

THE EVALUATION OF ENGLISH-AND FRENCH-CANADIAN  
STUDENTS BY ENGLISH-AND FRENCH-CANADIAN TEACHERS

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this research, carried out in St. Boniface, Manitoba was to determine whether French-and English-Canadian students are evaluated differentially. Because the French-Canadian stereotype appears to reflect both their lower socio-economic status and the difficulties French-Canadian youngsters experience in the educational system, it was hypothesized that both English-and French-Canadian teachers would evaluate French-Canadian students more negatively than English-Canadian students. Because increased contact with the outgroup reduces the tendency to stereotype, it was hypothesized that teachers who have had classroom contact with the other language group would be less biased than those who have not. It was also hypothesized that the amount of bias shown toward French-Canadian students would change as they progressed from grade one to grade three.

Teachers of grades one and three were asked to evaluate arithmetic and printing or handwriting exercises of ten children, and also to rate the children's overall academic ability on the basis of this work. For half of the teachers the work of a given child was attributed to an English-Canadian. Analyses of variance for each of the dependent measures revealed no significant differences between the English-and French-attributed versions of the protocols. No differences were found between grades one and three. A comparison of teachers with and without outgroup contact was not possible due to few single-group contact teachers.

The findings were discussed in terms of the quality of protocols evaluated and the possibility that attitudes toward French-and English-Canadians by St. Boniface teachers may not reflect those found in other regions of Canada for political, social, or cultural reasons.

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This study was concerned with whether or not English and French-Canadian teachers evaluate English-and French-Canadian students differentially. French-Canadians, as will be shown, tend to occupy the lower strata of Canadian society, and to fare more poorly in the educational system than English-Canadians. These facts appear to be reflected in French-and English-Canadian stereotypes, and may either contribute to, or result from, bias within the school system. This study investigated whether or not such a bias exists.

Throughout Canada, relations between the two cultural-linguistic groups have often been stormy, and are still sometimes viewed by members of each group as that of conquerer to conquered (Wagley & Harris, 1958). It is not surprising that the groups have developed marked stereotypes about each other. Because teachers of the various public school programs are also members of a cultural-linguistic group which hold shared beliefs about the other major group, this may affect student evaluation. It has been shown that factors such as the student's physical attractiveness (Landy & Sigall, 1974; Kehle, 1972), sex, race, intelligence, and socio-economic status (Kehle, 1972) can affect a teacher's expectations and evaluation of a student. It is possible that knowing a student is from a different cultural-linguistic group than one's own could also bias a teacher's evaluation of that student.

The study begins with a review of the differential status of Anglophones and Francophones in Canadian society, with particular emphasis on differential achievement and school adjustment of the children. This is followed by a summary of the literature on English-and French-Canadian stereotypes (i.e., what preconceptions each group has of the other), and how they are modified by intergroup contact. The



possible ramifications of the stereotypes on teachers' evaluations of English-and French-Canadian students is then examined systematically.

#### English-and French-Canadian Differences in Canadian Society

Much research supports the French-Canadians' contention that they are second-class citizens in Canada. French-Canadians are over-represented in lower socio-economic levels, and in the lower echelons of business, government, educational, and financial institutions, while English-Canadians are over-represented in the upper levels (Porter, 1965; Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism 1968; Lanthier & Morris, 1974). French-Canadians who do reach the senior ranks of the civil service are paid less than their English-Canadian counterparts, even when educational differences are controlled for (Beattie & Spencer, 1971). However, the proportion of French-Canadians who pursue a university education has always been lower than that of English-Canadians (Wagley & Harris, 1958).

Even when socio-economic level is held constant, there are marked differences in the aspirations of French-and English-Canadians for their children, and in the actual achievement and school adjustment of the children. Several studies have shown that French-Canadian parents have lower aspirations for their children (Rosen, 1959; Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1968; Majoribanks, 1972). Rosen (1959) compared a group of French-Canadian mothers and sons with Italians, Greeks, Jews, Negroes, and white Protestants living in the north-eastern United States in terms of the 'achievement syndrome' - a combination of need for achievement, value orientations, and educational-vocational levels. The need for achievement scores of the French-Canadian boys and their mothers' vocational aspirations for them were the second lowest among the six groups. The ages at which

their mothers wished to see them independent in various areas was the second latest. Mothers' educational aspirations for their sons and their attitude toward striving for excellence were the lowest of all the groups.

In terms of actual achievement, French-Canadian students have been found to score significantly lower on I.Q. tests than English-Canadian students and students from homes where languages other than French and English are spoken (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1968; Majoribanks, 1972). They also do more poorly on aptitude and achievement tests (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1968). In a longitudinal study encompassing virtually all of the public and private secondary schools in Ontario, the relationship between ethnicity and school adjustment was examined (Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1968). Students from homes where French was primarily spoken were compared to students from homes where English or other languages (Ukrainian, German, Polish, Italian, Dutch, Slovak, and Hungarian) predominated. In each year of the study, the number of French-Canadians failing to complete their grade was significantly higher than any of the other groups. Only 3.2% of students from French language homes, as compared to 13.2% of students from English-language homes, successfully completed Grade 13 within five years. The poorer performance of the French-Canadian students cannot be attributed solely to their coming from a dual-language home, because the percentage of students from all but one of the other dual-language homes surpassed that of students from both English-and French-language homes.

The Commission also compared ratings of students by their teachers on the following factors: reliability in performance of curricular

and extracurricular activities, cooperation, industry, stamina, and the chance of successfully completing Grade 13. Students from homes where a language other than French or English was spoken received significantly more "above average" ratings than students from French or English language homes. French-Canadian students received more "below average" ratings than any other group. This standing was maintained even when an adjustment was made for a possible "halo effect" of academic achievement. Although the teacher ratings may have reflected an anti-French bias even after the adjustment for academic achievement, the fact remains that fewer French-Canadians than English-Canadians complete Grade 13 after five years. Thus, it appears that by high school the adjustment of French-Canadians is poorer than that of English-Canadians. It is possible that differential attitudes of teachers toward French- and English-Canadian students either result from, or contribute to, the differential adjustment of the two groups.

#### Stereotypes of the Two Language Groups

The stereotype of the French-Canadian held by English-Canadians contains few, if any, attributes which would appear to correlate highly with academic success. Gardner, Wonnacott, and Taylor (1968), using the stereotype differential, a variation of the semantic differential (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957), found that English-Canadians attributed the following characteristics to French-Canadians: excitable, talkative, proud, impulsive, emotional, colourful, artistic, haughty, active, religious, sensitive, tenacious, and short. In a similar study (Gardner, Taylor & Feenstra, 1970) 14 and 15 year-old English-Canadian students described French-speaking Canadians as religious, artistic and proud, whereas English-Canadians were described as "proud, pleasant, loyal, intelligent, active, likeable, kind, artistic

and important" . Kirby and Gardner (1973) found that adult subjects held very similar stereotypes of the two language groups. While there is a slight overlap between the French-and English-Canadian stereotype as revealed in these studies (both are rated as proud, artistic, and active), the differences are striking. English-Canadians are seen as intelligent, important, loyal and a great deal more placid than French-Canadians who appear to be viewed as excitable (talkative, impulsive and emotional) sensitive, and religious. A study using a free response technique with Ontario nursing students as subjects (Gardner & Taylor, 1969) indicated that English-Canadians tend to be viewed more in light of the political and financial power they wield on a country-wide basis, whereas French-Canadians are perceived as being more Quebec-bound and are seen more in terms of their culture and religion.

A study in an industrial setting (Gardner, Kirby & Reynolds, 1972) asked English- and French-Canadian workers to indicate the attributes required for "a good worker on my job" . They were then asked to rate several ethnic groups on the stereotype differential. Both French-and English-Canadians ascribed the characteristics of a good worker to the concept "English-Canadian" . While French-Canadians also attributed these traits to themselves, English-Canadians did not perceive the French-Canadians as having the attributes of a good worker.

In short, English-Canadians appear to be viewed as important, intelligent, powerful and placid, and as good workers. French-Canadians are viewed primarily as religious, excitable and culture-bound, and are not perceived, at least by English-Canadians, as being good workers. The characteristics attributed to English-Canadians appear more likely

to lead to academic success than do those attributed to French-Canadians.

Although there are marked French-and English-Canadian stereotypes, individuals who have had an opportunity to interact with members of the opposite-language group tend to perceive them less in terms of the stereotype than do individuals who have had little or no interaction with them. Abound and Taylor (1971) had French-and English-Canadian subjects rate the concepts "French-Canadian", "English-Canadian", "teacher", "student", and all of the linguistic-occupation combinations on several personality dimensions. They found that subjects who had had negligible contact with members of the outgroup tended to ascribe to outgroup students and teachers the characteristics of the ethnic stereotype, and to ingroup students and teachers the characteristics of the role stereotype. This tendency is lessened with increased outgroup contact. Once someone has interacted with outgroup members role characteristics assume more saliency than ethnic characteristics. Anisfield and Lambert (1964) used a "matched guise" technique in which French-and English-Canadian subjects listened to tape-recorded passages in English and French and rated the speakers on several personality variables. The five bilingual speakers each read the passages in both French and English. The subjects, however, believed that they were listening to ten different speakers. The researchers found that bilingual French-Canadian children saw themselves to be more similar to English-Canadians than did unilingual French-Canadians. Presumably, being bilingual resulted from or permitted more contact with English-Canadian youngsters. Increased contact, therefore, tends to reduce perceptions of inter-ethnic differences, Koulack and Cumming (1973) suggest that increased contact allows

confirmation or disconfirmation of expectancies based on stereotypic knowledge of the outgroup.

#### Comparative Evaluation of French-and English-Canadians

Several studies have shown that French-Canadians and their work tend to be downgraded when compared to English-Canadians. In two studies carried out one year apart in Calgary, Alberta (Labovitz, 1974), subjects were presented with a resume of research and asked to evaluate it on a scale ranging from highly favourable to highly unfavourable. The resumes were attributed variously to an English-Canadian male, English-Canadian female, French-Canadian male, or Canadian-Indian male. In both studies, the French-Canadian male received the lowest rating, and the English-Canadian male the highest.

French-Canadians have sometimes been found to downgrade themselves in comparisons with English-Canadians. Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum (1960) used the "matched guise" technique described earlier and found that both English-and French-Canadian listeners rated the speakers more positively in their English guise. The authors concluded that the French have internalized the belief that they are inferior to English-Canadians. However, these results may only appertain to French-Canadian males from Quebec. Larimer (1970), using a similar design but including male and female speakers from several English accent groups, and three French accent groups (Parisian, Quebec, and Acadian) found that both Quebec and Nova Scotia English-and French-Canadian subjects downgraded the male Quebec French accent. The same effect did not occur for the female Quebec Francophone nor the Acadian Francophones.

### Summary

French-Canadians tend to be over-represented in the lower socio-economic levels and have lower academic and vocational aspirations for their children. French-Canadian children tend to do more poorly in school, and on I.Q. and achievement tests. They appear to be less motivated to achieve, and are rated less favourably by their teachers on nonacademic factors than their English-Canadian counterparts. There is a tendency for both English-Canadian and French-Canadian adults to downgrade French-Canadian adults. If adults devalue the work of French-Canadians of any age, teachers may also tend to devalue the work of French-Canadian youngsters. This tendency would likely be more pronounced in teachers who have had little contact with students of the outgroup, for as intergroup contact increases, expectancies can be confirmed or disconfirmed (Lay & Cumming, 1972; Cumming & Koulack, 1973), and role stereotypes become more salient than ethnic stereotypes (Aboud & Taylor, 1971). Therefore, teachers who have had more experience with outgroup members should be able to evaluate their work more objectively than those who have had less contact.

### The Present Study

The evaluation of French-and English-Canadian children by French-and English-Canadian teachers was systematically examined. Anglophone and Francophone teachers, varying in degree of professional experience with outgroup students, were asked to evaluate bogus protocols on which the ethnic identity of the students was varied. The problem was also examined developmentally, by assessing whether cultural-linguistic bias increased or decreased from grade one to grade three.

### Hypotheses

1. It was hypothesized that teachers from both cultural-linguistic

groups would rate English-Canadian students more positively than French-Canadian students.

2. It was hypothesized that teachers who have not taught students of the other-language group would be more likely to demonstrate an anti-French bias than would teachers who have taught both language groups.

3. It was hypothesized that the pro-English bias would increase from first to third grade among French-Canadians in French Immersion programs. This increase would be due to the increased French-language facility of Anglophone students by third grade.<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 teachers are faced with children who know little or no French but for whom they presumably have more positive expectations than they do for Francophone first graders. Grade 3 teachers interact with students who now have second-language facility, and for whom they have positive expectations based on the ethnic stereotype. Therefore, a greater discrepancy, in favour of the English-Canadian students, was expected from first to third grade.

4. It was hypothesized that anti-French bias on the part of English-Canadian teachers who have taught both language groups would decrease from Grade 1 to Grade 3. A child from a Francophone background in an English-language program may be less fluent in English than his Anglophone classmates, and this, in addition to negative expectations because of ethnic background, might result in his work being rated more negatively. By grade 3 he should have greater English-language

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<sup>1</sup>Research on French-immersion programs in Montreal has shown that by Grade 4, Anglophone children are functionally bilingual (Lambert, Tucker & d'Anglejan, 1973).



facility, and any negative bias toward his work because of language difficulties would be decreased,<sup>2</sup>

### Method

#### Setting

The locale of the study was St. Boniface, Manitoba. Although in 1971 French-Canadians constituted only 9% of the population of Manitoba, in St. Boniface they were the majority group, comprising approximately one-third of the population (Driedger, 1976). In the older sections of St. Boniface there are many French-Canadian cultural institutions, such as a newspaper, theatre, churches, and recreational facilities. Street signs and many of the names of and services offered by, private businesses are in both official languages. French-Canadians living in businesses are in both official languages. French-Canadians living in St. Boniface have a strong cultural identity (Backeland, 1971).

The newer sections of St. Boniface are predominately English and the French flavour found in the older sections is not as apparent there.

Since 1970 the St. Boniface School Division has offered a number of programs varying in the proportion of instruction given in English and French. Programs A (all instruction, except Language Arts, in French) and B (50% of the instruction in French) are geared primarily to children from French homes. These, and the French Immersion course for non-French-speaking children, are taught by Francophone teachers. Program C (all instruction in English) is open to both English-and French-Canadian children, and may be taught by a teacher from either

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<sup>2</sup>This assumes that even if other factors which contribute to anti-French evaluation bias increase in strength from grades one to three, in early grades improved language facility would tend to outweigh them.

cultural-linguistic group.

### Participants

All first and third grade teachers in the St. Boniface School Division, with the exception of two who were absent at the time of testing, participated in this study. The teachers' co-operation had been requested by their principals, with whom the study had been discussed. This resulted in 29 grade one teachers (17 English-Canadian and 12 French-Canadian) and 23 grade three teachers (11 English-Canadian and 13 French-Canadian) being tested. One grade three French-Canadian teacher did not complete all of the handwriting or overall evaluations. Therefore  $N = 12$  for this cell on those two dependent variables, while for arithmetic  $N = 13$ .

### Materials

Protocols (Appendix A) Each teacher received the same ten sets of grade-appropriate work to evaluate. Each set consisted of one exercise in numerical concepts and one exercise in printing or writing, depending on grade level. These exercises were done by first and third grade children at schools not participating in this study. The work of each child was duplicated and the child signed it once with an English male name (first name only) and once with a French male name. This provided two sets of identical material from each child, differing only in the assigned name and ethnic identity of the fictional student.

Professional Information Questionnaire (Appendix B) This questionnaire was designed by the author to determine the cultural-linguistic background of the teacher and the proportion of opposite-language students he has taught, without alerting him to the purpose of the study. It consisted of seven questions about professional

background and experience, among which two (numbers 4 and 7), were meant to elicit the above-mentioned information. The question on linguistic background allowed teachers to choose either "French-Canadian", "English-Canadian", or "other", which they were asked to specify. English-speaking teachers born in Canada were expected to identify themselves as English-Canadian, rather than by the nationality of their ancestors. That is to say, it was not felt that the category "English-Canadian" would be limited to those of British ancestry. Similarly, it was assumed that French-speaking teachers born in Canada would tend to identify themselves as French-Canadian, regardless of their ancestors' country of origin.

#### Procedure

Teachers participated as a group at each elementary school in the division. They were told it was a developmental study of academic achievement in which they were to grade the work of students drawn at random from the division. The researcher presented them with the same ten sets of grade-appropriate work, five sets bearing an English name, and five bearing a French name. Each teacher received the sets in a different randomized order so there would be no language-position effects. Teachers were asked to evaluate each subject area on a five-point scale ranging from excellent (5) to poor (1). In addition, they were asked to indicate their overall impression of the students' academic ability on the same five-point scale. Separate forms were provided for this overall rating with a space for teachers to write the names of the student being evaluated. (Appendix C). This was to remind them of the names. When they had completed the evaluations, teachers were asked to fill in the Professional Information Questionnaire to provide information about teachers in the division. Participants were

debriefed by letter after the research was completed.

### Results

Each teacher's ratings on the five same-language protocol sets were averaged to obtain his mean French and English ratings on each of the three dependent variables (overall evaluation, arithmetic, and printing or handwriting). Ratings of teachers with and without outgroup experience at each grade were collapsed into single cells for each language-group of teachers. Group means and standard deviations for each dependent measure are presented in Tables 1(a), 2(a), and 3(a), respectively. The French and English ratings for each dependent measure were analyzed in separate  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  (teachers  $\times$  grades  $\times$  protocols) fixed effects analyses of variance for repeated measures. These results are presented in Tables 1(b), 2(b), and 3(b). Significant main effects for teachers on the dependent variables overall evaluation ( $F = 4.529$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and arithmetic ( $F = 9.527$ ,  $p < .01$ ) were found. On overall evaluation, English-Canadian teachers rated higher than French-Canadian teachers. On arithmetic, French-Canadians rated higher. However, these  $F$  - values may be spuriously high because the analyses did not control for unequal cell sizes. No other significant results were observed.

Further analyses were done for the following reason. The protocol sets used were French and English versions of work produced by ten different children. The protocols produced by one group of five children always appeared in the same language version, sometimes English, sometimes French, and those by the second five children in the opposite language. Therefore, the ten protocol sets received by some teachers consisted of the French version of the first five protocols, and the English version of the second five, while other

TABLE 1 (a)

Overall Ratings of English and French Protocols by  
 English-and French-Canadian Teachers  
 by Grade Level

	English Protocols		French Protocols		Total Protocols		English Protocols		French Protocols		Total Protocols	
	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.
English-Canadian Teachers	2.24	.48	2.21	.40	2.22	.43	2.20	.49	2.27	.40	2.24	.44
	(N = 17)				(N = 17)		(N = 11)				(N = 11)	
French-Canadian Teachers	1.92	.45	2.02	.35	1.97	.39	2.45	.44	2.40	.48	2.43	.45
	(N = 12)				(N = 12)		(N = 12)				(N = 12)	
Total Teachers	2.08	.49	2.12	.38	2.10	.43	2.33	.48	2.34	.44	2.33	.45
	(N = 29)				(N = 29)		(N = 23)				(N = 23)	

(b) Sources of Variance for Overall Ratings  
of French and English Protocols

	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Grade	1	0.02	ns
Teachers	1	1.47	4.53*
Grade x teachers	1	1.19	ns
Error	48	0.33	
Protocols	1	0.02	ns
Grade x Protocols	1	0.00	ns
Teachers x Protocols	1	0.01	ns
Teachers x Grade x Protocols	1	0.08	ns
Error	48	0.05	

\*p < .05

TABLE 2 (a)

Ratings of English-French Arithmetic Protocols  
By English-and French-Canadian Teachers by Grade Level

	Grade 1				Grade 3							
	English Protocols		French Protocols		Total Protocols		English Protocols		French Protocols		Total Protocols	
	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.
English-Canadian Teachers	2.07	.42	2.11	.46	2.09	.44	2.40	.60	2.33	.51	2.21	.54
	(N = 17)				(N = 17)		(N = 11)				(N = 11)	
French-Canadian Teachers	1.97	.44	2.03	.34	2.00	.39	2.48	.39	2.32	.52	2.40	.46
	(N = 12)				(N = 12)		(N = 13)				(N = 13)	
Total Teachers	2.02	.43	2.07	.41	2.05	.42	2.44	.49	2.33	.50	2.38	.49
	(N = 29)				(N = 29)		(N = 24)				(N = 24)	

(b) Sources of Variance for Ratings French  
and English Arithmetic Protocols

	<u>df</u>	<u>Ms</u>	<u>F</u>
Grade	1	0,02	ns
Teachers	1	2,94	9,53*
Grade x Teachers	1	0,10	ns
Error	49	0,31	
Protocols	1	0,03	ns
Grade x Protocols	1	0,00	ns
Teacher x Protocols	1	0,17	ns
Teacher x Grade x Protocols	1	0,02	ns
Error	49	0,12	

\*p < ,01



TABLE 3 (a)

Ratings of English and French Printing and  
Handwriting Protocols by English-and French-Canadian Teachers by Grade Level

Grade 1

Grade 3

	English Protocols		French Protocols		Total Protocols		English Protocols		French Protocols		Total Protocols	
	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.	$\bar{X}$	s.d.
English-Canadian Teachers	2.14	.50	2.18	.42	2.16	.46	2.22	.42	2.13	.36	2.17	.29
	(N = 17)				(N = 17)		(N = 11)				(N = 11)	
French-Canadian Teachers	1.85	.43	1.97	.29	1.91	.36	2.17	.47	2.22	.40	2.19	.42
	(N = 12)				(N = 12)		(N = 12)				(N = 12)	
Total Teachers	2.00	.49	2.07	.38	2.03	.44	2.19	.44	2.17	.37	2.18	.40
	(N = 29)				(N = 29)		(N = 23)				(N = 23)	

(b) Sources of Variance for Ratings of French-and  
English Printing and Handwriting Protocols

	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Grade	1	0,34	ns
Teachers	1	0,56	ns
Grade x Teachers	1	0,46	ns
Error	48	0,31	ns
Protocols	1	0,02	ns
Grade x Teachers	1	0,08	ns
Teachers x Protocols	1	0,06	ns
Grade x Teachers x Protocols	1	0,01	ns
Error	48	0,04	

teachers received the English version of the first five protocols and the French version of the second five. Although the distribution of the French and English versions of each group of protocols was counter-balanced across all teachers at each grade level, it did not balance out between French-and English-Canadian teachers within grade levels. That is to say, within cells, the number of teachers receiving the first group of protocols in English and the second group in French did not equal the number receiving the first group in French and the second in English. Therefore, the equivalency of the two protocol groups was examined. Two of the dependent measures at each grade level were randomly selected and tested, T-tests were calculated comparing the ratings of all the first group protocols with all the second group protocols, regardless of language version. The results were significant or approached significance for two of the four dependent variables tested (grade 3 arithmetic,  $t = 1.828$ ,  $p < .10$ ; grade 1 arithmetic,  $t = 2.3000$ ,  $p < .03$ ).

These differences in protocol quality were adjusted by obtaining single corrected-mean English and French ratings for each teacher x grade cell on each of the three dependent variables. The corrected mean English ratings were obtained in the following way. Within each teacher x grade cell, ratings on the English version of the first group of protocols were averaged, ratings on the English version of the second group of protocols were averaged, and the two averages averaged, resulting in one mean English protocol rating per cell. Mean French protocol ratings for each cell were derived in the same way. The resulting cell means are displayed in Tables 4(a), 5(a), and 6(a).

For each dependent variable a  $2 \times 2 \times 2$  ANOVA for repeated measures on unweighted means was calculated. In each cell there were