

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON SCHOOL  
ACHIEVEMENT OF INDIAN AND METIS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were to determine the ability of Indian and Metis students in grade nine to comprehend oral English; to discover if a relationship existed between ability to comprehend oral English and the choice of academic courses chosen in grades ten and eleven; and further, to analyze the structure of the Cree language to identify features of it that create barriers to the comprehension of oral English.

A standardized test was used to establish ability of students to comprehend oral English. The test consisted of seventy-six items and was administered to one hundred thirty-seven students. Quartile distributions were used to establish relationships between oral language ability, promotions, drop-outs and course choices during grades nine, ten and eleven. Basic structures of the Cree language were determined and data developed were applied to an item analysis of errors in the test of oral English ability.

The major findings of the study were as follows:

1. The ability of Indian and Metis students to comprehend oral English was such that few could learn adequately from the lecture method of teaching.
2. A significant relationship existed between ability to comprehend oral English and success in an academic high school program.
3. A significant relationship existed between ability to comprehend oral English and remaining in high school.

4. Linguistic differences between Cree and English were a basic cause of inability of students to comprehend oral English at a sophisticated level.

The study indicated a need for the development of radically different approaches to English language studies in Frontier School Division #48.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The role of persons of mixed Indian and White blood formerly called half-breeds in Canada and now euphemistically referred to as Metis, has been an unhappy one. Unlike their half brothers, the registered Indians, the Metis had no paternal federal government to supply their material needs, provide free education and administer tax free land holdings which were theirs in perpetuity.

The Metis, largely settled in isolated areas of the pre-cambrian shield, and often living in conjunction with Indian reserves or frontier White settlements, were neither of White nor Indian society. Classed by the Whites as Indians and spurned by the Indians for being White, the Metis evolved their own society--a society where all were received and were welcomed. Drifters from White society, Indians who had sold their Treaty rights, all became a part of the Metis society.

Most of the Metis lived in unorganized territories where there was no municipal government to turn to for "relief" when economic depressions struck the settlements. They lived a hard life but a completely free one--free even to face starvation if their skill on the traplines, fishing boats, hunting trails, or as lumberjacks, failed to earn them a living.

Living in isolated areas and often close to Indian reserves some Metis began to adopt more and more of the Indian culture. The language of the Indians became theirs and though the surnames remained to indicate Scottish, English or French ancestry, more and more they became

Indians in a cultural sense.

Some Metis lived in closer proximity to White settlements and their movement into that society varied with the region. In some areas assimilation was rapid. In others, racial factors were more apparent and the Metis were rejected. Cut off from Indian society by distance and from White society by prejudice, other Metis evolved as a separate group. English usually became the language of everyday life but it was not standard English. It had a vocabulary predominantly English but the basic structure was that of Algonkian, usually Cree or Saukteaux. In a sense they lived in a linguistic no man's land.

In many of the isolated communities there were no schools. In others the only school was on the nearby Indian reserve in which only registered Indians were permitted to enroll.

Concern on the part of the Metis parents and the Manitoba government brought about the creation of a Special Schools Branch in 1947. Under its Director, Bernard Grafton, there were established a number of Special Schools in isolated areas. Being in unorganized territories these schools had no tax base and were built, staffed and administered by the Department of Education. As the years progressed both parents and government became dissatisfied because the small village schools ended at grade eight and students had no opportunity for further education.

In 1965 the Manitoba Government established a residential high school at Cranberry Portage where an abandoned air force training base was converted into residences and classrooms. A new school division,

Frontier School Division #48, was created to administer the new residential and the isolated elementary schools.

Within the first year it became apparent that the majority of the children in Frontier Collegiate were unable to benefit from normal high school instruction. To solve the problem the curriculum was adapted, special reading classes organized, compulsory evening study time instituted, and a great diversity of courses offered. All of these modified, but did not solve the problem.

It became obvious that much of the research done with White students was not applicable to the problems in Frontier Collegiate. Research among Indians was more applicable to Metis students but Indian students were no more successful in high school. Indian Affairs Branch schools were struggling with similar problems.

## I. THE PROBLEM

### Statement of the Problem

As a consultant in the Curriculum Branch of the Department of Education who visited Metis Schools and later as an administrator of a junior high school which each year had Indian and Metis students enter as non residents at the grade nine level, the writer had observed that certain patterns seemed to develop in students as they entered grade nine:

1. The reading level was often below the norm but was usually high enough to enable students to handle grade nine textbooks with difficulty.

2. Problems of social adjustment were serious but some students overcame them successfully.

3. Some students who read well seemed to have difficulty in gaining meaning from the classroom lectures of the teachers and little meaning from class discussions.

4. Those who could comprehend oral English and speak it well were more likely to overcome their social adjustment problems.

5. Few students were doing well academically or adjusting socially, who appeared to have serious weaknesses in their ability to comprehend oral English.

Was this subjective judgment reliable? If so, did it give a clue as to methods of educating grade nine students at Frontier Collegiate and similar schools? The problem was divided into four sub-problems:

1. What is the ability of students in grade nine at Frontier Collegiate to comprehend oral English in comparison to White students in non Metis communities?

2. What is the relationship between ability to comprehend oral English and the choice of courses chosen in grade ten and eleven?

3. What unique features of the Algonkian languages create barriers to comprehending oral English?

4. What would be the significant aspects of a program in oral English in Frontier Collegiate to remedy the inability of Metis students to comprehend oral English?

#### Importance of the Study

The stated purpose of Frontier School Division #48 has been to

inculcate in its student body intellectual skills and knowledge as well as social skills, which would fit the students to enter the dominant society with an educational background that would enable them to compete on equal terms with graduates of any other high school. Metis communities are no longer able to absorb all their young people in the traditional ways of earning a living. To be integrated into the dominant society Metis boys and girls must receive an education which, upon graduation from high school, allows them to compete for employment or opportunities in higher education. Unless this is achieved, Metis people will fill the ranks of the unskilled and unemployed rather than making the contribution of which they are capable to the economic, cultural and intellectual life of Manitoba.

## II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Metis: In this study the term "Metis" refers to a person of Indian and White ancestry who had acknowledged it on information requested on his test papers.

Indian: In this study "Indian" refers to a person who has treaty or equivalent rights under the revised Indian Act (1965), Statutes of Canada. (In the context of research studies done in the United States, Indian refers to a person who has one-eighth Indian "blood" and is recognized as a member of an Indian Band by the United States Department of the Interior. In the United States no differentiation, other than noted above, is made between an Indian and a "mixed blood." Thus studies concerning Indians in the United States have relevance to both Indians and Metis in Canada.)

Academic Achievement: In this study "academic achievement" refers, perforce, to the difficulty of academic courses chosen in grades ten and eleven at Frontier Collegiate. As Frontier Collegiate has a policy of non retention in grades nine, ten and eleven, but directs students into programs in which it is felt the student can be academically successful, the courses have been arranged in order of academic difficulty.

1. University Entrance
2. General Course
3. Business Education
4. Occupational Entrance Course

### III. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to the students who entered grade nine in Frontier Collegiate in September, 1968 and progressed to grade ten in 1969 and grade eleven in 1970. Any generalizations will be applicable only to these students or similar groups in similar schools.

The study assumes that Frontier Collegiate students fall into the average range of intelligence.

The students included in the study come from three distinct groups:

1. Metis students from communities where the language of everyday use is Cree or Sauteaux.
2. Metis students from communities where the language of everyday use is English but with a strong influence of Algonkian sounds and structures.

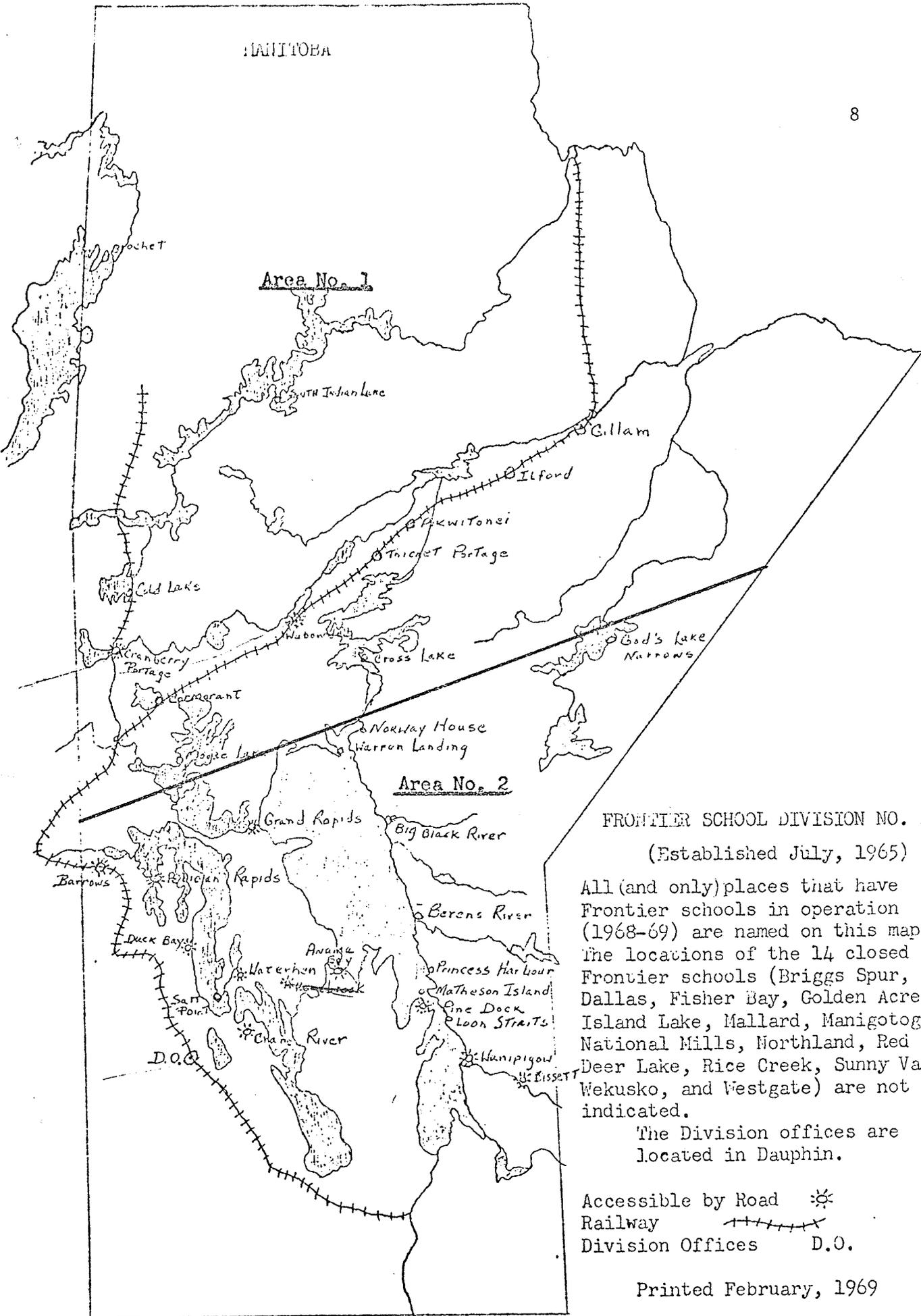
3. White students whose mother tongue is standard English.

The results of the study will be considered separately for White and Metis students.

#### IV. LOCATION OF THE STUDY

Frontier Collegiate is a residential high school with a student body of approximately five hundred students (1970). Situated fifty miles north of The Pas, Manitoba, it is situated on the height of land marking the division between the Nelson River system and the Churchill River system.

It is the only high school serving Frontier School Division #48 which covers approximately two-thirds of the geographical area of Manitoba. Frontier elementary schools are largely in the Canadian Shield country and range from the southern part of Lake Winnipeg in the South-East of Manitoba to Lake Brochet in the North-West corner of the province. Within this broad area there are enclaves which are not part of Frontier School Division. These consist of large towns and cities which operate their own school systems such as The Pas, Flin Flon, and Thompson. In addition, there are numerous Indian Reserves which operate schools under the authority of the Federal Department of Indian Affairs and North Development. In certain communities where the population is small or other factors warrant it, there operate integrated schools. Integrated schools are schools attended by Metis, Indian and White students but under the jurisdiction of Frontier School Division #48. Thus, in Frontier Collegiate are to be found some registered Treaty



FRONTIER SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 48  
(Established July, 1965)

All (and only) places that have Frontier schools in operation (1968-69) are named on this map. The locations of the 14 closed Frontier schools (Briggs Spur, Dallas, Fisher Bay, Golden Acres, Island Lake, Mallard, Manigotogan, National Mills, Northland, Red Deer Lake, Rice Creek, Sunny Valley, Wekusko, and Westgate) are not indicated.

The Division offices are located in Dauphin.

Accessible by Road ☼  
Railway +++++  
Division Offices D.O.

Indians who are graduates of integrated elementary schools. At no time, however, has the percentage of registered Indian students risen above ten per cent. Some White students are served by Frontier. White students in the group studied amounted to sixteen per cent of the total while registered Indians amounted to six and one-half per cent.

Most of the parents of students in the group studied fell into one of three categories in terms of earning a livelihood: fishermen, trappers, lumbermen. Many, however, were unemployed.

#### V. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

A review of other investigations related to the study will be the subject matter considered in Chapter II. Chapter III will outline the design of the study in detail. The analyses of the results of the findings relating to ability to comprehend oral English of Metis, White; males, females; and relationship to courses chosen in grades ten and eleven as well as an item analysis will be presented in Chapters IV and V. Chapter VI will examine linguistic differences between English and Algonkian languages. Chapter VII will summarize the findings of the study and will present an attempt to interpret these results. The implications of the findings with recommendations for the education of Metis students in Frontier Collegiate and for further research will conclude the final chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature describing studies of the academic achievement of children of native ancestry in both the United States and Canada consistently points out two factors: the low level of academic achievement and the phenomenon of their deceleration of achievement after the fifth year in school.

Most studies of academic achievement investigate several factors and are relevant to this particular study in terms of background knowledge although none deal specifically with ability to comprehend oral English.

Studies will be reviewed under five headings:

1. Studies Related to Intellectual Ability
2. Studies of Academic Achievement
3. Studies Concerning the Reasons for Poor Academic Achievement
4. Studies of the Social Acceptance of Indian Children as a Factor in Academic Achievement
5. Studies in Comprehension of Oral English

#### I. STUDIES RELATED TO INTELLECTUAL ABILITY

In 1914 the first comparative studies of the intellectual ability of Indian and non Indian children in the United States were made. Standardized intelligence tests were used and results of these studies indicated that Indian children were intellectually inferior to non-Indian children.

As further studies were made there was found to be a positive correlation between intelligence test scores and the degree of "White blood" in the subjects tested. Low academic achievement was, therefore, to be expected of Indians. Hindsight allows one to hypothesize that the "self-fulfilling prophecy" entered into the picture as an important variable of teaching by teachers and learning by students.

The Congressional Report (1969) details the gradual change in thinking which doubted and later refuted initial studies of intelligence of Indian students. Not until 1929 did researchers begin to doubt the initial research findings. Tests administered in 1928 had indicated that Indian students were superior in performance while inferior in verbal sections of the tests.

The use of tests more "culture free" were administered in subsequent years and the disparity between Indian and non-Indian test scores began to lessen appreciably. Further research indicated that if "culture free" tests were administered in the native language of Indian students that no significant differences were to be noted in comparison with non-Indian test scores.

Studies by Zintz (1969) among Mexican-American students showed similar results.

The Congressional Report (1969) concludes its comprehensive historical survey by noting, "Since 1940 no responsible scholar has maintained that Indians are intellectually inferior" (p. 33).

Ferguson (1954) surveyed a number of studies from various parts of the world dealing with intellectual differences. Studies of the

intellectual development patterns of children who grew up on canal boats in England; Indian reserves in the United States of America; and negroid persons in Nigeria, led him to conclude that biological or racial differences were not variables in measuring intelligence. Where differences existed they were the result of cultural factors and were largely environmental limitations which acted to restrict certain activities or limit experiences during early childhood.

### Summary

Ethnic or racial background was not a variable in intelligence. The range of intellectual ability was similar for all peoples if test items were developed within the individual cultural environment and administered in the mother tongue of the child.

Differences in ranges of intelligence of children were due to limitations of culture and environment particularly in respect to early childhood activities and lack of exposure to different and intellectually stimulating experiences.

## II. STUDIES OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF INDIAN CHILDREN

The most comprehensive study of the academic achievement of registered Indian children in Canadian Federal Indian schools was published by Renaud (1958). His research indicated that Indian children were below the norms on standardized tests in all subjects tested. Results from his cross Canada study indicated that by grade five the children were behind the expected norms by one grade, and two grades behind by grade eight. In 1958 so few Indian children had progressed

beyond grade eight that no effort was made to secure data concerning them.

Chronological retardation was equated with academic retardation and he found that by grade eight registered Indian children were three or more years behind White Canadian children in public and separate schools.

In the Renaud study no effort was made to test the ability of registered Indian children to comprehend oral English although all tests involved the students in listening to instructions and reading them at the same time; then working out several samples; correction of sample questions by the person testing to ensure understanding, and then having the student rely upon his reading ability to complete the test.

Dilling (1965) made a study of Indian students attending an integrated school in Sarnia, Ontario. In comparison with Renaud (1958) the Indian children in integrated schools were achieving more than those in Federal schools. A deceleration of progress after grade four was noted. Dilling attributed greater success in integrated schools to social acceptance and school experiences more fitting to studies made in classrooms of the dominant society. Dilling suggested that success in school was largely dependent upon reading ability. No effort was made to determine the oral English abilities of the students.

Coombs (1961) and Ray, Ryan and Parker (1962) did similar studies in Arizona and Alaska respectively and both studies discovered deceleration of academic progress after grade four and five. Both studies attributed this to lack of reading ability and social acceptance.

Coombs noted that the Indians and Eskimos of Alaska seemed to be able to read at a more sophisticated level than they could speak. He attributed this apparent lack of ability to converse in oral English and to comprehend oral English to shyness.

Ray, Ryan and Parker noted that Indian children seemed to experience little difficulty in school until grade four where oral English and ability to read became key factors in the learning process.

Among the recommendations of this study was one urging that a greater emphasis be placed upon increasing the reading ability of Indian students. The implication of the recommendation was that ability in oral English would be improved by more attention to reading programs.

#### Summary

The studies indicated a positive relationship between academic achievement and reading ability. As age increased there was a deceleration of academic progress and this was particularly significant in regard to growth in ability to read. None of the studies investigated the relationship of ability to comprehend oral English and ability to read or progress in a general academic sense. Several studies related poor attendance to lack of progress in school and attributed poor attendance to lack of social acceptance by other children in the classroom.

### III. STUDIES CONCERNING THE REASONS FOR POOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Many studies have been undertaken in an effort to account for poor academic achievement. Prior to 1940 most studies investigated the

intelligence level of Indian children. Subsequent to the massive studies which proved conclusively that Indian and non-Indian children were of equal intelligence, the trend has been to investigate other factors.

Peterson (1948) completed a three year study for the United States Bureau of the Interior which identified four significant factors influencing the education of the Indian children.

1. The degree of familiarity with the non-Indian culture;
2. Educational background of the parents;
3. The language spoken in the home; and
4. The stability of the home.

Of particular significance to the present study was the relationship between language spoken in the home and lack of academic success. It was an important factor for all students whose mother language was other than English. Navajo, Zuni, Cheyenne and Cherokee were mother tongues of the students studied and were a factor contributing to lack of success in each case.

An equivalent study in Canada was that completed by Renaud (1958) but his conclusions for poor academic achievement were somewhat different:

1. Cultural differences between Indians and the dominant society which resulted in confusion in the minds of the children in the areas of attitudes and values.

2. Resistance to the school as an institution which was controlled by non-Indians who used the school as a means of inculcating in Indian children the values and attitudes of the dominant society.

3. An unrealistic appraisal of the socio-economic future of the

Indian pupil, i.e., the aim of education was to remove the child from his family, friends and community and force him to earn his living in the dominant society which was not ready to give him job opportunities.

4. As a result of previous factors mentioned, there was general indifference among Indians towards the schools and a minority who actively opposed the schooling process.

The Renaud study did not stress inability to comprehend oral English as a significant factor in itself but rather as a part of a complex problem.

Ray, Ryan and Parker (1962) felt it improbable that bilingualism alone could account for age-grade retardation in Alaska and they considered lack of fluency in English as a symptom of a larger problem rather than a basic cause.

Wax, Wax and Dumont (1964) in the study of Sioux Indians in North Dakota noted four possible reasons for lack of academic success:

1. Lack of fluency in the use of the English language;
2. Lack of communication between home and school;
3. The pattern of ridicule of error commonly found among Indian people and particularly apparent in pre-adolescence;
4. Lack of respect evidenced by teachers towards Indian students.

Of particular interest was the priority which the Wax team gave to lack of fluency in the use of oral English as contrasted with other studies that concentrated on lack of reading ability.

#### Summary

According to the studies reviewed the causes of lack of academic

success of Indian students were varied but with early studies stressing cultural conflict as a priority item. These conflicts confused the students, hindered communication between home and school, and developed in teachers negative attitudes towards Indians.

More recent studies have indicated that fluency in English was a factor which should be considered, although disagreement exists as to whether lack of fluency should be considered as a symptom or a basic cause of lack of academic success.

#### IV. STUDIES OF THE SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF INDIAN CHILDREN AS A FACTOR IN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The most comprehensive investigation of this aspect of Indian education was that completed by Wax, Wax and Dumont (1964). They found, amongst Pine Ridge Sioux children in North Dakota, that peer-group dynamics became a major influence with Indian children beginning at the ages of ten and eleven. Investigation reveals that the peer group values and attitudes closely paralleled values and attitudes held by Indian adults in the community.

At this age the Indian students began to be characterized as shy, passive and sullen by their non-Indian teachers. The school room became an educational battleground between the teachers and the students with the students outwardly becoming more passive as the years progressed while inwardly becoming more hostile to the teachers and the school as an institution. They tended to see the school as an intrusion into the Indian world whose main purpose was to destroy their identity as Indians.

The passive and sullen behaviour evidenced in the classroom was not noticeable in the home or in peer group relationships. It immediately reasserted itself, however, whenever contacts with non-Indians were made whether on a social or employment occasion.

Stupidity was often assumed by the children and digressions in class from a passive and non-participatory role were punished severely by the peer group. Correct performance in the classroom in terms of answering or volunteering answers; having work all correct, or being helpful was considered by the students as collaborating with the teacher, i.e., enemy, and was punished severely by use of peer group ridicule and sometimes physical punishment.

Wax indicated, however, that underlying the reluctance to participate in class, and perhaps one of the key factors in developing peer group attitudes, was the insecurity which Indian children of ages ten and eleven tended to develop about their fluency in English. When in attendance in primary grades it was understood by pupils and teachers that the children were just learning English and mistakes were acceptable. In the intermediate grades and up, there appeared to be a subtle change in attitude on the part of the teachers and pupils. Children were now supposed to "know" English and the permissive attitude towards incorrect English usage began to decline. Teachers now "corrected" errors in English usage. In Indian culture it is unforgivable for anyone to "correct" someone in public. Correction is made, if absolutely necessary, in private. Because "corrections" were now made in a public classroom Wax suggested that this effort on the part of teachers to improve the

child may be a significant factor in developing hostility towards teachers and in forcing the peer group to undertake disciplinary action against recalcitrant members.

Gleason (1970) in investigating the relationship between academic achievement and social acceptance in integrated schools in Fort Frances, Ontario, summarized her findings as follows:

Indian children do not develop along the acceptable behavior patterns expected of children at school in our Canadian society. In a school system where Indian children from reservations are being integrated with those of the dominant culture the thoughtful observer is concerned by their very real problems which become increasingly apparent as they progress through the grades. From happy, industrious, delightful little children in the primary grades who achieve well in school and are readily accepted by their classmates, they begin, about the age of puberty, in grades five and six to withdraw and become sullen, resistant and indolent pupils. Their social acceptance is replaced by the formation of exclusive cliques within their own racial group and their achievement gives way to failure until Indian children in senior grades of elementary school usually quit as soon as they reach the legal age. The number who go on to high school and then graduate is disproportionately small (p. 112).

Gleason recommends that colleges of education prepare teachers of Indian children by giving them a thorough knowledge of Indian cultures and of the basic personality structure of Indian children as well as techniques for curriculum development and adaptation. Gleason gives considerable attention to lack of development of reading skills but does not mention the problem of developing fluency in oral English.

### Summary

The influence of peer groups is important in any society but wielded a disproportionate power among Indian students. It was a source of protection of their identity and pride. Indian students protect their

pride by passively resisting the schooling process because they lack the following: respect from their teachers; social acceptance by non-Indian students; curricula which accords their heritage a positive role; and the ability to compete successfully because of poor reading skills.

#### V. STUDIES IN COMPREHENSION OF ORAL ENGLISH

A review of literature revealed a considerable amount of basic research in the area of comprehending oral English done in regard to students whose mother tongue was English. A dearth of materials was evident in relationship to the problem of persons whose mother tongue is other than English. Some research was available on the ability of English students to comprehend oral French and German.

Research in this area proved not to be particularly relevant because of the stress on English vocabulary and pattern development to correct errors which were not applicable when the subject was from a completely different linguistic family.

Peterson (1948), reported on testing that was designed to measure progress over a twelve year period, 1934-1946, in the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, federally operated Indian schools. No oral aspects of English were tested and tests used involved Gates Basic Reading, grades 3-8, and Pressey English, grades 5-8.

Anderson (1953) carried out a comprehensive testing program for the same Department and used the same battery of tests to allow for better methods of comparison.

Coombs (1958) added a third set of data to the evaluations

initiated by Peterson. He used the California Achievement Test as a basic instrument. The test involved sub-sections dealing with reading vocabulary and grammar.

None of the researchers dealt with testing ability to comprehend oral English. It is significant, however, that all three noted the necessity of teaching oral English before beginning content subjects. All three further recommended the development of oral English programs and recommended that their use be compulsory in all Indian schools.

In Canada, as a direct result of Renaud (1958), the Department of Indian Affairs developed a Basic Oral English Programme for compulsory use in all federally operated Indian Schools. Colliou (1965) reported on the implementation of the programme and noted that it had brought about an improvement in reading ability. No other method, other than testing reading skills, was indicated as a research tool in determining its value in improving oral English.

Because Canada is officially a bi-lingual country and language training has necessitated the Federal Government setting up a special Language Bureau, an investigation into their methods of measuring ability to comprehend oral English was undertaken.

The Language Bureau, Public Service Commission of Canada, is one of the largest language training institutions in the world. In 1969 it employed three hundred full-time language teachers in addition to administrative personnel. Approximately three quarters of the teachers taught French and one quarter taught English. They dealt only with adults and tested their students in a comprehensive manner in order to determine

initial placement in second language programs as well as final standing.

White (1968) noted that their main problem in testing was in differentiating between the ability to understand and to speak. Results consistently indicated ability to understand to be greater than ability to speak.

The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test was used but later rejected as being more suitable for teen-age students than adults. Adult tests, largely patterned on the Brown-Carlson Listening Test, were developed by the Language Bureau.

#### Summary

Most English language testing in Canada and the United States has been based on ability to read written English. Most researchers have posited that ability to read at a certain grade level parallels ability to comprehend oral English. No evidence was uncovered to support such an assumption.

The Language Bureau, Public Service Commission of Canada, appeared to have done the most practical research in the area of testing ability to comprehend oral English. Use of the Brown-Carlson Listening Test was found unsatisfactory for adults but a reasonable testing instrument for teen-agers.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to discover the level of ability to comprehend oral English evidenced by the grade nine classes which entered Frontier Collegiate in September of 1968 and to investigate the relationship of this ability and the type of school program followed in 1969 and 1970.

In order to achieve this purpose the testing instrument was administered in November of 1968. The data were collected, subjected to item analyses by response, converted to percentiles, arranged by male, female, White, Metis, and then further arranged by quartiles. In November of 1969 data concerning course choices in grade ten were collected. In February of 1971 data concerning course choices in grade eleven were collected.

A description of the populations included in the study, as well as a discussion of the testing instrument used and of the methodology of the study will be considered in this chapter under the following headings:

1. The Population Included in the Study;
2. Description and Criticism of the Test Materials Used in the Study;
3. Collection of the Data;
4. Treatment of the Findings.

## I. THE POPULATION INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

The students included in this study were all the pupils enrolled in Frontier Collegiate in grade nine during November of 1968 and in grade ten and eleven in 1969 and 1970 respectively. The majority of the students were Metis with 16.7 per cent being White and 6.5 per cent being registered Indian. Because of cultural and linguistic similarities the registered Indians were not dealt with separately from the Metis as were the White students. A certain loss of numbers in the population resulted from the decision to gather data over a three year period. Inevitable circumstances such as student transfers and withdrawals occurred. These were indicated as such in the data analysis. Students transferring into the classes under study after November of 1968 did not appear in the data collected in 1969 and 1971.

## II. DESCRIPTION AND CRITICISM OF THE TEST INSTRUMENT

### USED IN THE STUDY

The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test has been constructed to measure the ability of students to comprehend the spoken English language. The authors define listening comprehension as the aural assimilation of spoken symbols in a face-to-face speaker-audience situation, with both oral and visual cues present.

There are two comparable forms of the test, Am and Bm, each comprising 76 test items. These items are grouped into five parts, each purporting to measure an important listening skill. These are:

1. Immediate Recall, which measures the ability to keep a sequence of details in mind until a question is asked which requires thinking back over the sequence.
2. Following Directions, which measures the ability to follow oral directions.
3. Recognizing Transitions, which measures the ability to recognize meanings of words from context.
4. Recognizing Word Meanings, which measures the ability to get meanings from context, and
5. Lecture Comprehension, which measures the ability to listen for details, get the central idea, draw inferences and understand the organization.

The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test, Form Am was administered for standardization purposes to approximately 8000 students in 25 high schools from 16 states.

The following table was extracted from the Manual of Directions for the test to indicate characteristics of the normative group at each grade level.

In light of these data the normative group appears to be fairly representative of the United States high school population with respect to age and ability level. The writer was convinced that these data plus the experience with the Brown-Carlson test by the Language Bureau of the Canadian Public Service Commission indicated the test was most likely to elicit the needed information.

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NORMATIVE GROUP AT EACH GRADE LEVEL<sup>1</sup>

Grade	N	Lerman-McNear Mean	I.Q. S.D.	Median C.A.
9	2142	100.2	15.2	15-0
10	2148	103.1	14.6	15-11
11	1982	102.7	13.5	16-11
12	1463	103.2	13.7	17-10

<sup>1</sup>Manual of Directions, Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test, p. 3.

### III. COLLECTION OF THE DATA

In November of 1968 the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test was administered to one hundred thirty-seven grade nine students at Frontier Collegiate. Certain variations might have occurred from class to class as the administrator gave the questions, lectures, etc. The only way to avoid this variation would have been to audio record the administrator's voice and play it to each class. This would have removed important visual cues and was rejected because of this factor. A video-tape presentation was considered but as the majority of the students were not used to television it was felt that an unnatural effect might be created.

In November of 1969 and February of 1971, a school secretary at

Frontier Collegiate was hired to extract the information regarding course choices from individual student file cards.

#### IV. TREATMENT OF THE FINDINGS

The one hundred thirty-seven test papers were subjected to item analysis by response and then analyzed by listening skill being tested.

A total listening score for each student was calculated as a raw score and then converted to a percentile rank.

A frequency distribution was determined for the group as a whole; on a male, female basis and finally as White and Metis. Finally a distribution by quartiles were determined and a percentage in each quartile calculated.

A comparison between percentile rank and course choice in grades ten and eleven was then made.

#### Summary

Data were collected over a period of three years for the grade nine class which enrolled in Frontier Collegiate in September of 1968. The data were then analyzed to examine the relationship which might exist between the observed ability to comprehend oral English and the choice of academic courses in grades ten and eleven.

## CHAPTER IV

### ITEM ANALYSIS OF THE BROWN CARLSEN LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST

The Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test was given to the grade nine classes enrolled in Frontier Collegiate in November of 1968. The results were used to determine the level of oral comprehension of Frontier students in relation to norms standardized on English speaking students in grade nine classes in the United States. The general pattern indicated that most students in Frontier School were below the thirty-fifth percentile which is considered to be a cut-off point below which students will be able to gain little from a formal classroom lecture or from informal class discussions (Brown, 1952).

The results of an item analysis were also used to determine the listening skills most deficient and to comment thereon.

#### Findings

The results of the item analysis which tested Immediate Recall follow in Table II.

#### Comment

The students performed relatively well on this part of the test which dealt with immediate recall.

Question eight which dealt with recall of prepositions caused sixty-six students to give a wrong response.

In question thirteen the term "box number" proved unfamiliar and students were unable to recall it after twenty second lapse of time.

TABLE II  
ITEM ANALYSIS BY RESPONSE  
IMMEDIATE RECALL

Question	A	B	C	D	E	NR
1	18	10	5		<u>100</u>	5
2	11	<u>90</u>	6	3	19	9
3	2	16	10	<u>93</u>	12	5
4	25	13	7	<u>82</u>	7	4
5	2	20	4	<u>97</u>	12	3
6	4	<u>46</u>	26	43	16	3
7	5	11	<u>98</u>	5	10	9
8	4	30	19	6	<u>72</u>	7
9	16	9	<u>69</u>	35	5	4
10	<u>91</u>	12	12	9	9	5
11	1	<u>65</u>	49	6	10	7
12	8	10	<u>78</u>	18	12	12
13	7	62	9	<u>40</u>	12	8
14	<u>106</u>	2	8	6	8	8
15	29	28	7	7	<u>54</u>	13
16	10	9	3	<u>94</u>	17	5
17	13	17	<u>34</u>	13	55	6

Question fifteen and seventeen which demanded recall of information in the preceding questions proved equally difficult.

Summary

Questions of immediate recall were handled satisfactorily by the majority of students. Difficulties were evident if recall was asked for after a twenty second time lapse.

TABLE III  
ITEM ANALYSIS BY RESPONSE  
FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Question	A	B	C	D	E	NR
18	27	8	9	2	<u>83</u>	9
19	29	8	11	5	<u>64</u>	21
20	14	23	3	7	<u>75</u>	16
21	12	9	<u>62</u>	21	25	9
22	8	<u>63</u>	15	16	29	7
23	16	29	14	5	<u>54</u>	20
24	17	<u>70</u>	21	9	13	8
25	30	53	<u>21</u>	4	9	21
26	8	7	38	<u>65</u>	11	9
27	1	7	25	<u>69</u>	24	12
28	24	18	<u>36</u>	17	35	8
29	<u>46</u>	34	9	14	26	9
30	5	18	<u>79</u>	10	16	10
31	13	<u>72</u>	12	13	15	13

... CONTINUED

TABLE III (CONTINUED)

Question	A	B	C	D	E	NR
32	<u>78</u>	23	5	-	24	8
33	21	<u>64</u>	13	7	16	17
34	46	9	<u>27</u>	5	41	10
35	36	18	26	<u>13</u>	27	18
36	<u>44</u>	18	5	4	55	12
37	<u>38</u>	18	32	17	22	11

Comment

The Following Directions sub test consisted of twenty items which required that students do simple number calculations. All numbers used were smaller than ten. All directions involved as key words, adjectives of degree such as small, smaller, smallest as well as prepositions indicating positional relationships such as above, below, by, next to, etc.

Test results indicate that the majority of students were giving incorrect responses except in four questions. More students were now giving no response at all.

Summary

Prepositions, adjectives of degree and/or simple calculations were beyond the grasp of most of the students to assimilate at a sophisticated level of oral English.

TABLE IV  
ITEM ANALYSIS BY RESPONSE  
RECOGNIZING TRANSITIONS

Question	A	B	C	D	E	NR
38	14	38	<u>77</u>	4		5
39	<u>57</u>	39	34	4		4
40	<u>50</u>	44	30	8		6
41	11	<u>65</u>	31	25		6
42	29	<u>40</u>	51	13		5
43	17	57	<u>45</u>	13		6
44	29	57	23	<u>23</u>		6
45	36	44	19	<u>34</u>		5

#### Comments

This sub test, which dealt with introductory, transitional and concluding sentences, indicated that the students had great difficulty in telling whether a sentence was beginning a topic, closing a topic or used in a transitional location.

#### Summary

All sentences contained subordinate clauses and it is posited this degree of complexity of sentence structure caused the majority of students to give incorrect responses.

TABLE V  
 ITEM ANALYSIS BY RESPONSE  
 RECOGNIZING WORD MEANINGS

Question	A	B	C	D	E	NR
46	50		18	<u>52</u>	10	8
47	13	2	42	9	<u>64</u>	8
48		<u>97</u>	16	2	16	7
49	2	5	95	<u>19</u>	9	8
50	<u>102</u>	5	4	7	12	8
51	2	20	57	22	<u>30</u>	7
52	<u>48</u>	23	31	6	20	10
53	5	39	43	18	<u>25</u>	8
54	8	49	<u>38</u>	7	28	8
55	29	<u>8</u>	4	56	33	8

Comment

This sub test attempted to determine the ability of students to give the correct dictionary meaning for particular words as used in a sentence context. Students became very confused and in only two cases did the majority give the correct response. "Dull" as used in the context of question fifty had one hundred two give the correct response of "stupid."

Summary

Idioms, synonyms and homonyms obviously create considerable confusion as to precise meaning.

TABLE VI  
ITEM ANALYSIS BY RESPONSE  
LECTURE COMPREHENSION

Question	A	B	C	D	E	NR
56	7	3	2	<u>113</u>	3	10
57	14	<u>77</u>	6	22	7	12
58	18	16	17	16	<u>58</u>	13
59	18	23	<u>69</u>	8	11	9
60	23	<u>23</u>	40	22	14	16
61	8	12	<u>74</u>	13	19	12
62	<u>44</u>	15	46	21	2	10
63	47	27	22	12	<u>11</u>	19
64	38	9	16	<u>57</u>	7	11
65	23	4	28	9	<u>65</u>	9
66	<u>41</u>	14	3	16	56	8
67	26	50	19	17	<u>12</u>	14
68	15	34	39	<u>28</u>	9	13
69	19	6	<u>85</u>	6	12	10
70	50	<u>38</u>	15	14	12	9

... CONTINUED

TABLE VI (CONTINUED)

Question	A	B	C	D	E	NR
71	27	25	39	<u>18</u>	20	9
72	12	26	19	<u>32</u>	37	12
73	16	<u>40</u>	30	14	25	13
74	55	4	28	<u>26</u>	17	8
75	5	<u>32</u>	39	21	30	11
76	<u>21</u>	45	45	9	10	8

#### Comment

In this test a story concerning the value of increasing your vocabulary was read or "lectured" to students. Reading time was approximately twelve minutes. The majority of students gave correct responses to a humorous anecdote concerning Abraham Lincoln and a cow as well as an anecdote concerning Queen Victoria. In all other questions the majority of the students gave incorrect responses. The rather even distribution of incorrect responses would lead one to posit that students guessed wildly at most answers.

#### Summary

Very little factual knowledge was retained by students after having a twelve minute oral lecture.

Implications

The implications of this item analysis will be considered in Chapter VI and incorrect responses will be related in part to differences between the basic structures of English and an Algonkian language.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF PERCENTILE RANKINGS

A ranking of the grade nine students was completed in order to determine the number of students who scored below the thirty-fifth percentile. It was determined by Brown (1952) that White students in grade nine in United States high schools would be unable to achieve satisfactory academic progress in college entrance programs if their ability to comprehend oral English was below the thirty-fifth percentile. Those between thirty-four and fifty would encounter extreme difficulty. The percentile ranking of scores would allow comparisons to be made. The percentile ranks were also used to compare the ability to comprehend oral English between male, female and Whites, Metis.

Distribution by quartiles were calculated in order to determine percentages of students in each quartile.

Frequency of standard scores were calculated twice in order to determine if there was a difference between male and female medians and to determine if there was a difference between White and Metis.

Finally a comparison between percentile rankings and program choices in grades ten and eleven was undertaken in an attempt to establish a relationship between the two items.

In terms of changes in student body the following criteria were used. Students transferred out of the original (1968) sample in grades nine, ten and eleven were disregarded. Students transferred into the classes during 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1971 were disregarded.

Frontier Collegiate Institute is a residential school. Some students were expelled from residence and thus, in effect, required to withdraw from classes. As no records indicated the reason for a student withdrawing from school the figures indicating "dropped out" undoubtedly will include a few students expelled from the residence. The numbers were judged to be small enough not to distort the study. One student made no responses on the test paper and was omitted from all further calculations.

TABLE VII  
DISTRIBUTION OF PERCENTILES

	Combined	Male	Female
95 - 99	2		2
90 - 94	1	1	
85 - 89	1	1	
80 - 84	1	1	
75 - 79	2	2	
70 - 74	0		
65 - 69	3	2	1
60 - 64	7	6	1
55 - 59	2	1	1
50 - 54	7	5	2
45 - 49	11	6	5

... CONTINUED

TABLE VII (CONTINUED)

	Combined	Male	Female
40 - 44	2		2
35 - 39	17	3	14
30 - 34	8	5	3
25 - 29	7	4	3
20 - 24	15	8	7
15 - 19	10	4	6
10 - 14	15	6	9
5 - 9	8	4	4
0 - 4	18	11	7
TOTALS	137	70	67

### Findings

The results of the distribution by percentiles are shown in Table VII. These results indicate that one hundred eleven students scored below the fiftieth percentile. The largest grouping of students was below the twenty-fifth percentile.

TABLE VIII  
DISTRIBUTION BY QUARTILES

	Combined	Male	Female
75 - 99	7	5	2
50 - 74	19	14	5
25 - 49	45	18	27
0 - 24	66	33	33
TOTALS	137	70	67

#### Findings

The results of distribution by quartiles are shown in Table VIII. The results indicated that the largest single group of students (66) were in the lowest quartile.

TABLE IX  
DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGES

Quartile	Percentage
75 - 99	5.05%
50 - 74	13.86%
25 - 49	32.83%
0 - 24	48.17%
TOTAL	99.91%

Findings

The distribution by percentages are shown in Table IX. The results indicated that over forty-eight per cent of the combined student body in grade nine were below the twenty-fifth percentile. Over thirty-two per cent were below the forty-ninth percentile but above the twenty-fourth. Eighty-one per cent were below the fiftieth percentile. Eighty-one students or fifty-one per cent were below the thirty-fifth percentile and fell into that group which Brown (1952) indicated would be unable to handle any college preparation type of program. Those below the fiftieth percentile, eighty-one per cent of the grade nine class enrolled in 1968, would be unable to, or would have extreme difficulty, achieving success in a college preparatory program.

TABLE X  
DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTILES

	Combined	White	Metis
95 - 99	2	1	1
90 - 94	1	1	0
85 - 89	1	1	0
80 - 84	1	1	1
75 - 79	2	2	0
70 - 74	0	0	0
65 - 69	3	1	2

... CONTINUED

TABLE X (CONTINUED)

	Combined	White	Metis
60 - 64	7	2	5
55 - 59	2	1	1
50 - 54	7	0	7
45 - 49	11	1	10
40 - 44	2	0	2
35 - 39	17	3	14
30 - 34	8	4	3
25 - 29	7	0	7
20 - 24	15	4	11
15 - 19	10	1	9
10 - 14	15	0	15
5 - 9	8	0	8
0 - 4	18	0	18
TOTALS	137	23	114

TABLE XI  
DISTRIBUTION BY QUARTILES

	Combined	White	Metis
75 - 99	7	6	2
50 - 74	19	4	15
25 - 49	45	8	36
0 - 24	66	5	61
TOTALS	137	23	114

Findings

The distribution by quartiles was shown in Table XI. The results indicated a great disparity in the ability to comprehend oral English between White and Metis students.

TABLE XII  
DISTRIBUTION BY PERCENTAGES FOR METIS AND WHITE

Quartile	White	Metis
75 - 99	26.0%	1.7%
50 - 74	17.3%	13.1%
25 - 49	34.4%	31.5%
0 - 24	21.7%	53.5%
TOTALS	99.4%	99.8%

Findings

In the quartile 0 - 24 only 21.7 per cent of the White students fell as compared to 53.5 per cent of the Metis students.

In the quartile 25 - 49 there were 34.4 per cent White and 31.5 per cent Metis students.

In the quartile 50 - 74 there were 17.3 per cent White and 13.1 per cent Metis students.

In the quartile 75 - 99 there were 26 per cent White and 1.7 per cent Metis students.

TABLE XIII  
STANDARD SCORES

Interval	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
135 - 139		
130 - 134		
125 - 129	2	
120 - 124		1
115 - 119	2	
110 - 114		3
105 - 109	3	9
100 - 104	8	11
95 - 99	16	9
90 - 94	14	13
85 - 89	11	8
80 - 84	4	4
75 - 79	1	5
70 - 74	2	2
0 - 4	4	5
TOTALS	67	70
MEDIAN	93.22	93.9

### Findings

The distribution of standard scores are shown in Table XIII. A

comparison of the median scores, Female 93.22 and Male 93.9, indicated no significant difference between the groups in ability to comprehend oral English.

TABLE XIV  
STANDARD SCORES

Interval	White Frequency	Metis Frequency
135 - 139	0	0
130 - 134	0	0
125 - 129	1	1
120 - 124	1	0
115 - 119	1	1
110 - 114	3	0
105 - 109	4	8
100 - 104	1	19
95 - 99	7	18
90 - 94	5	22
85 - 89		19
80 - 84		8
75 - 79		5
70 - 74		5
0 - 4		8
TOTALS	23	114
MEDIAN	98	93

Findings

A comparison of the median scores, White 98 and Metis 93, indicates a considerable difference between the groups in ability to comprehend oral English.

TABLE XV  
QUARTILE PLACEMENT COMPARED WITH PROGRAM CHOICE

	Grade X Course Choice	Grade XI Course Choice
75 - 99	5 University Entrance	3 University Entrance
	1 General	1 General
	Business Education	Business Education
	Occupational	Occupational
	Dropped Out	2 Dropped Out
50 - 74	8 University Entrance	7 University Entrance
	9 General	3 General
	Business Education	Business Education
	2 Occupational	2 Occupational
	1 Dropped Out	7 Dropped Out
25 - 49	4 University Entrance	3 University Entrance
	16 General	10 General
	6 Business Education	4 Business Education
	8 Occupational	4 Occupational
	5 Dropped Out	13 Dropped Out
0 - 24	4 University Entrance	2 University Entrance
	24 General	11 General
	8 Business Education	7 Business Education
	21 Occupational	7 Occupational
	5 Dropped Out	30 Dropped Out

## Findings

The results of tabulating program choice in grades ten and eleven in relation to quartile ranking in ability to comprehend oral English are shown in Table XV.

In quartile 75 - 99, there were 6 students who completed grade nine and entered grade ten in Frontier Collegiate. All successfully completed grade ten and entered grade eleven. Subsequently two students in the University Entrance course dropped out of school.

In quartile 50 - 74, there were twenty students who completed grade nine and entered grade ten in Frontier Collegiate. One dropped out during the year. There were nineteen students who entered grade eleven. Seven students dropped out during this year. One University Entrance course student switched to the General Course while seven general course students dropped out of school.

In quartile 25 - 49, there were thirty-nine students who completed grade nine and entered grade ten in Frontier Collegiate. Five students dropped out during the year. There were thirty-four students who entered grade eleven. Thirteen students dropped out from grade eleven. The University Entrance Course lost one; the General Course lost six; the Business Education Course lost two; the Occupational Entrance Course lost four.

In quartile 0 - 24, there were sixty-two students who completed grade nine and enrolled in grade ten in Frontier Collegiate. There were five students who dropped out during this year. There were fifty-seven students who entered grade eleven. Thirty students dropped out from

grade eleven. From the University Entrance Course two students dropped out. The General Course lost thirteen students. The Business Education Course lost one. Fourteen students dropped out of the Occupational Entrance Course.

TABLE XVI  
QUARTILE PLACEMENT COMPARED WITH PROGRAM CHOICE BY WHITE AND METIS

		Grade X Course Choice		Grade XI Course Choice	
75-99	<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>		<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>
	4	1	University Entrance	3	University Entrance
		1	General Course		1 General Course
			Business Education		Business Education
			Occupational		Occupational
		Dropped Out	1	1	Dropped Out
50-74	<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>		<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>
	3	5	University Entrance	2	5 University Entrance
	2	7	General	1	2 General
			Business Education		Business Education
		2	Occupational		2 Occupational
	1	Dropped Out	2	5	Dropped Out
25-49	<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>		<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>
	3	1	University Entrance	1	2 University Entrance
	2	14	General		10 General
	1	5	Business Education		4 Business Education
	1	7	Occupational		4 Occupational
	1	Dropped Out		7	Dropped Out
0-24	<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>		<u>White</u>	<u>Metis</u>
	1	3	University Entrance		2 University Entrance
	1	23	General		11 General
	2	6	Business Education	1	6 Business Education
		21	Occupational		7 Occupational
	5	Dropped Out	3	27	Dropped Out

### Findings

The results of tabulating program choice in grades ten and eleven by White, Metis and in relation to quartile rankings are shown in Table XVI. Further differentiation of these results is shown in Table XVII (Program Choice by White and Metis); in Table XVIII (Program Choice by White and Metis expressed as a percentage); and in Table XIX (Comparison of Program Choice percentages with quartile groupings of ability to comprehend oral English).

TABLE XVII  
PROGRAM CHOICE BY WHITE AND METIS

White	Metis	Grade X Choice	White	Metis	Grade XI Choice
11	10	University Entrance	6	9	University Entrance
5	45	General	1	24	General
3	11	Business Education	1	10	Business Education
1	30	Occupational		13	Occupational
2	9	Dropped Out	12	40	Dropped Out

### Findings

The results of a percentage tabulation of program choices by White and Metis students are shown in Table XVIII.

A preponderance of White students entered the more demanding academic course and this was balanced by a correspondingly high drop

out rate in grade eleven. The most demanding course is the only one which retains any considerable number of White students.

Although very few Metis students entered the most demanding academic course the drop-out rate was nil. A drastic drop-out rate was found in the General and Occupational courses in grade eleven.

Sixty-nine per cent of the White students dropped out during grades ten and eleven while 50.1 per cent of the Metis students dropped out. In terms of numbers, however, this represents fourteen White students and forty-nine Metis students . (Table XVII)

TABLE XVIII

## PROGRAM CHOICE BY WHITE AND METIS EXPRESSED AS A PERCENTAGE

White	Metis	Grade X Choice	White	Metis	Grade XI Choice
50.0%	.5%	University Entrance	30.0%	9.3%	University Entrance
22.7%	42.8%	General	5.0%	25.0%	General
13.6%	10.4%	Business Education	5.0%	10.4%	Business Education
4.5%	28.5%	Occupational		13.5%	Occupational
9.0%	8.5%	Dropped Out	60.0%	41.6%	Dropped Out
99.8%	99.7%	TOTALS	100.0%	99.8%	

TABLE XIX  
 COMPARISON OF PROGRAM CHOICE PERCENTAGES WITH QUARTILE GROUPINGS  
 OF ABILITY TO COMPREHEND ORAL ENGLISH

(a) <u>Whites</u>					
Quartile	Percentage in Quartile	Percentage Program Choice	Grade X Course	Percentage Program Choice	Grade XI Course
75 - 99	26.0%	50.0%	University Ent.	30.0%	University Ent.
50 - 74	17.3%	22.7%	General	5.0%	General
25 - 49	34.4%	13.6%	Business Education	5.0%	Business Education
0 - 24	21.7%	4.5%	Occupational		Occupational
		9.0%	Dropped Out	60.0%	Dropped Out
(b) <u>Metis</u>					
Quartile	Percentage in Quartile	Percentage Program Choice	Grade X Course	Percentage Program Choice	Grade XI Course
75 - 99	1.7%	9.5%	University Ent.	9.3%	University Ent.
50 - 74	13.1%	42.8%	General	25.0%	General
25 - 49	31.5%	10.4%	Business Education	10.4%	Business Education
0 - 24	53.5%	28.5%	Occupational	13.5%	Occupational
		8.5%	Dropped Out	41.6%	Dropped Out

### Findings

The results of tabulating program choice percentages with quartile groupings of ability to comprehend oral English are shown in Table XIX.

Of the White students 43.3 per cent were above the 49th percentile in their ability to comprehend oral English. However, 72.7 per cent of the White students chose a college preparatory program in grade ten (University Entrance, General Course or a combination of the two). Only 35 per cent were still in these programs by February of their grade eleven year.

Of the White students 56.1 per cent were below the 50th percentile but only 18.1 per cent chose non college preparatory programs. Only 5 per cent remained in these programs by February of their grade eleven year.

Of the Metis students 14.8 per cent were above the 49th percentile in their ability to comprehend oral English. However, 52.3 per cent of the Metis students chose a college preparatory program in grade ten (University Entrance, General Course or a combination of the two). Only 34.3 per cent were still in these programs by February of their grade eleven year.

Of the White students 56.1 per cent were below the 50th percentile but only 18.1 per cent chose non college preparatory programs. Only 5 per cent remained in these programs by February of their grade eleven year.

Of the Metis students 8 per cent were below the fiftieth percentile but only 38.9 per cent chose non college preparatory courses. Only 23.9

per cent remained in these programs by February of their grade eleven year.

### Summary

Brown (1952) found that students above the fiftieth percentile in ability to comprehend oral English were capable of succeeding in a college preparatory high school course.

At Frontier Collegiate Institute 43.4 per cent of the White students were above the fiftieth percentile but 72.7 per cent entered a college preparatory program. In February of their grade eleven year only 35 per cent of this group were still in a college preparatory program.

Of the Metis students 14.8 per cent were above the fiftieth percentile in their ability to comprehend oral English but 52.3 per cent entered a college preparatory program. In February of their grade eleven year only 34.3 per cent were still in a college preparatory program.

It is significant, however, that the General Course is only partially acceptable as a college preparatory course in Manitoba. Only 5 per cent of the White students were registered in the General Course in grade eleven while 25 per cent of the Metis students were.

The findings of Brown (1952) appear to be valid in terms of the University Entrance Course but not in terms of the General Course.

## CHAPTER VI

### LINGUISTIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLISH AND ALGONKIAN LANGUAGES

In order to ascertain some reasons for the inability of the test group to comprehend oral English adequately as well as to determine why certain types of questions on the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test were consistently answered incorrectly it was necessary to isolate and identify certain differences that exist between English and an Algonkian language.

No problem in education is so difficult to deal with as language. Even an attempted objective analysis of a language is fraught with danger because of the emotional and cultural aspects inevitably intruding into the analysis. Language is our most deep-seated learning. A person learns his first language while he is helpless and in the care of those who provide love. Language then, among other things, is a symbol of whatever measure of love and security we possess as infant human beings in a strange and threatening world. Learning another language can be, in effect, asking a child to leave his mother, his family and the security associated with love. All the patterns of thought vocabulary, pronunciation and sentence structure--which were once accepted and beneficial, are now intrusions and mistakes (Gue).

At another level, the Sapir-Wharf hypothesis states in brief, that our language is our "guide to social reality." We see things not as they really are but as our language teaches us. Beals and Hoyer (1965, p. 636) citing Sapir, state:

. . . The fact of the matter is that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.

In considering some examples of the reality different languages represent one wonders why there is no word for "good-bye" in Cree? Does this indicate they do not wish to terminate a social interaction? Does it indicate they do not know how to terminate such an interaction because they are at the mercy of their language?

Why are there no specific past, present or future tenses in Cree? Time is an ever-flowing present: I go yesterday, I go today, I go tomorrow. Why is there no masculine or feminine gender in Cree but only an elusive concept of "animate" or "inanimate" which renders "flour" animate, and the human arm "inanimate?"

Within the English language there are many languages: middle class and lower class English, for example. Middle class English tends to be stilted and formal. It is stilted and formal to such an extent that it appears inadequate to express a depth of experience. In times of emotional stress and anger, lower class language is used because of its intensity of emotive expressiveness. Native peoples of Manitoba tend to be more fluent in lower class English while their teachers tend to be more fluent in middle class English.

Language is one of the earliest learnings, one of the cultural universals; and one of the deepest emotional experiences. In this chapter, therefore, an effort is made to be objective concerning

language. To assist in this objectivity elements of the history of Indian languages are briefly discussed in order to give a context to the linguistic elements causing problems to the test group as revealed by the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test.

The following aspects will be considered:

1. Indian Languages
2. The Algonkian Languages
3. The Cree Language
4. Communication Within a Power Structure
5. Phonemic Elements
6. Morphology
7. Structural Differences
8. An analysis of Common Errors in the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test

## I. THE INDIAN LANGUAGES

Not too many years ago a visitor to a school in an Indian or Metis community was almost certain to notice a neatly printed sign hung in a conspicuous place which authoritatively declared, "SPEAKING INDIAN FORBIDDEN." Although nowadays schools have a more enlightened attitude towards languages, many people still believe that INDIAN is a language. Occasionally a person is heard to express astonishment at the discovery that two Indian people from different parts of the country cannot converse in a native language. Many white persons appear to be amazed to discover that Indian groups have different physical features, cultural

backgrounds and that Cree is as different from Sioux as English is from Ukranian.

In North and South America there were 500 - 1000 different Indian languages. Linguists have grouped these languages in sixty-eight families. War, disease, slavery and engulfment by European languages have caused some languages to disappear but even yet there are 300 - 400 Indian languages still used in daily communication (Boas and Powell).

Canada has ten language families among its Indian population: Algonkian, Athabaskan, Iroquian, Sioux, Kootenayan, Salishan, Wakashan, Tsimshian, Haida and Tlinkit. The latter six are in British Columbia and relatively small numbers of Indians use these languages.

For the purposes of this study the following description of a language family was used. Each language family or linguistic group has a common grammatical structure and the basic words used in each dialect group will have a common or related derivation. The basic sounds will be similar though each dialect may use one or more sounds unique to it.

In terms of language we can think of the Indians who inhabited the northern and east coast woodlands of North America as being of the Algonkian linguistic family. They occupied most of the woodland territory of the Prairie Provinces, northern Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes and southwards between the Appalachians and the Atlantic into the present United States to near the Florida Everglades. In addition they occupied a V-shaped wedge in the United States south and

west of Lakes Superior, Michigan and Huron. Some of the Algonkians had become Plainsmen and were known as Blackfoot, Gros Ventres and Cheyenne. Anthropologists estimate that people of this linguistic family entered America around 8000 to 7000 B.C. (McNickle). As they moved southwards along the eastern slopes of the Rockies and swung east around the southern edge of the glaciers they either sub-divided and left some groups behind such as the Blackfoot, Gros Ventres (Atsina) and Cheyenne or else these last named groups came at a later date or penetrated from the east. The mists of antiquity veil the distant past and theory and legend can provide only clues. The constant movement of Indian groups throughout history allows one only to make an intelligent guess at movements prior to the 16th century.

However, as groups migrated throughout America and extended or lost their territories, the distance involved created isolated situations in which unique vocabulary and sounds developed in the language. From this arises the various dialect groups we find in the Algonkian peoples today.

The Algonkian language has the largest number of speakers of any linguistic group in Canada. It includes the following important dialects: Cree, Ojibwa, Algonkian, Montagnais, Naskapi, Malecite, Micmac, Blackfoot, Piegan, Blood and Gros Ventres. Within these dialect groups the Cree and Ojibwa (called Saulteaux in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and Chippewa in the United States) are numerically the largest. This common linguistic base from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains looms large in the history of Canada for early explorers. Fur traders and

missionaries were able to secure Indian guides and interpreters in the East and penetrate to the Rocky Mountains by following the maps and instructions given them by people from the various Algonkian dialect groups encountered. Albeit the dialects varied greatly, the common base was sufficient to allow for basic communications.

## II. THE ALGONKIAN LANGUAGES

What is known of these Algonkian languages?

The Pilgrim Fathers in New England were greeted by Indians using an Algonkian language. Cartier, Cabot and Champlain were greeted in the Algonkian language. The first Indian customers of the Hudson's Bay Company spoke an Algonkian language. Henry Kelsey learned an Algonkian language when he ventured into the interior of Rupertsland. The first Bible printed in the New World was a translation into an Algonkian language--Elliot's Bible printed in 1663 for Massachusetts' Indians. Various vocabulary lists, readers and spellers were developed over the years and many efforts were made to analyze Algonkian language structures.

A striking example of either ethnocentrism or inflexibility of the White mind can be found in examining efforts to analyze Indian languages. Perhaps it only illustrates how every man is a prisoner of his own language. Most of the White people who examined Indian languages did so from a base of Latin grammatical structures. They pushed, pulled, distorted and twisted the Indian languages to fit the structure of Latin. Even to this day some linguistic scholars, while adamantly

declaiming the foolishness of previous grammarians, proceed along similar lines (Logan).

The first comprehensive grammar of an Algonkian language was published in 1844. Entitled A Grammar of the Cree Language, With Which is Combined an Analysis of the Chippeway Dialect, it was written by Joseph Howse, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company and a resident for twenty years in Prince Rupert's Land.

Joseph Howse had evidently made a thorough study of everything available on the subject of Algonkian languages and of the various attempts at developing grammars. Howse's grammar was so well done that it has served as the basis for all other studies of Cree and has been used as a model for many other Indian language grammars (Ellis).

In 1862, in Fort Garry, the Venerable Archdeacon James Hunter delivered a lecture to the Institute of Rupert's Land on the grammatical construction of the Cree language, which was supplemented by a series of charts showing paradigms of several Cree "verbs" worked out in great detail. This lecture was later published in 1875 under the title, A Lecture on the Grammatical Construction of the Cree Language. This gave considerable insight into the complexity of the Cree verbs.

Other grammars and dictionaries were published as the years progressed but no finer work than Howse's became available until 1964 when Robert A. Logan published Cree Language Structure and Introduction to a Cree English Dictionary. R. A. Logan's works have been either challenged or ignored by most Cree linguists. Nevertheless, all Cree speakers are excited about his works. His insights into the language,

his unorthodox approach and subsequent development of a new grammatical system which accurately describes the Cree language, makes him, in the opinion of Indians, a foremost authority on Cree grammar.

In order to clarify the problem of structure in Algonkian languages it is necessary to discuss a recreated language, Proto Algonkian. Through study of various dialects and application of modern linguistic techniques of investigation, certain linguists have recreated the Algonkian "Mother language" from which, it is maintained, developed all the modern languages of the Algonkian family. The works of Howse, Logan and legends of the Algonkian peoples dispute this hypothesis.

Joseph Howse, whose work with Cree people was at a time when the English language had little influenced the Cree language believed that it was the oldest and purest of the various Algonkian dialects. He considered it "the leading native language of all the tribes belonging to the British Settlements in North America" (Howse). Based on this belief he developed his grammar of the language. The basic structure developed applies equally to all dialects of Cree and other families in the Algonkian group.

Each dialect of Cree has as one of its chief differences the substitutions of certain sounds in common words. The grammatical construction of the language is not affected by these sound changes.

The word "no" is the same in the dialects except for the letter in capitals. (There are many words for "no." This is simply used as an example.)

Churchill River Cree	--	moTHa	--	TH dialect
Prairie Cree	--	moYa	--	Y dialect

Swampy Cree	--	moNa	--	N dialect
Moose Cree	--	moLa	--	L dialect
North East Ontario and Quebec	--	moRa	--	R dialect

Although a superficial example, the principle of dialectical change is applicable to very complex comparisons.

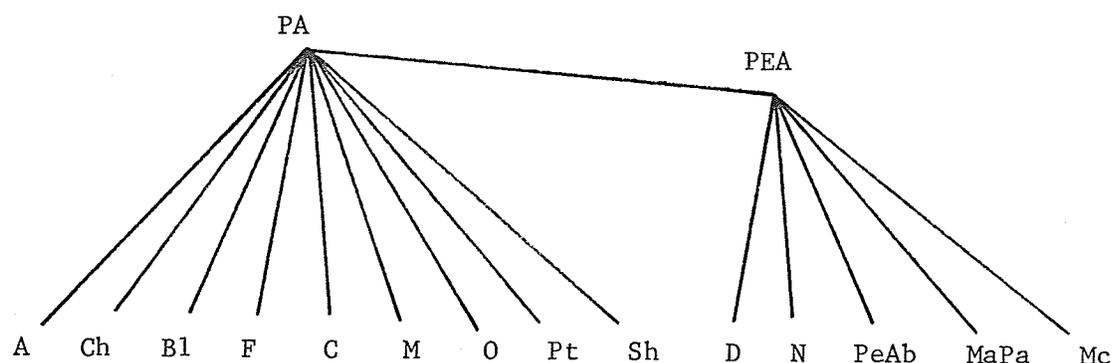
Robert A. Logan, with his creative development of a descriptive Cree grammar based on new principles, also has arrived at the conclusion that the Mother language of the Algonkian dialects was Cree. His study of Cree roots leads him to believe that the name given to speakers of this language by other dialect groups "Nayheeyawuk" means the "precisely speaking people." He maintains this has reference to the fact that the "Nayheeyawuk" maintained the original manner of speech while other tribes developed other forms of the Cree language as Ojibway, Montagnais, Delaware, etc.

The earliest historical references of traders and missionaries to the Cree referred to them as Kinistineaux, Klistineaux, Christineaux and various spellings of what was obviously the same word. These were the words used by neighbouring Algonkian dialect groups to refer to the Cree. Robert A. Logan's study of Algonkian roots leads him to believe that the words derive from "Kinistenoag" which means "they who were first."

Finally the legends of many Algonkian tribes refer dimly to a distant past when all the people were of one tribe and they were Nayheeyawuk or the "precisely (same) speaking people." The writer

firmly believes that Truth is every bit as likely to be found in legend as in the field of comparative linguistics.

Adherents to the hypothesis of a Proto Algonkian language believe the historical continuum can be represented diagrammatically (Genetic Classifications in Algonquian, p. 36).



### Key

PA - Proto Algonquian

PEA - Proto Eastern Algonquian

A - Arapaho  
 Ch - Cheyenne  
 Bl - Blackfoot  
 F - Fox  
 C - Cree  
 M - Menomini  
 O - Ojibwa

Pt - Potawatomi  
 Sh - Shawnee  
 D - Delaware  
 N - Natick - Narragansett  
 PeAb - Penobscot - Abnaki  
 MaPa - Malecite - Passamaquoddy  
 Mc - Micmac

Howse, Logan and Algonkian legends place all language and dialects as developing from Cree with Plains and/or Woods Cree being the purest remaining form of the Mother language.

### III. THE CREE LANGUAGE

Whatever the truth may be, let us turn to the present day Cree speaking peoples. These people, Indian and Metis, by conservative estimate number approximately 200,000 (Cree Studies, p. 4). Their close linguistic brothers, the Ojibwa (Saulteaux) speaking Indian and Metis, number approximately 130,000. As most Cree speakers are more to the north, more isolated, and therefore less acculturated than the Saulteaux, the Cree language will be examined. It is the predominant language of business and commerce in a broad belt extending from the Rockies to Labrador. Tens of thousands of Cree speak and understand no English. Church services are conducted in Cree, newspapers are printed in it and radio broadcasts in Cree are transmitted across the North. It is now becoming a language of instruction in schools both as a first and second language.

As a typical Algonkian dialect what is this Cree like? It is no hodge podge of sounds. It does not, like some White people think, consist of grunts, groans, and a few hundred words.

It is a language of beauty; beauty of sound, clarity, preciseness, regularity. It is a language of richness; rich in words, vowels, imagery and symbols. It is an oral language; a language of oratory and poetry. It contains few harsh sounds. It is a language which, like all languages, has evolved over tens of thousands of years. It is different as all languages are different. It enabled its speakers to categorize tribal experiences and its structure reflected the

interrelationships of language, culture and environment. It served its people and its structure shaped their world view.

It was an oral language but now is more than that. In 1841, the Rev. James Evans, at Norway House, Rupert's Land, invented a syllabic system of writing Cree. For a language of such preciseness and regularity as is the Cree, the syllabic system matches it in clarity and brevity.

The whole system is phonetic and the unit is a syllable rather than a letter. There are large symbols and small symbols. The small symbols represent single sounds but the large symbols represent syllables consisting of a consonant and a following vowel. The shape of the character indicates the consonant sound, while the vowel sound of the syllable which the character represents is indicated by the degree of clockwise orientation of the character. As there are only eleven rotating symbols for syllables and three rotating and four fixed symbols for non-syllables, the system can be learned in a short time. Slightly different systems are used for French and English. Examples used here are from the English syllabic system and of the Plains Cree dialect.

∧	>	∨	<	∠	
pee	poo	pay	pu	paa	P
∩	⊃	∪	⊂	⊆	/
tee	too	tay	tu	taa	T

Cree can also be written using Roman orthography but serious problems of how to represent sounds arise. As there is no agreement on this matter writers tend to use any system which appeals to them and considerable confusion results.

What is so different about the structure of the Cree language and how does it affect the thinking patterns of those whose mother tongue it is? The following quotations are all from Cree Language Structure and Introduction to a Cree English Dictionary by Robert A. Logan and published by University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan.

One of the greatest handicaps in the study of the Indian languages has been the lack of appreciation of the differences in the sequences of ideas in the mind of a native speaker and the sequence of ideas in the mind of a speaker of European languages.

If an English speaker says, "I see you" the sequence of ideas in his mind is: himself, the speaker; the action of seeing performed by the speaker and directed toward the person to whom he is speaking. But if a native speaker of Cree were to attempt to convey the same general information to a companion Cree-speaker the sequence of ideas in his mind would be quite different. Automatically would spring into the field of his mental vision the image of the person to whom he intended to speak; it would be instinctive for him to think first of the other person--just as it would be instinctive for an English speaker to think first of himself. Next in his sequence of ideas would be the idea that the person addressed is the target of an action performed by the speaker; the mental image or idea of the speaker himself being the last on the list.

Although seldom realized, the English language is a double language. We have vocal or sound symbols which represent ideas. Theoretically, each such sound symbol is bounded by a short pause unless it is compounded with another to form a new or slightly different idea-symbol. Such a sound symbol, whether representing one idea or a compounded one representing several ideas, is called a word. To convey an idea of action by, or condition of, a specified material by the use of the English language requires the use of more than one word--except in a few instances. A group of sound "idea-symbols" or words used for this purpose is termed a sentence. This is the English language of sound symbols, but the other English language is one of visual symbols, not representing basic ideas but

representing the sound symbols which in turn represent the ideas of materials, actions and conditions. This differs from such visual languages as Chinese, where the visual idea-symbols may have no connection with the sound symbols used for the same ideas. In our visual language, words are separated by spaces or gaps, even when grouped together to form a sentence. Therefore, we may be said to think in terms of words rather than sentences, although the only purpose of words is to be used in the construction of sentences.

The old Cree-speaking people did not have a written language at the time when Columbus discovered America. Their oral idea-symbols were not individual words. With few exceptions, they used idea-symbols compounded into sentences. When they heard certain sounds they knew what ideas were represented by those sounds, even if the sound seemed to the European ear to run together into something like long words. When the Europeans heard these utterances they mistook them for words and listed them accordingly. Thus was the study of the Algonquian languages handicapped from the very start.

. . .

One feature of Cree, and other Algonquian languages, is that there are two methods of arranging the ideas expressed by almost any sentence. In one method there is the equivalent of a personal pronoun before the section corresponding to the verb, when the actor or person described is a First or Second Person, as in the English statements, "I am reading," "You are sick," but in the other method the Cree symbol for the action comes before the indicator of a person, as in the English statements, "It is reading I am [doing]," and "It is sick you are."

Because nearly all modern European languages call for the use of a personal pronoun before the verb, the early European students of Algonquian languages assumed that the Indian form most resembling their own was the principal or normal form of the Indian sentence. They called it the Indicative Mood. The method which employs no personal pronoun before the verb was called the subjunctive Mood.

. . .

The so-called Subjunctive Mood of the Cree language is the normal or instinctive form of idea sequence in the mind of a Cree Indian who does not know English or French and who has not been influenced by reading books written in Cree by Whitemen whose words may have been Cree but whose ideas still followed the sequences of their own mother-tongues

The Cree Method which has the First and Second Person indicator before the action-indicator is used when the main topic of the utterance is the first person to be indicated, something like "I [not someone else] am reading." . . .

Grammarians learned in the languages of Latin, English and French have found much to confuse them in trying to separate the transitive and intransitive verbal forms of the Cree language. This is only natural, because they were looking for Cree forms which would correspond with Latin forms.

The designers of the Cree language had no interest whatsoever in transitive or intransitive verbal forms (Logan, pp. 37-39).

#### IV. COMMUNICATION WITHIN A POWER STRUCTURE

It is important to realize that, contrary to popular and uninformed opinion, Cree people do not live in a language vacuum. They have been raised and learned to communicate in a highly developed and satisfactory language. They have a full commitment to the language and all that that implies. They have, as a result of that language, a fully developed set of concepts, a way of categorizing things and a way of thinking.

Indian and Metis Cree speakers use their language to do more than communicate. They may sometimes use it as a defensive mechanism. If a White man wants an Indian to do something and the Indian does not want to do it, it may appear that the White man is not understood. When one is in the presence of a White man with authority, and most White people in native communities are in a position of authority, it is not wise to say "No." It is better to pretend not to understand.

If one is asking a favor of a White man, such as getting credit at the store, it would be humiliating to be reprimanded and refused. There is less chance of personal humiliation if risky business is carried on through an interpreter. If, through an interpreter, a man

is refused credit, less status will be lost if one can rationalize that the interpreter failed to convey the correct meaning.

If an angry parent wishes to reprimand a teacher, the interpreter is able to act as a modifying element. The parent can vent his anger in Cree and feel quite safe that the interpreter will translate in a manner guaranteed not to incense the teacher.

By speaking in Cree to one's friends while in the presence of a White man, one is able to make disparaging remarks such as criticizing the person's dress, mannerisms, and commenting generally on that individual's stupidity without running any risks whatsoever.

When communicating or attempting to communicate with Indians it must be realized that factors other than comprehension of oral English are of considerable importance. White men are generally in positions of power and authority over Indians. On many occasions White persons are on a "fly by night" mission. They fly or drive into an area with the intention of completing their business as soon as possible and getting back home. Often the ideas presented are quite new to the Indian people. The ideas may have considerable merit. The man from the Government Department has given considerable thought to these ideas and planned a course of action. He wants immediate reaction from the Indian or Metis people. They, understandably, want to consider the ideas carefully and resent being pressed for immediate comments and perhaps a decision. The fear element enters into the picture. If they are frank about their desire to consider the ideal in detail at their leisure the Government representative may feel they are not cooperating.

They may disagree with the proposal entirely. But these White men are powerful people. They have a thousand and one subtle ways of using their powers. Financial grants may be withheld, delayed or decreased in amount. Indians have learned through sad experience that open non cooperation with White people is often unwise. Thus, in the situation described the Indian people may say very little or let their silence be interpreted as assent. Following the return of the White man to the city there may be prolonged discussion and consideration of the idea by the local people. In view of the unique situation of the local community it may be determined that the government plan is not wanted. But the Indian silence was interpreted as assent by the government man. The only defence left is to do one of two things or a combination of the two. First, resist the program passively or secondly, maintain they did not understand. The second is a common reaction and further illustrates the use of language as a defensive mechanism. Fortunately the element of fear is a less powerful factor today and the Indian-Metis people are more apt to voice their objections to making a hasty decision in the first place. Nevertheless the perseverance of the cultural trait described above has serious implications in a classroom setting.

#### V. PHONEMIC ELEMENTS

Inasmuch as Frontier School Division #48 serves students whose mother tongue is either Cree, Saulteaux or English, which has been influenced by these languages, the phonemic and structural elements of Cree, as a typical Algonkian dialect, will be analyzed. The phonemic

and structural elements of both dialects are similar with the following exceptions. Saulteaux contains an "sh" sound. It tends to use the "z" sound to replace the Cree "s" sound and it replaces the Cree "sk" sound with a "ck" sound. The Cree "amisk" becomes "amick" in Saulteaux. The Cree "moose" becomes "mooz" in Saulteaux. The Cree says the English "shoes" and "marsh" as "sooes" and "marse" while the Saulteaux, having the "sh" sound would pronounce it exactly as the English do (Horden).

With the above exceptions, the following descriptions will accurately describe the linguistic backgrounds of Cree or Saulteaux speaking students in the test group.

(a) Major Vowel Sounds

<u>Vowels in Canadian English</u>	<u>Approximate Cree Equivalents Vowel Sounds Using English Examples</u>
(i) as in <u>si</u> t	(i) as in <u>si</u> t
(e) as in <u>se</u> t	(ii) as in <u>se</u> at
(æ) as in <u>sa</u> t	(e) as in <u>se</u> t
(a) as in <u>sou</u> ght	(a) as in <u>su</u> n
(ə) as in <u>bu</u> t	(aa) lengthened form of (a)
(o) as in " <u>gon</u> na"	(o) as in <u>bo</u> ok
(u) as in <u>pu</u> sh	
(+) as in <u>wome</u> n	

## (b) Major Diphthongs

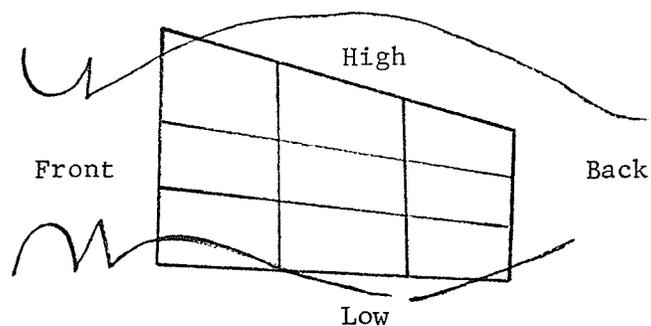
<u>Canadian English</u>	<u>Approximate Cree Equivalents</u>
(iy) as in <u>se</u> at	None. Pure vowel sounds are used.
(ey) as in <u>a</u> te	
(ow) as in <u>bo</u> at	
(uw) as in <u>to</u> oth	
(oy) as in <u>bo</u> il	
(ay) as in <u>sigh</u>	
(əy) as in <u>si</u> te	
(aw) as in <u>cro</u> wn	
(əw) as in <u>ou</u> t	

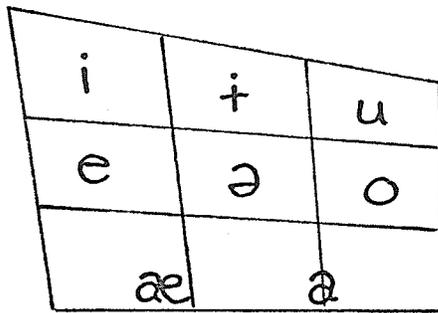
Cree is distinctive in that vowel length gives a different meaning to a word. Vowel length may be the only feature separating two otherwise identical words.

Tongue position is an important factor in the production of vowel sounds. The following diagrams illustrate the difference. The dotted lines in the Cree chart indicate that the sounds overlap.

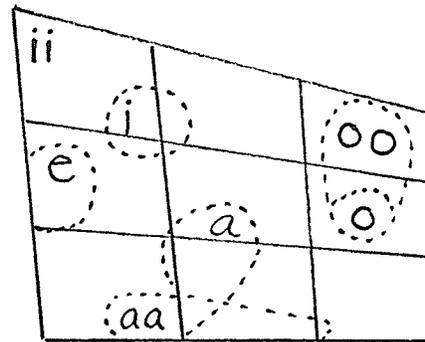
(Soveran, page 9)

## TONGUE POSITIONS FOR VOWELS





English



Cree

## (c) Consonants

StopsCanadian English

Voiced	Unvoiced
b (ball)	p (pull)
g (go)	k (kiss)
ʒ	j
d (dill)	t (till)

Cree

Voiced	Unvoiced
-	p
-	t
-	k
-	ʒ

Fricatives

Voiced	Unvoiced
v (voice)	f (fool)
θ (thistle)	ʰ (then)
s (sing)	z (zing)
ʒ (sure)	ʒ (azure)
-	h

Voiced	Unvoiced
-	-
-	-
-	s
-	-
-	h

NasalsCanadian EnglishCree

Voiced

Voiced

m (mother)

m

n (never)

n

(sing)

-

Lateral Continuant

l (lateral)

-

r (rat)

-

Semi-Vowels

w (will)

w

y (you)

y

As indicated above there are no voiced consonants in Cree. In English the use of voiced and unvoiced consonants are significant signals in comprehending oral English. Many children of the Algonkian linguistic family understand English poorly because they have never been taught to hear a difference and therefore never respond to it as a separate signal. Nor do they make the distinction clear in their own pronunciation of English.

## VI. MORPHOLOGY

All Algonkian languages are primarily verbal and inflected. They have as their base the verb and to this are added suffixes and

prefixes to indicate exactly whom or what is spoken about, who is being spoken to, and who is included in the conversation. The affixes also determine the nature of the thing being discussed. All objects are divided into an animate and inanimate classification and the affixes have to determine not only this but also whether the object under discussion is singular or plural.

The difficulties made evident by the results of the Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test are difficult to relate specifically to the morphology of Cree. However, note must be taken of certain elements which, if not confusing as single words, can be assumed to cause contextual problems.

Algonkian languages categorize words as animate or inanimate--moving or still objects. No particular logic, however, governs the method of categorization. As one would expect, a word such as water is animate--it moves. However a dock or pier is also classified as animate. Trees are animate--they obviously move, albeit slowly, upwards. However, a human arm is classified as inanimate. The Cree child has great difficulty in learning the English concept of gender. No "he" or "she" exist in Cree. The illogic of English is also confusing. Why is a ship a "she"? Many Cree children confuse the use of gender and in oral situations puzzle greatly over a conversation which might go as follows:

"How are your parents?"

"Well, he is fine but she has not been feeling too well."

In many cases a considerable period of silence will follow as

the Cree person struggles with the intricacies of gender to attempt to determine whether it is the father or the mother who is ill.

A similar situation exists in terms of general pronouns. English has first, second and third persons singular and plural. Algonkian languages have five such distinctions which allows it to be highly specific.

It makes considerable use of inclusive and exclusive pronouns. Ambiguity is thus avoided as antecedents are quite clear. The confusing question of whose bicycle is being ridden in the following sentence is not possible in Cree.

"John saw Bill ride his bicycle down the Street."

The use of an inflected noun to form a prepositional phrase is again a pattern that causes problems for the Cree child when dealing with English prepositional phrases.

<u>English</u>	<u>Cree</u>
river	sipi
at the river	sipikh

In English you put a preposition before the noun to indicate position or relation. In Cree you inflect the noun. Evidence of considerable confusion in oral comprehension will appear in regard to prepositions in the analysis of the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test.

Plurality in Cree is indicated by the adjective rather than both the noun and the adjective in English. Example:

Cree:	one book	--	ten book
English:	one book	--	ten books

## VII. STRUCTURE

Word order and sentence patterns are not as important as they are in English. Sentences in Cree can have the subject - verb - object order but the sentence does not have to remain in this order to be understood. No articles establish any expected order in the sentence and modifying words do not have to proceed the noun modified. Word form is more important than the word order which gives meaning to English (Ellis).

The following sentence in three word order forms ranges from an intelligible thought, to a confusing one, and finally ends up as gibberish.

I am going to leave for work soon.

To leave for work I soon am going.

I for work leave to soon am going.

In Cree the sentences would all be quite intelligible.

Tense is developed with Cree from an entirely different concept than English tense. English has a myriad of tenses each rather precise in differentiating time and space. This is indicated by various verb forms. Cree tense is developed on a continuum whose focal point is present time. The concept involved is that of present action completed, present action, and present action not yet undertaken. In short, the verb is timeless as in Greek. Markers show past or future, not the verb. Once again it will be appreciated that the Cree child is not faced with simply learning a few words or conjugating a verb. That is

difficult enough as the reader's experience with school French will have taught him. The greatest difficulty, however, is helping the child to understand the new conceptual framework of the tense system with which he must work.

The concepts of time are so different that one hesitates to give examples in English. The following examples only serve to illustrate the present tense orientation of Cree in relation to English.

English -- I haven't seen him  
(verb indicates time)

Cree Translation -- I didn't see him  
(verb is present, the did expresses  
completed action)

To confuse matters still more is the fact that the Cree equivalent of subordinate clauses do not equate with the English. Usually in English we expect the clause to be composed of a number of words. In Cree one word may express the thought in either a main or subordinate sense, i.e., It is raining. "Kimiwan"

The Cree grammatical system lacks a precise equivalent to the English infinitive mood. Thus we tend to have Cree children, who learn English as a second language, avoid using the infinitive.

Example 1. English -- I want you to come.

Cree -- I want that you come.

Example 2. English -- I'd like to go home.

Cree -- I'm going home.

In the last example one can easily see that the Indian child, in making a request, is apt to be considered impertinent by his teacher.

Until the child is fluent, to the extent that he thinks in English, such constructions are apt to cause him either to express a wrong thought as in example 2 or a strangely constructed one as in example 1.

Similar strange patterns result with regard to translation by the child in relation to degree.

In English we say:

I am warm.

I am warmer than you.

I am warmest. (The "of all" is understood)

In the superlative degree the Cree language uses the complete form and children tend to say in English.

I am warmest than all.

Cree does not have a possessive case for nouns. Thus the child, with his well-developed Cree word patterns, tends to be redundant in English.

English -- The man's house is by the river.

Cree -- The man his house is by the river.

A similar but more serious problem which frequently arises concerns the acceptable answer to an interrogative and leading question. Consider the beginning teacher who has had to reprimand a student for running in the school hallway. The teacher is apt to complete the conversation by saying: "You aren't going to do that again, are you?" In English the student is expected to say, "No." This, of course, is completely illogical. Logically, the child would reply, "Yes, I am not going to run in the hall again."

Logical or not, English has developed a pattern of language which demands a "No" answer.

The opposite approach is taken in Cree. Here the correct and acceptable answer is in the positive. Many a Cree child has been punished for impertinence because of this minor difference in language habits. The teacher who deals with Cree children must learn to avoid questions and statements which may lead to seemingly ambiguous or contradictory answers.

With this brief sketch of some of the more important differences the item analysis of the Brown-Carlson Test will now be examined in order to determine the root causes of certain primary errors committed by large numbers of students.

#### VIII. AN ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN THE BROWN-CARLSEN LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST

##### (a) Immediate Recall

The students performed relatively well on this part of the test.

Question eight which dealt with recall of prepositions caused sixty-six students to give a wrong response. This can be attributed to the basic difference in structure of an Algonkian and English language in regard to use of prepositions.

Questions fifteen and seventeen which demanded recall of information in the preceding questions proved difficult.

##### Summary

No great difficulty was evidenced by the test of immediate recall.

Most of the questions hinged around recall of numerals and reflects the fact that English numerals are extensively used in all communities in Frontier School Division #48.

(b) Following Directions

The Following Directions sub test consisted of twenty items which required that students do simple number combinations. As all numbers were smaller than ten it is posited that arithmetical inadequacies did not account for the large number of incorrect responses.

The first question in the sub-test (question 18) was "The number above the second vowel is----." It appears unlikely that any grade nine student would be unaware of the meaning of "second" or "vowel" yet fifty-five students out of one hundred thirty-eight gave an incorrect response or no response (nine) at all. From the analysis of the Cree language given at the beginning of this chapter it appears that the word causing the problem of oral comprehension would be the preposition "above."

The second question in the sub-test (question 19) was "Multiply the next to the smallest number by the smallest number and add the smallest number to it." Seventy-four students gave an incorrect response or no response (twenty-one). The analysis of the Cree language indicated that the superlative form of an adjective of degree is constructed differently. There are in the directions two problems of comprehension: one hinging on the use of the superlative and the other on the preposition "next."

The following summary identifies the specific problem(s) in each of the remaining questions. The number of incorrect responses appears in brackets.

- Question 21 - adjective of degree (75)
- Question 22 - adjective of degree, preposition (75)
- Question 23 - preposition (84)
- Question 24 - adjective of degree (68)
- Question 25 - adjective of degree (85)
- Question 26 - preposition (73)
- Question 27 - preposition, adjective of degree (69)
- Question 28 - preposition, adjective of degree (102)
- Question 29 - preposition, adjective of degree (92)
- Question 30 - adjective of degree (59)
- Question 31 - prepositions (66)
- Question 32 - preposition (60)
- Question 33 - preposition (74)
- Question 34 - preposition (92)
- Question 35 - preposition, adjectives of degree (102)
- Question 36 - prepositions (83)
- Question 37 - prepositions (100)

### Summary

Prepositions and adjectives of degree, being formed differently in Cree than in English, apparently contribute greatly to the difficulties of comprehending oral English by students from the Algonkian linguistic group.

(c) Recognizing Transitions

The Recognizing Transitions sub-test consisted of eight items which tested the students' ability to determine whether a sentence was introductory, transitional or concluding. This type of question assumes that comprehension of oral English is related to the listener's awareness of the function of transitional words and phrases within sentence contexts. All the sentences used in the test contained subordinate clauses and/or prepositional phrases.

In only one of the questions did the majority of students give the correct responses. In the one referred to, seventy-seven gave a correct response while sixty-one answered incorrectly. Significantly this one sentence was the first (question 38) and the easiest test question.

The eight sentences used for test purposes contained fourteen prepositional phrases, three infinitives and five clauses. Each of these is used differently in Cree and English and their use in conjunction appear to have caused considerable confusion.

Summary

The sentences contained subordinate clauses or infinitive phrases or prepositional phrases or a combination of each. It is posited that the complexity of sentence structure caused the majority of students to give incorrect responses.

(d) Recognizing Word Meanings

The Recognizing Word Meanings sub-test attempted to determine

the ability of students to give the correct dictionary meaning for particular words as used in a sentence context.

In only one sentence (question fifty) did the majority of students give a correct response (102). The life experiences of the students seem to have allowed them to master the idea that "dull" is synonymous with "stupidity."

Idioms, homonyms and synonyms in any language are recognized as particularly difficult for non-native students to comprehend and the test results indicate that students of the Algonkian language family experience such difficulties when learning English.

#### Summary

Word meanings governed by context were beyond comprehension by the majority of students tested.

#### (e) Lecture Comprehension

The Lecture Comprehension sub-test consisted of lecturing "reading" a story concerned with the value of increasing your vocabulary. Reading time was approximately twelve minutes. The significance of the test results were considerable inasmuch as the lecture method, socialized recitation and other discussion techniques play such a major role in any high school. The lecture method assumes a level of skill in the comprehension in oral English which needs no remediation. Teachers assume students can understand and will understand if they can be motivated to listen intently.

The sub-test consisted of twenty-one questions concerning content

of the twelve minute lecture. In only two questions (questions fifty-six and fifty-seven) did the majority of students give a correct response. The correct responses numbered one hundred thirteen and seventy-seven respectively. The content upon which the questions were based was humorous in nature and was "lectured" in the first thirty seconds of the test.

The rather even distribution of incorrect answers makes analysis impossible except to posit that the students guessed wildly. The wild guesses may have been as a result of poor motivation which caused the students to ignore the lecturer or evidences complete inability to comprehend the sophistication of oral English heard.

#### Summary

Very little factual knowledge was retained by students after a twelve minute lecture.

#### Conclusions

Structural differences between an Algonkian language and English cause difficulty to Cree and Saulteaux children in comprehending oral English. Structural patterns developed in Algonkian interfere with comprehension of English structural patterns. The test evidenced this specifically in regard to prepositions, prepositional phrases, infinitive phrases, adjectives of degree and clauses. In addition phonemic differences between the languages may be hypothesized to be a severe handicap but the test was not specifically designed to discover this. Nevertheless phonemic differences would likely be a predominant handicap

in every aspect of the test.

The results of the analysis indicate that considerable work in the area of comprehension of oral English should be undertaken with most students entering Frontier Collegiate who come from areas where the predominant language is an Algonkian language or where the English spoken has been greatly influenced by Algonkian language structures and its phonemic system.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY, INTERPRETATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Frontier School Division #48 was created to provide education for young people in the remote and semi-remote areas of Manitoba. Covering two-thirds of the geographical area of the province the school division serves children of whom the majority are Metis, that is, of mixed Indian and Euro-Canadian ancestry. Schools of varying size are located in the villages and serve the educational needs of children from kindergarten to grade eight. Two schools in larger settlements offer a partial high school program but the majority of grade eight graduates attend a residential high school called Frontier Collegiate at Cranberry Portage in Manitoba.

The stated purpose of Frontier Collegiate is to inculcate in its student body, intellectual skills and knowledge as well as social skills, which will fit the students to enter the dominant society with an educational background that will enable them to compete on equal terms with graduates of any other high school. The emphasis upon the dominant society is necessary, for the Metis communities are no longer able to absorb more than a minority of the young people in the traditional ways of earning a living. The rapid decline of the importance of trapping, fishing and independent pulp wood ventures has caused employment problems even for adults presently resident in existing Metis communities.

The majority of grade eight graduates enroll in grade nine at Frontier Collegiate but the number that graduate from high school is

disproportionately small. Of those entering grade ten, the majority of Metis students are enrolled in high school programs which are the least academically difficult. Teachers of Metis children explain the program choice and the disproportionate drop-out rate in several ways. Of primary importance is the language problem and particular stress is put on inability to communicate orally and in written form. Of lesser importance is a general form of reticence in interpersonal relationships between student and teacher.

This study looked for an explanation of these concerns through an investigation of the ability of grade nine students in Frontier Collegiate to comprehend oral English in comparison to White students in non-Metis communities. It further attempted to discover if a relationship existed between inability to comprehend oral English and program choices in grades ten and eleven. In addition, a study was made of the linguistic family, Algonkian, from which the majority of Metis students derive their native language, and to discover which unique features of language created barriers in comprehending oral English.

A summary of the design and findings of the study is made in this final chapter. The interpretation of these findings points to the recommendations made for the education of Metis students in Frontier Collegiate and for further research.

#### I. SUMMARY OF THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Data concerning the ability of students enrolled in grade nine

at Frontier Collegiate to comprehend oral English were collected in November of 1968. The testing instrument used was the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test. The data were subjected to an item analysis. A study of phonemic and structural elements of the Algonkian linguistic family of languages was undertaken. Then a specific analysis of the Cree and Saulteaux dialects was completed. The results of the study were applied to the item analysis in an attempt to isolate unique language differences in a structural and phonemic sense which were creating barriers to the comprehension of oral English. In order to put the linguistic differences in a suitable context, a brief history of the language was developed and the total role of language in a culture was noted.

In November of 1969 and February of 1971, information was extracted from individual student file cards regarding program choices in grades ten and eleven.

The percentile ranking of all students in the test group was completed. Distribution by quartiles was calculated in order to determine the percentages of students in each quartile.

Frequencies of standard scores were calculated in order to determine if there was a difference between male and female medians and between White and Metis students.

Finally a comparison between percentile ranking and program choices in grades ten and eleven was undertaken in an attempt to establish a relationship between the two. Because of the large number of students from the test group who left school during the three year period, only gross comparisons were possible.

## II. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the item analysis by response to the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test indicated that linguistic differences in English and Cree were causing predictable barriers in the comprehension of oral English. Elements of phonemics caused general and diffused difficulties while specific problems were related to prepositions, adjectives of degree, infinitives, clauses and idiomatic expressions. Problems with homonyms and synonyms were considered peculiar to the English language and not caused by linguistic differences.

The results of the distribution of responses by percentiles indicated that one hundred eleven students were below the fiftieth percentile while eighty-one were below the thirty-fifth percentile. Brown (1952) had indicated that students below the thirty-fifth percentile would gain little from informal classroom discussion or formal lecture.

The distribution by percentages indicated that 51 per cent fell below the thirty-fifth percentile. Breaking it down by Metis and White indicated that nine White students fell into this category while seventy-one Metis students did.

The standard scores indicated a median score of ninety-eight for White and ninety-three for Metis.

The results of a percentage tabulation of program choices by White and Metis students indicated that in grade ten 50 per cent of the White and .5 per cent of the Metis students were in the academically

demanding University Entrance course. The General Course was elected by 22.7 per cent of the White and 42.8 per cent of the Metis; 13.6 per cent White as compared with 10.4 per cent Metis elected a Business Education course. The least demanding course, the Occupational Entrance, was chosen by 4.5 per cent of the Whites and 28.5 per cent of the Metis. The drop-out rate was 9 per cent and 8.5 per cent for White and Metis respectively.

A considerable number of students changed programs upon entering grade eleven. In this year it was found that 30 per cent of the White and 9.3 per cent of the Metis were in the University Entrance Course. In the General Course it was 5 per cent and 25 per cent respectively for White and Metis. 5 per cent White and 10.4 per cent Metis were in the Business Education while 13.5 per cent of the Metis were in the Occupational Entrance Course. No White students remained in this least academically demanding course. 60 per cent of the Whites dropped out of school while 40.6 per cent of the Metis left. In terms of numbers, however, this represented fourteen Whites and forty-nine Metis students. The figures indicated that White students tend to choose the most demanding academic program and if unable to achieve success they drop out of school rather than move to a lesser academic program. The figures could also be used to show a preference of White students to avoid classes where Metis students predominate.

The drop-out rate was so great, and the movement of students to other courses so common, that only gross comparisons could be made in determining relationship between program choice and ability to comprehend

oral English.

Brown (1952) found that students above the fiftieth percentile on the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test were capable of succeeding in a college preparatory high school course.

At Frontier Collegiate 43.4 per cent of the White students were above the fiftieth percentile but 72.7 per cent entered a college preparatory program. In February of their grade eleven year only 35 per cent of this group were still in a college preparatory program.

Of the Metis students 14.8 per cent were above the fiftieth percentile in their ability to comprehend oral English but 52.3 per cent entered a college preparatory program. In February of their grade eleven year only 34.3 per cent were still in a college preparatory program.

It is significant, however, that the General Course is only partially acceptable as a college preparatory program in Manitoba. Only 5 per cent of the White students were registered in the General Course in grade eleven while 25 per cent of the Metis students were.

The findings of Brown (1952) for the results of the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test as a predictor of success in a college preparatory course are valid in terms of the University Entrance Course but not in terms of the General Course.

### III. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The Metis child is torn between two cultures. He is neither Indian nor White. His ties, however, tend to be either with a White or an Indian culture although he may not be completely accepted by either.

The group in this study are more closely aligned to Indian culture. As such, they have suffered the same educational indignities as inflicted upon the Indians. They have been inflicted with an educational system which insists upon educating them in a foreign language while using that language to disparage the Indian culture. The schooling process has been used to inculcate the values of the dominant society which are often at complete variance with Indian culture.

The child enters school at age six with a wealth of experiences and well-developed language skills. The school rejects his experiences as being of little value and proceeds to build up a new set of experiences which will make him "fit" a standard White oriented curriculum. It begins to teach him to read in a language of which he has practically no knowledge. The programs used are those developed for children whose mother tongue is English. The school believes that he will learn to speak and understand oral English concomitant with learning to read English. The result is that many of the students are very poor readers of English and, as this study shows, the majority of Metis students who enter grade nine in Frontier Collegiate have limited ability to comprehend oral English.

A gross relationship exists between the ability to comprehend oral English and the choosing of a college preparatory program. Those students who have poor ability in comprehending oral English are more likely to leave school before graduation.

Inasmuch as teachers in Frontier Collegiate are Euro-Canadian and products of a highly verbal Canadian school system, one can appreciate

the quandary in which they find themselves. Great stress is put on verbal fluency in social interaction, class discussions and the transmitting of information by lecture. In all of these areas the Metis student is at a disadvantage because of an inadequate English language base. His English tends to be lower class English. His conceptual understanding of gender, infinitives, prepositional phrases, and clauses tends to be of a very low level. Daily he must face a barrage of middle class English spoken at a rate which appears to him to be excessively rapid, and because of his low conceptual knowledge of English is, more often than not, just words without meaning when assembled into complex sentences.

Although it was beyond the scope of this study, one must be aware of the unconscious attitudes teachers and the general public transmit concerning disdain for things Indian. Students often become ashamed of their Indianness and become increasingly reticent. Others develop either a passive or active hostility towards the teachers whom they see as an aggressively anti-Indian representative of the dominant society.

Nevertheless, the Metis student must, in order to survive, move into the dominant White society. To be able to enter that society on equal terms with his White compatriots he must become a person fluent in all aspects of English.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF GRADE NINE

##### STUDENTS IN FRONTIER COLLEGIATE

Since most of the problems which interfere with the academic

progress of Metis students, as revealed in this study, have a basis in language, it is important that those concerned with their education understand the principles of language development. In general terms teachers in Frontier Collegiate must have a knowledge of basic elements comprising Algonkian language with specific knowledge of the structures of the Cree and Saulteaux languages. In addition to these general and specific knowledges, the teachers must develop some expertise in sentence patterning and language concept development which will allow them to remediate problems of grade nine students as they are discovered.

It is recommended that the staff in Frontier Collegiate adapt the Brown-Carlson Listening Comprehension Test, with modifications as experience will dictate, and administer it to students at the grade eight level prior to their entering Frontier Collegiate. Test results should be analyzed individually and those students having a score placing them below the fiftieth percentile should be grouped in the September classes and an extensive effort should be made to upgrade the oral language skills of these students. No great effort should be made to increase the reading skills until a more adequate level of oral English has developed. There is no reason to suppose the students are deficient in any reading skills which do not have as a root cause inability to comprehend and express themselves in oral English. All subject areas should be oriented towards the development of spoken and oral English skills and, in this important grade nine year, the content of subject areas should be of secondary concern except as it is used as the medium for English language instruction.

Teacher lecturing must be subservient to student talking and situations which will encourage oral interchange must be carefully planned. For these students, and possibly for a number above the fiftieth percentile, the teaching of standard English courses in grammar, composition and literary studies must be anathema. Persistence of such programs simply refute the basic educational principle of moving from the known to the unknown.

Teachers on staff must develop an expertise in teaching English as a second language generally and specifically become knowledgeable in the skills of contrastive analysis. This implies a knowledge of the basic structures of Algonkian languages and English.

Long range solutions of student language problems in Frontier School Division #48 will be found by more comprehensive and enlightened language programs in the elementary school. Instruction, first in the native language with a gradual shift to English in the fourth or fifth school year, seems to offer the greatest hope of improvement. Miraculous changes will not occur, however, as the language of many of the remote communities is an Algonkian language. English will always be alien and the degree of mastery of English will always be less than for those whose native tongue it is. For many students, entrance to Frontier Collegiate will be the first year of almost total immersion in English--English newspapers, television, stores, movies, etc. The years in Frontier Collegiate and especially the first year, must be highly productive in the development of English language skills. With such development many of the frustrations now experienced by the students will be modified; success in both

academic and social areas will be greater; and hopefully the retention rate of the student body will rise.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The limitations of this study require that further research should seek to substantiate the findings concerning the language deficiencies of Metis students in Frontier Collegiate. Research in this area should be an ongoing concern of the teachers in Frontier Collegiate as well as in the elementary schools. Such research should be coordinated at the division administrative level. Concomitant with such research the knowledge of language of all teachers in the previously noted areas should be upgraded. In-service training, newsletters, professional publications, sample lesson plans, methods of analysis, and language remediation techniques should be supplied by the division administration as stimulus for such a development. A comprehensive effort to overcome oral language difficulties at all grades is necessary if the final product is to be capable of moving into the dominant society and competing on equal terms with it.

A series of longitudinal studies, with a sufficiently large sample of students in Frontier School Division #48, should be undertaken to learn more of the unique problems of language development of Metis children and how these are related to cultural factors and the self concept of the students.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

BROWN-CARLSEN LISTENING COMPREHENSION TEST

PART A. IMMEDIATE RECALL

"Part A is called Immediate Recall. All work must be done mentally and answers recorded on the separate answer sheet. Listen carefully while I read the sample question." [Examiner reads numbers at a rate of one per second in a clear, strong voice.] "In the series of numbers 4 - 5 - 3 - 2 - 1, the first number is \_\_\_\_." [Pause] "Yes, the first number is 4. Therefore, in the sample on your answer sheet, the answer space under the 4 has been filled in. If the correct choice is none of those given, you should fill in the answer space under N. Are there any questions." [Answer any questions at this time.] "The others are to be done in the same manner. Be sure your marks are heavy and black. Erase completely any answer you wish to change. Listen carefully and try to remember what I say. I shall read each question only once." [Be sure to read the number of each question. Pause for approximately 5 seconds after each question. Estimate 5 seconds by counting silently 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005.]

- "1. In the series of numbers 5 - 8 - 4 - 1 - 6, the second number is \_\_\_\_?
2. In the series of numbers 2 - 1 - 4 - 5 - 8, a series containing five numbers, the fourth number is \_\_\_\_?
3. In the series of numbers 7 - 8 - 5 - 9 - 7, the fourth number is \_\_\_\_?
4. In the series of numbers 6 - 9 - 4 - 4 - 8 - 2, the fifth number is \_\_\_\_?
5. In the series of numbers 8 - 1 - 9 - 5 - 3, the third number is \_\_\_\_?

6. In the series of numbers 1 - 9 - 5 - 7 - 3 - 5, a series containing only odd numbers, the next to the last number is \_\_\_\_?
7. In the list of words by - of - in - at - on, the word beginning with 'a' is \_\_\_\_?
8. In the list of words at - by - to - of - in, a list containing five words, the second word is \_\_\_\_?
9. In the list of words of - to - at - on - by, the third word is \_\_\_\_?
10. In the list of words by - at - of - to - in, the fourth word is \_\_\_\_?
11. In the list of words on - an - in - of - at - to, the fifth word is \_\_\_\_?
12. In the statement, 'Send three box tops with your name and address and 20 cents to Box 24, Denver 18, Colorado, to receive the special gift offer,' the number of cents to be enclosed is \_\_\_\_?
13. In the statement just read, the box number was \_\_\_\_?
14. Listen to this explanation: 'After inserting two small set screws in holes marked A in the angle brackets marked D on the enclosed diagram, make three complete turns of each screw; then place the brackets on the wall in the desired position and fasten them into place with the screws marked C on the diagram.' The number of turns of each set screw you were directed to make was \_\_\_\_?
15. The number of set screws mentioned was \_\_\_\_?
16. Listen to these directions: 'Eight of you should walk 4 blocks up this street, turn to your left and continue 2 blocks to Oak Street, then angle off on Oak for one more block to the corner house at 203 Oak.' The number of persons directed to make the trip was \_\_\_\_?

17. The total number of blocks to the corner house on Oak Street is \_\_\_\_\_?

"That is the end of Part A."

PART B. FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

"In Part B you are to follow oral directions. In the upper left corner of your answer sheet is a group of numbers and letters to which you will need to refer." [Point to proper place.] "The even numbers and the vowels have been underlined; the numbers 3 and 6 have been circled. Now look at the sample. Referring to the row of numbers above the answer spaces for this part, subtract the smallest number from the largest number." [Pause] "The correct answer is 7; so on your answer sheet the answer space under the 7 has been filled in. If the correct choice is none of those given, you should fill in the answer space under N."

"All the questions in this part will be answered in the same manner. You are not to do any figuring on the answer sheet; all work must be done mentally. Listen carefully; I shall read each question only once."

[Examiner reads each question in a clear, strong voice at moderate speed. Be sure to read the number of each question. Pause for about 5 seconds after each question.]

18. The number above the second vowel is \_\_\_\_\_?
19. Multiply the next to the smallest number by the smallest number and add the smallest number to it. The answer is \_\_\_\_\_?
20. The number two less than the third underlined number is \_\_\_\_\_?

21. Subtract the smallest number from one half of the largest number.  
The answer is \_\_\_\_\_?
22. Subtract the next to the smallest number from the largest number.  
The number that is four less than that is \_\_\_\_\_?
23. To the sum of the first two underlined numbers add the number above the first underlined letter. Two less than that sum is \_\_\_\_\_?
24. Subtract the smallest even number from the largest number and take half the difference. The answer is \_\_\_\_\_?
25. The number one greater than the smallest number encircled is \_\_\_\_\_?
26. Add the two numbers above the two vowels. The letter directly below that number is \_\_\_\_\_?
27. Subtract three from the largest number. The next larger number is \_\_\_\_\_?
28. Subtract the next to the smallest odd number from the next to the largest even number. The number one less than that is \_\_\_\_\_?
29. Subtract the smallest number from the next to the largest number.  
One less than half the difference is \_\_\_\_\_?
30. Subtract the third smallest number from the third largest number and add the smallest number to the difference. The answer is \_\_\_\_\_?
31. Add the number above the first vowel to the number above the first consonant; then add the number above the second consonant to that sum. Two less than the resulting sum is \_\_\_\_\_?
32. The number one less than the number directly above the second underlined letter is \_\_\_\_\_?
33. The number two greater than the number above the first letter of the word answer is \_\_\_\_\_?

34. Add the first underlined number to the second encircled number.  
The letter directly below one less than that sum is \_\_\_\_\_?
35. Add the number above the letter immediately preceding the second vowel to the next to the smallest number. From this sum subtract the number above the letter following the first vowel. One less than the result is \_\_\_\_\_?
36. Subtract the number above the first vowel from the number above the second consonant. The number one less than that number is \_\_\_\_\_?
37. Subtract the number above the fourth consonant from the next to the largest number. Twice that amount is \_\_\_\_\_?

"That is the end of Part B."

PART C. RECOGNIZING TRANSITIONS

"A good listener has to note words and phrases that indicate the speaker's plan. An introductory sentence sets the stage for a discussion; a transitional sentence marks a change of thought or a new point; and a concluding sentence adds a note of finality to what has been said. If you think a sentence is introductory, fill in the answer space under I; if you think it is transitional, fill in the answer space under T; if you think it is a concluding sentence, fill in the answer space under C; and if it is none of these, fill in the answer space under N."

"Find the proper column for this part on your answer sheet. In the sample the sentence is: 'It is indeed a pleasure to address you on this occasion.' This is an introductory sentence; so on your answer sheet the

answer space under I has been filled in. Listen carefully. I shall read each sentence only once." [Pause for approximately 5 seconds after each statement.]

38. And so for those living in the past as well as those facing the future, this discovery seems to have been of the utmost importance.

39. Our subject is 'The Desirability of Foreign Travel as an Aid to the Creating of One World.'

40. There are four kinds of thinking that should be of interest for us to discuss.

41. A somewhat similar treatment is taking the murderous sting out of whooping cough.

42. Also, other features of this program are encouraging.

43. In view of these disastrous incidents, it seems high time for ship-builders to build ships that do not and cannot burn.

44. The younger graduate students often are serious about their work.

45. An interchange of students is made possible by the Smith-Mundt Act."

"Now we will go on to Part D."

#### PART D. RECOGNIZING WORD MEANINGS

"In Part D, Recognizing Word Meanings, you are to decide which of the correct dictionary definitions is the meaning intended in the sentences I shall read."

"Look at the sample. In the sentence, 'The soldiers pitched their tents,' which meaning best defines the word pitched?" [Pause] "You can

tell from that sentence that 'set up' is the meaning intended. Since set up is choice 'a', the answer space under 'a' has been filled in on the answer sheet."

"Listen carefully as I read each sentence; then mark your choice for the intended meaning. I shall read each sentence only once."

[Pause for approximately 5 seconds after each sentence.]

46. What does turn mean in the sentence, 'One good turn deserves another'?
47. What does turn mean in the sentence, 'She knew how to express every turn of emotion'?
48. What does close mean in the sentence, 'You are undoubtedly a close observer of details'?
49. What does close mean in the sentence, 'The other room is too close for comfort; suppose we meet in here'?
50. What does dull mean in the sentence, 'Because Tom Sawyer didn't get along very well in school, people thought he was dull'?
51. What does dull mean in the sentence, 'He gave a long, dull account of his doings'?
52. What does game mean in the sentence, 'A tiger is a dangerous game to hunt'?
53. What does game mean in the sentence, 'Make-believe is a children's game'?
54. What does true mean in the sentence, 'Several true copies of the original were found'?
55. What does true mean in the sentence, 'True piety is as cheerful as the day'?

"That is the end of Part D. Do not turn your answer sheet over until you are told to do so."

PART E. LECTURE COMPREHENSION

"In this part I shall read you a fairly lengthy selection entitled Increasing Your Vocabulary. Listen carefully as I read because, after I have finished, you will be required to answer questions about the selection. Do not take notes on what I read. Just listen carefully." [Examiner reads the following selection in a clear, strong voice at normal speed.]

Increasing Your Vocabulary

A good vocabulary is important for several reasons. First, words win arguments--they persuade, they convince.

Once Lincoln, having failed to make a stubborn opponent see the error of his reasoning, said, "Well, let's see. How many legs has a cow?"

"Four, of course," came the ready answer.

"That's right," said Lincoln. "Now suppose we call the cow's tail a leg, how many legs would the cow have?"

"Why, five, of course."

"Now that's where you're wrong," said Lincoln. "Simply calling a cow's tail a leg doesn't make it a leg."

Second, you need a good vocabulary to make clear, concise explanations. Sometimes one word, provided it is the right one, explains

everything. For example, once when Paderewski played before Queen Victoria, the sovereign exclaimed with enthusiasm, "Mr. Paderewski, you are a genius."

"Ah, your Majesty," he replied, "perhaps; but before I was a genius I was a drudge."

Words are important for a third reason--to illuminate experience. Max Eastman, writing about how to enjoy poetry, says that most Americans, confronted with a poem, mistake it for a conondrum. They think their part is to dodge the simple impact of the words, and sneak behind them in search of a moral, or a piece of extra-subtle information.

Poetry is using words, not to record or convey information, but to cherish or illuminate experience. If the poet can communicate to you the refined essential quality of any genuine moment of his life, or any imagined life, that is enough. Don't ask for more. If you get something more, it is so much velvet. But if you are anxiously on the watch for it, you will miss the whole thing.

Eastman then goes on to mention a poem of his called "Egrets," which attempts to give something more. He says: "I once had a friend in Texas who loved to paddle around marshy islands taking wonderful pictures of these slender, broad-winged, snow-white birds. One day while we were looking at his pictures, my friend's tall, slim daughter, the most beautiful thing I saw in Texas, sat silently on the arm of her father's chair, attentive yet remote. In my feelings, her beauty merged in some subtle way with that of the birds and furnished the inspiration for my poem, 'Egrets,' which describes her as being 'kin to their slim

hauteur,' as being 'gentle and yet far away as wings upon wild water.'"

[Reading time to this point approximately 3 minutes.]

Finally, words make the difference between boring or interesting someone. You may have fascinating things to tell, but you need the right words if you want to make them truly interesting. Notice how the right words make this an interesting story.

The country is India. At a dinner party the talk had turned to poise and self-control, and the old dispute: Which was more reliable in a crisis, man or woman? The males present, army officers and civil servants, agreed that women were the masterpieces of creation; their one defect was that they went into hysterics in a crisis. That was when you needed them.

All the ladies placidly concurred, except the hostess. At the height of the discussion she called a native boy. "Ali: Kindly fetch a bowl of milk at once and put it on the floor."

With a terrified roll of his eyes the boy ran to obey, placing a jade bowl on the flagstone, close to the mistress of the house. Then he stood back, holding a looped whip in his hand, as from under the white napery of the table, there slithered a long bloated thing, yellowish-brown with black and white marks. The cobra approached the milk and the native boy fell on it and killed it.

"Well," puffed a red-faced colonel, "how on earth did you know that snake was under the table?"

"It was coiled," replied the hostess, "around my ankle."

Now let's see how we may increase our vocabulary. In other words,

since vocabulary is so all-important, how can we build one that will convince, explain, or interest others more effectively?

In the first place, what about the G.I. way of building a foreign-language vocabulary? Wouldn't that work equally well with strange English words?

Take Fernandez, a shy Mexican from one of the big sheep ranches of the Southwest. When the Army picked him up at 18 and started him on basic training, he was desperately homesick. He couldn't write home. And when anyone sent him a letter, he couldn't read it.

At Fort Riley they put him in the Special Training Troop with other representatives of our nation's 4,000,000 illiterates. After eight weeks he was able to sign the payroll and was crazy with happiness. At the end of thirteen weeks he was following the news and writing letters home.

Such "go-devil" teaching is common in the Army and Navy.

Think of the two or four years usually spent in studying French or Spanish. In the Army they teach you the bread-and-butter essentials of a language in eight to twelve hours. [Reading time to this point approximately 6 minutes.]

Suppose our schools take up the Army-Navy technique. You'll first find the class around a phonograph, learning as a child learns his own language--by listening to and imitating a native speaker. After 15 to 20 minutes' work with records, the teacher fires simple questions at the students. All questions, all answers, even from the first lesson, are in the foreign tongue.

This language technique emphasizes the importance of using the words added to your vocabulary.

Then, there is the dictionary-study way. The dictionary has had a fascinating history in this country, from the time Noah Webster first got interested in preparing one.

At the end of his first year's work, Webster estimated that his dictionary would require the incessant labor of 5 years more. It required 18, and it was in 1828 that his American Dictionary of the English Language was published. It contained 70,000 entries.

But \$20 was a high price, and many of the 5500 original sets were still unsold in 1840, when Noah brought out a revised edition at \$15. This went badly, too. After Webster's death, the Merriams, small job printers, obtained his copyrights and began a new revision of the dictionary.

Its publication in 1847--one volume, \$6--was an immediate success. Slightly more than a hundred years later, the big Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, appeared. Its editor-in-chief, Neilson, was assisted by 207 special editors, expert in such diverse fields as astrophysics, locksmithing, and archery.

Now how should this invaluable reference book be used as a vocabulary-building aid? Well, we can learn a few things from Uncle George, who was as fond of words as an entomologist is of ants. The first thing he did when he came to pass the winter with us was to have the big dictionary brought into the dining room. Hardly a meal was finished without some of us children jumping up to consult that dictionary.

We found we could have as much fun with it as with any game we played.

One morning Uncle George asked if we knew what exiguous meant. "Well, I sort of half know," I said.

"If you don't know exactly," Uncle George replied, "you can't use it properly. It's like recognizing a man by his clothes. You can identify him, but you don't know much about his character."

After I'd consulted the big dictionary, Uncle George said, "Now, repeat the word aloud three times." [Reading time to this point approximately 9 minutes.]

He insisted that we must use each new word in a sentence at least three times a day. Somehow the new words made us feel mentally richer. When we talked we had a feeling of confidence, the way you do when you have money.

Uncle George would also show us what interesting stories the dictionary contained. He had us look up the word nice and read the dictionary story of a word that insisted on being a compliment instead of an insult.

"Give me three words derived from the names of cities," he used to say in another of his dictionary word-games. And so it went. That's how Uncle George showed us the fun of using a dictionary.

Suppose we use a concise statement by Funk to summarize this approach. He says, when you read or hear an unfamiliar word, make a note of it and look it up later in the dictionary. If you think it will be useful to you, write it down with its pronunciation and its simple definition. Then say the new word out loud several times and

use it as soon as possible in your conversation or in a letter. Be sure to review your list from time to time, for new words slip easily from the mind.

Then there is the synonym-study way. A study of synonyms is one of the surest ways of enriching your vocabulary. But very few words are exactly alike. For instance, hate, loathe, despise, abhor, detest, and abominate are synonyms, but each shows a slightly different facet of one central idea. Watch the car cards, the bill-boards, the advertisements in magazines and newspapers. Pick out the striking words and see how many synonyms you can think of for each of them.

And don't overlook the derivation or word-history approach. Searching out the history of a word often helps clarify and fix its meaning. When we find, for instance, that crestfallen refers to the dropping coxcomb of a rooster that has been beaten in a fight, and that sediment really signifies something that "sits" on the bottom, these words become more vivid. Word histories are both fascinating and helpful.

The word-a-day plan, the last of the five methods to be recommended, stresses regularity and orderliness. You may loaf along at a one-a-day rate or step along at a five-a-day speed, depending on how ambitious you feel. It has been proved again and again that if you will regularly add new words to your vocabulary, and use them accurately and aptly in your conversation, you will increase your self-confidence, and gain wider social acceptance and greater influence in your community. [Reading time to this point approximately 12 minutes.]

So much for the separate methods. Whichever method or combination of methods you decide to use, remember that the important thing is to tailor it to your own needs. A method that suits some people may not suit you, although you can probably modify it to do so.

"That is the end of the lecture. Now turn over your answer sheet. Look at the sample. The question is, 'What is the title of the lecture?' Decide which of the five choices given is correct." [Pause] "Choice 'c' Increasing Your Vocabulary, is the correct title. Therefore, the answer space under 'c' has been filled in on the answer sheet."

"Are there any questions? Listen carefully; I shall read each question only once." [Pause for approximately 5 seconds after each question from 56 to 68, and 10 seconds after each of the remaining questions.]

56. What animal was mentioned in the Lincoln story?
57. Before whom did Paderewski play?
58. Who wrote the poem, 'Egrets'?
59. Where did the poet's picture-taking friend live?
60. What was poetry said to be an attempt to do?
61. What are women said to do in a crisis?
62. In the Army program the basic essentials of a language were taught in 8 to 12 \_\_\_\_\_ what?
63. Fernandez was spoken of as one of how many of our nation's illiterates?
64. For how much did Webster's original dictionary sell?

65. Who was the editor-in-chief of Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition?
66. What word did Uncle George have the children look up?
67. To illustrate the helpfulness of word histories, mention was made of the derivation of what word?
68. How many major vocabulary-building methods were mentioned specifically?
69. What was the central idea of the lecture?
70. Which of the parts of the lecture was least directly related to the central idea?
71. The Lincoln story was used in this lecture to show the importance of a good vocabulary in \_\_\_\_\_ what?
72. Which specific vocabulary-building method was not given a separate place in the organization of the lecture?
73. From the Paderewski story what would one infer that he thought?
74. That part of the lecture about Army-Navy language teaching suggests that vocabulary building is largely a matter of \_\_\_\_\_ what?
75. Paderewski would probably consider desirable vocabulary growth as \_\_\_\_\_ what?
76. The discussion of word histories implies that we remember best those things which are most \_\_\_\_\_ what?

"That is the end of the test." [If the answer sheets are to be machine scored, say: "Go over your answer sheets carefully, making sure that each mark is heavy and black. Erase any stray marks not intended for correct answers."]