

ATTAINMENT IN AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS FRENCH AMONG
12 AND 13 YEAR - OLDS IN DIFFERING SCHOOL STRUCTURES.

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Master of Philosophy at the
University of Aston in Birmingham.

May, 1982.

The University of Aston in Birmingham.

Attainment in and attitudes towards French among
12 and 13 year-olds in differing school structures.

SUMMARY

This thesis examines the relationship between attainment in French and attitude of pupils aged 12-13 years towards French in differing school structures.

The thesis analyses results of attainment tests in the skills of listening, reading and writing. These three scores were also combined to form a composite measure of attainment in French; responses to an attitude to French questionnaire are also presented.

The final tests for the three separate attainment skills and attitude responses were compiled after item analyses in a Pilot Study. They were administered to two populations from two distinct school structures :

- i) Pupils who had studied French for 4 years in 9-13 middle schools.
- ii) Pupils who had been taught French for 2 years from the age of 11, in 11 + high schools. These pupils had no previous primary French experience.

Analysis of test data showed no significant difference in cognitive performance in French between the two populations. This applied to the total populations from each school type and also for both male and female populations from 9-13 middle schools and from 11 + high schools. However, amongst both populations, it was found that girls generally perform better in each of the separate skills and consequently achieve a significantly higher composite French attainment score.

For the attitude to French questions, assessing degrees of liking or dislike for French, and for the attitude to French questionnaire (which incorporated 3 sub-scales), there were significant differences between responses for boys and girls, with girls displaying a more positive attitude. Again, however, there was no significant relationship between the nature of the school system in which the pupil learns French and attitudes towards the subject.

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Master of Philosophy 1982.

Key words : French attainment, attitude/school structure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to many people for their co-operation, advice and encouragement.

In particular, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Richard Whitfield, for his interest, encouragement and practical help.

I am very grateful to Drs Jim Narayan, Peter Goodyear, and Peter Coxhead of the Department of Educational Enquiry, for their assistance with data analysis.

Thanks are also due to the Hereford and Worcestershire Education Authority for financial support and to the Education Authorities of the City of Birmingham and Hereford and Worcestershire for permission to carry out research investigations in their schools. I am grateful for the co-operation and help of the headteachers and teachers of the schools where testing took place. In addition, I would like to thank the modern language advisors of the two authorities, Mr. J.A. Robinson and Mr. D.J.S. Mann.

Finally, a special thank you must be recorded to my husband for his support, encouragement and practical help.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF AIMS

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF AIMS

1.1 Reasons why the investigation was undertaken.

There has been much interest in and indeed concern in recent years about standards of French attainment of pupils in English schools and particularly of those who have started French as a part of their primary or middle school curriculum at the age of 8 or 9. One of the principal conclusions of the H.M.I. Report (1977) was that there was frequently :

"haphazard and infinitely varied provision for language learning encountered as one moved from school to school." (P.45)

The same report compares "two-tier systems, with transfer to high school at 12 or 13 years of age, to systems offering an uninterrupted five-year course to 'O' level or C.S.E. examinations. The conclusion reached is that over half the 13-18 high schools in the survey had to resort to starting French from scratch, since there had been too much variety of experience and standard in 9-13 or 8-12 feeder middle schools. Examination results were found to be better at the age of 16 in 11 + high schools, after pupils had had 5 years of continuity of French teaching.

Robinson (1976) stresses that continuity in language teaching between primary and secondary schools or middle and upper schools is essential. About the early start to learning French, in some areas at the age of 8 or 9, he states :

"As long as primary school teachers can justifiably complain that their ex-pupils are made to start French all over again and as long as secondary school teachers can

complain that there is no common level of achievement among their new entrants, then the best effects of the earlier start will scarcely be noticeable." (P.13)

In some L.E.A.'s, French is being taught to some children for 4 years up to the age of 13, whereas in other nearby, even neighbouring catchment areas, children may receive 2 years of French teaching from 11 years up to the age of 13.

There is also serious concern, at the present time, that as well as attempting to teach French to pupils who start to learn at varying ages, a wide ability-range of pupils is being catered for, perhaps in ability settled groups, but sometimes in mixed ability groups. In too many schools, of varying structures, this may be producing :

"... a very low common denominator of language achievement." (H.M.I. report, op.cit. P.15)

There will be further comment about ability grouping both in the next chapter and in the conclusion to this thesis.

It should be stated here that in areas of England, representative of a wide range of socio-economic status, it is possible to find schools, of varying structures, where French teaching is most successful. In these schools, the drop out rate at the option stage mentioned in the H.M.I. report, P.15, is minimal. However, although the author has encountered examples of these schools, nevertheless, it seems that there is rightly concern nationally over attainment in French and attitude of pupils towards that subject, particularly around the age of 13 when, after the 9-13 middle school, transfer is made in many areas to 13 + high schools.

The H.M.I. report states about this age of transfer :

"But it was in school systems with transfer at the age of 13 or 14 that discontinuity took its heaviest toll and in its many forms created the severest obstacle to successful language learning". (op. cit. P.27)

Faced with the national picture of variation of provision of French teaching and age of transfer and interest and concern as to whether there is any advantage to be gained by the pupil starting to learn French at the age of 8 or 9, the author began this research on a part-time basis in October 1976.

It was decided to take 2 populations across 2 differing school structures, at the critical age of 13, and to administer French attainment tests and an attitude to French questionnaire. The aim was to assess whether there is any advantage to attainment or attitude to be gained by the so called early start at the age of 9, prevalent in so many primary and middle schools.

The author has had both experience of teaching French for 11 years in 11-18 high schools, where pupils had had no previous experience of French learning before the age of 11, and, latterly, 4 years in the role of French adviser and teacher in a 9-13 middle school.

1.2 Summary of the aims of the investigation.

Populations were selected from an area of the Midlands which incorporates a cross-section of types of catchment area for both school structures, that is comprising 11 + high schools, where no primary French had been taught before the age of 11, and 9-13 middle schools where French had been taught for 4 years.

The principal aim of the investigation was to test the following hypotheses :

- i) that there are significant differences in attainment in French between pupils who have been taught the subject in different school structures.
- ii) that there is a significant relationship between attainment in French and attitude to the subject.
- iii) that there are significant differences in performance and attitude between males and females from the same and from differing school structures.

Attainment in French was assessed in terms of varying skills :

- i) listening,
- ii) reading,
- iii) writing,
- iv) composite attainment in French, incorporating (i) to (iii).

1.3 Outline of the Populations tested.

For the Pilot Study.

A population (N = 96) of all 4th year pupils who studied French in a randomly selected 9-13 middle school was tested. This population was considered to be representative of a cross-section of the ability range in a school which had a catchment area in its turn considered to be representative of a wide range of

socio-economic status. Pupils had been taught French for 3 years by non-specialist class-teachers, but, in their 4th year of learning French, by 2 specialist French teachers. Further details of group composition will be given in Chapter 3.

For the Main Investigation.

Middle school pupils (N = 302) were tested at the age of 12-13, after 4 years of learning French. 11 + high school pupils (N = 273) were more or less simultaneously tested, again at the age of 12-13, but at the end of their 2nd year of learning French.

An attempt was made to obtain a balance between catchment areas for the populations of the 2 school groups. These areas varied between rural, suburban, and urban areas, with schools of varying sizes. The aim was also, for each school group, to test the whole of the population studying French or, if this was not possible, to assess a cross-section of the ability range.

The schools where pupils were tested were observed to be using differing materials and methods in the teaching of French, and classroom conditions and teacher qualifications naturally varied. In addition, there were some curricular differences encountered between high schools and middle schools, particularly in terms of allocation of class-based teaching in middle schools as opposed to specialist provision in high schools and for some middle school classes. However, these were considered to be variables which may be found in any teaching situation, independent of school structure. An attempt was made to cover a sufficiently wide population from both school types to obtain results which should be indicative of standards of French attainment and of attitude to French learning of pupils in general for these school structures.

1.4 List of enquiries undertaken.

Pilot Study.

A Pilot Study, which will be described in detail in Chapter 3, was devised in order to attempt to measure reliability of French attainment tests in the three skills of listening, reading and writing. This Pilot Study was conducted in July 1978 with a population of 12-13 year old pupils from a wide ability range and representative of a wide cross-section of socio-economic status.

Attitude Question and Questionnaire.

An attitude question, designed to measure degree of liking or dislike for French was given to the Pilot Study population, in addition to an attitude to French questionnaire designed to assess population scores on 2 French attitude scales :

- i) attitude to French as a curriculum subject.
- ii) attitude to French culture.

In the Pilot Study, a completion of sentences section was included to reveal positive and negative attitudes to French learning and, in addition, there was the possibility for each candidate to make further comments regarding his attitude to learning French.

Amended tests for the Main Investigation.

Satisfactory reliability coefficients were obtained for the measures of attainment so that the amended tests which gave the highest reliability coefficients were employed for the Main Investigation. These were administered in May and June 1979 and comprised :

- i) listening test (32 items) Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficient (KR 20) = 0.780
- ii) reading test (34 items) KR 20 = 0.825
- iii) writing test (12 items) KR 20 = 0.895

Attitude Scales.

The following attitude to French scales were formed and the highest alpha coefficients obtainable were accepted.

Scale 1 : Attitude to French in terms of its value as a curriculum subject. This scale comprised 12 items and the Alpha Coefficient was 0.682

Scale 2 : Attitude to French culture. This finally comprised 3 items. Alpha Coefficient = 0.613. These 2 scales were combined to form a 15 item attitude questionnaire for the Main Investigation.

Main investigation analysis.

This analysis will be described in detail in Chapter 4 so that it is considered relevant in this section to outline briefly the investigations undertaken.

Reliability coefficients were obtained for the Main Investigation tests and the attitude scales. These were, for the listening test (32 items) 0.876, for the reading test (34 items) 0.880 and for the writing test (12 items) 0.912. For the attitude scales, Alpha coefficients of 0.733 for Scale 1 (12 items) and 0.763 for Scale 2 (3 items) were obtained.

Statistical tests were carried out to assess relationship between attainment in French and school structure. Relationships were also analysed between attainment in French and attitude to the language. These analyses were carried out for the total populations of both school types and also separately for male and female populations. The aim was to discover any significant relationship between the school structure in which pupils had been taught French and their attainment in and attitude to that subject.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

CHAPTER 2

2.1 Introduction.

This chapter comprises 5 main sections which are related to background literature concerning the teaching of children in the middle years. Ideas are linked particularly to the teaching of French in varying school structures to pupils in the 9-13 range. In addition, a section has been included relating to oral testing in French.

Section 2 consists of an outline of the formation and character of the middle school. This throws some light on how school structures and provisions may affect French teaching.

Section 3 is a review of literature and ideas concerning the teaching of and provision for French in primary and middle schools, with reference particularly to the 9-13 age range of pupils learning the language.

Section 4 consists of a brief outline of recent research findings regarding French attainment and attitude in differing school structures. Noteworthy conclusions are drawn which will be recalled in Section 6 of this chapter.

Section 5 reviews reports and papers relating to the N.F.E.R. report's conclusion that primary French may be "in the balance."

Section 6 relates to oral testing in French.

Section 7 outlines research into French attainment tests and attitude questionnaire, with reference to criteria by which these tests may be planned. This section is of direct relevance to the selection and formation of assessment material for the Pilot Study of this investigation.

Section 8 summarizes conclusions and implications which may be drawn from this chapter.

In this section, an outline is given of the background to the formation and developing character of the middle school, with reference to the area of Hereford and Worcestershire where most of the investigations for this research were carried out. There is also particular reference made to the role of the middle school teacher.

The designation and character of middle schools.

The past 15 or so years have seen the emergence and development of new trends and ideas for the middle years of education in England. "Middle schools", in this sense of the term, are designed to cater for pupils between 8 and 13 years (in rare cases 14).

The following table (from Hargreaves & Tickle (1980)) demonstrates the growth of middle schools in England and Wales.

TABLE 2.2.1

NUMBERS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

YEAR 1ST JAN)	FIRST AND MIDDLE	DEEMED PRIMARY	DEEMED SECONDARY	TOTAL
1969	0	1	14	15
1970	4	31	105	140
1971	84	118	147	349
1972	86	137	186	409
1973	143	242	302	687
1974	304	505	404	1213
1975	331	578	473	1382
1976	348	645	509	1502
1977	383	685	564	1632
1978	387	702	601	1690
1979	390	754	620	1764

In some areas of the country, as was indicated in Chapter 1 of this thesis, schools taking pupils aged 9-13 exist in close proximity to those catering for pupils aged 8-12 or 7-11, with transfer to high school or secondary school education at the age of 13, 12 or 11.

Hargreaves and Tickle (1981) comment that the very existence of middle schools can often be explained in terms of "administrative expediency", in that many local authorities used existing primary and secondary school buildings to provide middle school facilities as a "cheap way of going comprehensive". The designation and character of the middle school have long been the subjects of debate. Moreover, it seems appropriate here to suggest that at a time when there is much interest in the 16 + age-range and there are moves to create sixth form colleges, the future of many middle school systems may well be uncertain. Hargreaves and Tickle (1981) suggest that middle schools may prove

to be "the casualties of policies geared towards the top end of the system".

However, to return to the designation and character of these schools as they were at their foundation. Positive and encouraging sentiments were expressed as far back as 1966.

"It would be misleading and unimaginative to think of these middle schools simply in terms of a compromise between the primary and secondary approach. If they eventually establish themselves as a permanent feature of the public system of education it will probably be because they have learned from primary and secondary traditions but have also developed a character and mode of work which is distinctly their own."
(Dept. Educ. & Science. Building Bulletin 35, (1966))

The emphasis is that the middle school idea has much to offer to education in its own right.

But why provide schools designed specifically to cater for pupils in these middle years? The Plowden Report (1967) recommends the extension of the stage of primary education by one or two years. Taylor (1969) points out that Plowden is advocating a view of the child in school which accepts him for what he is, not for what he might become. Most children in the middle years were believed to have reached Piaget's stage of concrete operational thought. Although their power of logical thinking is developing, education at this stage should still be based on objects or situations, real, described or imagined. Hargreaves (1980) specifies that middle schools are often designed to cater for transition to the next stage of "formal operations". They also put forward the claim that the middle years (8 to 13) may also be associated with a distinct stage of social and emotional development, for which "the family atmosphere of the first school and the youth culture of the high school are both inappropriate." (P.24).

In the Plowden Report, the advice is also given that middle schools should not move too far away from the best of primary school traditions and ideas. The specialist teaching approach of the secondary field of education has an important influence but should not be over emphasized :

"If the middle school is to be a new and progressive force it must develop further the curriculum, methods and attitudes which exist at present in junior schools. It must move forward into what is now regarded as secondary school work, but it must not move so far away that it loses the best of primary education as we know it now."

(Plowden Report (1967) Para. 383.)

In addition, it is to be debated whether the variety of school structures encountered in these middle years of education are indicative of flexibility of ideas and approach or whether they reflect the "spasmodic development" reported by Blyth and Derricott (1977), and commented upon by Hargreaves and Tickle (1981). Increasing anxiety is also reported by Blyth and Derricott about what is happening within the 8-12 or 9-13 range, to be coming from high school and secondary school teachers in the "third tier of the system", that is those drawing from feeder middle schools. (op.cit. P.112).

Hargreaves and Tickle (1981) report that, in 1979, on the basis of a survey of its middle school members, the N.U.T. concluded that middle schools could be doomed in many areas if no-one saw fit to protect their specialist teaching by policies of more generous staff resources.

It is considered relevant and necessary here, therefore, to review briefly the role of the middle school class and specialist teacher.

The role of the middle school teacher.

There seems to be a need for a combination of 2 roles, either existing within the same teacher or as 2 distinct and yet inter-related characteristics of 2 teachers with differing roles within the same school.

Firstly, there is found the class-teacher pattern of the primary/junior school. Teachers of this role are needed particularly for the younger middle school pupils, aged 8-10 years, whereas the older 11-13 year olds have increasing need of the second category of teacher, subject orientated, with a role reflective of the pattern of the secondary school.

It is regarding this second category of specialist teacher that there seems to be considerable uncertainty concerning role and status. In the conclusion to their enquiry concerning the role of the middle school teacher, Ginsburg et al. (University of Aston, Dept. of Educ. Enquiry Monograph No. 7.) (1977) present this teacher :

"charged with the responsibility of achieving a smooth transition from a primary to a secondary -type instructional approach within one institution."
(P.55)

It is concluded that this is the basis for middle school teachers' ambiguity of role. They must work co-operatively with colleagues from both first schools and high schools and there is therefore pressure brought upon them from both sides. Ginsburg et al. describe the middle school situation as "an innovative organizational setting", so that there results ambiguity and confusion as to the most appropriate way for teachers to perform their role.

A much debated question is how much specialist teaching should there be in the middle school and how early should this type of teaching begin? Research carried out in 5 middle schools by Ginsburg et al. (1977) reported that the teacher's role moved from the primary pattern of class-based instruction in the early years towards predominantly one of specialist teaching in the final year. This report also states, however, that many specialist middle school teachers express dissatisfaction that they are "spread so thinly" over middle school classes. (Ginsburg et al. (1977) P.9. There may also be few real subject specialists to form a team group to work together and to complement each other. In some schools, it is also apparent that "semi-specialists" are appointed either in place of or as well as fully qualified subject specialists.

In Blyth & Derricott, the following may be noted :

"We detect a growing concern about what is happening in the curriculum of middle schools coming from teachers in the third tier of the system." (op. cit. P.112).

This concern is from high school teachers who are themselves specialist in function, particularly in subjects which require progressive systematic development along a strictly restricted number of channels, such as, for example, mathematics and modern languages. Teachers in 13 + high schools are reported to be all too well aware that they have effectively 'lost control' of the curriculum experiences of 12 and 13 year old pupils and they strongly express their desire to know what is happening in their contributory schools. The implication is that they have little or no confidence in non-specialist or semi-specialist colleagues in middle schools and that there may be ineffective liaison between feeder and high schools. These comments are from teachers of the older age-range of pupils but it is felt that they are relevant to this research about the 9-13 middle years of learning in the so-called 'contributory' or 'feeder' schools.

The Worcestershire Education Committee, Droitwich Working Party (1968) showed foresight in emphasizing the merits of the class-teacher system,

"with its potential for the establishing of a stable, continuous relationship between a teacher and a group of children."
(P.2.)

However, there was seen to be a need to appoint :

"special advisory teachers within the teaching team in any middle school. Their function (should be) to guide class teachers in matters which present difficulties to a non-specialist and to teach in a specialist fashion those pupils in the older classes whose study is conducted in such depth and at such a pace, as to make specialist guidance desirable."
(Droitwich Working Party, ibid.)

The H.M.S.O. Education Pamphlet 57 (1972), "Towards the Middle School", also expresses an opinion in favour of specialist teaching, even in the early years of learning :

"At this age (8-9 years) there are some undoubted advantages in the class teacher having responsibility for most of the curriculum, including French, music and physical education. But none of these are likely to suffer gravely - and indeed there may be gain - if they are handed over to experts who are also sensitive to the needs of young children." (P.15).

Finally, in this section, comments by Hargreaves and Tickle (1981) regarding the importance of middle school specialist provision must be noted. They state that more and more is being demanded in performance of pupils at 16 + and, therefore, if pupils are to stay in middle schools until the age of 13, there should be more demand for specialization in middle schools. This is at a time when falling rolls and education cuts prevent further specialist teachers being appointed or even present specialist provision being maintained.

In the next section of this Chapter, comments about specialization in the middle school will be related to French teaching. Brief reference will now be made to the middle school structures existing in the County of Hereford and Worcestershire.

The Hereford and Worcestershire situation.

There is a predominance of middle schools catering for the 9-13 age range in the Hereford and Worcestershire Education Authority area. The middle school system in Worcestershire (as it was called prior to local government reorganization in 1974) was planned as part of the County's reorganization for comprehensive education. As far back as 1966, D.E.S. approval for the Worcestershire scheme was obtained with, firstly, approval of the plans for Droitwich and then for Bromsgrove (Worcestershire Education Committee, 1968 and 1970). During the academic year 1969-70, the first middle schools in the area were formed and opened. Reorganization was basically into a 3 tier system, that is incorporating first, middle and high schools, a system which has been continued and maintained by the new county of Hereford and Worcestershire, although there has been no further movement or development.

The main justification for the formation of a middle school system was given in the Report of the Bromsgrove Working Party (1970) referring to psychological and developmental arguments based on a :

"deeper knowledge and understanding of the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children described by Piaget and given wider currency by the Plowden and Gittins report."

(Worcestershire Education Committee, 1970 : 7).

However, it was also reported that reasons and purposes for reorganization :

"have not always been strictly educational, but have sometimes been the result of the economic and social pressures of the times." (ibid. Section 6).

This motivation for middle school development, using existing school buildings, has also been commented upon by Hargreaves and Tickle (1981).

Thus, the development of middle schools in Hereford and Worcestershire, as elsewhere, did in fact evolve from the existing situation, largely using buildings and staff already used and employed under the old system. As a result of this, some buildings are purpose-built, some staff may, more recently, be middle school trained, but many middle schools operate in redeployed primary or secondary school buildings with staff who are primary or secondary trained.

The report of the 1978 working party of heads of modern language departments in the County of Hereford and Worcestershire states emphatically that :

"There is considerable variation within the Authority in the patterns of school organization." (Section 7.1.)

In the same authority area, there may be found a predominance of 9-13 middle schools, but there also exist 8-12 and 9-12 middle schools and 11-18, 12-18 and 13-18 high schools in close proximity to each other.

It has been stated that the main purpose of this investigation is to research how school structure and varying provision may affect the teaching of French. It is now proposed to review literature and ideas concerning the teaching of French, with particular reference to the 9-13 years of French learning.

2.3 Background literature concerning the teaching of French
in primary and middle schools.

Having provided a general outline of the middle school scene and a summary of the situation in the County of Hereford and Worcestershire, it is now proposed to relate some of the ideas already outlined to ideas and information specifically concerning French teaching and learning.

Modern Languages Provision.

The Hereford and Worcestershire Authority 1978 working party of heads of modern language departments (including the author) stressed that primary and middle school provision should be "equal and consistent." This is particularly relevant and important in a cumulative subject like a foreign language.

By equal provision, the report specifies :

"that all feeder schools of one high school should :
offer (or not all offer) a foreign language;
offer the same language;
employ the same course and comparable methods;
offer the same language to the same age groups
and over the same ability range;
have the same provision of teaching time,
resources, and qualified staff, i.e. teachers
who have studied French during their period of
initial training and are fluent and confident
in the use of the language." (Paragraph 7.1.1)

The report continues to emphasize that this equality of provision should be maintained throughout the feeder (middle or primary) schools and on into the high schools. The vital role of liaison is stressed between feeder and high schools. The latter should, therefore, be able and willing to build upon the work of contributory schools.

As was related in Chapter 1, Robinson (1976) stresses the importance of continuity between primary and secondary schools. He continues to recount, however, that in those areas of the country where secondary school pupils are drawn from a wide catchment area and from randomly situated and allocated primary provision, the chances of achieving equal secondary provision are much less. His recommendation is that there should be :

"overall co-operation, planning and co-ordination (with a lead) being given, perhaps by an L.E.A. or perhaps by language teachers working in concert."
(Teaching with En Avant, op. cit. P.13).

The manual of the Assistant Masters' Association (1979) emphasizes that modern language teachers like to have (and indeed should have) continuity of teaching because of the cumulative nature of the subject. They may also have more job satisfaction when they can have long-term goals, since in an 11-18 upper school they may teach (within the same modern languages department) the same pupils for 4-5 years continuously to C.S.E. or 'O' level. The manual offers this situation as being ideal but states that "schemes of reorganization in so many areas have shattered this." (P.4.) Ideas previously cited from the H.M.I. (1977) Report are also echoed in this manual :

"The inevitable gap in the language learning process caused by the upheavals of transfer is undoubtedly one of the main causes of underperformance at 16 +." (P. 73).

Again, the principal solution to problems encountered is given as liaison between feeder and upper schools. Emphasis on this point seems to feature predominantly in recent literature and reports related to modern language teaching.

In the H.M.I. (1977) Report, it was shown that of the 55 schools surveyed with a starting age of 11 or 12 almost 60% of schools received pupils who had learned some French at the primary stage. However, the material covered varied considerably amongst those pupils who had learnt French and there were always substantial numbers of pupils who had no previous knowledge of the language. Therefore, it was found that the majority of upper schools started to teach French again, discounting any previous knowledge. In only 7 cases (out of 32 schools) had there been any relevant consultation with primary schools and therefore an attempt made towards continuity of teaching. As has been mentioned in Chapter 1, the report emphasizes the :

"great variety in the organisation of modern language teaching adopted by individual schools within any group of lower schools (9-13 and 11-14) contributing to the same upper school."
(op. cit. P. 27).

The conclusion reached is that if French teaching is to be successful, continuity between schools, and indeed within the schools themselves, is essential. Effective methods of assessment and recording of results and standards would help to improve matters, but the key solution to all problems related to continuity is summarised by the phrase "close working relationships between the teachers concerned." (ibid. P. 29).

The manual of the Assistant Masters' Association (1979) concludes its chapter on "Problems of the Modern Languages Teacher" on this very point :

"It may seem that we are talking of an ideal world in which teachers have the time to maintain such links with feeder schools but close liaison between schools is essential if progress is to be made." (op. cit. P.74).

The importance has been mentioned of continuity within schools, which implies a successful working relationship between modern language teachers working under the guidance of a head of department in a high school (or co-ordinator in a middle school). The H.M.I. (1977) report concluded that,

"The head of department is a key figure, the most important single factor governing the quality of language work in a school." (P.18).

This "crucial role" was also emphasized in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire working party report (1978) and by Hawkins (1981).

Furthermore, the attitude of the headteacher seems to have a marked influence on the attitude and motivation of teachers and pupils in his school. Burstall (1968) concluded that if the headteacher is involved in the teaching of French, his positive attitude tends to mirror the attitude of the teacher who is responsible for the French teaching of several classes. Similarly, a negative attitude may be displayed by a "non-involved" headteacher. This negative attitude towards or lack of enthusiasm for French teaching may be reflected in the attitude of teachers and thus in the low level of attainment of pupils in French. Conversely, in schools where the attitude of the headteacher might be described as very positive towards French, reports submitted by visiting Inspectors tended to emphasize the beneficial effect of French teaching. Pupils in these schools appeared to be deriving maximum benefit from the introduction of French.

The importance too, of the role of national and local authority support particularly in terms of advisory services must be emphasized. The H.M.I. (1977) report stressed that modern language advisers can be of considerable help to all teachers, from the probationer to the senior teacher :

"They are in a position to identify needs and either to provide the necessary guidance themselves or to direct teachers to other sources." (P. 46).

Hawkins and Godfrey (1980) also conclude that in-service training is of great importance for modern language teachers from the point of view of encouraging enthusiasm and positive attitudes amongst these teachers. They recommend that training and courses should include :

"maintenance of the teacher's high standards of accuracy in the use of spoken and written language which he teaches; updating of his understanding of the life and culture of the foreign community; reappraisal of classroom methods; re-examination of teaching objectives; search for new solutions, such as parental lack of encouragement." (P. 83).

From this constructive note, ideas and opinions which may offer some solutions to problems encountered by modern language teachers and particularly by teachers of French to children aged 9-13 years are now reviewed.

Mixed ability French teaching.

This is a subject on which there has been and continues to be much debate in recent years. It is only during the last decade that most modern language teachers have encountered the problems and challenge of attempting to teach French to pupils of a wide ability range.

Oral facility in the earliest stages of learning a foreign language does not seem to be highly correlated with general ability. With reference to primary school pupils learning French at the oral stage, the findings of Burstall (1968) were :

"that a pupil's potential level of achievement in French cannot reliably be predicted from his performance on a general attainment battery. There are sufficient high-scoring children in the low-ability group and low-scoring children in the high-ability group to cast doubt on the validity of using general attainment as a predictor of language-learning success." (Burstall (1968)P.26)

Burstall continues to claim that success in oral French may stimulate a pupil's interest in subjects in which he has previously experienced failure, but, on the other hand, the introduction of reading and writing at the later stages of French learning may present difficulties to an initially successful child who has learned, through other experience, to associate failure with the printed word.

Nevertheless, it would seem that if pupils of all abilities at the beginning of a primary or middle school French course have this oral (and aural) facility, then mixed ability groups may not only be workable at this stage, but also encouraging to pupils who have experienced learning difficulties in other parts of the curriculum.

The Education Pamphlet 57 (1972) expresses the opinion that, after 2 years or so, the divergent needs of the pupils will probably dictate the nature of the course that different groups of pupils will need to follow. For some, this will inevitably be a predominantly oral and aural based course, while others should add reading and writing skills to their accomplishments in the language. The solution offered, therefore, is that : "setting seems a reasonable solution to this problem." (P.26). There is also an interesting recommendation that there should be :

"smaller than normal classes in the early stages of a foreign language since opportunities for individual practice and conversation in small groups are highly desirable. " (ibid. P. 27)

This provision seems to be not only desirable but necessary if mixed ability groups from the full ability range are to be taught French, even for the first 2 years of learning the language.

The H.M.I. (1977) report emphasizes the need to differentiate the objectives of the French course according to pupils' abilities and needs. The report cites examples of schools where mixed ability classes produce low standards in French and German, with the ablest pupils being held back by restless and demanding less able children. Inevitably, there may also be loss of interest amongst the more able pupils. As was quoted in Chapter 1 of this thesis, but will be reiterated and expanded in this section since it is so relevant :

"The need to cater for a wide ability - range in every teaching group, even in the final (third) year, was producing a very low common denominator of language achievement Pupils were finding it impossible to adapt to the extra pace required in the third year and so the drop-out rate at the option stage was enormous." (Op.cit. P.15).

In mixed ability groups, there may be unrealistic demands on less able pupils, whereas the report also expresses great concern over the plight of more able pupils in groups which do not fully cater for their needs. Regarding these more able pupils, the report relates the following findings :

"In general their very considerable powers of aural comprehension remained largely undeveloped; they were not taught to speak the language with flexibility and discrimination but tended to operate mechanically at a low and often trivial level; they were not taught the invaluable skill of rapid silent reading; and written work, instead of requiring personal and lively self-expression, was all too often dull, mechanical and undemanding." (ibid. P. 15).

The solution to these problems seems to have been summarised in the previously quoted words of the Education Pamphlet 57 (1972), that modern language groups should be smaller than the normal class group size and should be setted whenever possible.

These recommendations were also made in the Manual of the Assistant Masters' Association (1979), that mixed ability teaching for modern languages, even with a group-work approach, is not suitable after the first year of teaching the language in an 11 + high school. Setting is then recommended as being both desirable and necessary if all ability groups are to make progress to their full potential. Howgego (1975) states that while he believes that mixed ability groups can be taught modern languages in the early stages, using a course book supplemented by additional materials, it is nevertheless imperative for there to be flexible setting or broad banding of modern language groups in the more advanced stages. He states that he considers it vital to allow enough time in the mixed-ability situation for abilities and aptitudes to develop so that an accurate assessment of potential can be made. The introductory chapter of the booklet of the Oxfordshire Modern Languages Advisory Committee (1978) amply confirms these recommendations. The emphasis given is that both more able and less able pupils should be identified at an early stage so that each group is provided with a course which it is able to complete.

Sanderson (1981), speaking at the C.I.L.T. Conference about the University of York report "Teachers in Action" (to be completed in 1982) emphasized that successful modern language teachers, observed during the recent survey of teachers deemed successful, were able to demonstrate control over varied teaching situations, regardless of ability groupings. They were able to pitch the lesson accurately and divide it up into a series of clearly explained and achievable tasks. Further comment will be made about this interesting research project in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

2.4 Outline of recent research into
French attainment and attitude.

British educators became interested in evaluation of attainment and attitude in foreign languages in primary education around 1960. The Pilot Scheme for the teaching of French in primary schools was launched in 1963 and its aim was to ascertain the educational desirability and feasibility of extending the teaching of a foreign language to pupils of a wide range of age and aptitude, and in particular at a primary level. The need was stressed for such a study to be controlled, school-based and across the wide range of social strata. The importance of an adequate teaching force was also stressed and of continuity of teaching through to the secondary stage, so that pupils could learn French continuously for 5 years.

The effects of this experiment have been evaluated by the National Foundation for Educational Research, spanning the period 1964-74, the team of researchers being led by Clare Burstall and the evaluation taking the form of a longitudinal study of three age-groups or 'cohorts' of pupils. Tests were devised to measure attainment in both written and spoken French, attitudes of pupils towards foreign language learning and also attitudes of teachers towards the introduction of French into the primary school curriculum.

An outline will now be given of the N.F.E.R. work, with particular mention of ideas relevant to this research. In addition, reference will be made to other papers and reports which express differing views of primary French. Buckby (1976), for example, emphasizes that the N.F.E.R. report was not an evaluation of "Primary School French", but

"rather a survey of French being taught in the rather special context of the Pilot Scheme." (P.15)

Nevertheless, while it is acknowledged that there has been important critical discussion of the conclusions of the N.F.E.R. report (Bennett, 1975; Nicholson, 1975; Buckby, 1976; Hoy, 1977), some of the findings of the report are considered relevant to this research and they will now be outlined.

Sex differences.

Burstall (1974) concluded that girls of each cohort reached consistently higher levels of achievement in French than did the boys, with more boys than girls, at the secondary level, selecting not to continue learning French (when administrative option gives them the choice). Nisbet and Welsh (1972), from their evaluation of French teaching in Aberdeen schools, also concluded,

"girls had consistently more favourable attitudes to French, and better performance in it, than boys." (P.175)

Burstall (1974) also concluded that girls in the sample were consistently more positively motivated than the boys, more keen to achieve success. This was perhaps, according to Burstall, because in early years at school and in the wider society they had received differential treatment in their exposure, particularly in early years, to foreign language acquisition. It was concluded that differences in attitude in the secondary school may partly stem from "different employment expectations" for boys and girls, in fact the extent to which foreign language learning can be perceived by parent and child as being relevant to "occupational requirements." (P. 165).

The view that foreign-language learning is a more suitable occupation for girls than for boys is undoubtedly current in our society. Burstall concludes that parents' attitudes towards the value of teaching French at the primary level are strongly influenced by their assessment of the relevance of a knowledge of the language to their children's future employment prospects. In consequence, girls usually receive much more overt encouragement to learn French than do boys and, thus, this parental attitude has the powerful effect of producing positive attitude to and motivation in the subject. This factor is shown by Burstall to exert a most beneficial influence on the child's attainment in the language.

The findings of Buckby et al (1981) regarding sex differences of pupils aged 13+ are of relevance to this section. An investigation was carried out in 1978-79 for the Schools Council on the attitude

to French of pupils who were taking graded French attainment tests in North Yorkshire and Leeds schools. A control group ($N \approx 300$) and a similar sized experimental group were randomly selected from 11-18 and 9-13/13-18 schools.

Both groups were assessed for attitude and aptitude at the beginning of the school year and were found to be comparable. Girls of both populations showed markedly more positive attitudes to French than boys. The control group carried on learning French "in the normal way" throughout the year, whereas the experimental group worked according to a graded test syllabus, precise details of which had been given to pupils, parents and teachers.

A second attitude questionnaire, administered at the end of the school year, revealed that the difference in attitude of boys and girls of the control group had remained constant throughout the year, whereas the attitude of the experimental group boys had moved closer to that of the experimental group girls.

The importance of parental attitude had been emphasized by Burstall (1974), in that girls often receive more encouragement to learn French than do boys. The findings of the Schools Council survey on parents suggested, however, that parents of male and female pupils who were working for graded tests were influenced by their children's positive attitude and thus they gave positive encouragement to the children. Information about the tests had been given to parents and children at the beginning of the school year so that parents and children (of both sexes) were encouraged to work together towards an obtainable short-term goal.

Results of this survey were more significant in North Yorkshire schools, where graded tests had been taken for 3 years, than in Leeds schools where graded test were being taken for the first time. All North Yorkshire schools used for the survey were in an 11-18 system whereas the majority of Leeds schools were of the 9-13 middle/13-18 comprehensive high school variety.

(ii) Socio-economic factors.

Burstall (1974) reported that, after the age of 13, a significantly higher percentage of pupils from the lower socio-economic strata than those from the higher strata chose not to continue their French studies. (P. 119). It was also noteworthy that a higher proportion of children from the higher socio-economic strata visited France at the secondary stage, displaying positive interest and attitudes towards French life and people, attitudes no doubt significantly related to their eventual level of achievement in the language.

This relation between social class and attitude to and attainment in foreign-language learning is illustrated by significant differences in attitude between pupils attending different types of secondary school. Burstall reports that favourable attitudes towards French were most characteristic of grammar schoolpupils in the experimental sample, whereas unfavourable attitudes of secondary modern pupils, particularly of the boys, were generally recorded. (P.166) In addition, differences of attitude and attainment became more pronounced as pupils proceeded through the educational system.

It has been noted previously that evidence suggests that children with parents in higher-status occupations receive greater parental support than those with parents in lower-status occupations, when approaching the learning of a foreign language or indeed any new learning experience. (Goodacre, 1968, P.33-46; Barker Lunn, 1970, P. 177 & 185) Burstall also referred to ideas put forward by Goodacre (op.cit.) and Barker Lunn (op.cit.) that teachers may evaluate differently the potential abilities of pupils from different social backgrounds. There can be little doubt of the relation between positive attitudes of both parents and teacher and the positive attitude to the learning task, motivation and level of attainment of the child.

(iii) Attainment and size of school.

Burstall (1974) reported that pupils in small schools in rural areas maintained a consistently higher level of achievement in French than did pupils in larger urban schools. This was despite the situation often to be found in the smaller schools :

"pupils differing widely in age and ability and, classroom conditions often inimical to the teaching of French by audio-visual means." (P.32)

Burstall stated that the N.F.E.R. research revealed no association between size of class and level of French attainment. However, there was further comment :

"the possibility remains that the high level of achievement in the small schools stems partly from the heterogeneous nature of their classes.(P.32)

Pupils are not competing with those of their own age-group and Burstall emphasizes that neither pupil nor teacher is pre-occupied with the concept of a "standard." The classroom situation in the small school should therefore encourage co-operative behaviour and positive attitudes and motivation for all pupils, attitudes which have been shown by Burstall to be carried over consistently into the secondary stage. Cole (1969) emphasizes, too, the importance of the early relationship between pupil and language teacher, so that the pupil has a positive attitude to French when he begins his secondary school course. He stresses that,

"motivation and interest are factors which are just as powerful as efficient teaching technique." (P.108)

(iv) Optimum age for foreign-language learning.

Reference will be made to comments regarding the age when children may most easily learn (particularly to speak) a foreign language. Cole (1969) comments that,

"primary school children possess a great natural capacity for assimilating speech patterns of a foreign language."
(P.15)

He further describes the oral and aural ability of the primary school child with respect to language structures of varying complexity.

Carroll (1967), however, with reference to research carried out in American schools and colleges, considered that, although there was evidence of a superior foreign-language ability in the young child, this predominantly oral ability was not necessarily transferred to the later stages of learning, expressive skills, aural comprehension, grammatical accuracy and other reading and writing skills.

Burstall's 1974 findings, to a certain extent, reflect this opinion. Primary school pupils who were introduced to the study of French at the age of eight did, in fact, reach a higher level of attainment in oral fluency than did pupils who began French studies at the age of eleven, at the beginning of the secondary school, and who, when tested, had studied French for an equal period of time. However, the latter pupils were found to reach a higher level of achievement in other aspects of proficiency in French.

Burstall, therefore, concludes that pupils reach higher standards of achievement in those aspects of French to which greater teaching time has been allocated and that this emphasis is not necessarily directly associated with the age of the child.

There will be further reference to the "optimum age arguments" (Nicholson, 1975) in Section 2.5.

(v) Visual versus auditory presentation of French material.

It was observed in the Aberdeen evaluation (Nisbet and Welsh, 1972) that pupils in the first year of the Secondary School who had been taught French at the primary stage scored higher than average on tests of oral comprehension of vocabulary.

However, it was found that by the end of this first year of secondary education this advantage appeared to have diminished or even to have disappeared.

Burstall (1974) observed that during the primary stage of the experiment,

"few of the pupils in the experimental sample were able to tolerate for long a purely auditory presentation of material. Most pupils strongly disliked having to accept a passive listening role." (P.63)

This rejection of predominantly auditory presentation of material was found by Burstall et al. to be "even more marked" during the secondary stage - for experimental pupils.

"There was evidence of a growing dislike of tape-recorded material and a growing conviction that it was easier to learn French from a textbook than from an auditory presentation." (P.168)

Grammar school pupils were reported, particularly, to show a preference for a "traditional" rather than an "audio visual" approach to learning French.

Amongst all pupils, it was observed that there was "an increasing anxiety" when they were asked to read or speak in French. (P.168)
Grammar school girls, particularly those in co-educational schools, were reported to be most afraid of exposure to peer-group ridicule.

(vi) Attitudes and attainment in co-educational and single-sex schools.

The final considerations in the last section lead naturally on to this examination of differences in attitude to and attainment in French in co-educational and single-sex schools.

It was noted in the first section that girls in the Burstall sample were consistently and generally more highly motivated than boys to achieve success in learning French and expressed more positive attitudes.

Burstall (1974) found conclusively that both boys and girls in single-sex schools at the secondary stage of the experiment reached a higher level of attainment in French. Boys who had been taught French in single-sex schools displayed "markedly more favourable attitudes towards learning French than did boys in co-educational schools." (P.240).

There was, however, only a "slight tendency" for girls from single-sex schools to display a less favourable attitude to French learning in comparison to girls from co-educational schools. Sex differences in pupils' attitudes towards speaking French in class were not recorded during the primary stage of the experiment. It was only during the secondary stage, and particularly in co-educational schools, that girls "reveal an ever-growing anxiety about speaking French in front of other members of the class." (P.240)

Summary

Learning French in the Primary School does not seem to confer a lasting advantage from the point of view of attainment in spoken French, but it does seem to exert a lasting influence on the attitude of the pupil towards speaking and learning French at more advanced and complex stages.

The most important factor, from the point of view of attainment, seems to be the length of time allocated to the various aspects of French teaching. This explains why pupils who have learned French from the age of eight display greater oral ability at the beginning of the secondary school, although this advantage appears to diminish or to disappear and these skills may not necessarily be transferred to the later stages of learning. Burstall (1974) claimed that these pupils seemed to maintain their superiority in listening comprehension and positive attitudes towards learning French.

A similar conclusion was reached by Nisbett and Welsh (1972) :

"The effect of primary school French in this study appears to have been on attitude rather than on attainment In the first year of secondary school, since all pupils started French afresh, the stimulus of novelty was lost for those who knew some French, and its popularity suffered. But subsequently the subject re-established a favourable position with those who had been introduced to it in primary school." (P.174-175).

It must be noted that there was no continuity of teaching in French from primary to secondary school and that all pupils at the beginning of the secondary stage started French from the beginning, whether they had previously studied it or not. This must certainly have accounted for the change in attitude of those pupils who had followed a primary French course. This continuity must also be the aim of foreign-language teachers today in Middle and High Schools, when the age of transfer is thirteen years.

The importance of time allocated to learning French has also been stressed by Buckby (1976). There will be comment on his ideas in Section 2.5.

In favour of teaching French in the Primary School, there seems little doubt that there is an optimum age for the acquisition of a native-like pronunciation of a foreign-tongue, although, as has been pointed out, this skill is not necessarily transferred to more advanced language skills.

Girls in the primary school appear to attain a higher standard than do boys in oral French and sex differences in attitude towards the language are prelevant in pupils from the lower socio-economic strata. There has been found to be a linear relation between the pupil's socio-economic status and his level of attainment in French.

This may stem from his parents' expectations and their attitude towards his learning French, his teacher's attitude to his learning of the language (expectation, encouragement, enthusiasm), his relationship with his teacher and his parents' attitude to and relationship with that teacher, and, finally, his own view of his learning potential. Thus, children from lower socio-economic status families may develop a negative view of their expectations of success.

Differences in attainment and attitude may also stem from differences in size of school, type of school and size of class, although Burstall considers that the latter variation is secondary in importance to the personal relationship of teacher with pupils. In single-sex schools, too, boys and girls seem to reach a higher level of achievement than do pupils in co-educational schools and boys in single-sex schools tend to have a more positive attitude towards the learning of French.

Finally, with regard to the presentation of material in the teaching of French, few pupils, whether of primary or secondary age, seem willing or able to tolerate a purely passive role, to listen to voice or tape-recorder for long periods of time and to repeat language structures or patterns.

Methods of presentation should be varied and adapted to the age, ability and interests of the majority of pupils in a class. Cole, (1969) suggests that language teaching, particularly in the early stages, should be linked with other areas of the curriculum. Above all, pupils are acquiring a "living language" and learning about "real people".

"If, in the primary school, the teacher can provide a wide background of varied and interesting experiences connected with France and things French, the pupil will be better equipped in the secondary school to see the learning of the language in its proper perspective." (P. 108).

Presentation of foreign-language material linked with other areas of the curriculum should be possible, to a great extent, in the Middle School, with a 9-13 age range, where the class teacher may be a modern language specialist or where there may be close liaison with the specialist modern language teacher and other teachers of a range of subjects.

Thus, there are noteworthy conclusions to this section, some of which are relevant to this research and they will be recalled in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

2.5 Primary French in the Balance ?

The N.F.E.R. (1974) report's conclusion that "the weight of the evidence has combined with the balance of opinion to tip the scales against a possible expansion of the teaching of French in primary schools." (Burstall et al., P. 246), has been discussed and queried by interested modern linguists and educationalists, in that this report should not be used as a conclusive basis for the planning of the future of primary French teaching.

Hoy (1977) emphasizes that :

"even if Burstall (1974) had urged the expansion of primary French the implementation of such advice would have been prevented by financial constraints and by the acute shortage of primary teachers who are competent in French." (P. 25).

Bennett (1975) advocated the introduction of primary French on a large scale, in terms of teacher provision and grouping of pupils for French teaching. He had set out to assess whether the design and analysis of the N.F.E.R. (1974) research had produced evidence strong enough to form a basis for decision making. Bennett concluded that the question as to whether French should be nationally introduced into primary schools cannot be adequately answered by the data of the report. There is a point here that what ought to be done in terms of any educational policy partly depends on desirability (values) and feasibility (resources, empirical impacts etc.)

Buckby (1976) stressed that there are other considerations which should be borne in mind when planning curricula, which the N.F.E.R. report appears not to consider (P.15). He refers to the statement of Carroll (1963a), quoted in Burstall (1974) ,

"that one of the most important variables in the learning process is the total amount of time spent actively in the learning of a given task."

Thus, according to Buckby, if time on task is such an important factor, it would seem to be advantageous to add three years to the high school starting age of 11, to start to learn French at the age of 8. Buckby is probably realistic in that he expresses doubts as to whether secondary schools would make extra time available for French teaching if primary school teaching was not available. Asher (1978) had put forward the view, that a 3 year upper school course to C.S.E. or 'O' level, with extra provision of teaching time, would be ideal. He considered that 'O' level results would be improved if potential candidates were given 3 years of specialist modern language teaching, with provision for

"extra lessons of French on the timetable and for the organisation of intensive language courses at various times during the school year." (P.26)

The key point is "conventional" versus "intensive" courses, where total time teaching on both courses can be the same. Buckby (1976) emphasizes that there are important aspects of French teaching which the report omits to mention and "questions which remain unanswered." (P.20) He cites the question of an optimum starting age for learning a foreign language, recommendations regarding teacher training and guidance in terms of teaching methods and materials. Nicholson (1975) also stresses that the Pilot Scheme does not provide any real evidence relevant to "the optimum age arguments." (P.128)

Moreover, Buckby (1976) points out that the primary/secondary school French teaching situation had much improved since the Pilot Scheme took place. The En Avant course had been revised and

"teachers at the primary and secondary levels have gained considerably in experience and expertise as a result of the pilot project." (P.20)

The Pilot Scheme had attempted to deal with two major innovations the teaching of French from the age of 8 along with a process which was

"revolutionary at the time, namely teaching French to children of all abilities." (Buckby, 1976, P.20)

Asher (1978) also shows that he considers it unfortunate that primary school French teaching should have been introduced at the same time as there was a demand for "curricular reform", in that it was advocated that French should be taught across the ability range. Thus Asher refers to

"the bewilderment and uncertainty among teachers, caused by so much rapid and radical reorganisation." (P.25)

He refers to the variety of levels reached by pupils from different middle schools feeding the same high school. Thus :

"The resultant frustration of some pupils and the bewilderment of others can only have a seriously negative effect on attitudes towards French and other foreign languages." (P.26)

Asher stresses that middle school pupils, who have started to learn French at 9, must acquire "good linguistic habits" and adopt "a favourable attitude to the subject." Otherwise, the upper school has little or no foundations on which to build.

It has already been pointed out that Asher advocates "French from 13", with good specialist teaching and a generous allowance of teaching time.

On the subject of length of time on task, Buckby (1976) expresses an opinion in favour of a primary school start in French. He states,

"going back to a start at 11 would merely put off the problems for three years and reduce by three years the time available to solve them." (P.20)

Thus Buckby recommends that there should be extra teaching time, before the age of 11, if teachers are to meet the needs of pupils across the ability range.

Buckby concludes that, although the N.F.E.R. report has limitations, he considers that the introduction of primary French is "clearly a step in the right direction." He emphasizes that :

"Given the crucial importance of the length of exposure to the foreign language, primary French may well be the only hope of making substantial improvements in foreign language learning." (P.21)

It has already been pointed out that Buckby expresses doubts as to whether secondary schools would make extra teaching time available if there was no primary French. He may also be concerned that if the start for learning French is left to the age of 13, then some pupils may be unable even to try learning the language because of social/academic selection mechanisms operating even in comprehensive schools.

A noteworthy conclusion is also reached by Nicholson (1975) in favour of retaining French in the primary school :

"My view is that we do not decide what to include in the curriculum of the primary (or middle) school on the basis of what children do in tests at sixteen ... It seems to me that one should take curriculum decisions on other grounds and then tackle the organisational and teaching problems of implementing these decisions An essential condition or pre-condition is that we should believe it to have some educational purpose."(P.132)

Similarly, Hoy (1977) concluded that

"if the maximum benefits are to be obtained from our investment and experimentation in the early teaching of modern languages, we need as a country to decide on acceptable aims and objectives in this area, and to create the known and necessary conditions for success." (P.68)

The Hoy report described the N.F.E.R. 1976 survey of the modern languages teaching situation which was intended to complement the N.F.E.R. 1974 report and to "lead to a fuller understanding of the positive results of the pilot experiment."

It was reported that many L.E.A.'s followed their H.M.I.'s advice in pruning poor primary French teaching and fostering good standards of primary French. It was estimated that some 20% of junior and middle schools in England and Wales provided French teaching for 8-11 year olds. The opinion is expressed that much of the teaching of French at this level is good,

"if only because it represents the survival of the fittest." (Hoy, P.35)

An interesting conclusion of the same report was that

"at their best middle schools combine the zest of primary French with the more mature motivation of the secondary school."(P.45)

There is little doubt that primary and middle school French teaching can be of a high quality and successful. Valuable teaching time can be gained and the importance of length of time on task has been noted. The importance, too, has been mentioned of the provision of specialist French teaching and continuity between primary, or middle and upper schools. It is unlikely that primary French will expand nationally. Robinson (1975) questioned whether British policy-makers

"are yet ready for the formulation and implementation of anything approaching a national policy on the teaching of French in primary schools."

Financial restraint and a national shortage of specialist French teachers for primary or middle schools will inevitably mean some contraction of early French teaching. There is also patchy provision of French teaching for the early years, dependent on L.E.A. provision and the policy of individual schools. However, there is undoubtedly some strength of feeling that the effects of this teaching can be good and, where teacher provision is available, it should continue.

One advantage of beginning to learn French in the primary or middle school may be in terms of oral fluency and confidence (although it was stressed in Section 2.4 that this oral ability is not necessarily transferred to later stages of learning).

As will be pointed out in Section 3.2, it was not considered practically possible to test pupils orally in this investigation. The following section will describe problems related to oral testing as well as oral testing techniques, methods of marking and marker reliability.

2.6 Oral testing in French.

The importance of both the validity and the reliability of oral tests in foreign languages (as in all testing) has been emphasized by Lado (1961) p. 321, 330, and Valette (1967) p. 30.

Lado stresses :

"for a test to be valid we expect the content and conditions to be relevant, and that there will be no irrelevant problems which are more difficult than the problems being tested." (P.321)

"Relevant" (in relation to the behaviour under test) is the key word, since different teachers or examiners may be attempting to assess different aspects of performance in the spoken language.

Valette (op. cit.) points out that the teacher must bear in mind his own course objectives when constructing oral language tests. He continues,

"the publishers of commercial tests are often at fault for having omitted a detailed description of precisely what the tests presume to evaluate." (P.30)

Harding (1974) emphasizes that there must be collaboration between teachers and examiners if we are all to be applying the same criteria for the testing of oral language,

"both positively in the sense of the range and complexity of the language presented and produced, and negatively in the sense of (lack of) accuracy." (P.172)

Dyson (1972) outlines four "areas of proficiency" in the use of the foreign language which may be assessed in an oral examination, and which should "coincide approximately" with the teacher's aims as far as oral skills are concerned. Primarily, these include a "candidate's ability to use the spoken form of the language", which incorporates :

- "a) His ability to understand the spoken word.
- b) His pronunciation, intonation and phrasing in speaking the language (his comprehensibility)
- c) The range of ideas he can express.
- d) The accuracy with which he can express these ideas." (P.10)

Dyson continues to point out that these four areas of proficiency coincide more or less with the aims of modern language teachers in teaching oral skills, although it is stressed that different teachers place emphasis on different skills.

Dyson classifies oral tests into two categories, those testing receptive skills - category a) above, or productive skills - categories (b), (c) and (d). Testing techniques, currently used in public examinations are listed. Firstly, there are those tending "towards the formal speech situation, where there is little or no interaction between the candidates and another speaker."

- "a) Reading aloud : one of the oldest types of test used, sometimes followed by formal contextual questions.
- b) Exposés : the candidate speaks with little or no prompting from the examiner.
- c) Lists of prepared questions, from which the examiner chooses a selection to be put to the candidate.
- d) Picture-based tests : these can take the form of single or linked pictures, presented in conjunction with fixed questions or as a stimulus material for oral composition." (P.11)

Secondly, tests are described which "tend towards the reciprocal speech situation." (Dyson points out that the listener is usually the examiner in a modern language testing situation, whereas, when oral English tests take place, the listener may be another candidate).

- "a) 'Free' general conversation.
- b) Conversation based on prepared topics (sometimes following an exposé).
- c) Rôle - playing or assignments, where the examiner acts a part corresponding to a rôle assigned to the candidate." (P.11)

Dyson further comments that since all these types of oral tests are currently used in examinations, it would seem that "some teachers at least accept them as valid." (P.11)

Harding (op.cit.) questions whether validity or reliability of oral tests "should predominate", should the oral examination

"be prepared on the basis of a defined syllabus, giving greater reliability, or should techniques of freer conversation be explored, an activity seen to be more valid?" (P.175).

Harding continues to point out that certain types of oral test are unnatural - rôle-play situations, for example, when the teacher plays the rôle of the foreigner who is meeting the pupil (the candidate) for the first time.

On the subject of reliability of tests, Lado (op.cit.) stresses that validity is not possible when the scores resulting from testing are not stable.

"A test cannot be valid unless it is also reliable, for an unreliable test does not measure." (P.330)

Lado defines reliability with reference to oral testing in this way :

"Reliability has to do with the stability of scores for the same individuals. If the scores of students are stable the test is reliable; if the scores tend to fluctuate for no apparent reason, the test is unreliable." (P.330)

Dyson (op.cit.) stresses that there is an overlap between reliability and validity, since, although an unreliable test cannot be valid, a test can in fact be reliable but invalid. This test would

"be measuring the wrong qualities in the candidate, but doing so consistently and accurately." (P.12)

Lado (op.cit.) comments that instability of test scores may be due to at least three main circumstances. Firstly, there is "time and circumstances." The performance of the skills may be found to vary "as a result of irrelevant circumstances and time change." Secondly, instability of results may be as a result of "limitations and imperfections of the test." This, Lado points out, may be due to "inadequacy of sampling, lack of homogeneity in the items, etc." Thirdly, test scores may be unreliable because of "scorer fluctuation or even examiner fluctuation." (P.331).

Dyson (op.cit.) points out that reliability includes both administration of tests and the marking of them. As far as administration is concerned, the examiner may participate in the test and may therefore be subjectively involved. There may also be "lack of standardisation between examiners" who administer oral tests. Secondly, Dyson stresses that "a big source of unreliability in testing is the marking process." He continues :

"there must be stability in performance on the part of the marker comparable to the stability in performance on the part of the candidate."(P.13).

On the subject of unreliable assessment of speaking tests, Valette (op.cit.) comments that

"different teachers may assign different scores to the same utterance, and an individual teacher who hears the same utterance on two different occasions may not give it the same score each time."

Valette emphasizes that scorer reliability is increased when

"judges evaluate only one aspect of the utterance, such as fluency, overall intonation, or the production of a specific vowel or consonant." (P.82)

From the point of view of evaluating pronunciation tests, when vowel and consonant sounds are being judged, Valette recommends that the teacher should

"listen for only one aspect of each sentence or phrase..... it is suggested that the key sound appear at least twice in the test items." (P.89)

Various stimuli or cues are described by Valette - to induce the desired response from the pupil. It is considered worthwhile to note these in detail.

There may be mimicry, when the model may be the teacher or console of a language laboratory; memorization, when a poem or passage is recited from memory or two pupils may recite a dialogue, pattern drills may be employed, for example :

"Cue : Je rentre à midi (nous)
Response : Nous rentrons à midi." (P.90)
(The sound assessed is "r".)

There may also be a question and answer technique employed, such as,

"Cue : Jean finit-il son travail?
Response : Oui, Jean finit son travail." (P.90)
(The sound assessed is "i").

Completion items may be used to produce the response of a word which was not in the stem, to eliminate the possibility of simple imitation. Reading material may be used as a testing instrument, both familiar material and a reading passage which is new to the pupil. Finally, pronunciation tests based on pictures may be effective, but Valette recommends that a spoken or written cue to accompany the picture may be helpful.

From the point of view of evaluating intonation tests, Valette also recommends that the teacher should prepare

"items that permit the evaluation of one or two specific aspects of intonation." (P.91)

She continues to describe how intonation may be measured by means of tests of mimicry, memorization, oral cues, visual cues or a reading passage. (P. 92-93).

Briefly, Valette describes stress tests (P.93) and written tests to evaluate pronunciation, intonation and stress (P.94). She emphasizes that these written tests should be used

"sparingly, however, because students can learn pronunciation rules and still not pronounce well." (P. 94).

Further types of oral tests are described, directed speaking tests, designed to measure

"the ease and accuracy with which the student handles the patterns of the target language." (P.97)

Free response tests are mentioned, either describing pictures, for a stated period of time, or holding a conversation with

"the teacher or another qualified speaker."
(P.104-105).

Finally, Valette describes an oral examination, "the comprehensive speaking test,"

"composed of several sections in which the various aspects of the speaking skill are evaluated." (P.106).

Still on the subject of types of stimuli which may be used to produce an oral response for an examination, Dodson (1963) advocates the thorough preparation of set questions before the examination. He stresses that a central feature of modern language learning is

"to acquire an automatic response to the various aspects of the foreign language." (P.8)

Since Dodson is of the opinion that this can best be done by "over learning" and "repeating given sentence-patterns", he goes as far as to state that

"if future oral examinations should tend to encourage this approach to language learning, they will have done a service to education." (P.8)

It is also possible to argue in terms of the value of this type of prepared oral test in that the pupil or student experiences success, has enjoyed the learning experience and found it meaningful.

Valette (op.cit.) emphasizes the desirability of the student experiencing success in an oral examination :

"if possible, the speaking test should provide a satisfying experience for the student and permit him to demonstrate his newly acquired or growing skill in conversing in the target language." (P.107).

The preparation of set questions or a prepared conversation about a set book or topic may well result in the candidate experiencing success in an oral examination, but the question must be asked as to whether this method of testing is inherently invalid. Harding (op.cit.) shows that she considers that this prepared conversation may well become for the pupil a memory test and a reflection of the teacher's writing skill, so that

"in terms of oral communication the test is valueless." (P.175)

With regard to less structured, but perhaps more valid oral tests, Francis (1981) points out that tests may be

"short, unstructured and involve interpersonal communication between examiner and candidate." (P.15)

Testing of this kind would therefore assess the candidate's comprehension of spoken language, his pronunciation, intonation etc., his "range of ideas" and "the accuracy with which he can express these ideas." (Dyson, op. cit. P.10). Communication of this kind is valid but it is questionable as to whether the marking of it is always reliable.

Francis (op. cit.) discusses the efforts of the Associated Examining Board to improve oral test reliability. All newly appointed examiners are required to attend one-day training sessions and also a standardisation meeting. Francis goes on to point out that a desirable method of improving oral test reliability would be "multiple marking." However this has practical and financial difficulties.

Francis further suggests that an analytic method of marking oral examinations may improve their reliability. He comments on the report of Dodson (op.cit.) who describes a scheme where candidates lose marks for grammatical errors, incomplete sentences and pronunciation errors. Dodson's findings were

"that the discrepancies between oral examiners are no greater, if not less, than those obtained between examiners of written scripts." (Dodson,P.6.)

Dyson (op.cit.) reported research into "self-consistency and inter-marker agreement," using either an analytical marking scheme or marking according to general impression, when a "free" conversation in French was assessed. Self consistency of markers was reported to be as high as could be achieved when assessing written tests in French and correlation coefficients for inter-marker agreement were high (varying between 0.87 and 0.98). It was also found that there was no significant difference between the reliability of the two methods of marking. This finding confirms conclusions reported by Rudd (1970) and Francis (1981).

Nevertheless, Dyson questions whether examination boards may be justified in

"awarding a substantial proportion of marks to the oral tests in modern language examinations, on the basis of assessment by individual markers." (P.21.)

He concludes that if oral tests are to carry this "substantial weighting" (P.23.), then there should not be reliance on marking by one person. A second experiment is described by Dyson (P.26 onwards) when a team of four markers attained a very high degree of marker reliability.

The conclusion must also be drawn that oral tests should only be allocated this "substantial proportion of marks" if they are both valid and reliable. Comment by Francis has been mentioned regarding training sessions and standardisation meetings for examiners. Harding (op.cit.) also emphasized that there should be "collaboration between teachers and examination boards." The class teacher or an "external agent" may act as examiner and again the recommendation is that there should be training sessions and standardisation meetings for those involved with assessing oral skills.

Above all, it seems to be vital that there should be liaison between teachers and examiners and between examiners themselves, and that they should plan ahead to achieve acceptable schemes of work, examination techniques and methods of marking.

The following section will now relate directly to criteria by which attainment in and attitude to French may be defined as a precondition to their valid measurement.

2.7 Research on attainment tests and attitude questionnaire considering criteria by which attainment in and attitude to French (between 9-14 years) may be defined.

This section outlines research into attainment tests and attitude questionnaire for French in the early stages, with particular reference to the criteria by which these tests may be planned. These findings were of particular value when the tests and questionnaire for the Pilot Study of this research project were being selected.

In Stern (1969) Carroll concludes that, when planning proficiency tests in a foreign language, there are 4 basic linguistic skills which should be considered :

- a) listening comprehension,
- b) oral production,
- c) reading comprehension,
- d) written expression.

There are also at least 4 kinds of content to be covered :

- a) phonology (in the case of listening and speaking),
- b) orthography (reading and writing)
- c) vocabulary,
- d) grammatical structure.

Carroll recommends that tests should not be excessively long, each sub-test being capable of administration within a 35 minute period. Tests should also not be too speeded, i.e. there should not be strict time-limits. In addition, it is recommended that items of varying difficulty should be randomly arranged in order to maintain the interest and motivation throughout the test of pupils of all abilities.

Recommended schedule of tests. (Carroll 1969 and 1975).

Although other test material and syllabuses were examined, Carroll's recommendations were taken into consideration since they were thought to be most appropriate for the ability-range and age-range of the population to be assessed.

1. Listening tests : administered by teacher's voice (or from a tape of a native French voice).

a) Multiple-choice, selection from a series of pictures :
e.g. (i) Ce sont des chevaux.

Drawing of hats. | horses | hair | horse |

(ii) Après le dîner les parents prennent du café.

Drawings:	parents	2 men	father	mother
	drinking	drinking	drinking	making
	coffee.	in a cafe.	coffee	coffee

b) Sentences :

The pupil hears a remark or question in French and selects the correct response. There is a choice of 4 answers in the test booklet.

e.g. Qu'est-ce que vous donnez à manger à votre chien?

A. Oui, souvent.

B. Très gentil.

C. C'est un animal.

D. De la viande.

c) Short conversation or dialogue.

After hearing a conversation between two people, the pupil must mark the statement (from 4 alternatives) which is correct according to what has been said.

d) Passage or conversation followed by a question and answer.

The pupil hears the prose or dialogue, listens to the question in French and then refers to the booklet for the choice of 4 answers.

2. Reading comprehension tests. (for children who have received at least one year's instruction in reading in the foreign language).

a) Pictorial items.

e.g. Elle tricote une chaussette.

Choice from 4 pictures.

b) Vocabulary items.

Suitable for testing the 2nd and 3rd year of French teaching. A successful answer usually depends largely on knowledge of the meanings of one or two key words occurring (generally) in the given alternatives. A variety of lexical and syntactic knowledges are tested.

e.g. Jean revient à la maison. Sa mère
lui dit : "Comme tu es méchant !
Tu as ton pantalon !"

- A trouvé
- B acheté
- C porté
- D déchiré

c) Text items, printed passages of various lengths and difficulties about which the pupil is asked questions in French. Answer is chosen from a choice of 4.

3. Grammar (spoken and written language) tests.

Administered to children who have been exposed to at least one year's instruction in reading French and conducted by the teacher (since the inclusion of a native-speaking voice may be regarded as immaterial as far as the mastery of grammatical patterns is concerned).

e.g. The pupil would be asked to select the "correct" sentence (from a grammatical standpoint)

(Sentences read twice)

1. Jean a donné au professeur un livre.
2. Jean au professeur a donné un livre.
3. Jean a donné le professeur à un livre.

Written-language grammar tests could be analogous to the spoken-language tests. Some of the items could, however, be "open-ended," requiring the pupil to supply appropriate grammatical forms, phrases or sentence structures. (although the latter items could present difficulties of measurement.)

4. Speaking tests.

- a) Pronunciation tests. Graded items to be repeated by the pupil after a taped native voice. Each short French sentence is heard twice, in immediate succession, followed by a pause of about 6 seconds.

e.g. Il fait chaud.

Elle est là-bas.

Quelle heure est-il?

(See Carroll (1969) P.70. for range of scores).

- b) Structural control.

The test consists of a series of pictures in the pupil's test booklet, accompanied by tape-recorded questions in French which must be answered in French by the pupils using a suitable structure.

e.g. Qu' est-ce que c'est ? (fish in bowl)
 Où sont les enfants ? (classroom)
 Combien d'enfants y a-t-il ? (5)
 Que font ces gens ? (watch television).

c) Oral reading. This should be administered only to pupils who have received at least one year of instruction in reading French. It consists of a single paragraph (160 words) and the pupil is given 3 minutes to prepare his reading of it, which is tape-recorded. (For scoring see Carroll, (1969) P. 72.).

d) Fluency. Pictorial material is presented to the pupil who is asked to describe or otherwise freely respond to it, in French. He is expected to produce a series of sentences, perhaps three, four or more. (This test would produce little results from many pupils without stimulus in the form of questions, cues, from the teacher.)

5. Writing tests.

a) Grammar test consists of 25 sentences in which particular words (usually short "function" words) are replaced by blanks. The pupil is asked to write the single missing word on the basis of the context.

e.g. Si j' étais riche, j'achèterais une belle voiture.
 Voilà Paul qui arrive; je vais lui dire bonjour.

b) Verbs and modifiers.

This test consists of six or seven sentences with certain verbs and modifiers underlined. Each such sentence is accompanied by a parallel sentence of the same form with a change of gender, person, or number and with a series of blanks. The pupil is, therefore, asked to fill in the blanks to produce grammatical agreement.

e.g. Mes petits frères font leurs devoirs.
 Ma petite soeur fait ses devoirs.

c) Directed composition.

The pupil may be asked to describe a set of pictures or to write a dialogue between two children in French.

Words or phrases may be given to be used in the composition.

(For score analysis see Carroll. P.78.).

A summary of tests devised by a team of researchers, led by Clare Burstall, for the National Foundation for Educational Research, into attainment in French in Primary Schools.

1. Reading Comprehension Tests:

(given to children at the end of the primary stage).

a) 20 multiple-choice items; 4 pictures are given to each, one of which is appropriate to the French sentence given.

b) 20 multiple-choice sentence-completion items.
In each instance, the pupil is given 4 words to choose from and is required to identify the missing word.
(i.e. the test requires no element of writing ability, but reading and word recognition ability).

c) Passage or dialogue; 10 multiple-choice items designed to test the pupil's understanding of the passage.

2. Listening tests.

20 multiple-choice picture items. Each sentence or sentences, tape-recorded in French, describes one of four pictures printed in the pupil's test booklet.

(Test takes 20 minutes to administer).

3. Writing tests.

a) Picture items each consist of a pair of pictures, with a short sentence in French printed beneath the first picture. The pupil is required to provide a similar sentence in French to describe the second picture.

- b) Sentence completion items. Each consists of a sentence in French from which one word has been omitted. The pupil is asked to complete the sentence by supplying the missing word.
4. Speaking tests. In the first test, the pupil is asked to listen to and repeat 20 short sentences in French. In the second test, each item is in the form of a question referring to an illustration in the test booklet. The pupil is asked to reply in French to each question.
e.g. Que fait le garçon?Il mange.
In the third speaking test the pupil is required to read aloud a short passage of French prose. Throughout the tests the pupil's responses are tape-recorded. (Instructions are given in English and there is no time restriction.)

I.E.A. Tests.

These are French as a foreign language tests published in June 1970 for the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

In 1965, the I.E.A. inaugurated a cross-national survey of attainment in 6 curriculum subjects (Science, Reading Comprehension, Literature, Civic Education, English as a foreign language and French as a foreign language).

The I.E.A. study of French attainment focussed its attention on students' achievement in basic competencies in French, leaving aside other objectives of foreign language study, such as appreciation of literature, etc.

In each country where students were to be assessed, these basic competencies or objectives (specified by those teaching French) were considered to be reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

Thus it was possible to plan the construction of sets of French proficiency tests that would be applicable across the countries in a relatively uniform manner, covering the four basic skills of attainment and catering for populations of different levels of ability.

The I.E.A. French Proficiency Tests were comprised of separate batteries which were aimed at different population levels :

<u>Population I</u>	10 year olds.
<u>Population II</u>	14 year olds.
<u>Population IV</u>	Students in their final year of schooling before university.

The composition of tests was as follows :

<u>Population I</u>	1. listening. 2. reading. 3. speaking (pronunciation, structural control, fluency).
<u>Population II & IV</u>	1. listening. 2. reading. 3. writing (sentence completion, writing composition). 4. speaking (pronunciation, structural control, oral reading, fluency).

It was assumed that Population I pupils would have had, an average, a year or two of "minimal" exposure to French teaching, that is daily exposure (of up to 30 minutes) of simple French vocabulary and grammatical structure. For Population II pupils, it was assumed that their teaching would have consisted of 2 or 3 years of "standard French secondary school courses". (Carroll, 1975).

Practical considerations dictated that all tests should be as brief, simple and uniform as possible while maintaining adequate reliability and validity. An analysis of the intercorrelations of scores on tests assessing different skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) indicated that all the tests tended to measure, for the most part, a unitary factor of general competence in the French language. It was considered (Carroll, 1975) that this factor was most adequately measured by the reading tests and also by those parts of the writing tests that were focused on accurate grammatical knowledge.

It was decided that as proficiency tests, the instruments were mainly of the "global" type, as opposed to the "discrete-point" type in which particular elements of the French language were to be the target of testing (Carroll, 1961, 1968). That is, the pupil's response to an item was to be a complex function of his total degree of competence in French, not his knowledge of any particular item of vocabulary, morphology or syntax. This principle was found to be followed (Carroll, 1975) in the reading and listening tests and also in the "fluency" portion of the speaking and writing tests.

Attitude questionnaire.

There has been much contention that the successful acquisition of a foreign language is to a large extent determined by attitudinal factors.

The longitudinal nature of the N.F.E.R. evaluation (1974) permitted a large-scale investigation to be carried out of the development of pupils' attitudes towards learning French over a period of several years.

Some examples of attitude-type items are now given.

General statements were made and pupils were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

e.g. "I would like to meet some French people."

"My parents are pleased that I am learning French."

The questionnaire also included statements referring to teaching/learning preferences (c.f. attitudes) such as, "It is more difficult to understand the tape-recorder than the teacher."

"If I see a French word written down, it helps me to say it."

Attitude to French statements were also employed in a free-response section. Pupils were asked to complete sentences, such as :

"I like French because"

"I don't like French because"

There was also a section where the degree of liking or dislike for the language was assessed. Pupils were asked to tick one of four statements :

1. I like French.
2. I like French most of the time.
3. I only like French some of the time.
4. I don't like French.

In addition, pupils were asked to comment freely on any aspect of learning French which was not specifically covered by the questionnaire items. Questionnaires were completed under conditions of anonymity.

In Section 2 of this chapter, middle school structure and provision were discussed. It was shown that there may be considerable variation of provision between schools feeding the same upper or high school. Inevitably, difficulties may develop concerning a cumulative subject like Mathematics or French, particularly at the age of transfer to upper school. In this section, too, there were conclusions reached that the character of the middle school owes much to primary and secondary school example and tradition, but such schools have, nevertheless, developed their own characteristics. There was also discussion about the role of the middle school teacher and the degree of specialization in the curriculum. The implication was that there is a place for specialist teaching in certain curriculum areas, particularly towards the end of a middle school course.

In Section 3, guidelines were laid down regarding equal provision of French at the primary/middle school stage. Again, the importance was stressed of continuity of French teaching within schools and between feeder and upper schools. Effective liaison between schools seemed essential for this continuity to take place. There was also discussion in this section on the subject of mixed ability teaching of foreign languages. It was suggested that it may be possible and desirable to teach French to all-ability groups for the first 1 or 2 years of a French course but then an accurate assessment of pupils' ability and aptitude should be made. It was felt to be desirable to identify pupils of varying abilities at an early stage so that courses may be developed to cater for their varying needs. The suggestion was that they should continue to be taught French in setted or broad-banded groups and that courses should be developed which pupils can complete with a reasonable chance of achieving success. Carefully structured courses should be developed for less-able pupils, but it was emphasized that more able pupils should not be forgotten and should be encouraged to fully develop their potential abilities and interests. At all times, too, it was felt that groups for French teaching should be smaller than the normal class size.

In Section 4, recent research into French attainment and attitude was outlined and noteworthy conclusions were drawn and discussed. Of particular relevance to this research are the following. It was concluded that learning French from the primary school stage does not seem to confer a lasting advantage on attainment in the language, but that any advantage gained is on attitude towards speaking and learning the language at the more advanced stages. It may be that there is an optimum age for the acquisition of oral skills in foreign language learning, but this language skill is not necessarily transferred to more advanced skills, such as writing or reading. Differences in attainment and attitude may also be related to size of school, type of school and size of class. In addition, pupils in single sex-schools seem to reach a consistently higher level of achievement in learning French than do those in co-educational establishments and boys in single-sex schools seem to display a more positive attitude towards French learning.

Section 5, entitled "Primary French in the Balance?" reviewed reports and papers relating to the N.F.E.R. (1974) report's conclusion that the scales are tipped against the expansion of French teaching in primary schools.

Section 6 related to oral testing in French, particularly in terms of validity and reliability of oral tests, oral testing techniques, methods of marking and marker reliability. It will be pointed out in the following chapter that it would have been desirable and worthwhile to have included oral tests as part of this investigation, but, for administrative reasons and problems of reliability (See page 41j), it was not considered feasible to include them. It is recognised that this omission is a limitation of this study.

Section 7 reviewed criteria by which attainment in French and attitude to the language may be defined as a basis for the selection and formation of assessment tools. This section is of direct relevance to the following chapter which will deal specifically with the Pilot Study of this investigation.

CHAPTER 3.

THE PILOT STUDY.

3.1 The aims and objectives of the Pilot Study.

The Pilot Study was carried out in July 1978, 2 weeks before the end of the Summer term, with a population of 12-13 year old pupils in one middle school.

The aim was to assess for reliability test measures for the three separate skills of listening, reading and writing in French. Responses to the attitude to French questionnaire were also analysed in an attempt to form attitude scales which were reliable and suitable for use in the Main Investigation.

Thus, it was intended to bring together reliable measures for the attainment tests and also attitude scales which could be employed to assess comparable populations of the same age and ability range at the same time in the following school year, 1978-1979.

3.2 Details of tests used and population tested.

In Chapter 2, Section 7, an outline was given of criteria which should be considered when French attainment tests are being planned. On the basis of this review, it was decided to model the attainment tests for the Pilot Study of this investigation on the I.E.A. tests, details of which have already been given.

The question of test validity was also considered. Before the Pilot Study took place, the tests to be used were shown to two modern language advisers and to two experienced modern language teachers, all of whom confirmed the author's judgement that the tests were valid for the population to be assessed.

Test material was reviewed from the South-West Language Centre, the University of York Language Teaching Centre (French Proficiency Tests), the University of Leeds Teaching Information Centre, and the Oxfordshire graded test syllabuses were examined. Burstall was unable to make available test material for the attainment assessment of this investigation.

Reliability coefficients were obtained for the I.E.A. test scores. It may be observed that these tests did in fact maintain adequate reliability.

TABLE 3.2.1

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS (KR 20) FOR
LISTENING AND READING TEST SCORES FOR
POPULATION I.

	Listening test	Reading test
United States (1)	.912	.897
England	.866	.873
Netherlands	-	.814
New Zealand	.665	.832
Rumania	.969	.918
Scotland	.812	.887
United States (2)	.752	.788

Reliability coefficients for writing test scores (for Population II) were estimated by use of distribution statistics in Kuder-Richardson 21. These coefficients ranged between .974 (Rumania) and .909 (New Zealand).

It was, therefore, decided to adopt Population I listening and reading tests for the Pilot Study. These tests were considered suitable since the pupils who would be assessed for the Main Investigation would have followed either a middle school French course where there was much emphasis on oral and aural skills or would have started to learn French in an 11 + high school and would have followed only 2 years of a high school French course. It was considered that Population II tests would prove to be too complex for all but the most able pupils and that vocabulary and grammatical construction tested at this level would not have been adequately covered by the populations to be tested.

In Section 2.6, problems associated with oral testing, such as test administration, marker reliability, test validity and reliability, were outlined. It is acknowledged that it would have been of interest to have administered oral tests. However, for practical and technical reasons, it was decided to concentrate this investigation on the assessment of listening, reading and writing skills.

Speaking Test to become a Writing Test. The French questions, given for the I.E.A. Structural Control, Population I, Speaking Test, were, in the case of this Pilot Study, shown in written form underneath each picture and pupils were asked to respond in written French form, encouraging both fluency of response and grammatical accuracy. It was considered that it would be possible to control this test adequately both for the Pilot Study and for the Main Investigation and that this type of Writing Test would measure the "accurate grammatical knowledge" which had been emphasized as important by Carroll, 1975.

The attitude to French questionnaire for the Pilot Study was adapted from the primary stage questionnaire which had been given to pupils in 1970 as part of the N.F.E.R. Pilot Scheme (Burstall et al., 1974).

A section designed to assess the degree of the pupil's liking or dislike of the language was selected for inclusion at the beginning of the questionnaire. There followed items which were considered to be relevant to pupils at the age of 12-13 studying French. The response to these 26 items was either Yes or No. Thirdly, an open-ended section was included in order to give pupils the opportunity to add further comments about their experience of French learning and also to express positive or negative attitudes to the subject.

The Population Tested.

For the Pilot Study a population (N = 96) was tested. This consisted of a cross-section of the ability-range of pupils who studied French in a 9-13 middle school in the Hereford and Worcestershire area. The school had a catchment area representative of a wide range of socio-economic status. Pupils lived in or near what had been a Worcestershire country town which has developed

within the last 30 or so years into a suburban commuter area. There has also been some urban re-housing. Some pupils travelled in from outlying rural areas.

For 3 years, from the ages of 9-12, pupils had been taught French by 3 general class teachers who were not French specialists. In their 4th year of French learning, at the age of 12-13, the same pupils were taught the language by 2 specialist graduate French teachers.

The composition of the groups of pupils was thus :

Group 1. N = 35. 18 Male, 17 Female.

Setted as an upper ability group, according to ability in English and Maths.

Group 2. N = 32. 14 Male, 18 Female.

A middle ability group, 3rd of 5 sets according to ability in English and Maths.

Group 3. N = 29. 12 Male, 17 Female.

A lower ability group, 5th of 5 sets according to English and Maths ability.

3.3 Methods of testing employed.

The listening test of 40 items was administered separately to each of the 3 groups. The sentences referring to sets of pictures (see Appendix 5) were read twice, clearly but at a normal "French" speed, by the same specialist French teacher. Each group had for some part of the year been taught by this teacher and was familiar with the teacher's voice. Responses were multiple-choice, the response being a letter to be indicated on an answer sheet. (see Appendix 7).

The reading test of 40 items was administered during a separate 35 minute lesson to each group under strict test conditions and by the same teacher as for the listening test. Again, there was a choice of 4 pictures and pupils were asked to respond to the written sentence by writing a letter (A,B,C or D) on the answer sheet.

The writing test, in response to 12 pictures and questions, was again administered on a separate occasion to each group. It was felt that by spacing out tests, pupils were given the opportunity to be able to concentrate and answer as fully as possible. Response was on an answer sheet and pupils were asked to write one or two sentences in French in response to each question and picture.

The attitude to French questionnaire was administered by the same teacher and under the same test conditions, although pupils were told that they could answer anonymously if they wished. The importance was emphasized of their indicating whether they were male or female.

Marking and coding for computer analysis of all test and questionnaire responses and results for the Pilot Study and also for the Main Investigation was undertaken by the author. A full set of Main Investigation attainment test scripts, pupils' answer sheets and the attitude questionnaire is included as Appendices.

3.4 Analyses and results.

For the listening test, the first analysis was made of the 40 items and a procedure for estimating test reliability (described by Thorndike & Hagen (1961)) was employed. This was the Kuder-Richardson reliability test and a reliability coefficient (KR 20) of 0.753 was obtained. For the second analysis of the listening test, 8 items were removed, these being individually judged, (negative f indices using Van Naerssen's procedure (1969)) because

the rest of test without them would have higher reliability. A total of 32 items was left in the test and this produced a somewhat higher KR 20 of 0.780. These 32 items were therefore adopted to form the listening test for the Main Investigation.

For the reading test, for all 40 items, a KR 20 reliability coefficient was obtained of 0.815. For the second analysis, 6 items (those with negative f indices) were removed to improve KR 20 to 0.825. Thus it was decided to adopt the reading test consisting of 34 items for the Main Investigation.

The responses to the writing test had been assessed on a 4 point scale : 3, 2, 1, 0 (3 being the mark for a fully accurate response). No response was coded as 9. (See Coding Manual for Pilot Study, Appendix 1). The S.P.S.S. computer package provided a Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for all 12 items of 0.895. (Cronbach Alpha Coefficient is described in Cronbach (1970) P. 160 f.) Thus it was decided to adopt all 12 items for the writing test of the Main Investigation.

TABLE 3.4.1

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS OBTAINED AS A RESULT OF THE PILOT STUDY FOR THE THREE ATTAINMENT TESTS.

	<u>Number of items.</u>	<u>Reliability Coefficient.</u>
<u>listening test</u>	32	0.780
<u>reading test</u>	34	0.825
<u>writing test</u>	12	0.895

Breakdown by groups.

Analysis of variance was made of responses for the 3 attainment tests of the 3 groups tested in the Pilot Study. It was known that these groups had been setted according to ability in English and Maths and the intention was, by this breakdown, to confirm that these populations of varying general ability would show significant difference of attainment in the 3 skills in French.

TABLE 3.4.2

BREAKDOWN BY GROUPS FOR LISTENING TEST.
(for 40 items of the Pilot Study)

	<u>Ability</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Range of Scores</u>	
				<u>Actual</u>	<u>theoretical</u>
<u>Group 1</u>	high	48.71	4.24	18-40	0-40
<u>Group 2</u>	medium	51.79	3.83	23-31	0-40
<u>Group 3</u>	low	56.02	4.13	13-29	0-40

For the listening and reading tests responses were coded :

- 1 = correct response.
- 2 = incorrect response.
- 1.5 = no response.

For the listening test of 40 items an F value (analysis of variance) was obtained of 25.5. This far surpassed the critical value of $F \approx 4.85$ (at the 1% level of significance, with 2 and 93 degrees of freedom). Thus, it was concluded that there was significant difference between the 3 population groups for listening test scores. The list of mean scores for this test (correct response coded 1, incorrect coded 2) demonstrates that Group 1 had by far the highest number of correct responses, Group 2 the next highest number and Group 3 the lowest number (although the range of scores for the groups shows that there was some overlap of ability).

TABLE 3.4.3

BREAKDOWN BY GROUPS FOR READING TEST. (40 ITEMS)

	<u>Ability</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Range of Scores</u>	
				<u>Actual</u>	<u>Theoretical</u>
<u>Group 1</u>	high	45.46	3.93	28-40	0-40
<u>Group 2</u>	medium	49.91	4.31	21-37	0-40
<u>Group 3</u>	low	54.03	4.57	15-31	0-40

An analysis of variance was again carried out on responses for this test and an F value of 33.1 was obtained which was significantly greater than the critical F ratio of 4.85 (at the 1% level). Thus it may be concluded that there was significant difference of reading test scores between the populations of the 3 groups tested.

TABLE 3.4.4

BREAKDOWN BY GROUPS FOR WRITING TEST. (12 ITEMS)

	<u>Ability</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>Range of Scores</u>	
				<u>Actual</u>	<u>Theoretical</u>
<u>Group 1</u>	high	22.40	6.09	4-35	0-36
<u>Group 2</u>	medium	11.23	5.09	1-22	0-36
<u>Group 3</u>	low	6.79	4.68	0-15	0-36

As has been previously shown, responses for this test were recorded on a 4 point scale (3, 2, 1, 0 - 3 being for a fully accurate and detailed response).

Therefore, it may be observed from these mean scores that Group 1's score for the writing test seems to be significantly higher than that of Group 2 and that Group 2's score appears significantly higher than that of Group 3. (There was also a wide range of scores for each group for this test).

An analysis of variance was carried out on these scores and an F value was obtained of 73.4. Thus it was confirmed that there was significant difference (at the 1% level) between the responses of the 3 groups for this writing test.

Thus, for the 3 skills of listening, reading and writing in French, it was concluded that the 3 groups showed significant difference of attainment, in the same direction as their general ability.

Analysis of the attitude questionnaire.

It was decided to attempt to obtain attitude scales, measuring different aspects of French learning and teaching which were considered relevant to this age of pupil studying the language. The direction of scoring of positive and negative attitudes was recoded for the appropriate variables before analysis could take place.

Response to the first 4 sentences of the questionnaire (See Appendix 12), designed to assess the degree of the pupil's liking or dislike of French, was included in the first scale which was analysed. This scale was considered to measure attitude to French as a curriculum subject. Two combinations of variables were analysed in order to obtain the highest possible Cronbach Alpha Coefficient.

Scale A. (Attitude to French as a curriculum subject).

The first section assessing liking or dislike of French was combined with questions 3, 5, 9, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 - to make a total of 13 items. An Alpha Coefficient was obtained for this scale of 0.559.

Scale A.* (Attitude to French as a curriculum subject.)

An item/test correlation analysis was carried out on Scale A and items with the greatest number of negative correlation coefficients were removed from the scale. Thus it was decided to add question 2 in Scale A* but to omit questions 21 and 22. For the total of 12 items an Alpha Coefficient of 0.682 was obtained.

The second type of scale was intended to measure the pupil's attitude to French culture.

Scale B. (Attitude to French culture.)

Questions 7, 8, 14, 20 and the question "Have you ever been to France?" were combined to obtain an Alpha Coefficient for the 5 items of 0.489.

Scale B.* (Attitude to French culture.)

Since correlation analysis revealed some negative coefficients for the last 2 items of Scale B, these questions were omitted for the second analysis to form a scale of 3 items (Questions 7, 8 and 14). Now an Alpha Coefficient for this scale of 0.613 was obtained.

Further attitude scales were analysed concerning :

1. Methodology of French teaching.
Questions 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, 16 and 17.
Alpha Coefficient = 0.323
2. Attitude that the pupil would like to continue to learn French (and other foreign languages) in school and after leaving school.
Questions 1, 2, 15, 22 and 24.
Alpha Coefficient = 0.052

It was decided not to include these last 2 scales in the attitude questionnaire of the Main Investigation. It may be observed that they had low Alpha Coefficients and, also, it was considered that methods of teaching would vary amongst the

populations to be assessed in the Main Investigation and that the age of 12-13 was too early for decisions to be made concerning continuation of learning foreign languages.

However, it was concluded that relatively reliable Scales A* and B* (total 15 items) would be used for the Main Investigation.

Finally, it was decided to exclude the "Completion of Sentences" section (the last 9 variables) from the attitude questionnaire of the Main Investigation. It was considered that this section had produced too wide a range of responses - and there were many no - responses - for it to be possible to include these items in the composition of attitude scales. (See Appendix 14 for absolute frequencies for Completion of Sentences section). Number 9 represented No Response (or ambiguous or irrelevant response) and it can be seen that there are many of these for each sentence completion and particularly for the "further comments" section.

3.5 Summary of findings, conclusions on these pilot results and their implications for the Main Investigation.

It had been decided to employ I.E.A. Population I tests for the Pilot Study since these were considered to be most suitable for the age and ability-range of the population to be assessed both for the Pilot Study and for the Main Investigation.

It was deemed important that test measures should be brief, practical and above all, should maintain satisfactory reliability and the question of test validity was also considered. Furthermore, another important finding of the Pilot Study was that tests should be spaced out over at least 2 or 3 lesson units to enable pupils to concentrate and answer fully.

The listening test was included, since the listening skill was regarded as vital for this age of pupil. It is the first foreign language skill which should be developed in a 9-13 middle

school course and it was thought that it would be interesting and worthwhile to discover whether this skill was being adequately developed as part of the 2 year 11+ Secondary French course.

In addition, it was decided to assess pupils' reading attainment in French since this skill should be developed as a major part of the last two years' teaching of a middle school course and it is usually well emphasized from the beginning of a secondary school French course.

Thirdly, the writing test for the Pilot Study and for the Main Investigation was adapted from the Structural Control section of a Population I Speaking Test. The importance has been emphasized of writing skills in a foreign language. As pointed out by Carroll, 1975, the ability to write accurately and grammatically in a language is a sure indication of general competence in that language.

It was not considered possible to assess speaking skills either for the Pilot Study or the Main Investigation since it was decided that adequate control of testing and assessment of results would not be practically possible, particularly for the Main Investigation, in view of the size and divergence of population.

Satisfactory reliability coefficients were obtained for the 3 attainment tests to be used in the Main Investigation. These were :

<u>listening test</u>	(32 items)	Rel.Coeff. = <u>0.780</u>
<u>reading test</u>	(34 items)	Rel.Coeff. = <u>0.825</u>
<u>writing test</u>	(12 items)	Rel.Coeff. = <u>0.895</u>

It was also confirmed that the 3 Pilot Study groups of varying general ability showed significant differences of attainment in the 3 French attainment skills.

Attitude scales were accepted for the attitude questionnaire of the Main Investigation. These were :

Attitude to French as a curriculum subject : Alpha Coefficient = 0.682

Attitude to French culture : Alpha Coefficient = 0.613

These 2 scales were to be combined to form a 15 item questionnaire for the Main Investigation.

Thus, analysis of Pilot Study results was completed early in 1979 so that the attainment tests and attitude questionnaire could be printed and distributed for the Main Investigation assessment to take place in May and June of that year. The following chapter will describe this investigation and its findings.



CHAPTER 4

THE MAIN INVESTIGATION

In May and June 1979, French attainment tests and an attitude to French questionnaire were administered to 12-13 year old pupils who had been taught French in schools of two different structures. The principle aim of the investigation was to ascertain whether there is any significant advantage to either attainment or attitude to be gained by learning French for 4 years, from the age of 9-13, as opposed to learning the language for 2 years, that is starting to learn it at the age of 11 in an 11+ high school.

Schools of both 11+ and 9-13 structures were situated in the County of Herefordshire and Worcestershire and the City of Birmingham Education Authorities. Appendix 3 is a copy of the letter sent by the author to headteachers of all schools concerned. Support and encouragement for this research was obtained from both Education Authorities and advice was sought from the modern languages advisers for the two areas.

Several visits were made by the author to each of the schools concerned, to meet and talk with the headteachers and modern languages staff, to familiarize them with the aims of the investigation and testing material and to discuss the populations to be assessed. Ultimately, visits were made to distribute and collect test and answer papers. In all cases, tests and questionnaires were administered by the French teacher of the pupils concerned and it was emphasized to these teachers that strict testing conditions should be adhered to so that results would be as reliable as possible. The findings of the Pilot Study had been that an adequate time allowance was necessary for pupils to be able to concentrate and respond fully. Thus, each attainment test was to be administered during a single unit of teaching time, 30 minutes being the maximum time allowance for each of the attainment tests and 20 minutes for the attitude questionnaire.

Further details will be given of the populations and school groups which were assessed.

4.1.2 Test materials employed and populations.

The three attainment tests employed for the Main Investigation were shown in Chapter 3 to have satisfactory reliability. They were intended to assess attainment in the separate skills of listening, reading and writing in French and, in addition, it was the intention for the Main Investigation to combine these 3 scores to form a composite measure of attainment. Test scripts, answer sheets and the attitude questionnaire for this Main Investigation can be seen as Appendices 5 to 11.

The attitude to French questionnaire was reported in Chapter 3 to be composed of 2 scales assessing attitude to French as a curriculum subject and attitude to French culture. These scales had been constructed and analysed during the course of the Pilot Study and satisfactory reliability coefficients had been obtained.

It was indicated in the previous chapter, that the validity of the tests and questionnaire was also considered. Before the Main Investigation took place the headteachers of the schools concerned were shown the tests, as were the French teachers of the groups to be assessed and they all considered them to be valid.

Populations tested consisted of 12-13 year old pupils who were at the end of their 4th year of learning French, in 9-13 middle schools, and pupils of the same age-group, at the end of their 2nd year of learning the language in 11+ high schools. Schools in the second category were carefully selected from both education authority areas in that populations assessed had had no experience of primary French teaching up to the age of 11.

It was attempted to obtain a balance of catchment areas for the populations of both school types, varying between rural, suburban and city schools, and, in addition, an attempt was made to assess either the whole of the population currently studying French or, if this was impracticable, a cross-section of the ability range.

Permission was sought and obtained from the headteachers of 4 9-13 middle schools and 4 11+ high schools. Test results are available for a total population of 575 cases and tables show the school and group composition.

TABLE 4.1.1

POPULATIONS OF SCHOOLS RELATED TO SCHOOL TYPE.

<u>School Number</u>	<u>Population</u> (middle school)	<u>School Number</u>	<u>Population</u> (high school)
1	67	5	111
2	57	6	29
3	118	7	49
4	<u>60</u>	8	<u>84</u>
	302		<u>273</u>

TABLE 4.1.2

NUMBERS IN GROUPS RELATED TO SCHOOL TYPE.

<u>School No.</u>	<u>Group No.</u>	<u>No. in group</u>	<u>School No.</u>	<u>Group No.</u>	<u>No. in group</u>
1	1	35	5	12	29
1	2	32	5	13	29
2	3	30	5	14	24
2	4	27	5	15	29
3	5	30	6	16	29
3	6	26	7	17	23
3	7	24	7	18	15
3	8	20	7	19	11
3	9	18	8	20	28
4	10	32	8	21	31
4	11	28	8	22	25

4.2 Analyses and results for the tests.

Reliability coefficients were obtained for the cognitive tests and attitude scales for the total Main Investigation population of 575. Tabulation will be used to show these :

TABLE 4.2.1

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS FOR THE COGNITIVE TESTS
AND ATTITUDE SCALES FOR THE MAIN INVESTIGATION.

	<u>Cronbach Alpha</u> <u>Coefficients.</u>
<u>Listening test</u> <u>(32 items)</u>	0.876
<u>Reading test</u> <u>(34 items)</u>	0.880
<u>Writing test</u> <u>(12 items)</u>	0.912
<u>Attitude Scale 1</u> <u>(12 items)</u>	0.733
<u>Attitude Scale 2</u> <u>(3 items)</u>	0.763

Tabulations will now be used to show mean and standard deviations for the cognitive tests.

TABLE 4.2.2

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE COGNITIVE TESTS

	<u>Total Pop.</u>	<u>All boys</u>	<u>All girls</u>	<u>Total Mid. Sch.Pop.</u>	<u>Total High Sch. Pop.</u>
<u>listening test</u>					
Mean	21.9	21.0	22.7	22.1	21.7
S.D.	6.36	6.58	6.03	6.49	6.21
<u>reading test</u>					
Mean	23.4	22.2	24.5	23.5	23.3
S.D.	6.89	7.12	6.50	7.16	6.59
<u>writing test</u>					
Mean	12.7	11.1	14.3	11.8	13.8
S.D.	9.66	9.43	9.62	9.46	9.78
<u>Composite Score for cognitive tests.</u>					
Mean	58.1	54.4	61.6	57.4	59.0
S.D.	21.4	21.5	20.7	21.8	20.9

Population comparisons were made of attainment test results for each of the 3 separate skills and for the composite scores. Analysis of variance was firstly carried out on these results for total populations of the 2 school types.

TABLE 4.2.3

VALUES OF VARIANCE RATIO F FOR COGNITIVE TESTS
FOR TOTAL POPULATIONS.

	F value	D/F
listening test	0.394	1/573
reading test	0.043	"
writing test	6.45	"
composite score for attainment tests.	0.813	"

At the 1% level of significance, it may be observed that there is no significant difference between performance of the population groups from the two differing school structures for the attainment tests. (At the 1% level, with 1/573 D/F, the critical value of $F \approx 6.66$).

Secondly, analysis of variance was carried out on the results of all male subjects, comparing the two population groups of the two school structures, for all attainment test results.

TABLE 4.2.4

VALUES OF VARIANCE RATIO F FOR ALL MALE SUBJECTS
FOR COGNITIVE TESTS.

	F value	D/F
listening test	0.187	1/275
reading test	0.021	"
writing test	3.51	"
composite score for attainment tests.	0.532	

It may be observed from the above table that, at the 1% significance level, there is no significant difference between groups. (At the 1% level, with 1/275 D/F, the critical value of F again ≈ 6.66).

Analysis for all female subjects of each population group.

Similarly, analysis of variance was carried out on the attainment test results for all female pupils, comparing the two populations, of 9-13 middle schools and 11+ high schools.

TABLE 4.2.5

VALUES OF VARIANCE RATIO F FOR ALL FEMALE SUBJECTS
FOR COGNITIVE TESTS

	<u>F value</u>	<u>D/F</u>
listening test	0.171	1/296
reading test	0.164	"
writing test	3.35	"
composite score for attainment tests.	0.387	"

It may again be observed that there is no significant difference in performance for the female population of either population group. (At the 1% significance level, with 1/296 D/F, the critical F value \approx 6.66).

Sex differences across both populations.

Analysis of variance was this time carried out for all attainment test results with relation to the male and female populations across both school types, that is for all male subjects tested (from middle schools and 11+ high schools) and for all female subjects tested.

TABLE 4.2.6

SEX DIFFERENCES ACROSS POPULATIONS.

	<u>F value</u>	<u>D/F</u>	<u>Male Mean</u>	<u>Female Mean</u>
listening test	10.82	1/573	21.04	22.77
reading test	15.50	"	22.29	24.53
writing test	17.50	"	11.07	14.39
composite score for attainment tests.	16.92	"	54.40	61.67

Thus, it may be noted that, at the 1% level of significance, the observed F ratios exceed the critical value of F at 1/573 D/F ($F_{.01} = 6.66$). This is for the listening, reading and writing test results and also for the composite score for the attainment tests. If we examine the recorded mean scores for the attainment test results, we must conclude that, for the combined populations of 9-13 middle school pupils and 11+ high school pupils, at the age 12-13, girls generally performed better in these aspects of French attainment.

4.3 Analysis of the attitude questionnaire.

4.3.1 Analysis of the attitude to French question.

The first question, designed to measure the pupil's attitude to French as a curriculum subject, was coded "Fratt". (See Coding Manual, Appendix 4 and Attitude to French questionnaire for the Main Investigation, Appendix 13). The wording of the question was :

1. I like French.
2. I like French most of the time.
3. I only like French some of the time.
4. I don't like French.

The response to this question was marked on a 4 point scale, from 3 points for the most positive response to French as a curriculum subject to 0 points for the negative response.

Analysis of variance was carried out for this question for all 575 cases with respect to school nature, and sex. Tabulation will show values of variance ratio F, means and standard deviations.

TABLE 4.3.1

VALUES OF VARIANCE RATIO F, MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR THE ATTITUDE TO FRENCH QUESTION.

	<u>F value</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>S.D.</u>	<u>D/F</u>
<u>School Nature</u>	2.22	Mid.Sch. 1.64	0.944	1/572
		High Sch. 1.57	1.05	
<u>Sex for total population.</u>	59.8	Male 1.26	1.00	1/572
		Female 1.88	0.904	
<u>Male population</u>	4.74	Mid.Sch. 1.39	0.969	1/275
		High Sch. 1.13	1.02	
<u>Female population</u>	0.015	Mid.Sch. 1.87	0.860	1/296
		High Sch. 1.89	0.953	

It may be observed that there is no significant difference between responses to this attitude question for the populations of middle or high schools. However, the variance between the question and the 2 sexes, across the populations of both school structures, may be observed in the F ratio 59.8. This far surpasses the critical value of $F \approx 6.66$ (1/572 D/F) (at 1% level of significance).

The recorded means for the 2 groups are thus :

<u>Male</u>	:	<u>1.26</u>
<u>Female</u>	:	<u>1.88</u>

It must be concluded that there is a significant difference between the responses of male and female populations, across school structures, for this attitude to French question and the

female response is significantly more positive. As far as this question is concerned, however, there appears to be no significant relationship between the nature of the school structure in which the pupil is taught French and his attitude to the subject.

Analysis of variance for this attitude to French question was then carried out with respect to male and female populations, comparing those populations from the differing school structures. The observed F values of 4.74 and 0.015 were not significant at the 1% level. Thus, it is concluded that there was no significant difference between either male or female responses to this question, whether pupils had been taught French in a 9-13 middle school or in an 11+ high school.

However the recorded means for responses may be seen in Table 4.3.1 as middle school males : 1.39, high school males : 1.13, middle school females 1.87, high school females 1.89. The higher means for female responses confirm previous observations regarding significant differences in the male/female attitude to French as a curriculum subject.

4.3.2 Analysis of the attitude to French questionnaire.

Analysis was made of responses to three attitude scales, comprising :

Scale 1.

11 variables. Questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. For attitude questionnaire, See Appendix 13.

This scale was designed to measure attitude to French as a curriculum subject. It did not include the attitude question which has been discussed separately in detail in the previous section of this chapter.

Scale 2.

12 variables, incorporating the previously cited 11 items and, in addition, the attitude to French question. This scale was again intended to measure attitude to French as a curriculum subject.

Scale 3.

3 variables. Questions 4, 5 and 7. This scale was designed to assess the pupil's attitude to French people and culture.

Positive and significant correlation (Correlation Coefficient : 0.644, significant at the 1% level) was obtained between the single attitude to French question and attitude Scale 1. This, therefore, helps to validate the composite Scale 2.

Correlation between the attitude scales and the French attainment test scores.

Product-moment (Pearson) correlation coefficients were obtained between scores for the attainment tests and the responses to the 3 attitude scales. Cases were not incorporated in the analysis when any of the 15 items of the attitude questionnaire had not been answered by a pupil.

TABLE 4.3.2

CORRELATION BETWEEN ATTAINMENT TEST SCORES AND THE 3 ATTITUDE SCALES. (in all cases N = 506)

	<u>Attitude Scale 1.</u>	<u>Attitude Scale 2.</u>	<u>Attitude Scale 3.</u>
Composite score for attainment tests.	r = 0.373	0.399	0.283
listening test.	0.304	0.328	0.255
reading test.	0.375	0.393	0.293
writing test.	0.357	0.386	0.255

(All r's are significant at 0.001 level).

It may be observed that there is positive and significant correlation between the 3 French attitude scales and all aspects of the attainment tests. For this analysis 506 cases were incorporated (those pupils who had answered all 15 items of the attitude questionnaire).

TABLE 4.3.3

CORRELATION BETWEEN ATTITUDE SCALES
AND SCHOOL NATURE AND SEX.

(Significance levels are enclosed in brackets).

	<u>Attitude</u> <u>Scale 1.</u>	<u>Attitude</u> <u>Scale 2.</u>	<u>Attitude</u> <u>Scale 3.</u>
Sex	r = 0.268 (0.001)	0.301 (0.001)	0.392 (0.001)
School nature	- 0.032 (0.473)	-0.045 (0.302)	-0.048 (0.276)

Again, it may be observed in Table 4.3.3 that there is positive and significant correlation between the 3 attitude scales and sex, across the populations of both school structures. It was suggested by the results of analysis on the separate attitude question that the female population as a whole has a significantly more positive attitude to French learning than does the male population. However, negative correlation is recorded between the 3 attitude scales and school nature. The significance level does not make this correlation worthy of further comment.

Analysis of variance for responses to attainment tests and for the attitude question in individual middle and high schools.

Although there were no significant differences between responses of total populations of the two school types, for the attainment tests or for the attitude question, significant differences were noted between the responses of individual schools of different types. (See Tables 4.4.1 to 4.4.4). However, the relevance of those differences needed to be explored by also comparing results and responses between individual schools of the same types. (Tables 4.4.5 and 4.4.6).

Identification numbers of schools used for this analysis showing the category of school to which they belong were given in Table 4.1.1 (Page 71). It was decided to omit high school 6 population from this analysis because the total population available for testing in this school had only been 29 (a middle - ability group).

Tabulations now show results of analysis of variance between individual schools. Comment will be confined to school structure, the subject of this investigation.

TABLE 4.4.1

MIDDLE SCHOOL 1 COMPARED TO 3 HIGH SCHOOLS.

<u>School 1 by School 5</u>	<u>F value</u>	<u>Mean (1)</u>	<u>Mean (5)</u>
listening test	(0.137)	22.1	21.7
reading test	(0.062)	23.9	24.1
writing test	10.7	12.2	16.5
composite score	(2.12)	57.9	62.3
Fratt (attitude to French question)	(0.068)	1.58	1.62
<u>School 1 by school 7</u>		(1)	(7)
listening test	9.23	22.1	24.2
reading test	(3.63)	23.9	25.4
writing test	19.0	12.2	17.1
composite score	12.6	57.9	66.8
Fratt	(0.205)	1.58	1.64
<u>School 1 by school 8</u>		(1)	(8)
listening test	34.6	22.1	16.1
reading test	22.8	23.9	18.1
writing test	22.2	12.2	5.65
composite score	28.6	57.9	39.8
Fratt	(1.94)	1.58	1.35

For all cases referred to in these tables, the critical F value, at 1% significance level \approx 6.66. F values which are enclosed in brackets are not significant and the following interesting significant differences may therefore be observed.

School 1 with school 8 has significantly higher means for all attainment test scores, in favour of the middle school. In the comparison of high school 5 with middle school 1, there are no significant differences of attainment or attitude, except for the

writing test, in favour of the high school. School 5 (an 11+ high school) will be seen to have had 3 writing test scores in its favour and 1 composite attainment score. School 7 (an 11+ high school) will be observed to have the following significant (at 1% level) differences in the attainment of its population tested in comparison to 9-13 middle schools : 2 listening test scores, 1 reading test score, 4 writing test scores, 3 composite attainment scores. There were no attitude response scores in its favour (at 1% level).

TABLE 4.4.2

MIDDLE SCHOOL 2 COMPARED TO 3 HIGH SCHOOLS.

<u>School 2 by school 5</u>	<u>F value</u>	<u>Mean (2)</u>	<u>Mean (5)</u>
listening test	(5.12)	24.0	21.7
reading test	(0.321)	23.5	24.1
writing test	7.35	12.1	16.5
composite score	(0.600)	59.6	62.3
Fratt	(0.248)	1.53	1.62
<u>School 2 by school 7</u>		(2)	(7)
listening test	(0.074)	24.0	24.2
reading test	(4.90)	23.5	25.4
writing test	13.0	12.1	17.1
composite score	(6.49)	59.6	66.8
Fratt	(0.475)	1.53	1.64
<u>School 2 by school 8</u>		(2)	(8)
listening test	52.2	24.0	16.1
reading test	18.0	23.5	18.1
writing test	17.9	12.1	5.65
composite score	30.8	59.6	39.8
Fratt	(0.982)	1.53	1.35

In comparison to high school 5, middle school 2 does not show any significant difference in response in its favour. In fact, for the writing test results, a difference in favour of the high school is noted. High school 7 also shows a significant difference in mean score for the writing test in comparison to middle school 2. There are, however, significant differences (at 1% level) in all attainment test results in favour of middle school 2 in comparison to high school 8, but there is no significant difference in the responses of the populations of the two schools for the attitude question.

TABLE 4.4.3

MIDDLE SCHOOL 3 COMPARED TO 3 HIGH SCHOOLS.

<u>School 3 by school 5</u>	<u>F value</u>	<u>Mean (3)</u>	<u>Mean (5)</u>
listening test	(3.86)	19.6	21.7
reading test	(2.88)	22.0	24.1
writing test	14.0	10.1	16.5
composite score	7.48	51.9	62.3
Fratt	8.49	2.10	1.62
<u>School 3 by school 7</u>		(3)	(7)
listening test	26.8	19.6	24.2
reading test	11.4	22.0	25.4
writing test	22.8	10.1	17.1
composite score	22.6	51.9	66.8
Fratt	9.69	2.10	1.64
<u>School 3 by school 8</u>		(3)	(8)
listening test	7.42	19.6	16.1
reading test	6.96	22.0	18.1
writing test	(6.52)	10.1	5.65
composite score	8.21	51.9	39.8
Fratt	16.9	2.10	1.35

In the comparison of school 3 (middle school) with schools 5 and 7 (high schools) there are significant differences in favour of the high schools in terms of attainment (except for listening and reading tests with school 5) but, in both cases, the attitude question response shows a significant difference in favour of the middle school. School 3 (middle school) did, in fact, for the total analysis, have 1 listening, 1 reading, 1 writing and 1 composite score in its favour and 3 attitude question scores, in comparison to high schools.

TABLE 4.4.4

MIDDLE SCHOOL 4 COMPARED TO 3 HIGH SCHOOLS.

<u>School 4 by school 5</u>	<u>F value</u>	<u>Mean (4)</u>	<u>Mean (5)</u>
listening test	(1.46)	23.2	21.7
reading test	(0.114)	24.5	24.1
writing test	(4.42)	12.8	16.5
composite score	(0.230)	60.5	62.3
Fratt	(2.74)	1.33	1.62
<u>School 4 by school 7</u>		(4)	(7)
listening test	(1.24)	23.2	24.2
reading test	(0.861)	24.5	25.4
writing test	8.18	12.8	17.1
composite score	(3.90)	60.5	66.8
Fratt	(3.90)	1.33	1.64
<u>School 4 by school 8</u>		(4)	(8)
listening test	27.5	23.2	16.1
reading test	20.4	24.5	18.1
writing test	16.0	12.8	5.65
composite score	23.8	60.5	39.8
Fratt	(0.005)	1.33	1.35

In comparison to middle school 4, high school 7 showed only significant difference in score for the writing test. In comparison to all the middle schools in this analysis, high school 8 shows no significant difference in score in its favour, in attainment test score or in attitude response.

Tables 4.4.5 and 4.4.6 now show results of analysis of variance between individual schools of the same type.

TABLE 4.4.5

COMPARISON OF INDIVIDUAL MIDDLE SCHOOLS.

<u>School 1 by school 2</u>	<u>F value</u>	<u>Mean (1)</u>	<u>Mean (2)</u>
listening test	7.51	19.6	23.2
reading test	(3.14)	22.0	24.5
writing test	(1.89)	10.1	12.8
composite score	(3.82)	51.9	60.5
Fratt	23.5	2.10	1.33
<u>School 1 by school 3</u>		(1)	(3)
listening test	(6.61)	19.6	22.1
reading test	(2.60)	22.0	23.9
writing test	(2.03)	10.1	12.2
composite score	(3.24)	51.9	58.0
Fratt	13.4	2.10	1.58
<u>School 1 by school 4</u>		(1)	(4)
listening test	15.8	19.6	24.0
reading test	(1.30)	22.0	23.5
writing test	(1.33)	10.1	12.1
composite score	(3.95)	51.9	59.6
Fratt	12.8	2.10	1.53
<u>School 2 by school 3</u>		(2)	(3)
listening test	(1.14)	23.2	22.1
reading test	(0.329)	24.5	23.9
writing test	(0.158)	12.8	12.2
composite score	(0.522)	60.5	58.0
Fratt	(2.79)	1.33	1.58

TABLE 4.4.5 (Contd)

<u>School 2 by school 4</u>		(2)	(4)
listening test	(0.515)	23.2	24.0
reading test	(0.709)	24.5	23.5
writing test	(0.129)	12.8	12.1
composite score	(0.043)	60.5	59.6
Fratt	(1.53)	1.33	1.53
<u>School 3 by school 4</u>		(3)	(4)
listening test	(4.77)	22.1	24.0
reading test	(0.126)	23.9	23.5
writing test	(0.001)	12.2	12.1
composite score	(0.293)	58.0	59.6
Fratt	(0.105)	1.58	1.53

With the critical F value, at 1% significance level \approx 6.85, school 1 population produced significantly less competent results for listening test scores, in comparison to two of the other middle schools, but it displayed significantly more positive responses to the attitude question compared to the other three middle schools. There were no other significant differences (at the 1% level) between middle school results and responses.

TABLE 4.4.6

COMPARISON OF INDIVIDUAL HIGH SCHOOLS.

<u>School 5 by school 7</u>	<u>F value</u>	<u>Mean (5)</u>	<u>Mean (7)</u>
listening test	79.4	24.2	16.1
reading test	52.1	25.4	18.1
writing test	66.3	17.1	5.65
composite score	80.1	66.8	39.8
Fratt	(2.79)	1.64	1.35
<u>School 5 by school 8</u>		(5)	(8)
listening test	9.50	24.2	21.7
reading test	(2.31)	25.4	24.1
writing test	(0.231)	17.1	16.5
composite score	(2.50)	66.8	62.3
Fratt	(0.019)	1.64	1.62
<u>School 7 by school 8</u>		(7)	(8)
listening test	24.4	16.1	21.7
reading test	22.6	18.1	24.1
writing test	43.8	5.65	16.5
composite score	35.6	39.8	62.3
Fratt	(1.94)	1.35	1.62

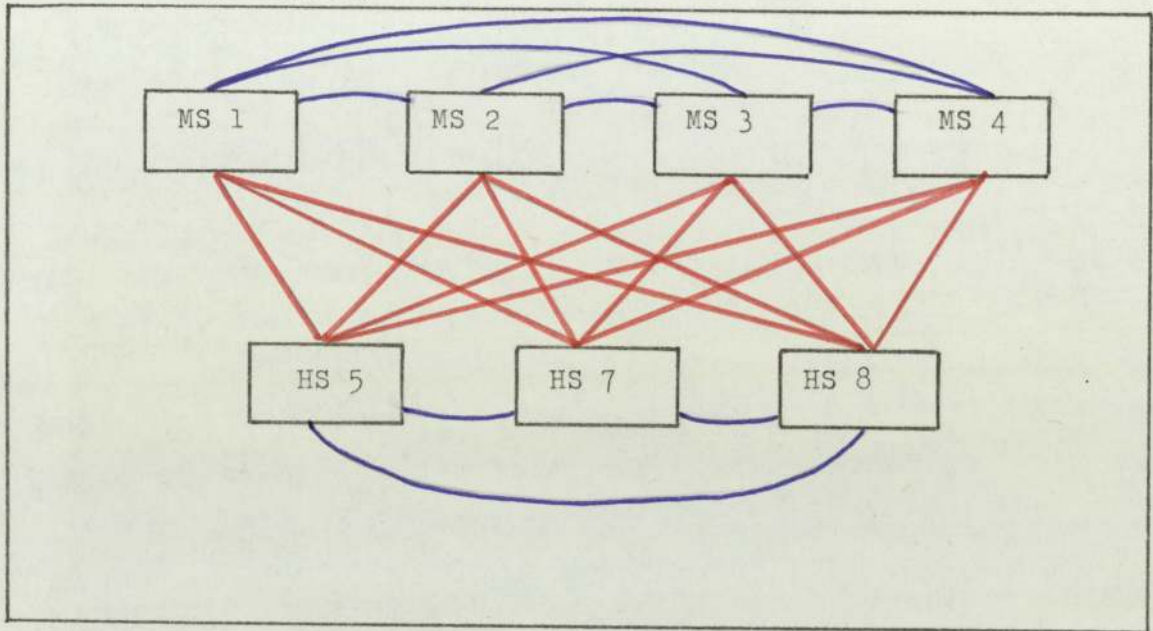
With the critical F value, at 1% significance level \approx 6.85, very significantly better results for all cognitive test scores may be noted for school 5 in comparison to school 7. School 5 also produced a significantly better listening test score in comparison to school 8. The latter, however, compared to school 7, produced significantly better cognitive test scores. No significant differences were recorded between responses of high schools to the attitude question.

FIGURE 1

COMPARISON OF SIGNIFICANT RESULTS FOR ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE.

(MS = Middle School

HS = High School)



— Vertical comparisons (52% significant).

— Horizontal comparisons (32% significant).

Thus, it may be observed in Figure 1 that for the totals of significant results (at the 1% level) of the tables of this section, for across types (pairwise) with between types (pairwise), 31 out of 60 (52%) vertical comparisons (Tables 4.4.1 to 4.4.4) are significant. Out of 45 horizontal comparisons (Tables 4.4.5 and 4.4.6) 14 are significant (32%).

It is appropriate to emphasize here that exposure to French teaching had been between 2 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours weekly in each of the middle schools (and for 4 years) and for the same weekly time in the high schools (but for only 2 years). Therefore, for middle school pupils, total time on task had been approximately double that of high school pupils, but length of exposure was consistent throughout schools of each school structure.

It must be concluded that differences of performance and response are influenced by other individual school variables not covered in this investigation. Several significant differences between individual schools on various measures both horizontally and vertically were noted, which, while not undermining the aggregate picture, in fact demonstrate that it is more complex than it seemed at first sight. Each school has a range of unique factors (size, teacher qualifications and/or involvement and commitment, teaching methods, facilities, headteacher's support, etc.) of which system type is but one. It is concluded that, in this study, system per se seems not to be crucial. However, individual school differences could provide the basis for further research work involving greater resources and a wider spectrum of variables.

Finally, it is considered relevant to refer to research by Rutter et al. (1979) into individual differences between 12 inner London secondary schools. Their findings were that the schools differed markedly as far as behaviour and attainment of their pupils was concerned. They concluded that,

"to an appreciable extent children's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experiences at school and, in particular, by the qualities of the school as a social institution." (P.179)

It must be pointed out, however, that there is a continuing debate about the research of Rutter et al. Preece (1980) demonstrates the significance of what he terms "data instability" in this research and he contends that their findings do not contradict the notion that, in general, differences between schools are a relatively weak influence on pupil attainment and attitude. Individual schools are changing all the time, as pupils and teachers etc. change, so that the between schools analyses of this section must be interpreted in this light.

With respect to the populations tested, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in performance in French of children from the two school structures at the age of 12-13, when assessed for listening, reading and writing skills and also for composite scores for the attainment tests. This applies when comparisons are made of the total middle school population and the total 11+ high school population. It also applies to either male or female populations from the two school groups. Thus, for males or females within either school structure there are no significant differences in attainment in French.

The only factor found to have any significant effect on the pupil's attainment in French was the sex of the pupil. Regardless of the fact that pupils had been taught French for either 2 or 4 years in middle or high schools, it was female pupils who generally achieved significantly higher scores on the French attainment section of this investigation.

Analysis of the single attitude question revealed that there were no significant differences of response between the two total populations, but there was a significant difference between the responses of males and females across both school types. The mean scores demonstrated that the female attitude to French, for this question, was significantly more positive. There were, however, no significant differences in response to this question between male and female populations of the two school types. The conclusion reached is that there is no relationship between school structure and either attainment in or attitude to French, for the population as a whole and for either male or female populations.

No correlation was found between school structure and attitude to French, but positive and significant correlation was obtained between the 3 scales of the attitude questionnaire and all aspects of the attainment assessment. The conclusion reached is that

positive attitudes to French as a curriculum subject and to French culture correlate significantly with attainment in the language. Positive and significant correlation was also recorded between the attitude scales and the sex of the population assessed. It has already been concluded that females generally display a significantly more positive attitude to French than do males.

Individual differences between the responses of populations in individual schools have been noted and further comment will be made in the concluding chapter concerning external variables which may be influencing performance or attitude in these schools.

Finally, as was pointed out in section 3.2, this investigation was limited to the assessment of listening, reading and writing skills, since it was not considered practicable, within the resources available to this research, to assess oral performance.

Buckby (1976) criticised the N.F.E.R. tests because they did not adequately assess oral skills (pronunciation and free conversational ability), and raised the possibility that pupils who begin to learn French in the primary school (aged 8) may perform significantly better orally than those who begin at the age of 11. Further mention is made of this aspect of early French learning in the concluding chapter, in relation to future research work.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of the findings of the investigation.

With regard to the attainment test results, the following findings were recorded :

- i) Between the two school structure populations tested (9-13 middle schools and 11+ high schools) there were no significant differences in cognitive performance in French for listening, reading and writing skills and for a composite score for attainment.
- ii) Also there was no significant differences in performance between male and female populations of the 2 school structures.
- iii) The female population from both school types performed significantly better on the 3 attainment tests and thus achieved a significantly higher composite attainment score.

With regard to the responses to the attitude to French questionnaire, the following findings were noted :

- i) No significant relationship was found between attitude to French and the school structure in which the language has been taught. As for the attainment results, this applied to the total population of each school type and also to the male and female populations of each type.
- ii) The attitude of the female population towards French (for the total female population across both school types) was significantly more positive.
- iii) Attitude to French and attainment in the language were found to be positively and significantly correlated.

5.2 Discussion of the findings of the investigation.

The length of time on task.

Carroll (1963a, 1967) concluded that one of the most important variables in the learning process (for second language learning) was the total length of time spent on the learning task. Mean scores on foreign-language tests (1967) varied as a function of

whether students had started to learn the language in elementary school, secondary school or college.

In schools where pupils were assessed for the purpose of this investigation, exposure to French teaching had been between 2 and $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours weekly in the 4 middle schools (for 4 years) and for the same weekly time in the high schools, but for only 2 years. Therefore, the total time on task for the middle school pupils had been approximately double that of the high school population. At variance with the findings of Carroll, one may speculate that it is not solely the length of time the language has been taught which most strongly influences attainment in and attitude to French, but also consideration must be given to the quality, commitment and purpose of the teaching. The influence, too, of the early age of starting to learn a foreign language (in the case of middle school pupils (at the age of 9-10 years) should be taken into consideration.

Burstall et al. (1974) also emphasized the importance of the length of time pupils had learnt a foreign language. The claim was that pupils who had been taught French from the age of eight seemed to maintain some superiority (over those who began to learn three years later) but this superiority was only in listening comprehension and in positive attitudes towards learning French.

In this respect, the findings of this investigation are also at variance with those of Burstall et al. (op.cit.), since, for the total populations from the two school structures, no significant differences were recorded either in French attainment (including listening comprehension) or in attitude.

The vital role of the teacher.

In view of the attainment results and attitude responses of the total populations from each school type, the implication may be that 2 years of specialist French teaching may be as valuable

as 4 years with one or several general-subject or semi-specialist teachers. Pupils in the 9-13 middle schools used for this investigation had been taught French for 4 years by specialist, semi-specialist and non-specialist teachers. It has not been the purpose of this study to investigate teacher qualifications, experience and attitude but, nevertheless, it is considered appropriate to point out that the population of 11+ high schools had, without exception, been taught French by specialist modern language teachers.

Since no significant advantage was reported in terms of attainment in French for pupils who had learned the language for the extra two years, it seems that, unless there is specialist provision available, then the start of middle school French should be delayed until the age of 11. One of the principal conclusions of the report of the National Association of Language Advisers (1976) on provision of primary (and middle) school French was that teaching should be by those with specialist knowledge or by those who have received adequate in-service training. The report continues :

"Where such teachers are lacking
there may be grounds for a temporary
reduction in the commitment to the
subject."

The report of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire working party of heads of modern language departments (1978) stresses that "qualified" French staff should be teachers who have,

"studied the language during their
period of initial training and who
are fluent and confident in the use
of the language." (7.1.1)

Hawkins (1981) concludes that,

"real progress in language teaching must
depend on the quality of the teacher."

He emphasizes that "well trained" foreign language teachers should have followed a course in the modern languages department of a university where the problems of foreign language teaching are taken seriously.

One of the principal conclusions of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire report was that effective French teaching will only take place when there is equal provision of staffing and other resources. Consistent and equal provision is crucial, particularly when several middle schools feed one high school.

The H.M.I. (1977) report acknowledges that,

"it is classroom practice and relationships
which above all determine success or
failure." (P.42).

The same report emphasizes, too, that provision of material resources alone is not sufficient to ensure effective learning of a foreign language. For pupils to achieve their full potential, what is needed is,

"a competent, conscientious, enlightened
teacher who recognises that hard work on
his own and on his pupil's part is an
essential ingredient of success." (ibid. P.49)

Sanderson (1981) emphasized that successful teachers, observed during the University of York survey, demonstrated enthusiasm, not only for their subject, but for the job of teaching it. They must be well organised, material must be thoroughly prepared, they must be energetic and committed to the task of involving all members of the class group and of giving them a chance of success.

These emphases for teacher success are surely applicable to all areas of the curriculum. It may be concluded that it is within the school's (and consequently the teacher's) power to strongly affect the pupil's attitude (and thus his attainment) in any

curriculum area. With reference to attainment in and attitude to science subjects, Whitfield (1979) acknowledges,

"that there are no doubt significant influences from the media, the home and social environments, the peer group and personality orientations, (but) it is potentially in our power to modify the effects of school." (op.cit. P.416)

Above all, it is essential that teachers have a clearly defined view of their aims and objectives, since they have so much influence on pupils' attainment and attitude. Burstall (1968) concludes that the greater a teacher's responsibility for French teaching, the more positive will be his attitude towards teaching the language (especially to low-ability children). Regardless of the school structure in which he works, the teacher needs to be fully aware of the function of his own role and his pupil's short and long-term goals.

The influence of the graded test syllabus.

Graded tests in modern languages (based on the Oxfordshire syllabus) have been available in the Herefordshire and Worcestershire area for middle and high school pupils since 1979, and in the Birmingham area since 1980. This investigation took place, therefore, before the graded test syllabus in French was available to schools and before it could have any influence on teaching, attainment and attitude.

The recurrent theme of the conclusions of recent research into modern language teaching has been that the goal of graded tests is particularly beneficial to pupils and teachers. Downes (1980) stresses the benefit of the graded test syllabus to teachers of pupils of a wide ability range :

"there is a need for clearer definition of aims and objectives, particularly now we are teaching across the whole ability range. (P. 39).

The H.M.I. (1977) report emphasized that identification should take place at an early stage of pupils who are capable of continuing modern language study up to the age of 16. Whether they embark on an extended graded test syllabus, or whether they follow a C.S.E. or 'O' level course, they should be given every encouragement to complete the full course of study. "Precise linguistic objectives" should be determined for pupils of all abilities and those who are considered not capable of following an extended syllabus should be able to achieve success in "a shorter course which is complete in itself." (P.49).

The implication must be that had pupils assessed in this investigation followed such a clearly defined graded test syllabus, the results may have been influenced.

With reference to the York Language Centre investigation into pupil, parent and teacher attitudes, in that they may be affected by a graded test syllabus, Buckby et al. (1981) concluded that teachers involved with the scheme had worked together to draw up and administer tests. They had, therefore, produced a clear statement of their objectives and were highly motivated to teach well and to achieve success. The effect on pupils following the syllabus was significant, particularly in terms of attitude and the desire to continue to learn French after the age of 14. Parental attitudes were also considered to have a positive effect on their children's motivation.

Sex differences.

These were reported for both the attainment and attitude sections of this investigation. On the attainment tests, the girls performed significantly better and for the attitude questionnaire, they displayed a more positive attitude to learning French. (There was, however, no significant difference between the cognitive performance or the attitude response of the female populations from the two school types.)

These findings are in agreement with those of Nisbet and Welsh (1972), the Education Survey 21 (1975) and also with the H.M.I. report (1977) which concluded that, by the age of 14-15, in many schools of varying structures, the ratio of girls to boys studying a modern language was often two to one and the proportion of boys was frequently lower in the abler sets and in the 6th form. Burstall et al. (1974) also reported that girls consistently reached higher levels on French attainment tests than did boys and that they were usually more highly motivated to achieve success in the language.

It has been noted that these findings are the obverse of those regarding attainment in and attitude to physical science (though not biology) in schools (Whitfield, 1979). Among candidates who were considered suitable by the schools for external assessment, about 4 boys appear for every girl in physics, the ratio is 2 to 1 in chemistry with the latter being reversed for biology. Moreover, in co-educational schools, it was reported that the greater opportunity given to girls to study physics and boys to study biology was met by a significant percentage reversal in pupil choice. The findings of an I.E.A. study of science education in 19 countries were also that boys consistently achieved significantly higher levels of attainment than girls in physical science items at each of 3 age levels sampled in every country and the differences widened with increasing age.

It can be concluded that there are varying influences affecting pupils' attainment in and attitude to certain areas of the curriculum, particularly with respect to science and modern language learning.

The conclusions of both the primary and secondary stages of the N.F.E.R. evaluation (1974) into French attainment and attitude support the view that parents may be transmitting to their children the so-called "accepted values of the wider society." (op.cit. P.166)

Whitfield (1979) acknowledged the influences on pupils' attitudes of "the media, the home and social environments." (op. cit. P.416)

The view of parent-child interaction of attitudes was expressed by Buckby et al. (1981) in their report of the Schools Council investigation. It was concluded that there were significant improvements in the attitude towards French of both girls and boys who had followed a graded test syllabus and that more boys in this experimental group expressed the desire to continue to learn the language after the age of 14. This was in comparison to a control group of pupils who were not working towards graded tests. Results of a survey on parents suggested that the attitudes of pupils and parents may well have influenced each other, since parents of experimental group pupils displayed a markedly more positive attitude towards French learning after their children's year of working towards graded tests. These are interesting findings but, so far, research has only been carried out on pupils aged 13+ who had taken graded tests.

Individual differences between schools.

Finally, it was concluded that individual differences between schools of varying structures must be influenced by variables such as teacher involvement and commitment, the support of the head of department (or co-ordinator in a middle school), the support of the headteacher and local authority, material provision, resources and methods of teaching. Further research into the effects of these variables on the learning of French will be described in the next section. The importance of continuity of teaching and liaison between the staff of a modern languages department and between schools has already been emphasized in this study.

5.3 Suggestions for further research.

It must be emphasized that the principal purpose of this study has not been to investigate teacher roles and relationships. Nevertheless, it is considered relevant to point out that research findings (Burstall, 1968 ; H.M.I. report, 1977 ; Hereford and Worcestershire heads of modern language departments working party, 1978 ; Hawkins, 1981 ; Sanderson, 1981 ;) present evidence to suggest that the influence of the teacher is considered to be a vital factor affecting progress in French learning. Further worthwhile research could be undertaken into the influence of qualifications and level of responsibility of French teachers working in middle and high schools. It could be interesting to assess the influence of these factors on attainment and attitude of pupils and on attitude of teachers.

Research could also be undertaken into the results of specialist French teaching in middle schools. In Chapter 2, it was reported that many middle school specialist teachers express dissatisfaction that they are "spread so thinly" over middle school classes, (Ginsburg et al., 1977). Whereas pupils who begin to learn French in an 11+ high school are very likely to be taught by a specialist modern language teacher (who is part of a team of modern language specialists, under the guidance of a head of department), the specialist French teacher in a middle school is often the sole French specialist. His role in the school, his influence on attainment in French and attitude towards the language of the classes he teaches, on the general level of French teaching throughout the school and on the work of his colleagues could be the subject of worthwhile research. The importance, too, of the influence of the head of department and the headteacher was emphasized in Chapter 2. Interesting further research could be carried out into their roles.

Hawkins (1981) states that although it is in in-service training that the greatest progress has been made in the past two decades, nevertheless, there is much wastefulness in its provision, particularly since there is frequently little or ineffective liaison between in-service work at national, local and school-based levels. Particularly at a time of financial restraint, worthwhile research could be undertaken into effective provision of advisory services at these three levels.

The importance has been stressed of continuous assessment and reappraisal by teachers of their role. In-service education courses play an important part in allowing and encouraging teachers to do this. It is considered relevant to reiterate the importance of effective liaison both within schools and particularly between feeder and upper or high schools. Further research could be undertaken into provision and organisation of this liaison and its effect on pupil performance.

Finally, in Chapter 3.2, it was pointed out that oral testing did not form part of this investigation. It would be most interesting and worthwhile to assess pupils orally at the age of 13+, to attempt to ascertain whether there is any significant advantage to be gained in oral performance from an early start to learning French.

Thus the possibilities for further research are varied. In recent reports (Buckby et al., 1981 ; Hawkins, 1981 ; Sanderson, 1981 ;) there are recurrent themes of optimism, enthusiasm and, not least, practical suggestions for the future of modern language teaching. This investigation has confirmed and developed a few ideas which modern language teachers and educationalists have had for some time regarding French learning. Research topics have been discussed which may be of both theoretical and practical value to those with an interest in French teaching in the early years. Above all, it has been shown that school structure is not the key educational-school oriented variable.

LIST OF APPENDICES

CODE : P = Pilot Study.

M = Main Investigation.

M/P = Main Investigation
and Pilot Study.

APPENDIX

PAGE

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APPENDIX 1

CODING MANUAL FOR THE PILOT STUDY.

Card 1

Cols	1 - 3	Case No. 001-096.
	4	Boy 1. Girl 2. No response 9.
	5	Specialist teacher (for 4th year) Teacher 1 and 2.
	6 -10	Listening test. Practice items. 1 correct. 2 incorrect. 9 no response.
	11-45	Listening test. (35 items).
	46-50	Reading test. (5 Practice items).
	51-79	Reading test. 29 items.
	80	Line number (1 or 2).

Card 2

1 - 3	Case Number.
4 - 9	Reading test continued (6 items).
10-21	Writing test (12 items). 3 (fully correct), 2, 1, 0 (incorrect) No response : 9.
22	I like French 1. I like French most of the time. 2. I like French only some of the time. 3. I don't like French. 4.
23-47	Attitude questionnaire (25 items). 1 Yes. 2 No. 9 No response.
48	Have visited France. 1 Yes. 2 No. 9 No response.
49-57	Attitude to French - complete the sentences. (49-51) What I like about French. (52-54) What I don't like about French. (55-57) Further comments.

APPENDIX 2

ATTITUDE TO FRENCH : COMPLETION OF SENTENCES.

(columns 49 - 57)

CODE

1. Positive attitudes.

1. The utilitarian value of the study of French.
2. Interest and involvement in its study.
3. Enjoyment and satisfaction from oral activity.
4. Benefit derived from continuous assessment (i.e. regular testing).
5. Importance attributed to the teacher.
6. The attitude that the study of French will be of positive value in the pupil's future career.
7. The communication value of the study of French, particularly when visiting French speaking countries.
8. Interest in learning about the country and its people.
9. No response. (or irrelevant or ambiguous response).

2. Negative attitudes.

1. Criticism of teaching methods which involve much repetition.
2. The pupil experiences difficulties with verbs.
3. The attitude that the French language is unduly complex.
4. The attitude that the study of French is at times boring.
5. Negative attitudes towards the use of the tape recorder.
6. The pupil experiences difficulties with verb tenses (frequent reference to past participles).
7. Negative attitudes towards memorizing (frequent reference to homework).
9. No response.

3. Further comments.

1. The importance of the role of the teacher.
2. The importance of good teaching conditions.
3. The pupil experiences pronunciation difficulties.
4. The pupil derives satisfaction and pleasure from oral activities.
5. The pupil expresses a preference for reading activities.
9. No response.

APPENDIX 3

A COPY OF THE LETTER TO HEADTEACHERS
REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR THE INVESTIGATION
TO TAKE PLACE IN SCHOOLS.

PARKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL
STOURBRIDGE ROAD
BROMSGROVE
WORCS.

6 April 1979.

Dear Headteacher

I have been advised by Mr. D. Mann, County Adviser for Modern Languages, to request your assistance regarding an investigation which I am undertaking concerning Attainment and Attitude in French.

All that this involves is simple assessment tests administered to two of your classes of 12-13 year old pupils. This would not cause any timetable disruptions and the total time involved is only about 1 hour.

My work with these tests forms part of a joint investigation which has been undertaken with the Department of Educational Enquiry at the University of Aston. Of course, any results are confidential and the outcome is only to assess French attainment and attitudes to the subject.

Many thanks in anticipation of your assistance in this investigation. May I please contact you again early in the new term?

Yours faithfully

S.M. Pickthorne.
French co-ordinator.

APPENDIX 4

CODING MANUAL FOR THE MAIN INVESTIGATION.

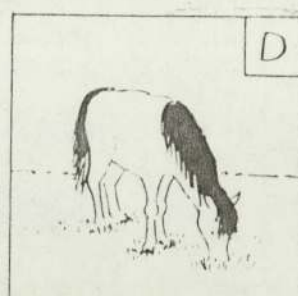
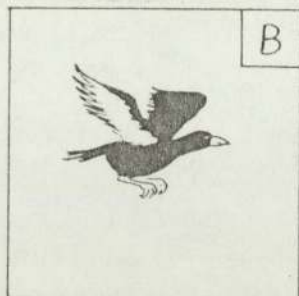
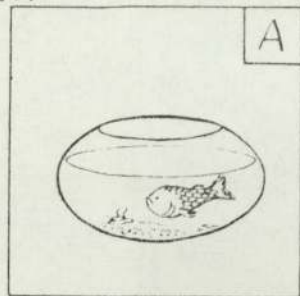
Card 1.

Cols. 1 - 3 Case Number, 001 - 575.
4 Sex : Male : 1. Female : 2.
No response : 9.
5 - 6 School Number : 01 - 08.
7 - 8 Group Number : 01 - 22.
9 School Nature :
9-13 Middle School : 1.
11+ High School : 2.
10-11 Listening test. Total Score out of 32.
12-43 Listening test. Individual items.
(1 correct. 2 incorrect. 9 no response).
44-45 Reading test. Total score out of 34.
46-79 Reading test. Individual items.
80 Line number. (1 or 2).

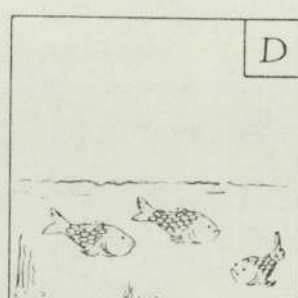
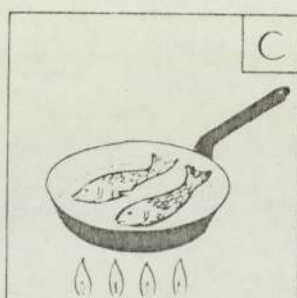
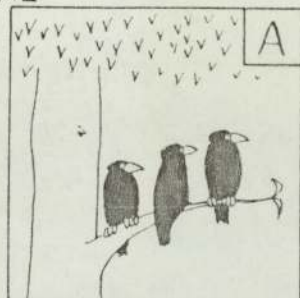
Card 2.

1 - 3 Case number.
4 - 5 Writing test. Total score out of 36.
6 -17 Writing test. Individual items.
3 (fully correct), 2, 1, 0 (incorrect)
No response : 9.
18-20 Composite score for attainment tests.
(out of 102).
21 Attitude to French question (FRATT)
Score, positive to negative : 3, 2, 1, 0.
No response : 9.
22-35 Attitude to French questionnaire (14 items).
Positive response : 1, Negative response : 2,
No response : 9.
(In order to obtain reliability coefficients for
the attitude scales these were later re-coded
Positive : 2, Negative : 1.)

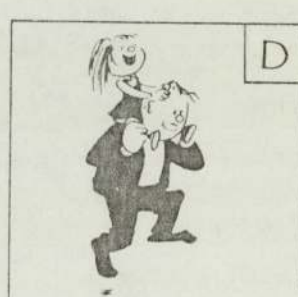
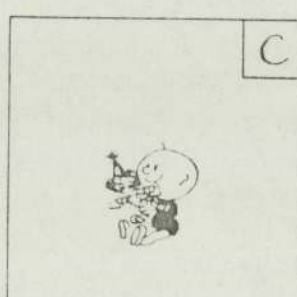
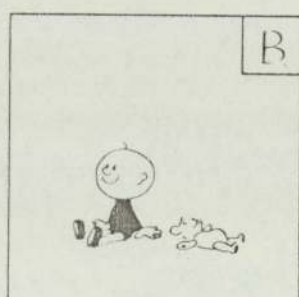
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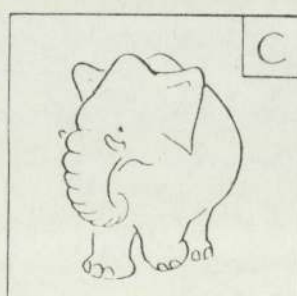
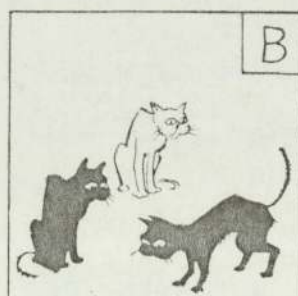
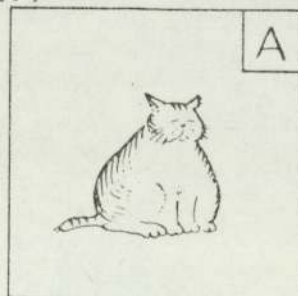
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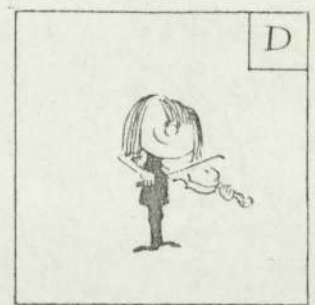
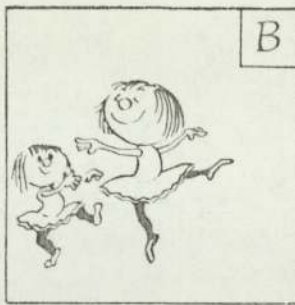
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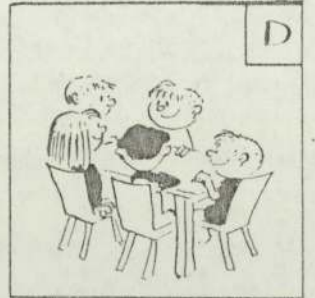
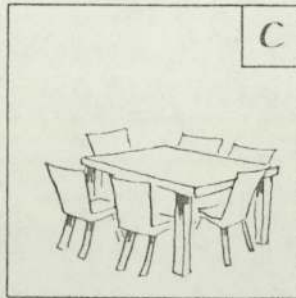
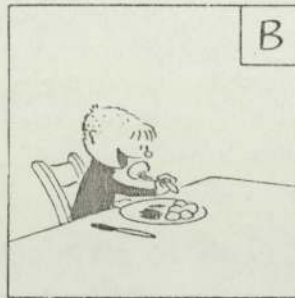
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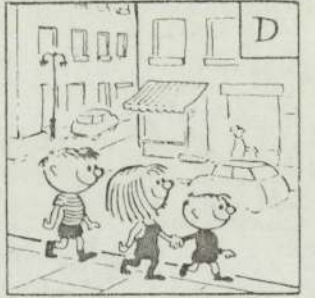
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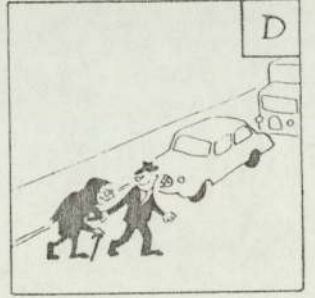
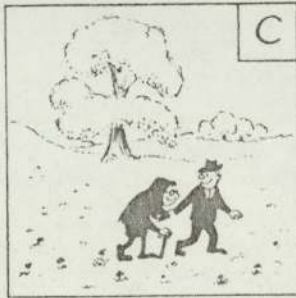
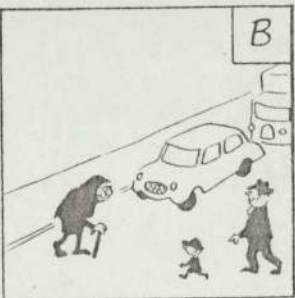
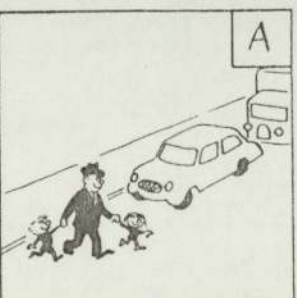
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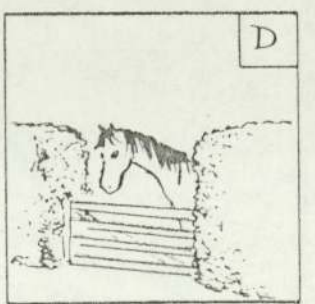
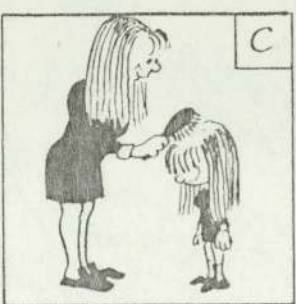
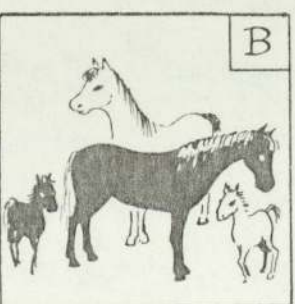
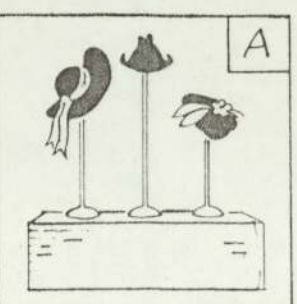
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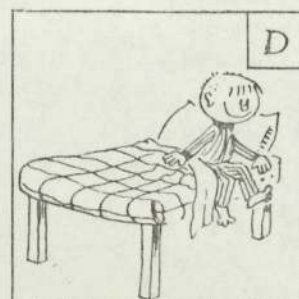
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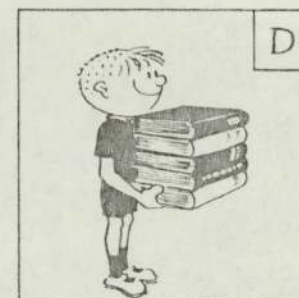
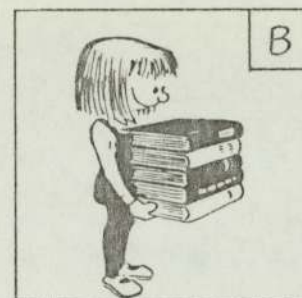
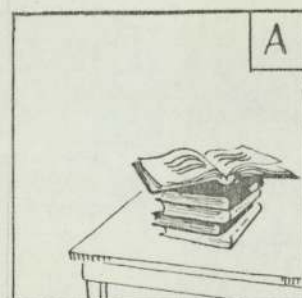
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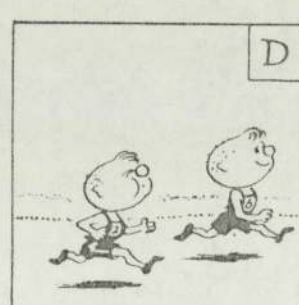
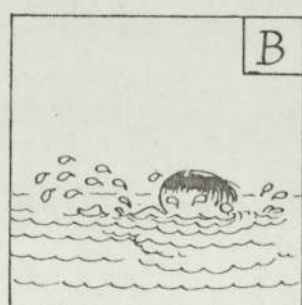
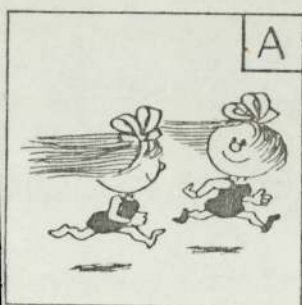
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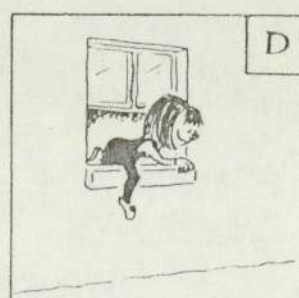
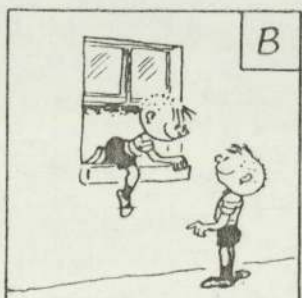
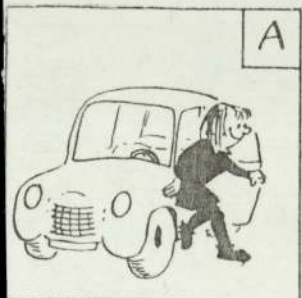
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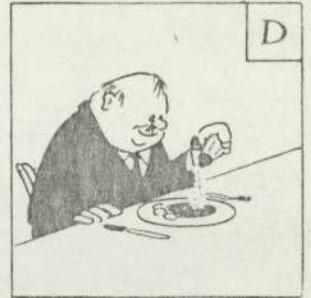
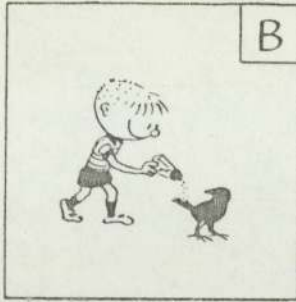
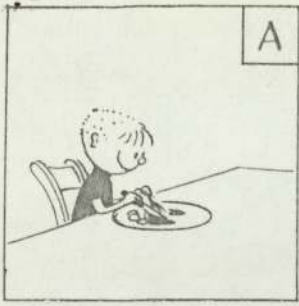
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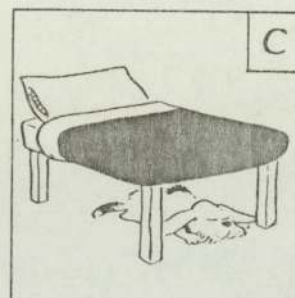
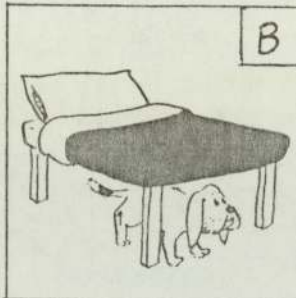
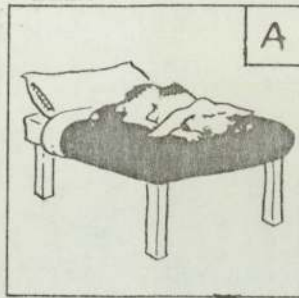
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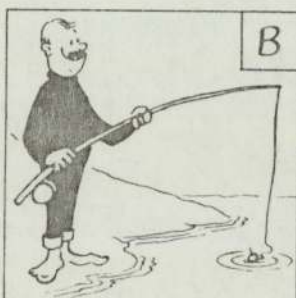
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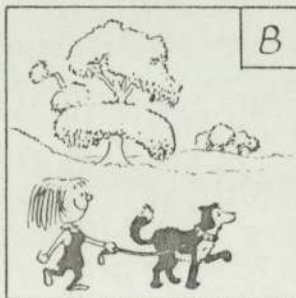
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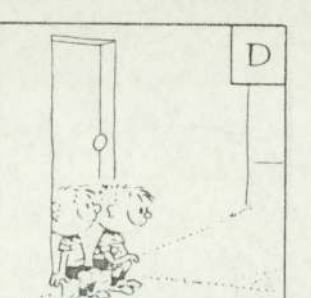
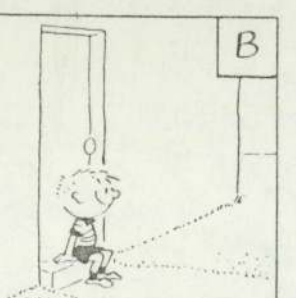
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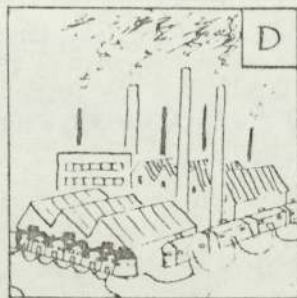
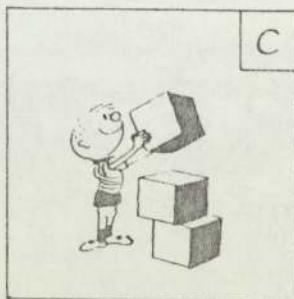
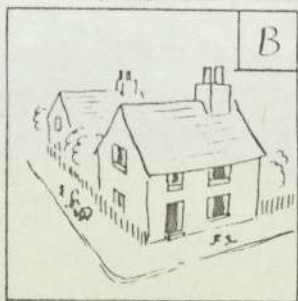
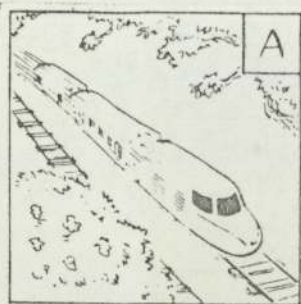
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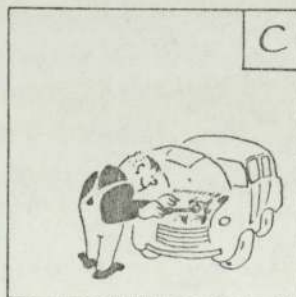
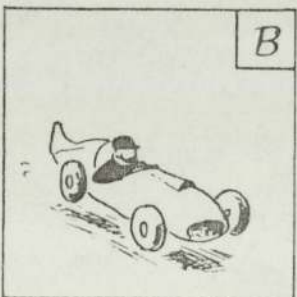
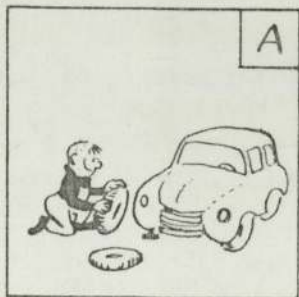
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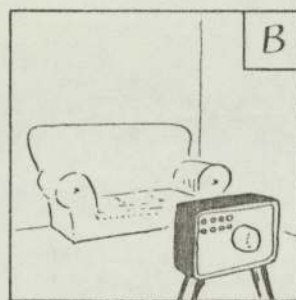
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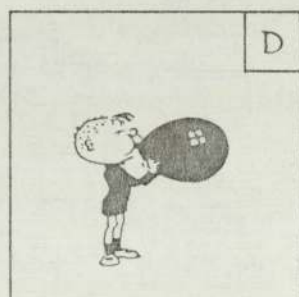
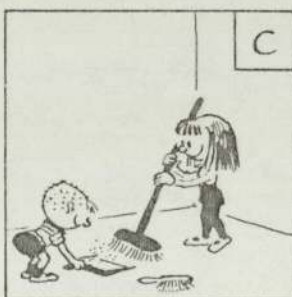
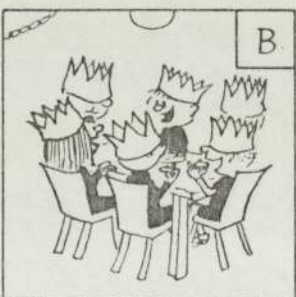
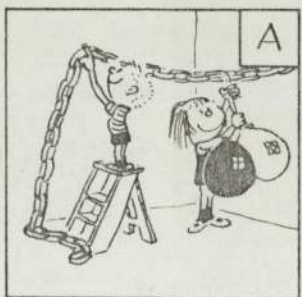
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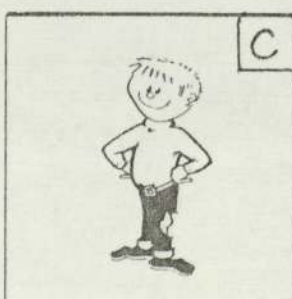
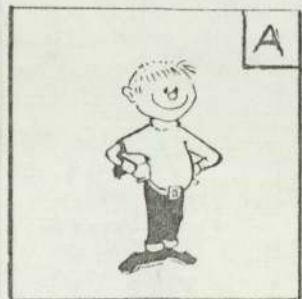
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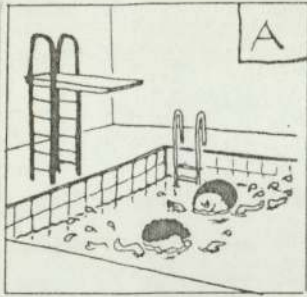
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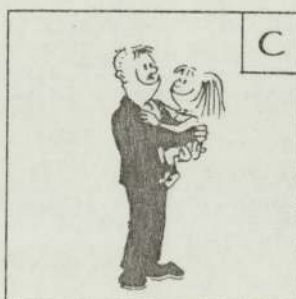
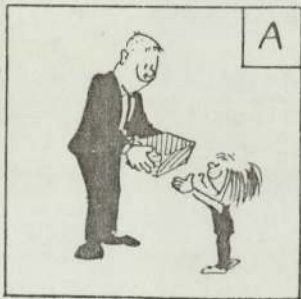
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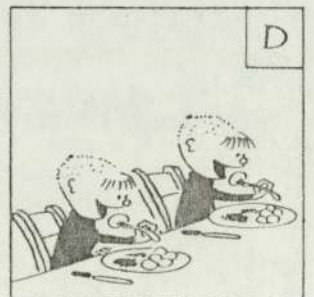
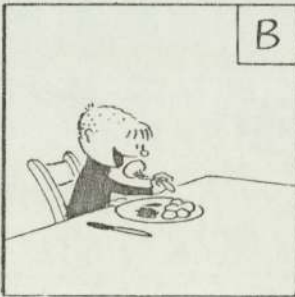
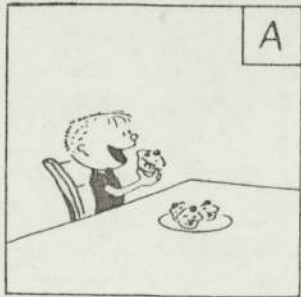
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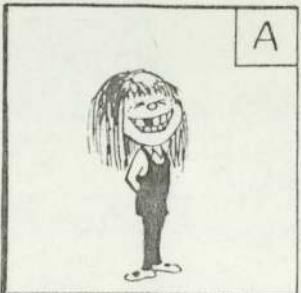
25.



26.



27.



APPENDIX 6

LISTENING TEST SCRIPT.

1. C'est un oiseau.
2. Les poissons sont dans l'eau.
3. Le bébé tient son jouet dans ses bras.
4. C'est un gros chat.
5. Les enfants jouent dans le jardin.
6. La petite fille chante.
7. Ils sont à table.
8. Les enfants se promènent à la campagne.
9. Le monsieur aide la vieille dame à traverser la rue.
10. Ce sont des chevaux.
11. Les enfants se lavent.
12. Elle a cinq livres.
13. Ils courent.
14. Elle sort par la fenêtre.
15. Il met du sel sur sa viande.
16. Le chien dort sous le lit.
17. Le pêcheur ne porte ni chapeau ni chaussures.
18. Le chien est attaché à l'arbre par une corde.
19. Le garçon s'est assis devant la porte.
20. C'est le quartier industriel.
21. Elle se lave les cheveux.
22. Le mécanicien répare le moteur de la voiture.
23. Maman met le couvercle sur la casserole.
24. Elle coupe du papier avec ses ciseaux.
25. Il n'y a personne dans la cuisine.
26. Les enfants décorent le salon pour la fête.
27. Il a un trou à son pantalon.
28. Les enfants nagent dans la rivière.
29. Il boit de l'eau.
30. Le père porte sa fille sur ses épaules.
31. Il ne mange pas.
32. Elle a perdu une dent.

SMP/RCW. UNIVERSITY OF ASTON.

Department of Educational Enquiry.

APPENDIX 7

LISTENING TEST PUPILS' ANSWER SHEET.

UNIVERSITY OF ASTON, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY.

FRENCH LISTENING COMPREHENSION

School

Name

Class

Each answer should be a letter - A, B, C or D.

Alter any changes clearly.

P.1.

P.2.

P.3.

P.4.

P.5.

1.

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27.

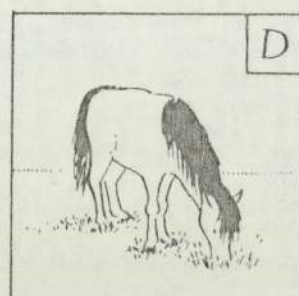
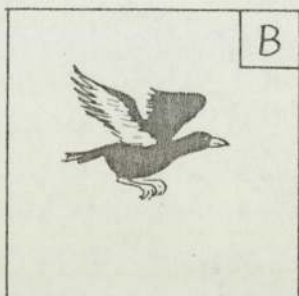
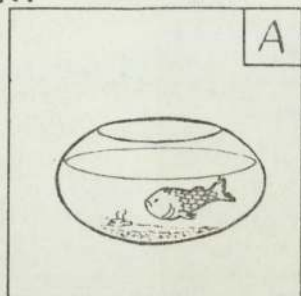
THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY

FRENCH READING TEST

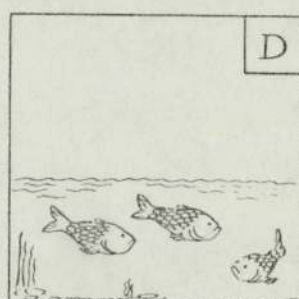
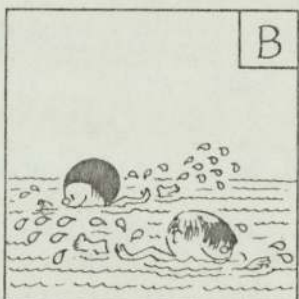
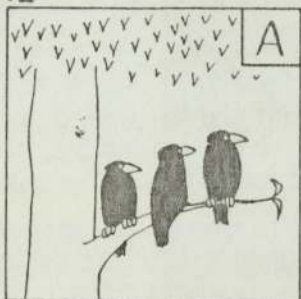
PAGE 1

P.1



C'est un oiseau.

P.2



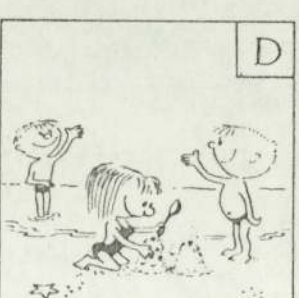
Les poissons sont dans l'eau.

P.3



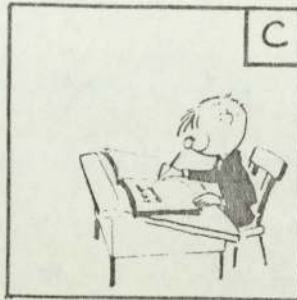
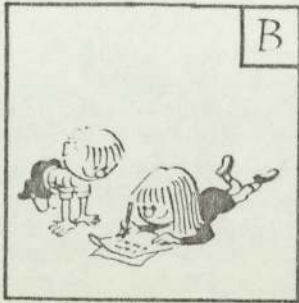
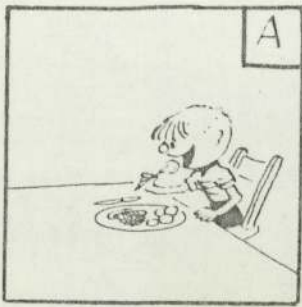
Le bébé tient son jouet dans ses bras.

P.4



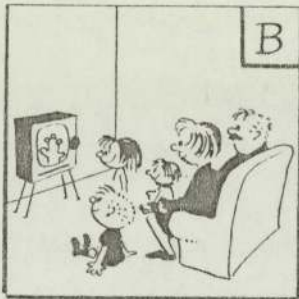
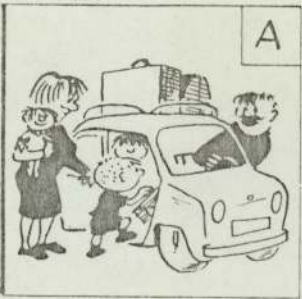
Les enfants jouent dans le jardin.

1.



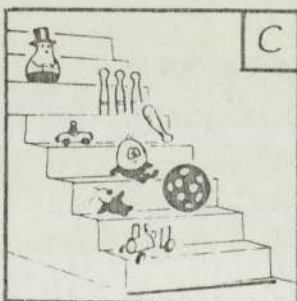
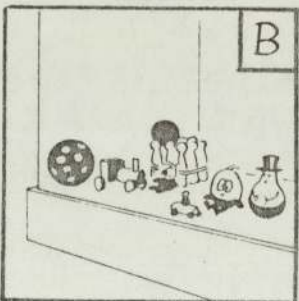
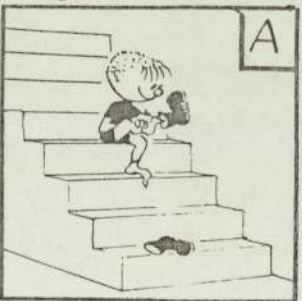
Le garçon écrit.

2.

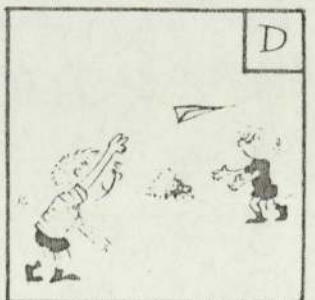
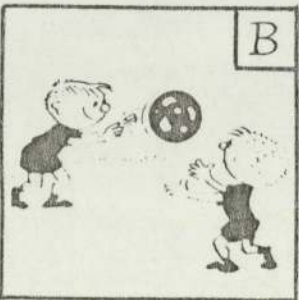


La famille s'installe dans la voiture.

3.

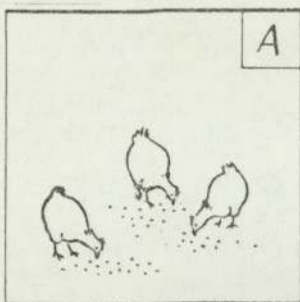


4. Il y a des jouets sur l'escalier.

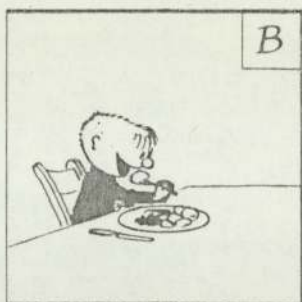


Il lance la balle à son ami.

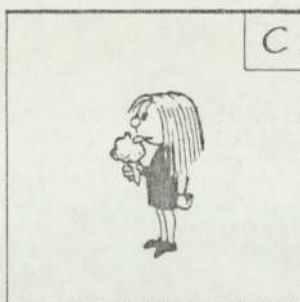
5.



A



B



C



D

Il mange.

6.



A



B



C



D

Elle tricote une chaussette.

7.



A



B



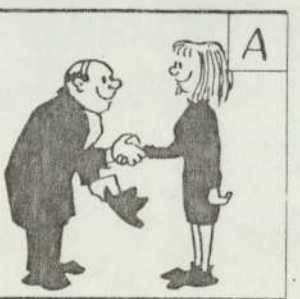
C



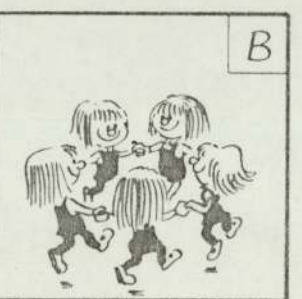
D

Le bébé pleure.

8.



A



B



C



D

Ils se serrent la main.

9.



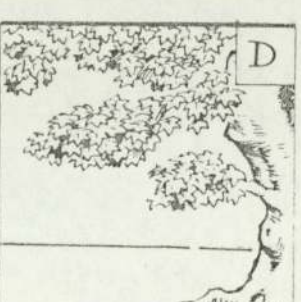
A



B



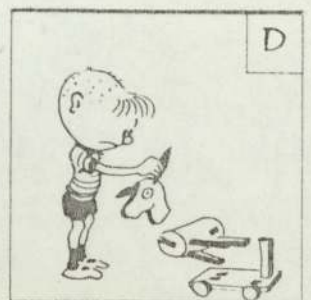
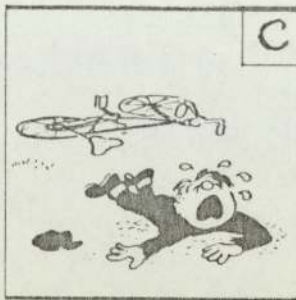
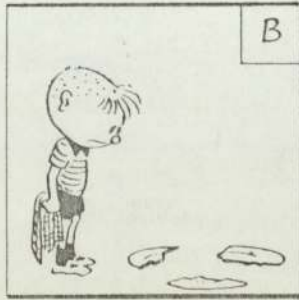
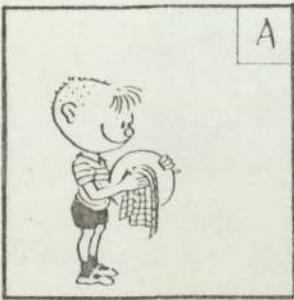
C



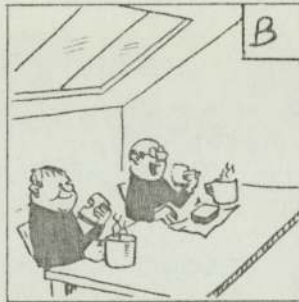
D

Les feuilles tombent.

10.

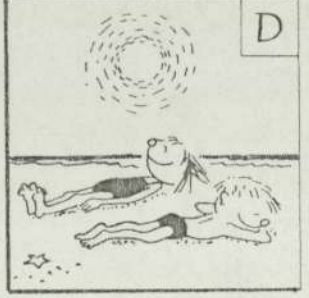


11. Le garçon a cassé son assiette.

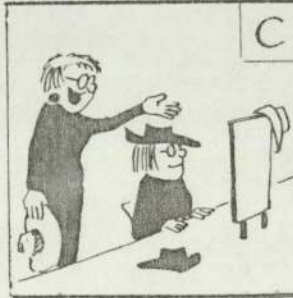
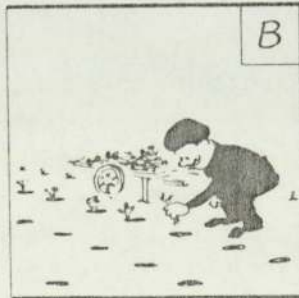


Les ouvriers travaillent à l'usine.

12.

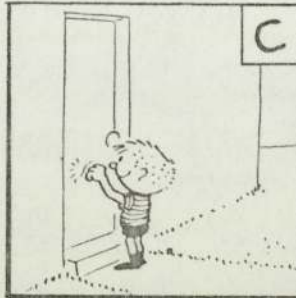


13. Il fait nuit.



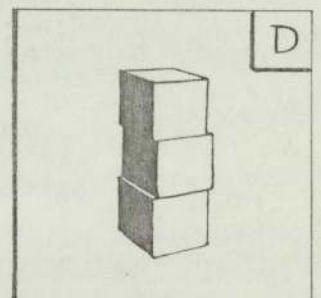
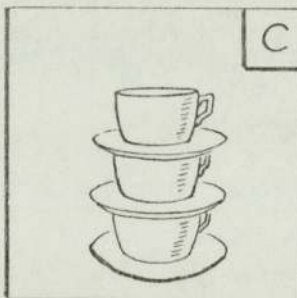
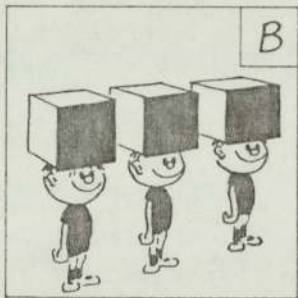
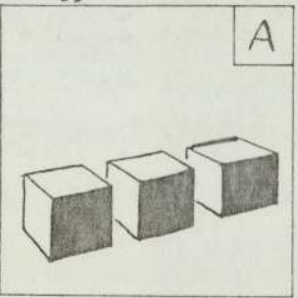
Ce marchand vend des légumes.

14.



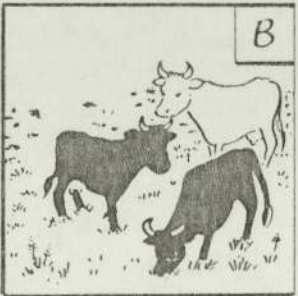
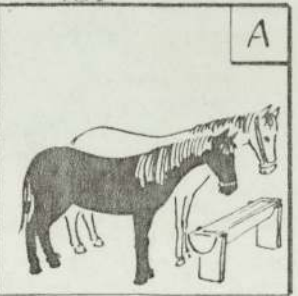
Le facteur frappe à la porte.

15.



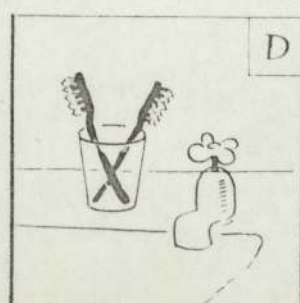
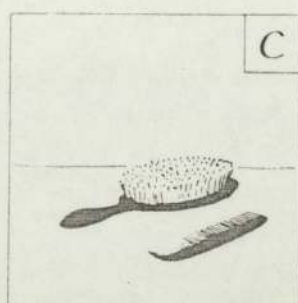
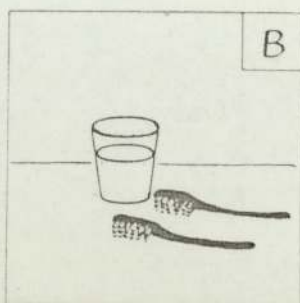
Les trois boîtes sont posées l'une sur l'autre.

16.

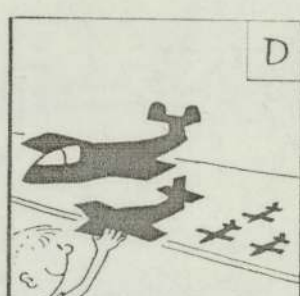
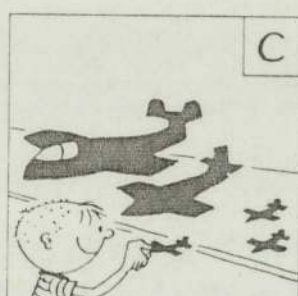
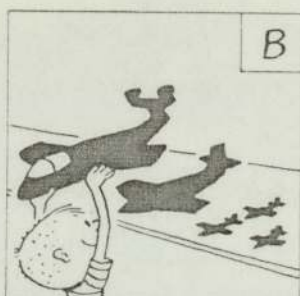


Il y a des vaches dans la prairie.

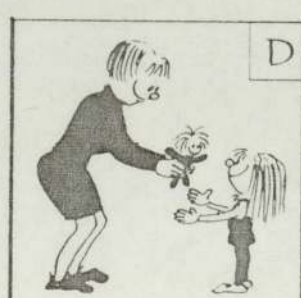
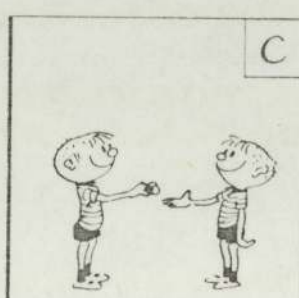
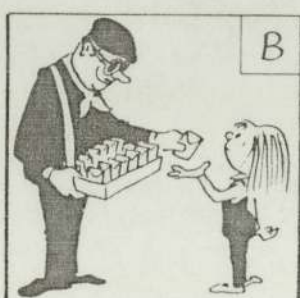
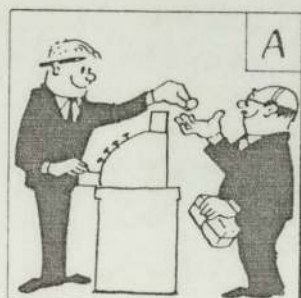
17.



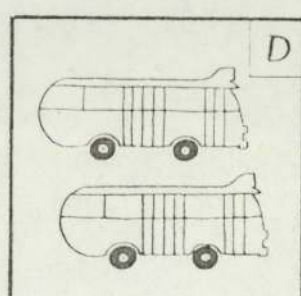
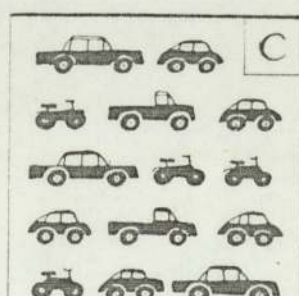
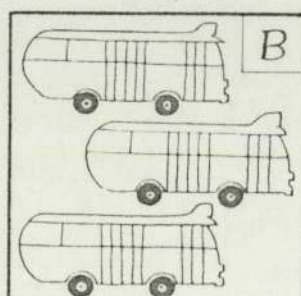
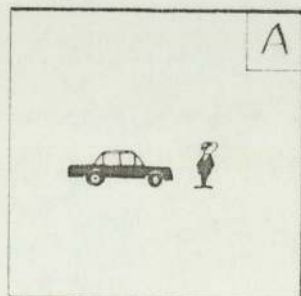
18. Les brosses à dents sont dans le verre.



19. Le garçon a choisi le plus grand avion.

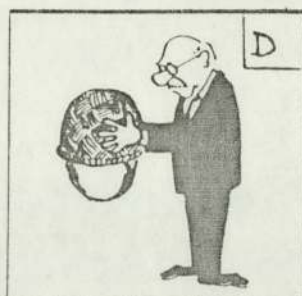
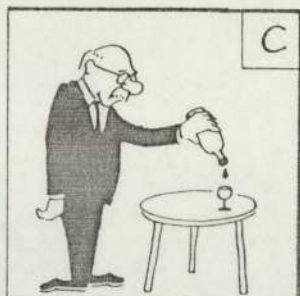
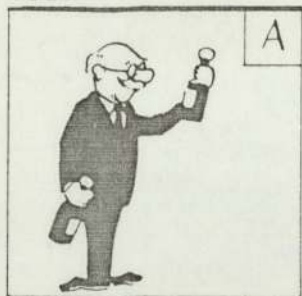


20. Le marchand lui rend la monnaie.



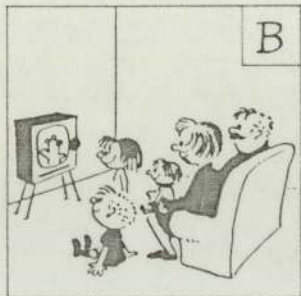
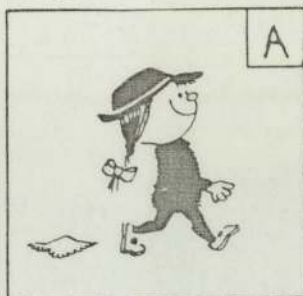
On ne voit que deux autobus.

21.



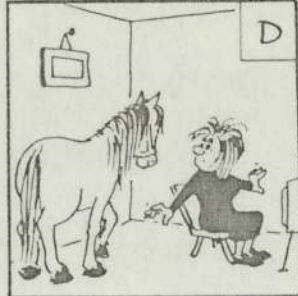
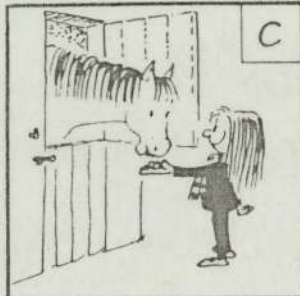
La bouteille de grand-père est vide.

22.



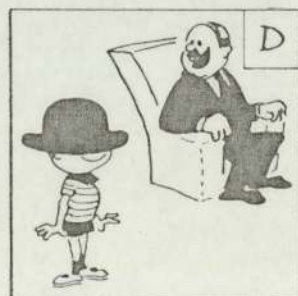
Ils sont au marché.

23.

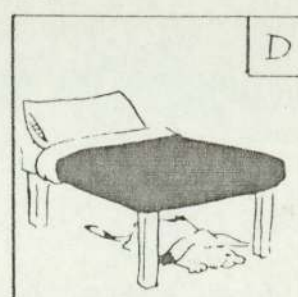
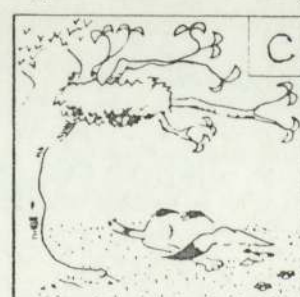
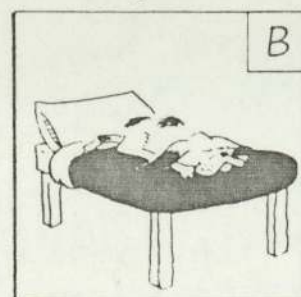
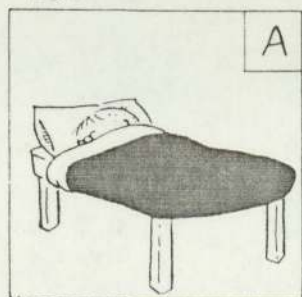


La dame est très étonnée de voir un cheval dans la maison.

24.

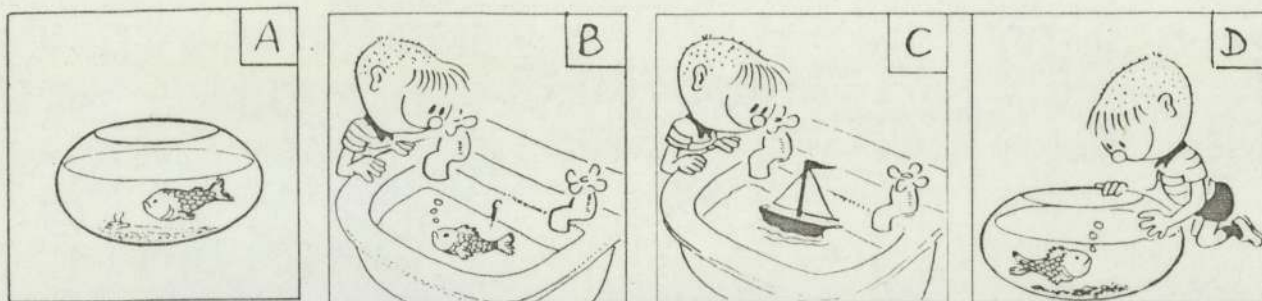


25. Il s'est fait un chapeau avec le journal de son père.

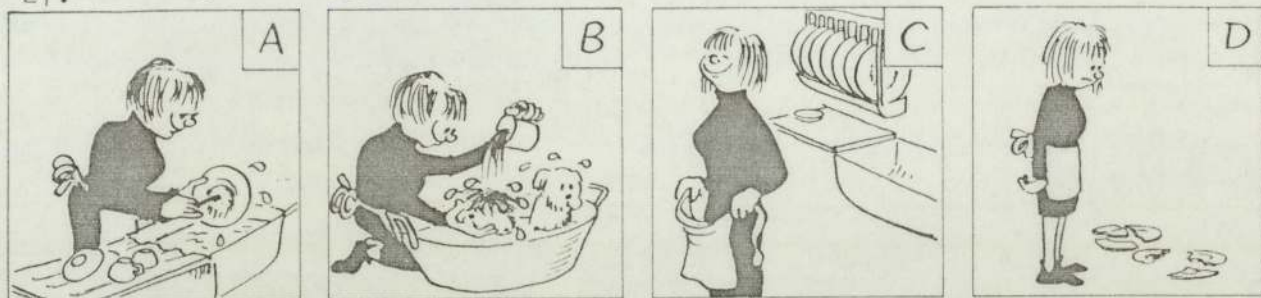


Le chien dort sur le lit.

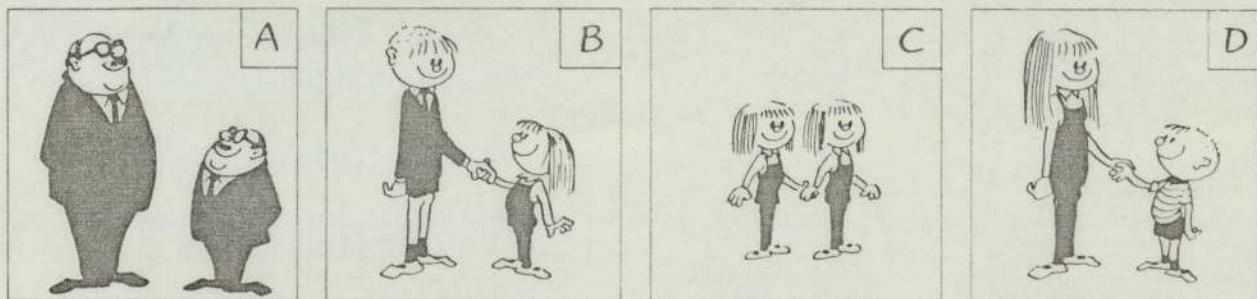
26.



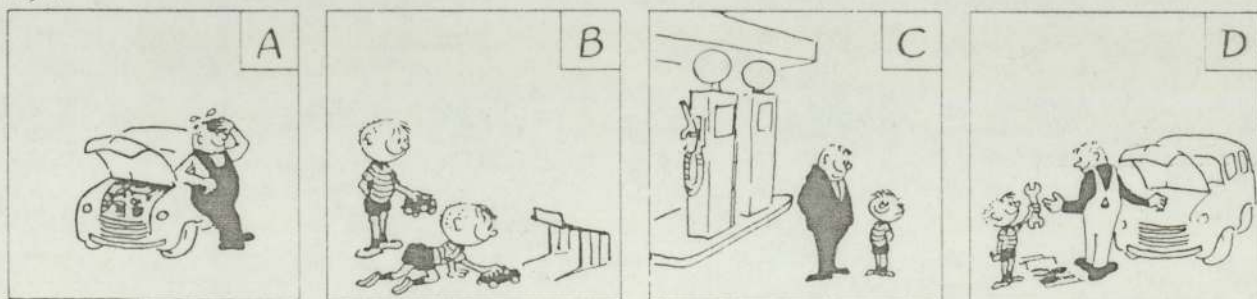
27. Il regarde le poisson dans le lavabo.



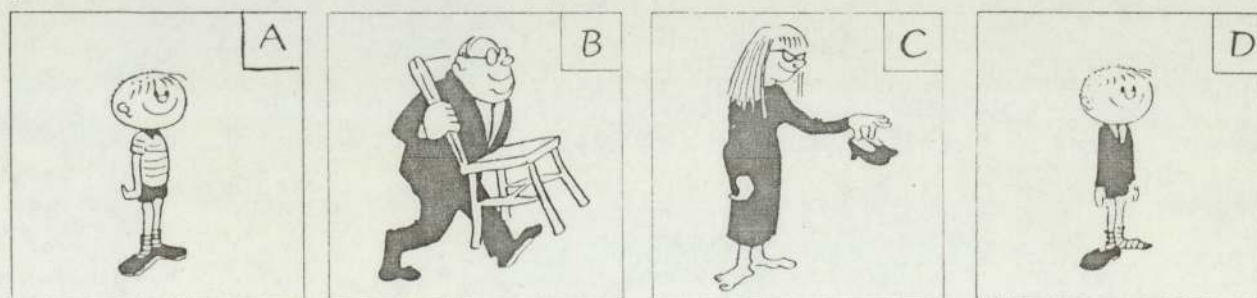
28. Maman lave les assiettes.



29. Il est plus grand que sa soeur.



30. Il aide le garagiste.



Il ne porte qu'une chaussure.

APPENDIX 9

READING TEST PUPILS' ANSWER SHEET.

UNIVERSITY OF ASTON, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY.

FRENCH READING COMPREHENSION

School

Name

Class

Each answer should be a letter A, B, C or D.

Look at the sentence under the 4 pictures and write the letter
of the picture you think best goes with the sentence.

P.1.

14.

P.2.

15.

P.3.

16.

P.4.

1.

17.

2.

18.

3.

19.

4.

20.

5.

21.

6.

22.

7.

23.

8.

24.

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10.

26.

11.

27.

12.

28.

13.

29.

30.

APPENDIX 10

THE UNIVERSITY OF ASTON IN BIRMINGHAM

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY

FRENCH WRITING TEST

1.



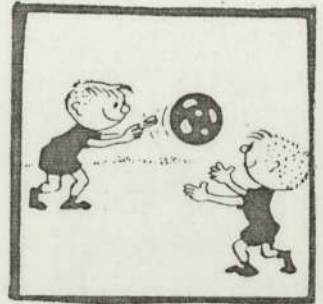
Que font les enfants?

5.



Où est le chien?

9.



Que font les garçons?

2.



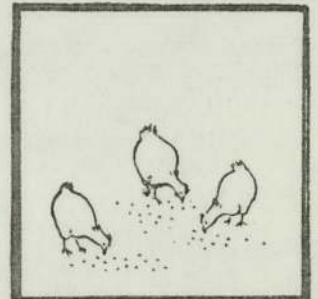
Quel temps fait-il?

6.



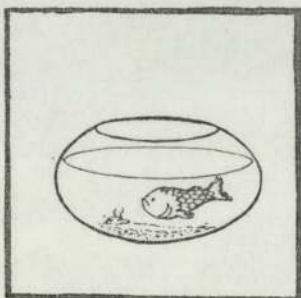
Que fait le facteur?

10.



Qu'est-ce que c'est?

3.



Qu'est-ce que c'est?

7.



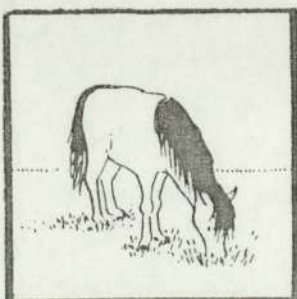
Où sont les enfants?

11.



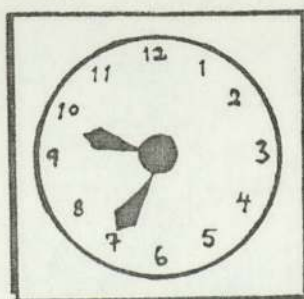
Combien d'enfants y a-t-il?

4.



Que fait le cheval?

8.



Quelle heure est-il?

12.



Qu'est-ce qu'il y a sur la table?

APPENDIX 11

WRITING TEST PUPILS' ANSWER SHEET.

UNIVERSITY OF ASTON, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ENQUIRY.

FRENCH WRITING TEST.

School

Name

Class

Answer the questions from under each picture.

Answer with one or two sentences in French.

Write your answers here.

1.
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2.
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3.
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4.
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9.
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10.
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11.
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12.
.....

APPENDIX 12

PUPILS' ATTITUDE TO FRENCH QUESTIONNAIRE (PILOT STUDY)

Name

Boy

Girl

You can help us to find out if children like learning French in school by filling in this questionnaire. It is important that you answer as truthfully as possible.

No-one else need see what you have written.

Before you answer the rest of the questions, tick one of the four sentences written below, to let us know how you feel about learning French.

1. I like French
2. I like French most of the time
3. I only like French some of the time
4. I don't like French

Please read each of the sentences written below and decide whether you agree with what it says or not. If you agree with what the sentence says, draw a ring round YES. If you do not agree with the sentence draw a ring round NO. Do this for each sentence.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|----|
| 1. | I would like to speak many languages | YES | NO |
| 2. | I am not interested in learning foreign languages | YES | NO |
| 3. | French is easier than the other subjects I learn at school. | YES | NO |
| 4. | It is often more difficult to understand the tape-recorder than the teacher. | YES | NO |
| 5. | There are other languages which are more important to learn than French | YES | NO |
| 6. | I do not always understand what I am saying when I speak in French | YES | NO |
| 7. | I would like to go to France | YES | NO |
| 8. | I would like to meet some French people | YES | NO |
| 9. | French is too difficult for me to learn | YES | NO |
| 10. | Speaking French is easier than reading and writing French | YES | NO |
| 11. | If I see a French word written down it helps me to say it | YES | NO |
| 12. | I get very bored repeating words over and over again in the French lesson | YES | NO |

13.	I think English is the best language	YES	NO
14.	I would like to make friends with some French children	YES	NO
15.	French will be useful to me after I leave school	YES	NO
16.	I am afraid to speak French	YES	NO
17.	I like having a lesson with a tape recorder	YES	NO
18.	There are more important things to learn in school than French	YES	NO
19.	French is my favourite lesson	YES	NO
20.	French people should learn English instead of us learning French	YES	NO
21.	I think my parents are pleased that I am learning French	YES	NO
22.	I don't think I will ever speak French after I leave school	YES	NO
23.	Only children who do well in English should learn French	YES	NO
24.	I would like to go on learning French		NO
25.	I am better at French than at other subjects.	YES	NO

Have you ever been to France ?	YES	NO
--------------------------------	-----	----

Now finish off these two sentences :

1. What I like about learning French is _____

2. What I don't like about learning French is _____

If you would like to say anything else about learning French please write it here.

When you have finished read through your paper and hand it to your teacher.

APPENDIX 13

PUPILS' ATTITUDE TO FRENCH QUESTIONNAIRE (MAIN INVESTIGATION)

School

Name

Boy Girl

You can help us to find out if children like learning French in school by filling in this questionnaire. It is important that you answer as truthfully as possible.

No-one else need see what you have written.

Before you answer the rest of the questions, tick one of the four sentences written below, to let us know how you feel about learning French.

1. I like French
2. I like French most of the time
3. I only like French some of the time
4. I don't like French

Please read each of the sentences written below and decide whether you agree with what it says or not. If you agree with what the sentence says, draw a ring round YES. If you do not agree with the sentence draw a ring round NO. Do this for each sentence.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | I am not interested in learning foreign languages | YES | NO |
| 2. | French is easier than the other subjects I learn at school | YES | NO |
| 3. | There are other languages which are more important to learn than French | YES | NO |
| 4. | I would like to go to France | YES | NO |
| 5. | I would like to meet some French people | YES | NO |
| 6. | French is too difficult for me to learn | YES | NO |
| 7. | I would like to make friends with some French children | YES | NO |
| 8. | French will be useful to me after I leave school | YES | NO |
| 9. | There are more important things to learn in school than French | YES | NO |
| 10. | French is my favourite lesson | YES | NO |
| 11. | French people should learn English instead of us learning French | YES | NO |
| 12. | Only children who do well in English should learn French | YES | NO |
| 13. | I would like to go on learning French | YES | NO |
| 14. | I am better at French than at other subjects. | YES | NO |

SMP/RCW UNIVERSITY OF ASTON.

Department of Educational Enquiry.

APPENDIX 14

PILOT STUDY.

ABSOLUTE FREQUENCIES FOR ALL VARIABLES.

LISTENING TEST.

N = 96.

<u>Question</u>		<u>Number of</u> <u>correct</u> <u>responses</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>incorrect</u> <u>responses</u>	<u>Facility</u> <u>Index (%)</u>	(There are no omits)
	1	95	1	99.0	
	2	62	34	64.6	
	3	44	52	45.8	
	4	90	6	93.8	
	5	81	15	84.4	
	1	87	9	90.6	
	2	40	56	41.7	
	3	85	11	88.5	
	4	91	5	94.8	
	5	66	30	68.8	
	6	46	50	47.9	
	7	74	22	77.1	
	8	45	50	46.9	
	9	61	35	63.5	
	10	56	40	58.3	
	11	66	30	68.8	
	12	41	55	42.7	
	13	59	37	61.5	
	14	33	63	34.4	
	15	57	39	59.4	
	16	96	0	100.0	
	17	29	67	30.2	
	18	94	2	97.9	
	19	81	15	84.4	
	20	62	34	64.6	
	21	89	7	92.7	
	22	92	4	95.8	

LISTENING TEST (Continued)

<u>Question</u>		<u>Number of correct responses</u>	<u>Number of Incorrect responses</u>	<u>Facility Index (%)</u>
	23	66	30	68.8
	24	91	5	94.8
	25	23	73	24.0
	26	82	14	85.4
	27	69	27	71.9
	28	76	20	79.2
	29	67	29	69.8
	30	68	28	70.8
	31	89	7	92.7
	32	57	39	59.4
	33	54	42	56.3
	34	85	11	88.5
	35	45	51	46.9

ABSOLUTE FREQUENCIES FOR ALL VARIABLES.

READING TEST

N = 96

<u>Question</u>		<u>Number of correct responses</u>	<u>Number of incorrect responses</u>	<u>Facility Index (%)</u>
	1	92	4	95.8
	2	77	19	80.2
	3	45	51	46.9
	4	95	1	99.0
	5	95	1	99.0
	1	88	8	91.7
	2	77	19	80.2
	3	88	8	91.7
	4	84	12	87.5
	5	73	23	76.0
	6	92	4	95.8

READING TEST (Continued)

<u>Question</u>		<u>Number of correct responses</u>	<u>Number of Incorrect responses</u>	<u>Facility Index (%)</u>
	7	44	52	45.8
	8	89	7	92.7
	9	34	62	35.4
	10	71	25	74.0
	11	60	36	62.5
	12	64	32	66.7
	13	74	22	77.1
	14	78	18	81.3
	15	64	32	66.7
	16	92	4	95.8
	17	82	14	85.4
	18	91	5	94.8
	19	48	48	50.0
	20	76	20	79.2
	21	68	28	70.8
	22	60	36	62.5
	23	84	12	87.5
	24	77	19	80.2
	25	93	3	96.9
	26	54	42	56.3
	27	73	23	76.0
	28	83	13	86.4
	29	68	28	70.8
	30	72	24	75.0
	31	75	21	78.1
	32	72	21	75.0
	33	48	48	50.0
	34	76	20	79.2
	35	49	47	51.0

ABSOLUTE FREQUENCIES FOR ALL VARIABLES.

WRITING TEST

N = 96

<u>Question</u>		<u>No response</u>	<u>Fully Correct</u> <u>(3 marks)</u>	<u>2 marks</u>	<u>1 mark</u>	<u>Incorrect</u> <u>0 mark</u>
	1	0	19	18	20	39
	2	1	18	29	12	36
	3	6	12	15	35	28
	4	2	18	17	18	41
	5	0	37	14	13	32
	6	5	27	14	15	35
	7	3	20	25	24	24
	8	5	15	12	13	51
	9	3	8	17	28	40
	10	11	2	9	13	61
	11	6	41	11	9	29
	12	7	5	10	19	55

ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

ASSESSMENT OF LIKING OR DISLIKE FOR FRENCH.

<u>Sentence</u>		<u>Number of</u> <u>responses</u>	
	1	35	(I like French)
	2	40	(I like French most of the time).
	3	17	(I like French some of the time).
	4	4	(I dislike French).

MAIN ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE.

<u>Response</u>	:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No response</u>
<u>Sentence</u>	1	81	15	0
	2	19	75	2
	3	22	73	1
	4	79	15	2
	5	25	69	2
	6	50	45	1
	7	89	7	0
	8	89	6	1
	9	7	86	3
	10	44	50	2
	11	62	33	1
	12	65	30	1
	13	53	42	1
	14	85	10	1
	15	78	44	4
	16	6	89	1
	17	8	84	4
	18	69	22	5
	19	12	83	1
	20	22	68	6
	21	87	4	5
	22	20	72	4
	23	7	84	5
	24	79	14	3
	25	13	79	4
Have you ever been to France ?		46	38	12

ABSOLUTE FREQUENCIES ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE :

COMPLETION OF SENTENCES.

(See Coding Sheet for Responses 1-9. For all variables
9 = No response).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<u>Sentence 1</u>									
Response 1	11	16	3	3	2	11	24	4	22
Response 2	0	1	4	0	2	10	11	2	66
Response 3	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	86
<u>Sentence 2</u>									
Response 1	21	14	3	12	11	1	6	0	28
Response 2	4	3	2	8	2	6	4	0	67
Response 3	1	0	0	2	0	2	5	0	86
<u>Further Comments</u>									
Response 1	7	3	3	7	1	0	0	0	75
Response 2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	93
Response 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96

MAIN INVESTIGATION

ABSOLUTE FREQUENCIES FOR ALL VARIABLES.

LISTENING TEST

N = 575

<u>Question</u>	<u>Number of correct responses</u>	<u>Incorrect responses</u>	<u>No responses</u>	<u>Facility Index (%)</u>
1	483	92	0	84.0
2	410	165	0	71.3
3	325	250	0	56.5
4	518	57	0	90.1
5	518	57	0	90.1
6	496	79	0	86.3
7	323	252	0	56.2
8	438	137	0	76.2
9	530	45	0	92.2
10	376	198	1	65.4
11	496	79	0	86.3
12	400	175	0	69.6
13	354	221	0	61.6
14	370	205	0	64.3
15	315	260	0	54.8
16	307	268	0	53.4
17	387	188	0	67.3
18	510	65	0	88.7
19	414	161	0	72.0
20	459	116	0	80.0
21	408	167	0	71.0
22	538	37	0	93.6
23	212	362	1	36.9
24	443	132	0	77.0
25	454	121	0	79.0
26	453	122	0	78.8
27	405	170	0	70.4
28	527	48	0	91.7

LISTENING TEST (Continued)

<u>Question</u>		<u>Number of correct responses</u>	<u>Incorrect responses</u>	<u>No responses</u>	<u>Facility Index (%)</u>
29		294	281	0	51.1
30		360	215	0	62.6
31		491	84	0	85.4
32		351	224	0	61.0

READING TEST

N = 575

<u>Question</u>				
1	481	94	0	83.7
2	434	139	2	75.5
3	289	284	2	50.3
4	537	36	2	93.4
5	495	80	0	86.1
6	518	57	0	90.1
7	445	130	0	77.4
8	460	115	0	80.0
9	510	65	0	88.7
10	283	292	0	49.2
11	496	79	0	86.3
12	222	353	0	38.6
13	401	174	0	69.7
14	402	173	0	69.9
15	409	166	0	71.1
16	469	106	0	81.6
17	323	252	0	56.2
18	539	36	0	93.7
19	377	198	0	65.6
20	437	137	1	76.0
21	340	233	2	59.1
22	454	121	0	80.0
23	387	188	0	67.3
24	472	103	0	82.1

READING TEST (Continued)

<u>Question</u>		<u>Correct responses</u>	<u>Incorrect responses</u>	<u>No response</u>	<u>Facility Index ($\frac{1}{2}$)</u>
	25	384	187	4	66.8
	26	379	192	4	65.9
	27	473	98	4	82.3
	28	375	196	4	65.2
	29	412	156	7	71.7
	30	396	173	6	68.9
	31	447	122	6	77.7
	32	305	262	8	53.0
	33	447	122	6	77.7
	34	307	262	6	53.4

WRITING TEST

N = 575

<u>Question</u>		<u>No response</u>	<u>Fully correct (3 marks)</u>	<u>2 marks</u>	<u>1 mark</u>	<u>Incorrect 0 mark</u>
	1	9	168	119	122	157
	2	19	186	128	78	164
	3	33	91	155	150	146
	4	20	161	120	105	169
	5	12	152	130	105	176
	6	30	43	197	112	193
	7	24	130	204	122	95
	8	49	36	111	121	258
	9	28	96	135	156	160
	10	110	12	83	95	275
	11	62	131	98	104	180
	12	78	30	76	160	231

ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

ASSESSING OF LIKING OR DISLIKE FOR FRENCH.

<u>Sentence</u>		<u>Number of responses</u>	
1		124	(I like French)
2		179	(I like French most of the time)
3		178	(I like French some of the time)
4		93	(I dislike French)
		1	No response.

MAIN ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE.

<u>Response</u>	:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No response</u>
<u>Sentence</u>				
1		179	394	2
2		66	503	6
3		271	295	9
4		466	107	2
5		406	164	5
6		133	435	7
7		393	178	4
8		361	207	7
9		483	82	10
10		47	522	6
11		202	352	21
12		129	444	2
13		354	215	6
14		57	502	16

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