

A STUDY OF THE ROLES OF TAHITIAN, FRENCH, AND ENGLISH  
IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF FRENCH POLYNESIA

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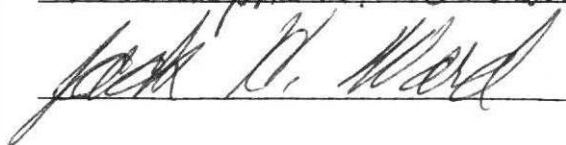
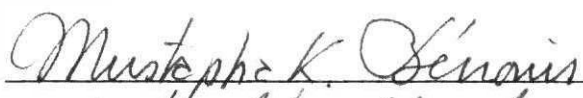
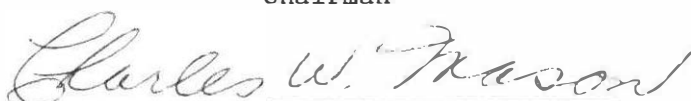
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis reveals, through an intensive study of the educational system of French Polynesia, how the different languages which are used there are taught, the role they play in the educational system, and the effect they may have on the lives of the Polynesians both current and future. Of particular interest is the teaching of and through three languages: French, English and Tahitian. This thesis addresses the language problems that Polynesian children encounter in schools patterned after the French schools and proposes three educational programs for adapting the French system to the needs and interest of the children of French Polynesia.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

There is a widely shared belief that the future for the people of developing nations or minority ethnic groups lies in the assimilation to the dominant (often European) cultural pattern. The principal agency for the spread of the colonial or dominant language and culture is generally the school system, the policies of which aim at acculturating individuals into the mainstream of the wider society by imposing on them a foreign language of instruction and a foreign set of values.

The availability of statistics which shows that children from dominated nations or minority groups have the least number of years of schooling (I.N.S.E.E., 1977), the lowest performances (Coleman, 1966; C.T.A.L. et al., 1973, 1976; NEA, 1966), and the most limited access to higher education and professional jobs (I.N.S.E.E., 1977) has buttressed some interest and concern directed toward understanding the school problems and the educational needs of such children. These concerns resulted in the awareness that formal education involves a home-school language shift for the individual student and that this shift may have detrimental effects on the cognitive development of the child; and that it deprives him/her of equal educational opportunities, and threatens the survival of native cultures and languages.

As a result of increasing demands from ethnic groups for the need to change the educational policies and practices in the United States, many communities have been obliged to establish bilingual programs,<sup>1</sup> and many others in the world are predisposed to consider such programs. The rationale behind the use of the child's native language

and culture for instructional purposes while learning a second language lies within both the cognitive and affective domains. It is argued that the use of the native language is the best language for instructional purposes (UNESCO, 1953) because it allows the child to participate successfully in the education process (Andersson and Boyer, 1970; Saville and Troike, 1971; Von Maltitz, 1975) and provides him/her with an opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills through the language s/he knows best; therefore, promoting easier learning and encouraging higher educational achievement (International Institute of Teachers College, 1926; Modiano, 1966). Furthermore, including elements of the child's culture and his/her language in the curriculum reinforces the child's self-confidence, fosters the concept that his/her language is valuable in itself, lessens the break between home and school, and minimizes cultural alienation (Von Maltitz, 1975). The most important aspect of such a program may be the inclusion of the home culture, according to Castañeda, Herold, and Ramirez (1975) who state:

. . . the basis for a child's learning about his own and other cultures must encompass the language, heritage, values, thinking and motivational frameworks with which the child is initially familiar . . . . His language, heritage, values, and modes of cognition and motivation can subsequently serve as a basis for exploring and developing selective loyalties to alternative expressions of thought, values, and life styles. There, the child would learn to function completely and effectively in, as well as to contribute to development of more than one cultural world.

However, many teachers, parents and government authorities are still not convinced that the home-school language shift does affect the cognitive and the affective development of the children and their achievement, and that this effect is independent of the students' level of intelligence or aptitude.



## I. The Problem

The focus of this thesis is the educational system of French Polynesia. The author's acquaintance with the islands and the Polynesian inhabitants and her experience as a student for more than thirteen years in the schools of Tahiti allow her to make the following observations: Polynesian children schooled in a language other than their own tend to have the lowest levels of proficiency in French, in content courses, and on the national examinations. In addition, they often repeat grades, and leave school early, often without any diploma.

French Polynesia presents a context in which to study the impact of the dominance of a European language and value system (French) over those of the indigenous people of the area, one which is very similar to what exists or has existed in other Pacific areas. Although the Polynesians are not immigrants to the area, the difficulties they face in the educational system are very similar to those of immigrant children in the United States. From the very beginning of the colonization of the area, the doctrine of "assimilation" has been in effect. The objective of this policy was to make all of the colonial people "Français à part entière." In linguistic matters, it resulted in a policy of gallicization wherein French became the language of instruction at all levels. In a study of the current situation of the indigenous languages of Oceania and New Zealand in formal education, Benton indicates that:

In the field of elementary schooling, the countries of the Island Pacific may be placed along a continuum from the French policy of exclusive use of the metropolitan language at one end, to the dominant use of the vernaculars in most of the British Colonies, Tonga and Western Samoa at the other (1978:145).

The kind of education found in French Polynesia today is one from which other Pacific nations and states have spent the last ten to twenty years trying to move.

The language policy imposed by France in the Territory cannot be viewed as one conceived specifically for the Polynesians. On the contrary, the school curriculum and the teaching methods employed in France were transported in toto to Polynesian, where a single language (Tahitian) usually enjoys the role of language of common intercourse, and to New Caledonia for example, where a multitude of languages and dialects coexist. In the span of a normal school life, three foreign languages are taught: French, English, and a third mandatory foreign language (European or Oriental). Until recently, at no stage in public education was Tahitian either taught as a subject or used as a medium of instruction.

The introduction of Tahitian as a subject matter in fourteen classes of the elementary schools of Tahiti in 1976 was the result of a number of circumstances and movements, among which were two studies of the educational system. In 1973, the Federation des Oeuvres Laiques de la Polynésie Française (Federation of Laical (secular) Work of French Polynesia, F.O.L.) published the first critical review of some aspects of the territorial education system. Entitled "L'Ecole en Polynésie," this work aroused many comments and much disagreement from the upper echelons of government. For the first time, the weakness of the educational system and its inappropriateness for the Polynesian student population was openly recognized. In September of 1976, with the help of the Fédération de l'Education Nationale (National Education Federation, F.E.N.), the F.O.L. published a second study which was

entitled without ambiguity "L'Echec Scolaire en Polynésie." This work went further in the critical analysis of the causes of student failure which had been mentioned in 1973. Instruction in a foreign language—in this case French—during the first years of schooling in a territory of marked physical, cultural, and linguistic differences was finally recognized as being a crucial factor in the lack of achievement evidenced by Polynesian children.

Thus, in the islands under French educational administration, the word bilingual is no longer "taboo."<sup>2</sup> In 1980, the educational system was evaluated by a group of experts from the Education Nationale (Ministry of National Education). The Commission recommended (Toraille, 1980) that:

. . . l'enseignement de la langue maternelle [Tahitian] doit être un enseignement vivant, actif, prenant ses motivations dans le milieu et en rapport étroit avec ce qui touche à l'affectivité de la sensibilité . . . Elle [l'école] doit promouvoir une pédagogie interculturelle se fondant d'abord sur les pratiques et les manières d'être, les formes d'expressions et de sensibilité, les activités esthétiques et culturelles. Une telle démarche conduit à un véritable bilinguisme, objectif à atteindre.<sup>3</sup>

The Territory is now considering including the local languages and culture as important components of the curriculum.

In its wider implications, the problem of adjustment of the Polynesians to certain aspects of European cultures may to some extent be applicable to the many people of diverse cultures around the world who have been subjected to similar colonial practices. An understanding of the problems faced by these children of diverse cultures is especially valuable to a teacher responsible for carrying out and implementing the programs of education effectively. An inappropriate type of education

could do a great deal of damage to the Polynesians as it has done to some peoples of undeveloped countries, to the Hawaiians and to the Maoris of New Zealand. But without the appropriate kind of education, French Polynesia will be unable to solve her problems.

It is the purpose of this thesis to determine, through an intensive study of the educational system of French Polynesia, how the different languages which are used there are taught, the role they play in the educational system, and the effect they may have on the lives of the Polynesians both current and future. Of particular interest is the teaching of and through three languages: French, English, and Tahitian. One specific aim of this study is to address the language problems that Polynesian children encounter in schools; and to reveal suggestions for adapting the French educational system to the needs and interests of the children of French Polynesia.

## II. Review of the Literature

There exists a vast body of literature which addresses the interrelationships of language, culture and educational difficulties. Although a large number of accounts and studies are concerned with the education of minority-group children in the American schools, similar patterns of group failure are also found among many Polynesian groups (Ritchie, 1963; Bender, 1971; Howard, 1973; Gallimore et al., 1974). There are two types of studies which pertain to the diversity of language and culture in the educational system--especially as they concern minorities: 1) those which see the minority group child as being "disadvantaged" by reason of ethnic origin or language--an assumption necessary to such concepts as "deprivation" and "deficiency"; and

2) those which challenge the cultural and linguistic deprivational arguments by asserting that educational failure results from the failure of the school (teachers, administrators, curriculum, etc.) to recognize the cultural and linguistic differences.

Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) and Deutsch et al. (1967) used the concepts of "deprivation" and "deficiency" to refer to the individual who is linguistically, culturally and socio-economically different from the middle-class American. Research has for a long time been concerned mainly with factors associated with learning disabilities such as intelligence, school achievement, perception, cognition and vocabulary. The conclusions reached in these studies indicate that "disadvantaged" children do poorly in schools because their homes lack an educational tradition, their modes of speech behavior or their reading skills are insufficient, their home backgrounds are deficient, they have no real culture of their own and they speak an inferior or inaccurate form of language (Williams, 1970).

The problem with these studies is that their authors ignored the children's background knowledge of their environment and their ways of interacting with parents and peers. On the basis of such studies (see Deutsch, for example), many minority children have been said to be "poorly equipped mentally, emotionally, and socially" (Crow, 1966:86). Similarly, Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) claim that black children are "non-communicative," "mentally retarded," and unable to express themselves clearly because they cannot plan their use of language. A report on the education of Mexican-Americans (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1969, cited by Abrahams and Troike (1972:12) reveals that children are

sometimes "assigned to classes for the mentally retarded merely because their language happens to be different from that of the majority culture."

More recently, studies have been concerned with the recognition of the linguistic and cultural differences of children of ethnic minorities and their relation to proficiency in the second language. Cazden and John (1971), Cole et al. (1971), Howard (1973) and King (1967) have shown that "disadvantaged" children experience cultural shock upon entering school because there exists sharp discontinuities between the home culture and the culture of the school. The studies carried out by Boggs (1972), Dumont (1972), Levin (1978), and Philips (1972) indicate that in general the culture of the school fails to recognize cultural differences, overlooks and underestimates the child's ability as well as his/her modes of intellectual functioning and his/her linguistic codes (Labov, 1969). All four authors point out specific differences in culture and ways of life which result in misunderstandings in their particular situations.

In an empirical study of speech patterning in concrete situations, Boggs (1972) describes what Hawaiian-American children encounter and experience in schools. Studying the "Meaning of Questions and Narratives" among these children, he provides an analysis of the different types of verbal strategies employed by teachers, the types of communication patterns existing in the classroom and their consequences on teacher-student interactions. He concludes that the poor performance of Hawaiian-American students in the classroom is not caused by poor competence in producing the forms of speech, but is rather a result of conflicting patterns of communication between individuals. Indeed, with respect to questions, there is for a Hawaiian child no pattern of

answering to an individual adult. Boggs reports that the child's recourse to such strategies as interrupting or forcing group relationships are for him/her the only way to cope with the situation.

The problem of interferences between the patterns of communication of the child and those of the teacher is further developed by John (1972), Dumont (1972), and Philips (1972) in their accounts of Indian children's reluctance to participate in classroom verbal interactions. John's focus is primarily on the learning styles of Navajo children and the conflict in teaching and learning that may occur from cultural differences. She points out that "a style of teaching stressing overt verbal performance is alien" to the Navajo child who is primarily visual and tactile in learning situations.

Observing Sioux and Cherokee classrooms, Dumont provides a meaning to the contrast between the Indian child's silence in the classroom and his/her vocal behavior outside of the classroom. He suggests that silence is a strategy used to exclude the teacher and exercise control over an unexpected situation. In an earlier piece of research, Dumont (1964) used an experimental community-based educational program to find possible alternatives to silence. This experience shows that "the more teaching and learning are moved into the cultural complex of the Sioux community," the more the students are willing to participate.

The situation studied by Philips (1972) is different from the ones previously mentioned since the Indian children in her study are monolingual English speakers. The problem therefore is a matter of difference in culture rather than one of language. However, as does Dumont, she encounters the same non-verbal behavior of children inside

the classroom. Like Boggs, she shows clearly that social interaction is disrupted because of differences in the rule of participant structures. Philips concludes that:

Indian children fail to participate verbally in the classroom interaction because the social condition for participation to which they have become accustomed in the Indian community are lacking . . . . Educators cannot assume that because Indian children (or children from other cultural backgrounds than that which is implicit in the American classrooms) speak English, or are taught it in school that they have also assimilated all of the sociolinguistic rules underlying interaction in classrooms and other non-Indian social situations where English is spoken (1972:392).

In an intensive study of classroom interaction in the schools of Tubuai (French Polynesia), Levin (1978) was interested in finding out how interactional contexts may influence students' success or failure. Analyzing performance in three different settings (questioning, answering, and evaluating) she concludes that children's performances are affected by teachers' expectations and by the schools' requirements concerning interaction which differ greatly from children experiences. Like Cazden (1972), D'Andrade (1967), Labov (1969), Mehan (1973), Philips (1972), and Sloggett (1969), Levin demonstrates that performance can be improved by allowing changes in the performance context, in the structure of the classroom interaction and in the content of the materials. Further data in the field of cultural differences and their effects on students' performance need to be obtained, especially from the multicultural schools of Polynesia, if we want to make the schools more successful in teaching the language and through the language. Because "the nature of language and its relationship to culture is such that it is unfeasible to attempt to change one and not the other"



(Center for Applied Linguistics, 1977), it is important that teachers are made aware of differences in sociolinguistic rules as well as in rules of communicative competence (Abrahams and Troike, 1972; Cazden et al., 1972; Spolsky, 1972).

### III. Definition of Terms

The term Polynesian is defined throughout this thesis as indicating any person in French Polynesia who speaks a vernacular language as a primary language, who usually belongs to the lower socio-economic class with subsistence or unskilled economic activities, and whose mode of living, actions, and beliefs are typically Polynesian. Accordingly, the term Polynesian is not used to designate a racial group, but rather it specifies membership in a cultural group. In addition to the Polynesians, there are three other groups found in French Polynesia: the Europeans (popa'a), the Chinese (tinito), and the "mixed" (demi). The term demi is used to refer to the more "Europeanized" Polynesian or the ethnically mixed (French-Tahitian) person whose primary language is French (Levy, 1973), who usually belongs to the middle or the upper socio-economic class, and who lives close to urban settings. Finney (1964), Kay (1963), Moench (1963), and Panhoff (1964) have noted how difficult it is to define the demi category since a complex set of sociological criteria is involved.<sup>4</sup>

### IV. Organization of the Thesis

Chapter II presents a general description of French Polynesia including the environment, the history, the current political situation, and overall language picture. In Chapter III the organization of the educational system in practice in French Polynesia is briefly described.

The focus of the chapter is on the teaching objectives, the methods, and the materials for the teaching of French, English, and Tahitian. An evaluation of the system is also offered. Chapter V presents an analysis of some alternative systems. Suggestions considered to be of some value in adapting the current system to the cultural and linguistic needs of the Polynesian population will also be included.

## CHAPTER II

### A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF FRENCH POLYNESIA

#### I. The Environment

Scattered over two million square miles of the southeast Pacific is the French overseas Territory of French Polynesia. French Polynesia is divided into five archipelagoes and one isolated island: the Society archipelago with its Leeward and Windward islands, the Austral, the Marquesas, the Tuamotu, and the Gambier archipelagoes, and Clipperton island.<sup>5</sup>

The Territory is located between the Line islands to the northwest, the Cook Islands to the west, New Zealand to the southwest, Pitcairn Island and Easter Island to the southeast and the western coast of South America to the east. The islands of French Polynesia stretch over an area comparable in size to Europe, between latitudes  $7^{\circ} 51'$  and  $27^{\circ} 38'$  south and longitudes  $134^{\circ}$  and  $155^{\circ}$  west. If we were to superimpose this area on the northern hemisphere with Tahiti coinciding with Paris, the Society islands would stretch to Wales in England, the Marquesas would be located in Oslo (Norway), the Tuamotu islands would cover central Europe and reach Berlin in Germany, the Gambier islands would correspond with Belgrade in Yugoslavia and Rapa (eastern Australs) would be in the north of Sardinia. However, the land area of French Polynesia is only 1544 square miles--approximately equal to the combined land areas of the three Hawaiian islands Kauai, Maui, and Molokai--of which one thousand two hundred and sixty are inhabited. Tahiti, the island central to all, has a land mass of 402 square miles, approximately 26 percent of the total land area.

Tahiti and Moorea are the two principal islands on the Windward side of the Society archipelago, with Raiatea on the Leeward side. Nine hundred and thirty miles northeast of Tahiti lie the sixteen mountainous islands of the Marquesas archipelago. They are divided into a northern group and a southern group of islands and cover some 492 square miles. South of Tahiti, the six islands of the Austral group stretch out from east to west near the Tropic of Capricorn over a distance of 826 miles. Situated 1054 miles southeast of Tahiti and enclosed in a single lagoon are the several islands of the Gambier archipelago. Among them are four large islands, only one of which is inhabited (Mangareva). The eighty Tuamotu islands, of which approximately thirty five are inhabited, are scattered over three hundred and ten square miles, between  $14^{\circ}$  and  $22^{\circ}$  latitude south and  $137^{\circ}$  and  $151^{\circ}$  west longitude, some one hundred and eighty six miles from Tahiti. Clipperton Island, located 4030 miles from the coast of Mexico is an uninhabited atoll and outside the Polynesian culture area. Abundant coral reefs and heavy surf make access to this island very difficult (Niaussat, 1978).

The way of life of the island people has been largely influenced by the islands' environment, and notably by the distinction between "high" islands and "low" islands. The high volcanic islands of the Society, the Austral and most of the Gambier archipelagoes have coastal plains and valleys with fertile soils which support abundant plant life, and allow garden agriculture. Fishing and agriculture support a subsistence standard of living. With the exception of the Marquesas and Rapa (Australs), these islands are circled and protected by coral barrier reefs which create lagoons. Built out of deposits of sand and coral upon submerged volcanic peaks, the low islands of the Tuamotus and

the Gambiers consist of a lagoon enclosed by a thin strip of low lying and frequently broken land and a protecting reef. Atolls are very dry and in many cases unsuitable for settlement. The soil is poor and shallow and the vegetation sparse and limited to coconut palms, breadfruit and pandanus trees. Under these restricted conditions, the native diet of the atoll people largely depends upon the ocean and the trading schooners which bring imported goods. Most atolls rise only a few feet (six to twenty) above sea level and are often washed over by the sea at high tides. Many of the islands are only accessible through navigable breaks in their reefs, and islands without any may be reached only at high tide, requiring care in navigation. Low islands are handicapped by other physical difficulties, including limited land area, limited fresh water supply, isolation, and remoteness.

Papeete, situated on the northwestern coast of Tahiti is the economical, political, and social capital of French Polynesia. The islands far from Tahiti have undergone a different development. Because of their isolation they have retained more of the old lifestyle of Polynesia. Their geographical remoteness and distribution have rendered communication among islands difficult. Today, trading schooners from Tahiti make irregular visits to some of the islands to bring them food and fuel supplies and to carry back produce and handicraftwork to Papeete. In general, islands within the Society archipelago are periodically visited whereas distant islands are visited only once a month and in some cases, once or twice a year. Some islands are also linked to Tahiti by inter-island air services, postal, telephonic, and/or telegraphic services. Television broadcasting (France Region 3, F.R. 3)

has not yet reached the Tuamotus, the Gambiers, the Australs, nor the Marquesas, but some islands are equipped with video sets. Radio Tahiti remains the most powerful link between the islands, Tahiti, and the outside world.

From the geographical viewpoint, it is the dispersal of the islands that is the chief characteristic of French Polynesia. This wide dispersal explains the difficulties encountered by the administration in governing these small islands and in developing their social organizations, medical services, and a system of education.

## II. The Historical Setting

The first record of the existence of the group of islands that form French Polynesia was made by the Spanish navigators Alvaro de Mendana and Fernan de Quiros who came upon the island of Fatu-Hiva, in the southeastern group of the Marquesas, in 1595 as they were sailing in search for the unknown continent. Ten years later, undertaking another voyage to search out for Terra Australis Incogniti, Quiros discovered several islands of the Society archipelago and some of the low islands of the Tuamotus, which were also visited in 1616 by two Dutchmen, Jacques Le Maire and Willen Schouten.

The seventeenth century went by without any further known discoveries. It was not until the second part of the eighteenth century that the remainder of the islands and Tahiti were explored. A series of voyages took place within a short time and a number of islands were added to the map of the Pacific thanks to the British and French explorers: Wallis, Bougainville, and Cook. On June 19, 1767, the Englishman Samuel Wallis, in command of H.M.S. Dolphin, discovered Tahiti

for the European world which he named, upon departing, King George Island. A few months later in 1768, the Frenchman Louis Antoine de Bougainville, aboard the frigate La Boudeuse, dropped anchor in Tahiti after sailing through the Tuamotus. The island was rechristened New Cythera. The same year, commissioned by the Admiralty and the Royal Society of London to lead a scientific expedition to Tahiti to observe the passage of Venus across the face of the sun, Cook undertook his first voyage to the South Pacific. In the span of three years, he discovered the Leeward islands and Rurutu (Australis), and drew maps of both the Leeward and Windward islands of the Society archipelago. During his second voyage (1772-1775), Cook revisited many islands, made new discoveries in the Tuamotus and the Marquesas (Fatu-Huku), and finished charting the Marquesas. The island of Tubuai (Australis) was only discovered during his third voyage (1776-1779). By the end of the eighteenth century most islands were located and the Leeward islands were fast becoming popular ports of call for all the European and American vessels, whaleships, and tradeships.

The years following the discovery of the islands were entirely taken up by religious and political struggles. Christian missionary activities began in the islands with the arrival in Tahiti on March 7, 1797, of the ship Duff, carrying more than thirty Protestants sent by the Mission Society of London to convert the indigenous populations. Conversions quickly spread among the people of Tahiti following 1812 when King Pomare II asked to be baptized and within fifteen years the missionaries had succeeded in their enterprise. Temples of the former gods were rapidly destroyed. By the 1830's the Protestant influence had

branched out to the Leeward, the Tuamotus, and the Australs. Four years later, the advent of the Roman Catholic missionaries slackened the authority and the expansion of the English Protestant missionaries. Sent by France to carry the French language and the dogma of the Roman faith to the Pacific area, they first settled in the Gambiers, where two years later, the population had converted to Christianity. Then, with the Tahitian language mastered, the missionaries set out to evangelize Tahiti where Catholicism ultimately was established. From there, it quickly spread to the outer islands. The presence of missionaries in the area resulted in religious hegemonies, notably with Protestantism in Tahiti and the Leeward islands, and Catholicism in the Tuamotus and the Marquesas. Today, fifty percent of the population are Protestants and thirty five percent Catholics (Vice Rectorat et al., 1974:61).

France eventually extended her sovereignty over all of the archipelagoes. In May of 1842, the chiefs of the Marquesas were brought to sign conventions recognizing the sovereignty of Louis-Philippe, King of France. In September, an agreement between the French Admiral Dupetit-Thouars and Queen Pomare IV was signed to insure the protection of all Frenchmen in the islands. In March 1843, the King of France ratified the document which gave France's protection to Tahiti, Moorea, the Tuamotus and the Australs. A year later, upon the request of their inhabitants, the Gambiers were also placed under French protection. On June 29, 1880, the childless King Pomare V turned his territory over to France, with the request that Tahitian laws and customs be maintained. On December 30, the treaty was ratified and Tahiti and its dependent islands were declared French colonies (French Oceania).



### III. The Population

The population of the different archipelagoes suffered tremendous devastation following contact with Europeans. Traders, whalers, and sailors introduced firearms and alcohol, new diseases and infections to which the island people had no resistance, and various changes in the Polynesian pattern of living. All of these contributed to the drastic reduction in numbers of the island populations with the lowest peak between 1910 and 1920 with a total population of twenty five thousand (Vice Rectorat et al., 1974a:53). This trend has now been reversed and the Territory is increasing its population four percent a year (I.E.O.M., 1979:41), doubling it every twenty five years. In 1981, the population of French Polynesia is estimated to be 149,530,<sup>6</sup> which gives an average density of one hundred and nineteen persons per square mile. Assuming that there will be no major disasters such as plague, war, or adverse climatic changes and that the rate of increase continues at the present level, the Institut Territorial de la Statistique (I.T.S.) estimates the 1985 population at 162,832 (I.T.S., 1980:2), and the Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economique (I.N.S.E.E.) estimates that French Polynesia will have a population of over 175,000 in 1987 and 235,000 in 2000 (I.N.S.E.E., 1977:7). The high population growth rate results in a large proportion (53 percent) of the population being under twenty years of age--only thirty one percent of the French population in France is under that age (I.T.S., 1981:4).

The population of French Polynesia is unevenly distributed among the various groups of islands. According to the 1977 census, more than four-fifths of the total population (124,243) is concentrated in the

Society islands. While more than half of the population lives on the island of Tahiti alone, about two-fifths of these live in the capital city of Papeete and the adjacent "communes" of Faaa, Pirae, and Arue. With a population of 105,641 inhabitants, the Windward islands have grown much more rapidly than any other group of islands, especially following the installation of the Centre d'Expérimentation du Pacifique (Pacific Experimentation Center, C.E.P.) in 1963. At present, the population of the Leewards amounts to twenty thousand, the Marquesas to six thousand, the Australs to five thousand, and the Tuamotus and Gambiers to ten thousand (I.T.S., 1981:1).

In 1971, the non-native population of Tahiti was made up as follows (Vice Rectorat et al., 1974a:68):

Tuamotu	6.0%
Gambier	3.0%
Austral	3.5%
Marquesas	1.5%
Leeward Islands	8.5%
Windward Islands	3.5%
Outsiders	5.5%

Most migrants from the outer islands come to Tahiti in search of paid employment or are attracted by the lifestyle and the diversions of the city. Although many archipelagoes have seen a large number of their inhabitants migrating toward Tahiti, it is important to note that the Tuamotus (especially Hao and Tureia) have suffered less in that respect due to the presence of the C.E.P. in those islands. The I.N.S.E.E. (1977:39) reports that more than twenty percent of the total population

of the Tuamotus are of European origin. Besides the Society archipelago, it is the only other archipelago to have a significant number of outsiders. However, the European population is only found in the two atolls of Hao and Mururoa where the C.E.P. is located.

The Territory is a multicultural country composed primarily of people of Polynesian, European, and Chinese ancestries. The figures are made up as follow: about sixty-six percent of the population are Polynesians, seventeen percent are demis, eleven percent are Europeans, and Asians make up about five percent. The official censuses for the years 1962, 1971, and 1977 show the following evolution for each ethnic group (I.T.S., 1981:3):

ETHNICITY	1977	1971	1962
Polynesian	90,160 65.6%	85,899 72.1%	62,747 74.2%
Demi	23,720 17.2%	12,221 10.3%	8,492 10.1%
Chinese	7,356 5.4%	7,983 6.7%	9,577 11.3%
European	15,338 11.2%	12,317 10.3%	3,034 3.6%
Other	808 0.6%	748 0.6%	701 0.8%

Although these figures should be interpreted with caution,<sup>7</sup> it is however important to note that the percentage of Maoris and Asians are decreasing in favor of the demis and the Europeans. Despite this, the large majority of the Territory's population is still of Polynesian descent; and the rate of growth of the Polynesian category is much higher than that of the other population groups.

#### IV. The Political Situation

In accordance with the terms of the Constitution of the fourth Republic, Polynesia became a French Overseas Territory in 1946 and took the name of French Polynesia in 1957. In the referendum of September 28, 1958, French Polynesia decided to retain its status of Overseas Territory. French colonial political structure united the entire area until 1977 when a new political status was ratified and instituted.

Currently, according to law No. 77772 of July 2, 1977, relating to the organization of French Polynesia, the Territory

. . . constitue, au sein de la République française conformément à l'article 72 de la Constitution, un territoire d'outre-mer doté de la personnalité juridique et de l'autonomie administrative et financière<sup>8</sup> (Journal Officiel, July 18, 1977:610).

The actual statute defines the metropolitan responsibilities in a limited manner by reserving them to such domains as foreign relations, national defense, civil protection, justice, secondary and higher education, civil status, money and credit, public communication services, research and so on. All other matters are to be taken care of by the Territory.

The Government of the French Republic is represented in French Polynesia by a High Commissioner who is also the head of the territorial administration and the president of the territorial council. The territorial government is comprised of the following bodies: the Territorial Assembly, the Government Council, the Economic Council, the Economic and Social Committee and two deputies and one senator.

The thirty members of the Territorial Assembly are elected by universal suffrage for a five-year mandate. The assembly has jurisdiction

over all aspects of common law and is consulted on questions relating to the budget of the territory and bills ratifying international conventions. The Council of Government is presided over by the High Commissioner and is comprised of a vice president and six members who are elected by the Territorial Assembly. The Council debates proposed charges and recommendations in areas such as real estate, civil aviation, domestic production, price regulations, import and foreign investment regulations and so forth.

Independent from the above mentioned bodies, the economic and social committee is a consultative body which is comprised of representatives of various professional groups. French Polynesia is also represented in the French Parliament by two deputies in the National Assembly, one senator in the Senate, and one councilor on the economic and social council.

Both the Territorial Assembly and the Council of Government may be dissolved by the Council of Ministers in Paris.

#### V. The Economic Life

Until very recently, the economic welfare of French Polynesia depended largely upon copra and its by-products, coffee, and vanilla beans. The opening of the international airport of Faaa in 1961 and the settling of the Pacific Experimentation Center in Tahiti have had a fatal influence on the traditional activities of agriculture and fishing. Statistics show that in 1977 only seventeen percent of the active population was employed in subsistence farming and fishing (I.E.O.M., 1979:42) whereas in 1962 forty-three percent of the population lived on these activities (I.N.S.E.E., 1977:125). By monopolizing the labor force

and by offering high salaries, the C.E.P. has attracted a large number of islanders to Tahiti and contributed to the general rise in the standard of living.

The three agricultural products copra, vanilla, and coffee have been in steep regression during the last fifteen years. Copra, which is by far the principal agricultural product of the Territory, is produced mainly by the Tuamotus, the Marquesas, the Australs, and the Society islands. In the year 1962-63 twenty-seven thousand tons of copra were produced. Following the introduction of the C.E.P., the exportation of copra and its by-products fell to fifteen thousand tons in 1967, to seven thousand tons in 1968, and to close to nothing in 1971 (Vice Rectorat et al., 1974b:8). The last figures for the year of 1979 show a total production of fifteen thousand tons (I.E.O.M., 1979:16). In the last twenty years, the production of vanilla has followed the same descending curve as the copra. Actually, the production has stabilized at around twenty-five tons per year, with the islands of Raiatea and Tahaa as the principal producers. Coffee, the third major agricultural crop, has been practically abandoned in the last few years. Tahuata in the Marquesas, Ra'ivavae and Tubuai in the Australs are actually the only producers (I.E.O.M., 1979:19). In 1956, the Territory exported three hundred tons of coffee (Vice Rectorat et al., 1974:10). Today, the production approximates one hundred and fifty tons per year.

Other industries in French Polynesia include fishing, aquaculture, pearliculture, and livestock. Fishing constitutes the livelihood of a great number of islanders. The recent extension of the economic zone to two hundred nautical miles from the coastline should benefit the

fishing industry which has not yet developed beyond the local consumption stage. Although it is practically impossible to evaluate the total catch, the Service de la Pêche (Fishing Department) estimates that two thousand two hundred tons of fish are sold every year in the markets (I.E.O.M., 1979:24). In 1970, the Tuamotus were the main producers with one thousand tons of fish, which represented approximately five-eighths of the total catch (Vice Rectorat et al., 1974b:94). The installation of the National Center for the Exploitation of the Oceans (C.N.E.X.O.) in 1967 and the Oceanographic Center of the Pacific (C.O.P.) in 1972 had as its objective the development of the Territory's possibilities in aquaculture farming and fishing. Industrial production started in 1979 on two farms in Tahiti, but is still limited to local needs. French Polynesia has also a substantial production of mother-of-pearl shells and cultured-black pearls in the Tuamotus and the Gambiers (I.E.O.M., 1979:25). Livestock includes cattle and pigs. There is also some poultry raised. However, the Territory's requirements for meat and milk are not covered by local production (I.E.O.M., 1979:21-22).

Since the inauguration of the international airport, tourism has become an important industry, mainly for Papeete and a few other islands. The number of visitors rose from eighty three thousand in 1973 to one hundred and two thousand in 1979 (I.E.O.M., 1979:27).

French Polynesia imports much more than she produces or exports. In 1979 more than four hundred and fifty thousand tons of goods were imported from France, the United States, West Germany, Japan, and Australia (I.E.O.M., 1979:39).

## VI. The Linguistic Situation

The islands of French Polynesia are multilingual communities. There may be more than twenty-four languages and dialects (Tevane, 1978; Hollyman, 1960) within the Territory which belong to three different language families. The different languages are: Pa'umotu, Tahitian, Ra'ivavae, Rapa, Rurutu, Mangarevan, and Marquesan in the Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) languages; French and English in the Indo-European language family; and Hakka Chinese and Punti in the Sino-Tibetan languages. The different languages perform different functions and are accorded differing statuses by different groups of people.

French was designated the official language from the time France began to administer the area, immediately after the islands were placed under the Republic colony state. French is the language of the administrative, legal, and educational systems. It is widely used in day-to-day government business, in legislation, on the radio, in the press, and as a medium of instruction at all levels (Platten, 1953:24; Thompson and Adolff, 1971). The local languages have no status whatsoever except Tahitian which became an official language on November 28, 1980 (Decision No. 2036VP), so that interpreters are required in official contexts when communication needs to be effected between French and non-French speakers (Lavondes, 1967:265). Efforts to spread French in all parts of the Territory have been encouraged through the educational system.

The educational system within the Territory reflects the influence of the metropolitan power, but since the large majority of the population is of Polynesian descent, the language used as a medium of instruction



is often a second language for a large number of students. The policy of using French only in all schools at all levels was waived in 1976 by the Director of Primary Education when he instructed all school principals to institute in all preschools interludes of Marquesan and/or Tahitian dances, songs, and legends twice a day for fifteen minutes (Drollet, 1976a, 1976b) and to use the vernacular languages wherever teachers found that their students were unable to understand a concept, an explanation, or directions given in French (Drollet, 1977). In September of 1976, Tahitian was introduced on an experimental basis in fourteen classes of the elementary schools of the urban zone (for thirty minutes daily). Despite the recent teaching of Tahitian as a subject matter in the primary grades, French still dominates the educational system and the local languages are relegated to a marginal position and treated more or less as foreign languages.<sup>9</sup>

French is the native language of a small minority of the population. It is the medium for intellectual exchanges. In general, those who command it are also the professional people and those who lack it are barred from higher levels of education, and therefore from many positions. Literacy in French is not universal in French Polynesia. Although, for the purpose of the 1962 census, no test was administered to evaluate literacy,<sup>10</sup> thirty-nine percent (18,784) of the adult (fifteen years and above) population replied that they could both read and write French (against 32,159 in 1971). The large majority of those literate in French live in the Windward islands (87 percent in 1962 and 84 percent in 1971), but even in some rural areas of Tahiti, the ability to speak French is poor (Finney, 1964:52). O'Reilly (1962) reports that

in some cases the French spoken in Tahiti shows influence of both Tahitian and English or differs from the French spoken in France in that some words have taken on new meanings in French Polynesia.

The Polynesian languages are subdivided into many dialects of unequal importance. Stimson and Marshall (cited by Tevane, 1978:2) noted that there were at least eight major dialects of Pa'umotu, all of which are regressing because of the depopulation of the archipelago due to massive emigration to Papeete (Hollyman, 1960; Lavondes, 1967). Hollyman (1960) lists five dialects of Marquesan which, according to Dordillon (cited by Tevane, 1978:4), can be classified into two groups: the dialects of the northern group of islands and those of the southern group. With respect to the position of the Marquesan dialects today, Lavondes (1967:260) reports that "interpenetration of the dialects is manifested by a multiplication of variants rather than by the substitution of one dialectal form to another." Although the Marquesan language, as is the case with Pa'umotu, has become impoverished lexically since the last century and "the position of the dialects is undoubtedly threatened, it is still very solid" due to geographic, demographic, historical, and religious reasons (Lavondes, 1967:260). Marquesan and Mangarevan are similar to Hawaiian, while all other Polynesian languages of the Territory resemble the Maori languages spoken in New Zealand and the Cook Islands (Green, 1966; Pawley, 1966; Biggs, 1971). The only information on the languages and dialects of the Austral archipelago concern the Rurutu dialect, of which Verin (cited by Lavondes, 1967:259) asserts "is still very well preserved." All the local languages are spoken in their respective archipelago and in Tahiti among members of the

same speech community. They are the primary linguistic vehicle for social intercourse.

Tahitian is the language of intercourse among island people, in "interethnic relations" (Lavondes, 1967:258). The status of Tahitian is special in that it is used throughout the different archipelagoes in various degrees. For those who speak another language, Tahitian is usually an important second language because it constitutes an important social and commercial link between islands. Though it had no official status, it is used in a limited amount in the communication media. As of May 1982, there are three radio stations and one television station operating in the Territory. Radio Tahiti, which began in 1951, is operated and owned by the government, and Radio T (1981) and Radio RTA (1982) are privately owned. The former is the only station to offer programs in Tahitian. Out of its daily seventeen hours (6:00 to 23:00) of broadcasting, approximately five hours are allotted to local and world news, music, personal messages, and maritime information wholly in Tahitian. France Region 3 (F.R. 3) T.V. station is governmentally owned and operated. Until very recently, the use of the local languages was not allowed on television. The decree of December 11, 1932 by which Tahitian was relegated to the status of a foreign language in Tahiti (Levilain, 1978:438) was still enforced in some government businesses, including the T.V. station. Today, programs in Tahitian are limited to the nightly fifteen minutes (18:30 to 18:45) of news and to an additional hour every Friday. From time to time, Tahitian is also used by the various religious groups in their twenty minutes per week-end. Recourse to Tahitian in the press is entirely restricted to official public

announcements and advertisements—when they do occur, which is not frequently. A review of the latest issues of the two daily newspapers shows that, with the exception of a few common words or sentences in Tahitian, everything is written in French. In addition, there are three bilingual French-Tahitian periodicals and another one entirely written in Tahitian. With the exception of one of them, all are published by religious groups, notably by the Protestants, the Reformed Mormons, and the Catholics.

At the present time, some political parties are fighting to have the Tahitian language used in the Territorial Assembly along with French (La Dépêche, 6-7-82:39) because they believe, like Topping (1982) that "as long as education and law are conducted in the alien languages, . . . the systems will remain alien ones." (p. 21)

Literature in Tahitian, and to some extent in Marquesan, Pa'umotu, and Mangarevan, includes various grammar books, dictionaries, some religious texts (including the Bible), a few school books, books of legends, and various other publications (see O'Reilly, 1967 for references). The lack of literature can be explained by the fact that Tahitian has been used as an oral means of communication with no long-standing tradition of literacy in the vernacular.<sup>11</sup> In this sense, Tahitian is no different than the other languages of Oceania which have developed little written literature for well-known historical reasons although there may be an extensive oral literature. In the area of theater, the success of two recent plays—one of them being an adaptation of a French play—gave the impetus for the creation and the presentation of more plays by the Maison des Jeunes, Maison de la

Culture (Youth and Cultural Center, M.J.M.C.).<sup>12</sup> FR<sub>3</sub> is also providing movie series largely in Tahitian.

The exact number of speakers for each of the languages of French Polynesia is not known. However, for the purpose of the Colloquium on Polynesian Languages which was held in Papeete in 1978, an estimation based on demographic extrapolations from the 1971 census and on studies of inter-island migrations was made. The estimates read as follows (Tevane, 1978:4-5):

Languages No Speakers	Marquesan	Pa'umotu	Mangarevan	Austral
Archipelago of origin	5504	6119	545	4003
Urban Zone (1962)	540	2558		668

The 1962 census, which was only concerned with Tahitian and none of the other Polynesian languages, shows that eighty percent (37,806) of the adult population are literate in Tahitian. Of those people, sixty-one percent live in the Windward islands, twenty percent in the Leeward islands, ten percent in the Tuamotu-Gambiers, four percent in the Marquesas, and six percent in the Australs. Tahitian is the first or the second language of many islanders since seventy-eight percent of the adult population of the Windward islands, eighty-nine percent of the Leeward population, ninety-three percent of the Austral population, ninety-two percent of the Tuamotu-Gambiers population, and sixty-eight percent of the Marquesas population can both read and write Tahitian. Literacy in Tahitian seems to be more common among people older than twenty years (Tevane, 1978:10) and even more so among people older than sixty. Knowledge of Tahitian among younger people appears to have deteriorated.

Lavondes (1967:258-259) attributes the predominance of Tahitian over the other indigenous languages to the demographic and economic expansion of Tahiti, to the social positions that Tahitians hold in the outer islands (teachers, policemen, physicians, . . .) and to the fact that Tahitian is the predominant language at the lower levels of trade--on the schooners--and is the only language used on the radio and in church.

If we evaluate the positions of the local languages of French Polynesia and place them with the languages of other Pacific nations along a continuum, we find at one end Western Samoa (Benton, 1978), Fiji (Benton, 1978; Schutz, 1972), and the Trust Territories (Trifonovitch, 1975) which have managed to sustain and transmit their indigenous languages and cultures, and at the other end New Zealand and Hawaii whose languages have lost ground and have been replaced by a dominant European language. Somewhere between the two ends are the vernaculars of Guam, American Samoa, Niue, Cook Islands, and Rotuma (Benton, 1978) and French Polynesia (Hollyman, 1962).

In a concern for the preservation of the Tahitian language in French Polynesia and the prevention of a language shift, an Academy of Tahitian (Fare Vana'a) was formed and officially inaugurated on July 2, 1974. The objectives of the Academy as summarized by Levilain (1978: 442-443) are to normalize the vocabulary, the grammar, and the orthography and to promote the writing of literary texts and the teaching of Tahitian in the schools. Currently, the Academy is working on a new grammar and is producing teaching materials, some of which are already in use. The Academy is also working on expanding the vocabulary of

Tahitian by the use of loan translations (40 words/month) to meet the growing needs. The Academy recently published a lexicon of technical words and a 76-page anthology of contemporary Tahitian literature. These literary texts were used in the Baccalauréat of 1982 (Tevane, 1982:9).

Because the Territory was up until 1835 religiously, and to some extent culturally and politically, dominated by English-speaking people, the English language was until the protectorate established very much in use. Today, English is still known in some families or to some segments of the population and is "very commonly understood" (Hollyman, 1971:907).

English has the status of a foreign language and is taught in all high schools where it is a mandatory requirement throughout the seven years of secondary schooling. Due to the geographic position of the Territory, English is an important language to know. French Polynesia lies 2,440 miles from Hawaii, 1,250 miles from American Samoa, 2,440 miles from Auckland (New Zealand), 3,200 miles from Sydney (Australia) and 3,700 miles from San Francisco. In addition to the fact that all neighboring continents or nations are English-speaking countries, the majority of the tourists visiting the Territory are English speakers. In 1979, more than sixty percent of the tourist population came from English-speaking countries, especially from the United States (I.E.O.M., 1979). English is usually associated with the language of the tourist industry since its use is restricted to hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and airline offices.

English is not commonly used in day-to-day conversations, although as noted by Lavondes (1967:257), a few words--especially units

of measure—are still being used in rural areas. In Papeete, there seems to be a recent trend toward using English words when naming commercial centers or stores (for example: Toshiba Center, Vaima Center, Tahiti Motor, Pareu Shop, Shop Tahiti, Tahiti Music), movie theaters (Liberty, Hollywood, Drive-in), and local products (Vegetable-Apple Soap Monoi). A look at the latest issues of the local newspapers shows borrowed terms such as "Miss Teenager" and even entire advertisements in English. The only weekly newspaper in English is tourist-oriented and is rarely read by the local population. Imported newspapers, books, and periodicals in English are available in most bookstores of Papeete. However, for a large proportion of the population--especially in rural areas--the only English texts available are those found on the labels of most canned goods (also reported by Lavondes, 1967:257).

The Chinese were the latest group to settle in French Polynesia. They first came in 1865-1866, then later in 1909 from Kwangtung Province to work in the cotton and sugar cane plantations. The majority of the Chinese speak Hakka Chinese--a language close to Mandarin--and the rest (10 percent) speak a dialect of Cantonese, called Punti (Moench, 1963:14). For a long time there were organized efforts to teach the language to all Chinese children. Three Chinese schools in Tahiti taught Hakka up until 1950 and then Mandarin up until the schools lost popularity because Chinese parents chose to send their children to all-French schools. Today, special instruction in Chinese outside of the regular school curriculum is available at these schools.

Most Chinese learn the language of the locality where they live. In this respect, Lavondes reports:



The demands of commerce, the activity preferred by the Chinese, make it necessary for businessmen in rural areas to be bilingual in Chinese and Tahitian, and in Papeete to be tri-lingual in Chinese, French, and Tahitian. As a result, the Chinese language has regressed. (1967:257)

Literacy in Chinese tends to be more common among the older people (Tevane, 1978:10; Lavondes, 1967:258). The majority of these speakers live in the Society archipelago. Chinese is never used in the media, except sometimes on television by some religious groups. Mandarin is taught in the secondary grades of some public schools and can be taken for credit to fulfill the mandatory second foreign language requirement. For the Baccalaureat in 1982, one student had registered for Mandarin as his/her second foreign language.<sup>13</sup>

### CHAPTER III

#### THE FRENCH POLYNESIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND THE TEACHING OF FRENCH, ENGLISH AND TAHITIAN

Up until the late seventies formal education in French Polynesia was dedicated to acculturating the Polynesian children to the French language, values and conceptions of the world. Many educational policies did indeed reflect this goal: studies for the various degrees were organized similarly to other metropolitan schools; all courses at all levels were taught in French using the same teaching methods and materials as in France; moreover students were punished if they used the vernaculars within the premises of the schools.

This pedagogical philosophy, often referred to as the "pédagogie du caillou," may still be found in some of the Polynesian schools. However, the territorial Department of Education in collaboration with the Tahitian Academy has mandated and initiated some educational changes. In general, the reforms which are called for seek to ensure a basic educational foundation for all children in French Polynesia through the adoption of a bilingual-bicultural program. The objective of such a program is to prepare young people to adapt effectively to the demands of the society they will face as adults.

It is the purpose of this chapter to describe the structure and organization of the present educational system and the instructional programs and methods used in teaching French, English and Tahitian. The majority of the changes to be implemented concern the primary level of education, but it is still too early to tell whether or not the new directives are being effectively implemented. As a result, the

educational programs and type of instruction are hereafter described according to the official texts. Any changes mandated at the secondary level by the new educational philosophy are hereafter mentioned specifically, but as a rule, secondary education in French Polynesia is no different from that which obtains in France itself.

## I. The Educational System

### Organization

Schooling in French Polynesia is comprised of four types: elementary, secondary, vocational, and technical. There are no universities in the territory; however, a few courses of higher education are available (nursing school, teacher training school, higher technical education in electronics or business, preparatory courses to post-graduate studies in business or law, etc.). Students wishing to continue their education beyond the secondary school level most commonly enroll in universities in France.

Elementary education is controlled by the Chef de l'Enseignement Primaire who is appointed by the territorial government. Secondary and technical education are directed by an Inspector of Academy, who holds the title of Vice Rector in Polynesia. Appointed by the Ministry of National Education (France), the Vice Rector also oversees the administration of private institutions and the distribution of all national examinations which emanate from France.

Education is compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 14 and is free of charge in all public institutions. Education is provided by both public and private (confessional) schools, but public

schooling is neutral with regard to religious, philosophical, and political matters.

### Structure

#### Pre-Elementary and Elementary Education

Pre-elementary education is relatively new to French Polynesia. The first school was opened in 1965 and the second in 1972.<sup>14</sup> It is provided on a voluntary basis for all children between the ages of 3 and 6. Pre-elementary schooling strives to encourage the social maturity and the personality development of the child. The curriculum includes an introduction to reading, writing and counting. Instruction is in French.

The lowest level of the system is the primary level, the first stage of compulsory education. Elementary instruction is divided into three consecutive cycles: the preparatory cycle (CP), the elementary cycle (CE<sub>1</sub> and CE<sub>2</sub>) and the middle cycle (CM<sub>1</sub>, CM<sub>2</sub>). Students are moved through the five stages depending upon their progress.<sup>15</sup> The structure is illustrated in the chart below.

<u>Age</u>	<u>Cycle</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Grade</u>
6-7	Elementary	Preparatory	CP
7-8		Elementary	CE <sub>1</sub>
8-9		Elementary	CE <sub>2</sub>
9-10		Middle	CM <sub>1</sub>
10-11		Middle	CM <sub>2</sub>

The curriculum follows the metropolitan pattern with an emphasis on French. The three R's are taught for eleven hours per week, followed by subjects called "activités d'éveil"--which include history, geography, moral and civic instruction, art, and music--for five hours

per week. Arithmetic (5 hours/week) and physical education (3½ hours/week) complete the program. An example of a standard schedule for the CE<sub>1</sub> grade is shown below (S.P.E.P., 1981):

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:30 AM TO 9:00 AM	Physical Educa- tion 45' Reciting 15' Reading 30'	Physical Educa- tion 45' Singing 15' Reading 30'	Games 15' Oral Expres- sion 30' Reciting 15' Reading 30'	Games 15' Oral Expres- sion 30' Singing 15' Reading 30'	Games 15' Oral Expres- sion 30' Physical Educa- tion 45' 9:20 AM
9:15 AM TO 10:20 AM	Arithme- tic 65'	Arithme- tic 65'	Arithme- tic 65'	Arithme- tic 65'	Arithme- tic 40' Reading 30' Handwriting 15' Singing 15'
10:30 AM TO 11:30 AM	Vocabu- lary 30' Grammar 25' Singing 10'	Grammar 30' Conjuga- tion 25' Handwri- ting 10'	Conjuga- tion 30' Spelling 25' Singing 10'	Spelling 30' Grammar 25' Handwri- ting 10'	11:00 AM
1:00 PM TO 2:20 PM	Games 15' Oral Expres- sion 30' Reading 35'	Games 15' Oral Expres- sion 30' Reciting 10' Reading 25'		Reading 30' French 30' Reciting 15'	
2:20 PM TO 3:30 PM	Drawing or Manual Work 60'	Drawing or Manual Work 60'		"Activi- ties D'evenil" 60'	

The principal aim of elementary instruction is to establish a foundation for subsequent education by emphasizing oral expression, an intuitive practice of grammar and the formation of the thinking process.

During the school year 1981-1982, 53,423 students (Vice Rectorat (ed.), 1982:1) were enrolled in the schools of French Polynesia. There were 207 primary public schools with a total enrollment of 31,420 students and twelve public schools with an aggregate of 7,695 students. Representing 73 percent of the total school population, these students were distributed among the primary cycles and the various archipelagoes as indicated below (Service de l'Education (ed.), 1982:5):

Cycle Population (total)	Pre-elementary 9,744	Elementary 28,663
Windward Islands	76%	71%
Leeward Islands	12%	14%
Australs	4%	4%
Marquesas	4%	5%
Tuamotus & others	4%	6%

Teachers for pre-elementary and elementary schools are locally trained at l'Ecole Normale de Tahiti. Candidates admitted for training at this school possess a secondary degree. The professional training provided in this institution lasts two years and includes theoretical work as well as classroom observations and teaching practice in pre-schools and primary schools. Although the majority of the elementary-school teachers had a teaching certificate in 1980, there were still 22.40 percent of the teachers who were not certified (Toraille, 1980:23, 31). And of these teachers 9.7 percent only possessed the C.E.P.E. certificate which certifies to the holder's completion of the primary cycle. There were 1,655 teachers in 1981-1982 (S.E. (ed.), 1982), of which 67 percent were in the Windward Islands, 15 percent in the Leewards, 6 percent in the Australs, 7 percent in the Tuamotus and Gambiers and 5 percent in the Marquesas.

### Secondary Education

At the age of eleven, students enter the secondary level of education. The course of studies lasts seven years and is divided into a first cycle and a second cycle of education as represented below:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Cycle</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Grade</u>
11-12	First cycle: Collège	Observation	6
12-13			5
13-14		Guidance	4
14-15			3
15-16	Second cycle: Lycée	General or Technical	2
16-17			1
17-18			Terminale

The first cycle, also known as the "Collège," lasts four years and is divided into a two-year period of observation and another two-year period of guidance. The following courses are offered to fulfill the general requirements of the first two years: French (5 hours/week), mathematics (3 hours/week), modern foreign languages--usually English (3 hours/week), experimental sciences (3 hours/week), art (2 hours/week), manual and technical education (2 hours/week), and physical education (3 hours/week). The curriculum of the following two years is basically the same except for an additional hour in mathematics, a thirty-minute reduction of the time allotted to manual and technical education and the addition of an elective chosen from Latin, Greek, a second modern language, technical courses (3 hours/week), or intensive studies of the first modern language (2 hours/week).

The "Collège" strives to give students general or professional training and to enable them to discover their capacities and preferences through the teaching of intellectual, artistic, manual, physical and sportive subjects (Sudel, 1981:23).

The first cycle of secondary education is sanctioned by the "Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle (B.E.P.C.) now called "Brevet des Collèges" since the 1975 Haby Reform.<sup>16</sup> The B.E.P.C. was granted upon passing a comprehensive examination, but the Brevet des Collèges is now conferred either upon successful completion of the prescribed course of study, or, in the case of an unsatisfactory academic record, upon passing an examination.

Pupils of age fifteen who have received their Brevet des Collèges are allowed to pursue their education in the second cycle, called Lycée, where two types of instruction are offered: a) a three-year program leading to one of several types of Baccalauréat or b) a three-year technical program leading to a technical Baccalauréat. A general Baccalauréat in humanities, mathematics, sciences or social sciences is received from a Lycée d'Enseignement General and a technical Baccalauréat from a Lycée d'Enseignement Technique. Both types of Baccalauréat lead to further studies on the level of higher education, but only the holder of a technical Baccalauréat may start working.

In a Lycée, students are grouped according to their specialization in one of the following sections: Section A: humanities and languages, Section B: economics and social sciences; Section C: mathematics and physical sciences; Section D: mathematics and natural sciences; Section E: mathematics and technology; Section F: industrial techniques; Section G: agriculture; and Section H: computer sciences.

The basic program for all first year students includes French, mathematics, a modern foreign language--(English), history, geography, civics, physical science and physical education. The electives are



Greek, Latin, music, art, a second modern language, business and practical classes in some technical fields. The number of hours dedicated to each subject and the choice of electives vary with each section. The second and the final year of the second cycle are basically the same. Some subjects essential to the training are added and others such as Introduction to Western Philosophy are required in all sections. Designed to prepare the students for higher education, the final year is one of intensive instruction. It is sanctioned by the Baccalauréat, a nationally administered examination which tests the students' general and specialized knowledge and which gives access to higher education.

The Baccalauréat is sent to French Polynesia by the Academy of Besançon (France), and is scored in New Caledonia. A student who does not obtain acceptable results on this examination must repeat the final year and take the examination again the following year. Students enrolled in Sections A through E receive a General Baccalauréat (Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement du Second Degré) while those in Sections F through H receive a technical Baccalauréat. Students in a technical lycée who do not wish to prepare for the Baccalauréat may follow a three-year program leading to the Brevet de Technicien, a certificate awarded after successful completion of a comprehensive examination.

### Vocational Education

An alternative to the Lycée d'Enseignement Général et Technique is the Lycée d'Enseignement Professionnel (Vocational and Technological Schooling, L.E.P.). Students must be fourteen years of age to enroll in a L.E.P. The L.E.P. provides two types of education: the Brevet

d'Etudes Professionnelles (B.E.P.) or the Certificat D'Aptitude Professionnelle (C.A.P.).

The course of studies which prepares a student for the B.E.P. lasts two years and includes a general education component and specialists courses in one of the three areas: trade, industry, or administration. The B.E.P. enables its holders to become employees or supervisors in the public or private sectors. The C.A.P. takes three years preparation and testifies to the holder's proficiency as a skilled manual worker for a specific job. Students with a C.A.P. may pursue their studies in the second cycle of secondary education.

In 1981-1982 the secondary and vocational school population represented 27 percent of the total school enrollment. This population is distributed among the educational levels and the five archipelagoes as follows (Vice Rectorat, (ed.), 1982):

Secondary Education:	11,250
First cycle:	10,020
Windward Islands	79%
Leeward Islands	13%
Australis	4%
Marquesas	4%
Second cycle:	1,230
Windward Islands	91%
Leeward Islands	9%
Vocational Education:	3,050
Short program (BEP):	2,428 <sup>17</sup>
Windward Islands	66%
Leeward Islands	15%
Long program (CAP)	622
Windward Islands	100%

Since there are no secondary schools in the Tuamotus and no second cycle of secondary education nor Vocational Education outside of the

Society archipelagoes, students from these areas are encouraged to attend school in Tahiti.

Secondary and vocational school teachers are required to have a degree from a university in the subject they will teach and a general secondary teacher's certificate (C.A.P.E.S.) or a technical teacher's certificate (C.A.P.E.T.). To teach in a Lycée the "agrégation"<sup>18</sup> is also required. But in French Polynesia, these academic requirements are not strictly enforced and teachers without the CAPES, CAPET or the "agregation" are numerous.

There were 694 teachers in 1981-1982 (Vice Rectorat (ed.), 1982: 3), 76 percent of whom were in the Windward Islands, 15 percent in the Leewards, 5 percent in the Australs and 4 percent in the Marquesas.

The proportion of European teachers to indigenous teachers is higher in the secondary and vocational schools than in the elementary cycle. The European teachers are contracted for by the Minister of Education for a three-year period which is renewable once.

### Technical Education

Technical education is peculiar to French Polynesia in the French educational system and was recently implemented for the rural school children who have difficulties following the official school curriculum. Three types of programs are now integrated into the school system and they all provide practical instruction adapted to the needs of rural areas. The Centres des Jeunes Adolescents (Centers for Young Adolescents, C.J.A.) are paid for by the territory while the Centres d'Education aux Technologies Adaptées au Developpement (C.E.T.A.D.) and the Centre de Formation à l'Artisanat Rural (Craftsmen Centers, C.F.A.R.) are funded by the Vice Rectorat.

Implanted in the rural areas, the C.J.A. have as their educational objectives to give primary-grade students with educational problems practical training which would allow them to enter professional life. Instruction is both general and practical with rules of hygiene, manual labor, gardening, management, local geography, canoe making, weaving, electricity, mechanics, etc., being offered. Young girls specialize in housekeeping, scientific rearing of children, needlework or basket weaving, while young boys work with wood, metals, etc.<sup>19</sup> The language of instruction is Tahitian with French being taught as a subject. There are no examinations and students receive no grades. Students work in groups on specific projects and the product of their work is sold to individuals or companies. Students who complete the two year program can either start their own businesses or seek employment in local workshops.<sup>20</sup> There are currently 24 classes in the territory, 18 of which are located in the Windward Islands (S.E., 1982:5). During 1981-1982, 308 boys and girls from elementary school between the ages of 14 and 17 sought training. The majority of them come from families who do not speak French and from poor socio-cultural and low socio-economical backgrounds.

Structurally similar to the L.E.P., the C.E.T.A.D. provides technical education for the training of contractors and craftsmen. Registration is open to students who experienced educational problems in secondary school (grades 5 and 4). Students graduating from this program receive a C.A.P. While most graduates from the L.E.P. are employed in urban businesses, it is hoped that those from the C.E.T.A.D. --or the C.J.A.--will seek employment in their island of origin.

A third program is also available for students who are unable to pursue a normal course of studies. The C.F.A.R. receives all students who, for various reasons, could not register in a C.E.T.A.D. or a L.E.P. The level of instruction is slightly superior to that provided in the C.J.A., but the objective of the program is similar: to train manual workers for the development of the rural areas.

## II. Language Teaching

### French

A directive from the Ministry of National Education (France) in 1949<sup>21</sup> states that formal education in all schools and at all levels must be given in French. Programs of studies and pedagogical instructions are set by the Ministry of National Education and are similar to those applied in France.

At the primary level of education the highest priority is given to the teaching of French. The official instructions state:

L'Enseignement du français est, . . . un outil de formation, il exerce la mémoire, l'attention, l'esprit de rigueur, le jugement, le goût de l'effort. Tout en favorisant l'expression de la sensibilité et de l'imagination, il contribue à l'élaboration d'une méthode pour penser et agir.<sup>22</sup>

and that oral and written fluency are the objectives of this instruction. These general goals are broken down into more specific objectives which define the competencies children must show in speaking, reading, writing, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, poetry, and handwriting. Students are taught to listen, speak, read, and write and to attach what they hear, say, read or write to objects, activities and events. The role of the educator is to help his/her students develop cognitive

abilities--including the development of new concepts, of analytical, critical and creative thinking--and affective abilities--such as motivation and emotional reactions. His/her role is to arrange the teaching-learning situation so that students will see a need to learn, and to facilitate language acquisition through the use of appropriate teaching techniques.

What is different in French Polynesian education as compared to education in France in general is the fact that the teaching of French as a second language is now stressed. The official pedagogical instructions reprinted by the Centre de Recherche et de Documentation Pédagogiques (C.R.D.P.) (C.R.D.P. and S.E., n.d.) for all primary school teachers include directives for the teaching of French in Polynesia. Emphasis is placed on the adaptation of the French curriculum to the Polynesian situation and to the needs of the Polynesians. Teachers are reminded that the linguistic background and the socio-cultural environment of the Polynesian child are different from those of a French child and that these differences are accentuated within Polynesia by the area's geography. Teachers are also made aware of specific phonological and syntactic problems encountered by the Polynesian children when learning French.

But, in reality, the official goals are not achieved. Indeed, in 1976, the Fédération des Oeuvres Laiques (F.O.L.) reported that at the CP and CE<sub>1</sub> level children have not mastered the oral language including its phonetics, vocabulary, and elementary syntactic structures (C.T.A.L., et al., 1976:40-41) and that in the CE<sub>1</sub>, CM<sub>1</sub>, and CM<sub>2</sub> grades students have difficulties with spelling (Ibid., 32), reading (Ibid., 41),

and pronunciation (Ibid., 71-74). In 1980 five representatives of the Ministry of National Education came to French Polynesia to evaluate the state of primary education in the territory. After visiting classes in the different archipelagoes, they reported that the teaching of French was not satisfactory in many areas. Specifically, they noted that:

1. Students are not given the opportunity to express what they can say in French or to verbalize their own thoughts, ideas and emotions (Toraille, 1980:27) because they are only required to answer questions, recite memorized texts or practice the use of syntactic structures by repeating after the teacher (Toraille, 1980:13).

2. Teachers use a method and its teaching materials mechanically (Toraille, 1980:16, 26).

3. Teachers' explanations are either vague or just paraphrases (Toraille, 1980:13).

4. The teaching of reading is not meaningful. Children are taught to read words taken out of context or sentences extracted from metropolitan textbooks (Toraille, 1980:27). In 1976, the F.O.L. found that in reading, the decoding and the pronunciation levels were good despite numerous pauses, but that the level of comprehension was generally low (C.T.A.L., et al., 1976:41).

Second language learning materials in French are currently being developed by a group of experts at the C.R.D.P. Basic texts, graded readers and supplementary interest materials are now available at the research center for consultation. But a large proportion of the textbooks is still imported from France.

It is at the secondary level of education that instruction is similar to the metropolitan system. Officially, the teaching of French at this level has the following objectives: a) to consolidate the oral and written practice of the language, b) to teach methods of studying, c) to develop analytical, creative and critical thinking, and d) to initiate students to European culture through the study of literary texts (Circular No. 77.156, April 29, 1977). The overall goal is to develop fluency and literacy in French. The programs place strong emphasis on the study of the French language and French literature. The course of studies includes the history of the language and its lexicon, the development of French literature from the Middle Ages through the twentieth century, and poetry. Students are also encouraged to practice the various styles of writing (narrative, descriptive, letters, speeches, dialog, poetry, . . .). They are taught how to summarize, analyze, criticize and comment on philosophical, literary and scientific writings. Because French is essential for passing all national examinations, much time is paid to the teaching of French as a subject rather than as a means of communication. Furthermore, the elaborate grammatical explanations, the intensive practice of syntactic structures, and the emphasis on recall, recognition and proper use of specific information seem to indicate that the primary goal of the method is written language fluency and understanding of the grammar.

The French test for the "Baccalauréat" consists of two examinations, one written and the other oral. The authors and texts which should be studied for the examinations are suggested by the Ministry of National Education and include writers such as Corneille, Racine, Molière,



Bossuet, La Fontaine, La Bruyère, Voltaire, Montaigne, Pascal, Boileau, Diderot, Rousseau, Shakespeare,<sup>23</sup> Walter Scott, Cervantes, Dante, Petrarque, Tolstoy, Kipling, and Goethe.

All textbooks used at the secondary level are imported from France and are similar to those used in France. However, some "collège" teachers do make use of local publications (legends, stories, newspaper articles) to supplement the regular textbooks so as to make the material more meaningful and relevant to the Tahitian children.

### English

It is also in the secondary grades that two foreign languages are introduced. In French Polynesia the first modern foreign language is English. Instruction starts in the sixth grade and is continued through the "Lycée." The second modern foreign language is one of Spanish, Italian, German, Russian or Mandarin. But in many schools, notably the private schools, Spanish is the only foreign language offered. In this situation instruction is offered from the fourth grade through the "Lycée."

English is taught so as to introduce students to a new culture and way of life, and to develop oral and written fluency in the everyday language.<sup>24</sup> The lexical items and grammatical patterns to be learned are set by the Ministry of National Education for each grade level.

The role of the teacher is to introduce structures in various contexts, to provide real situations of communication, to encourage oral expression, to solve the problems of pronunciation and to develop oral fluency. The ministerial instructions also recommend the use of audio-visual and audio-oral methods, and the memorization of dialogs and

texts.<sup>25</sup> It is hoped that by subjecting students to pattern practice drills repeatedly they will eventually be able to transfer their knowledge to different situations.

However, the limited amount of time (3 hours/week) devoted to the teaching of English makes the task difficult to achieve. A typical week's schedule follows:

First hour: Recitation of the lessons, oral interrogation or short quiz (10 minutes). Reading out loud of a text by the teacher followed by the reading of sentences from the text by students. Explanation of new vocabulary words (words are written on the blackboard with their phonetic transcriptions). A sentence in English or a drawing illustrates the meaning.

Second hour: Recitation of the lessons, oral interrogation or short quiz. Reading of the same text. Comprehension activities (usually literal comprehension activities and/or based on questions proposed below the reading text). Translation of the text or parts of the text into French.

Third hour: Grammar lesson taught in French followed by exercises (translation of sentences from French into English or vice-versa; filling-the-blanks and substitution exercises).

Homework usually includes lists of vocabulary items and rules of grammar to be memorized and/or translation or grammar exercises.

In the "Lycée" the objectives for the teaching of English are similar to those previously mentioned for the "collège," but the work is geared to the demands of the terminal examination which tests students' understanding of literary texts. The oral or the written skills are given priority depending on the students' sections.

All textbooks are published in France. The contents show a preference for the British culture and way of speaking. A typical lesson includes a reading passage (a dialog or a literary extract), questions based on the reading, a phonetic transcription of all new words, rules of grammar, exercises (translation in both languages, pattern practices), and a translation of the passage into French. A lexicon and an alphabetical list of the irregular verbs are usually found at the end of the textbooks.

Teaching tools are nonexistent. There are no visual materials, like wall charts, flash cards or portable blackboards, nor any other kind of instructional aids. The basic audio-visual equipment is rarely used in the English classes and there are no language laboratories. The secondary schools of the territory also lack dictionaries, and interesting supplementary materials in English. There is a minimum number of suitable books in their libraries.

In addition to the formal teaching of English in schools, students have the possibility every summer of participating in a study-abroad exchange program in either New Zealand or Hawaii. The New Zealand program is by far the most popular. Its low cost allows hundreds of students every year to be hosted by New Zealand families and to be immersed in English speaking classes. In Hawaii, special

English courses are provided by Punahou School for the students from Tahiti (between 10 and 15 every year), Japan and Micronesia who have enrolled in the program. In December, students from New Zealand come to Tahiti to study French. Students from Hawaii usually come during summer.

An analysis of the data<sup>26</sup> from the "Baccalauréat" examinations (general and technical) seems to indicate that those students who took the English test obtained satisfactory results. Of the 432 students tested in June and July 1982, 53 percent passed with a grade equal or superior to ten--the maximal grade being twenty. Among those who opted for English as an optional subject, 69 percent passed with an average grade or better. Although there is no evidence to prove it, teachers tend to think that the students' ethnicity has a significant impact on the attainment in English. With regard to this Lavondes (1967) adds:

High school English teachers marvel at the facility with which the native students learn English, a facility which they opine, exceeds that of the French-born pupils, and which they attribute to some rather dubious phonetic similarities between English and Tahitian (p. 256).

In France where students have the possibility to choose which first foreign language to present at the "Baccalauréat," English is the language studied by the majority of them--76 percent of the 1963-1964 "Lycée" population and 82.44 percent of the 1972-1973 population (Cellard, 1975).

### Tahitian

In connection with the status of the indigenous languages of French Polynesia and their role in the formal educational process, Richard Benton wrote in 1978 that:

the strongly assimilationist policies of the French administration in these areas [French Polynesia and New Caledonia] and the general acceptance of school curricula similar to those of metropolitan France have left no place at all for the local languages in the school system (p. 143).

Although it is true that pupils were not permitted to speak their local languages on the school premises--presumably to give them more opportunity for practice in French--a number of circumstances and movements have changed the picture of the vernaculars since Benton's observations. Members of the Territorial Assembly and of the Territorial Department of Education were the first ones to claim that the school system was not responsive to the educational needs of the Polynesian students and to the students' cultural assets. In May of 1975, the Council of Government requested the creation of a Commission to analyze the possibilities of introducing the Tahitian language in the school programs. After a careful evaluation of the educational system, the Commission recommended (Vice Rectorat, 1980) that the teaching of Tahitian be a) progressive from the ages of 4 to 14, b) optional in the secondary grades, and c) mandatory in the teacher-training program. The Commission, comprised of psychologists and teachers, concluded that "une bonne connaissance de la langue maternelle est profitable a l'enseignement du francais."<sup>27</sup>

Since 1975, the teaching of Tahitian has been experimentally introduced in the CE2, CM1, CM2, CP, and pre-elementary grades in the urban and rural areas of Tahiti. The experimental program which is supervised and guided by the C.R.D.P. and the Tahitian Academy, has as its objective the development of a curriculum for the maintenance of the Polynesian languages as well as the enhancement of cultural pride.

In 1976-1977, the program was begun in 32 classes of the urban schools (14 in public schools, 14 in Catholic schools and 4 in Protestant schools). Briefly stated, the primary goal of the project was to provide opportunities for the acquisition of the fundamental skills of reading, writing, counting, and fluency in speaking Tahitian. To this end, the Tahitian Academy in association with the Territorial Department of Education has worked out a recommended teaching method. Basically audio-visual in nature, the method is designed to begin in the CE2 grades with students who do not have any knowledge of the language. Entitled Tā'u Puta Reo Tahiti, the teaching material is comprised of four manuals for students and two for teachers. A lesson consists of a series of drawings which illustrate the use of the different syntactical structures to be learned. With the help of these drawings and questions from the teacher, the students are brought to understand the meaning of the proposed structures. This activity is then followed by choral practice of the patterns and the reading of the text in the book. This routine ends with some written work which is first prepared orally by the whole class, then written individually and finally revised and corrected collectively.<sup>28</sup>

The first-year experiment in the 14 classes held in Catholic schools revealed two major handicaps: 1) the poor knowledge of Tahitian by the teachers, and 2) the various levels of proficiency of the students.<sup>29</sup> The 1975 Commission estimated that, at that time, at least 50 percent of the teaching staff thought they could not teach any of the vernaculars. Many of them reported being able to understand Tahitian without being able to speak it fluently. Such was the case of 10 of the

14 teachers of the Catholic schools.<sup>30</sup> Despite the fact that the exclusive use of Tahitian was recommended in the program, the majority of the teachers were unable to conduct an entire lesson solely in the vernacular. In-service teacher training was offered every two weeks for a period of an hour and half to remedy the situation. Similarly, the linguistic levels of proficiency of the students varied greatly. A classification of the students according to the following criteria a) use of Tahitian to communicate with at least one member of the family, b) had a practical knowledge of Tahitian prior to 1976, c) has no or little knowledge of Tahitian, showed that 178 students fell in group a, 79 in group b, and 164 in group c.<sup>31</sup> This situation brought the administration in 1978 to group students from the CE2, CM1, and CM2 classes according to their linguistic abilities in Tahitian.<sup>32</sup> Three groups were formed, among which the L1 (beginner) group was the largest.

Generally speaking, the results of the experimental program are encouraging. The pre-testings and the post-testings of each class for each of the six years have shown visible linguistic improvement, notably in speaking and reading,<sup>33</sup> and significant changes of attitudes among students, parents and teachers. The many fears and feelings of reluctance concerning the teaching of the vernaculars expressed<sup>34</sup> during the first year of the experiment seem to have lessened, at least among those directly involved in the program. The majority of the students have enjoyed the classes and have shown an interest in the content of the lessons.<sup>35</sup> Polynesian children have also proved to be more confident, expressive and assertive during the Tahitian lessons.<sup>36</sup> More and more

parents and teachers now support the program although some still fear that teaching (and learning) the Tahitian language will hinder the rapid acquisition of French--hence access to a higher social position--or think that the vernaculars, being "inferior" languages, have no place in the curriculum. Clearly, there is a need for an informational program for parents and teachers alike which will instruct them on the advantages of learning in one's mother tongue as well as in bilingual contexts.

The six years of experimentation in both the pre-elementary and elementary classes also helped the program designers to evaluate the Tahitian language curriculum and to revise it when necessary. A major revision of the teaching method recently took place as the researchers realized that the program had failed to take into account the fact that the Tahitian language is a mother tongue for the Polynesian children and that therefore it should not be taught as a foreign or second language. As of October 1981, students in the pre-elementary, CP, and CE classes are encouraged to use the Tahitian language for the various school activities.<sup>37</sup> Teachers are also encouraged to use the students language as often as possible, especially in the first grade.

The teaching of Tahitian at the elementary level is still at an experimental stage. The implementation of the instruction in all grades, which was planned to occur progressively through the school year of 1981, 1982 and 1983, has not yet begun due to a lack of trained teachers. For the school year 1982-1983, the new director of the Territorial Department of Education has ordered some modifications to the teaching of Tahitian.<sup>38</sup> These include:



- 1) A change from the teaching of Tahitian to the teaching of the "Reo Maohi" (Polynesian languages) which implies the teaching of Marquesan in the Marquesas, of Tahitian in the Society Islands, etc.
- 2) An emphasis on aural/oral skills up to the CM2 grade with writing introduced in the CM1 grade.

The principle objective for the coming school year is to supply each administrative division of the territory with a team of competent trainers in the Polynesian languages. In his announcement the director made no reference to the method and materials for teaching these languages.

Tahitian is not taught in the secondary grades--except in some confessional schools by volunteer teachers<sup>39</sup>—despite the fact that laws and decrees<sup>40</sup> stipulate the conditions for the teaching of the local languages and dialects in French Polynesia. This delay in the application of the law is caused by a lack of state funds.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the Minister of National Education (France) notified the Vice-Rector in 1978 that the teaching of Tahitian could begin in the secondary grades only if it did not require the remuneration of additional teachers or supplementary hours.<sup>42</sup>

At the present time, students may choose the Tahitian language as an elective for the Baccalauréat examination (general or technical), but no courses are offered to prepare them to take the test.<sup>43</sup> A survey of the five "Lycées" of French Polynesia in 1979-1980 showed that 40 percent of their school population was interested in the study of Tahitian to fulfill the requirements of the Baccalauréat.<sup>44</sup> In June of

1982, 95 students took the oral Tahitian test for the Baccalauréat and 53 percent of them passed with a grade equal or superior to ten (on a scale of 0 to 20).<sup>45</sup> The examining body consisted of local persons from the Tahitian Academy who are recognized for their linguistic knowledge and abilities in Tahitian.

### III. Evaluation of the Educational System of French Polynesia

When J. W. Taylor (1965) writes "are we giving these people [the Tongans] the right sort of education or not?" he also speaks for the thousands of people in French Polynesia who are questioning the effectiveness of the actual system.<sup>46</sup> To roughly evaluate the effectiveness of the current educational system three factors will be considered. First is the percentage of students who finish elementary or secondary school. Second is the ratio of those who pass the examinations to the number of eligible candidates and the third is the age of the primary grade pupils.

An analysis of the statistical data<sup>47</sup> of the last ten years reveals that many children never complete their primary and secondary education. For example, there were 6,182 students enrolled in the CP grades during the school year 1974-1975 and four years later (1978-1979) the total CM2 enrollments showed a decrease of 35.5 percent. Furthermore, of these 3,988 students of the CM2 grade, only 2,455 were admitted in high school the following year. This means that 38.4 percent of the students either repeated their grade, enrolled in the first year of a C.A.P. or just dropped out of school. Even by supposing that the preparation of a C.A.P. was the alternative chosen by those not admitted

in grade 6, this does not explain what happened to 1,017 students, since only 516 were enrolled for a C.A.P. in September of 1979. These calculations show that of the students who began their education in 1974-1975, 52 percent are either out of school or are too old for their grade in 1980. If we now consider the age of the primary grade pupils, 31 percent of the elementary school population is two or more years too old for their grade in 1981-1982--against 32 percent the previous year.

Of those admitted into high school very few finish the course of studies or receive a diploma. Indeed, of the 2,249 students enrolled in the 6th grade in 1975-1976 only 524 (23.3 percent) reached the "Terminale" grade six years later and only 315 (60 percent) of the "Terminale" grade students received a Baccalauréat (general or technical). Of the same 6th grade population of 1975, 88 percent reached the third grade in 1978-1979, but only 69 percent of the grade population received the B.E.P.C. This means that 35 percent of the 1975 sixth graders were admitted into a "Lycée," 23 percent completed secondary education, but only 14 percent finished with a Baccalauréat. Fifty percent of the 1982 Baccalauréat students came from families who belong to the following socio-professional categories: manual workers, staff or trained personnel. Sixty percent of these students passed the Baccalauréat--a rate of success equal to that of the remaining students.

The 1977 census (I.N.S.E.E., 1977) reports that 2.2 percent (1,826) of the adult population (83,017) is illiterate, 63 percent does not hold any degree and that 34.8 percent holds a general or a technical degree. The holders of the degrees are distributed among the ethnic groups as follows: 73 percent are Europeans, 47 percent Chinese, 45 percent demi,

and 22 percent Polynesians. These figures clearly show that the Polynesian children are not performing as well as the other children of French Polynesia.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUGGESTED BILINGUAL EDUCATION PLANS FOR FRENCH POLYNESIA

The preceding chapter has shown that learning and academic progress are inhibited by the students'--and in some cases, the teachers'--lack of proficiency in the French language, the cultural discontinuity between the school and the home, the linguistically and culturally unsuitable textbooks, the ambitious syllabi which try to teach far more than is possible in the time available, and the emphasis on intellectual rather than more practical learning.

Education in French Polynesia might reasonably be expected to prepare children to live in the territory, that is, a country which has a low national income, no material wealth, a high population growth rate, important internal migrations to the urban areas and very limited occupational activities. It is important to educate all citizens--adults and children--to live efficiently and effectively in their particular communities, rather than restricting education to the training of an elite. This implies as suggested by Taylor (1965) that there is a need

for a more intensive health program, with hygiene, nutrition, home-making, infant care, agriculture and carpentry . . . for the preparation of a selected few for further scholarship abroad, so that eventually there will be a group of well-qualified people to replace the expatriate staff . . . for all to be able to read, write a simple, correct letter, to calculate at an elementary level and know a little about the world . . . . (1965:69)

It is the purpose of this chapter to review some of the literature which describes different theoretical models of bilingual programs and to suggest plans to assist the primary-grade students of French Polynesia.

The reason for examining bilingual programs is the assumption that French will continue--at least for the unforeseeable future--to be the primary language of wider communication used in French Polynesia.

Before looking at the actual research, it would be instructive to examine the various definitions related to bilingual education. The terms bilingualism, bilingual, bilingual education or schooling, foreign language teaching, and English as a second language (ESL) are the most important concepts which need to be defined.

### I. Definitions

Despite the fact that many linguists, educators, and psychologists have discussed and written extensively about bilingual education, there is still little agreement on a precise definition for bilingualism and what constitutes a bilingual. The earliest definitions of bilingualism have been stated in parsimonious terms and have ranged from complete mastery of a second (or more) language (Bloomfield, 1933:55) to the "passive knowledge" of the written language (Diebold, 1961). The term bilingualism includes a very great range of linguistic proficiency because the point at which an individual becomes a bilingual has not yet been determined to the satisfaction of professionals in the field. Andersson and Boyer (1970) suggest that bilinguals be classified on the basis of their skills in each language, along an infinite scale.

Malherbe (1943:18) defined bilingualism as a person's skills in both languages, and with reference to South Africa, he proposed a continuum of dual languages with the ability to follow an ordinary conversation or speech in written and spoken form at one end of the continuum, and a "native ability in both languages" at the other end.

Also defining bilingualism in an individual sense, Haugen (1956:10) narrowed the concept to the ability to produce "complete meaningful utterances" in the other language. While Aucamp (1926:9) defined it as "the condition in which two living languages exist side by side in a country, each spoken by one national group representing a fairly large proportion of the people," Mackey (1968) saw bilingualism as the property of the individual:

Bilingualism is not a phenomenon of language; it is a characteristic of its use. It is not a feature of code but of the message. It does not belong to the domain of langue but of parole. (p. 554)

Similarly, definitions of bilingual schooling have ranged from broad to narrow descriptions and as Mackey (1970) suggested

Since we are faced with various combinations of various factors, any single definition of bilingual schooling would be either too wide or too narrow to be of any use in planning and research, for what is true for one combination of factors may be untrue for another. And since the causes and effects of bilingual schooling are to be found outside of the school, it is important to take these into consideration. What is needed, therefore, is not another definition of bilingual but a classification of the field to account for all possible types—in other words, typology. (p. 65)

The definition of bilingual education which has served as the basis for the implementation of bilingual programs in the United States reads as follows:

Bilingual education is the use of two languages, one of which is English, the other, the native language of the child, as mediums of instruction for the same pupil population in a well-organized program which encompasses parts or all of the curriculum and includes the study of the history and culture associated with the mother tongue. A complete program develops and maintains the children's self esteem and a legitimate pride in

both cultures (Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1971).

Thus, the goal of a bilingual program is to teach a second language through the use of the mother tongue, and ultimately to use the second language as the medium of instruction. Ideally, the mother tongue is used for communication purposes as well as for imparting knowledge and concepts. Furthermore, the native culture and history of the child are important components of the program. As stated by McEvedy (1974), bilingual education implies that "the second language will be used frequently by the individual within his national-cultural environment," and therefore, differs from foreign language teaching which

. . . aims to equip an individual with a language which has no internal communication function within a community. It aims to facilitate communication with speakers from another national-cultural unit. The foreign language is taught through the mother language at all stages and is not used as a medium of instruction for non-language subjects. (p. 15)

There is also a widely held misconception that the teaching of English as a second language is a type of bilingual education program. ESL is an approach to teaching a language while bilingual education implies teaching subject matters through two (or more) languages. They are interrelated and reinforce each other.

## II. Theoretical Models

There exists a wide body of literature describing theoretical models of bilingual programs. Typologies usually differ in the number and the diversity of criteria considered and bilingual models are therefore either dual, three, four, or multidimensional-type models. Typologies have been provided on the basis of a) the intent of a program



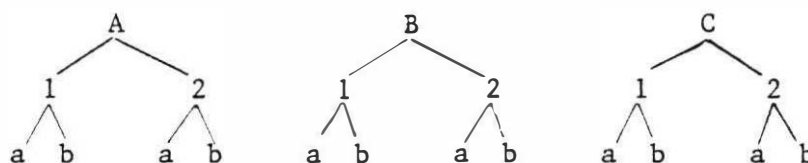
(see for example Fishman and Lovas, 1970; and Gonzales, 1975), b) the language used and the treatment of the languages (see Saville and Troike, 1971; and Stern, 1963), c) the use of time for language and subject-matter instruction (see Paulston, 1974; Cohen and Laosa, 1976), d) the student population (see Gaarder, 1976), e) the structure of the school and the social environments (see Spolsky, et al., 1974; Mackey, 1971) and on the basis of many more factors. Each of the models can be placed in an organizational framework as proposed by Trueba (1979:72):

#### Bilingual education:

Models

Types

Designs



Models	Types	Designs
Transitional	Compensatory, remedial for assimilation; ESL/ transitional, etc.	L2 in language arts and subject matter: L1 and L2 with phasing out of L1.
Maintenance	Bilingual/bicultural maintenance. Pluralism.	Equal emphasis of L1 & L2 in language arts.
Enrichment	Cultural pluralistic, etc.	L2 in early stages; emphasis on L2, etc.

For the purpose of this thesis, the author will briefly describe the three models advanced by Trueba and will provide a description of some of the typologies. The three-type model, namely Transitional, Maintenance, and Enrichment was first proposed as part of Fishman and Lovas' (1970) fourfold typology and later as Fishman's (1976) three-type model. In a transitional program the child's first language or mother

tongue (L1) is used in instruction for the sole purpose of facilitating the acquisition of skills in the second language (L2). Instruction in L1 is provided during the first years of schooling and is then decreased as instruction in L2 is increased. The whole curriculum is taught in L2 as soon as the child has acquired fluency in the second language. The aim of such a program is to "cure the language deficiencies of ethnic children so they can permanently enter regular classrooms with an all L2 curriculum" (Trueba, 1979:56), and to facilitate assimilation into the wider community. Mainstreaming usually results in loss of native language skills and increase in L2 dominance, but in no cases does it result in bilingualism.

In a maintenance program both languages, L1 and L2, are used as mediums of instruction--that is, for imparting knowledge and concepts. At some point in time instruction is given on a 50/50 basis with equal emphasis on both languages. The aim is to provide a dual-language curriculum in order to maintain and develop the individual's skills in both languages and promote bilingualism and biculturalism.

The aim of an enrichment program is literacy in both languages through the use of two languages as mediums of instruction. This assumes that a body of literature is extant in both languages. Participation is open and voluntary, however the programs are not specifically intended for minority group children. These types of programs are generally referred to as "elitist" bilingual programs.

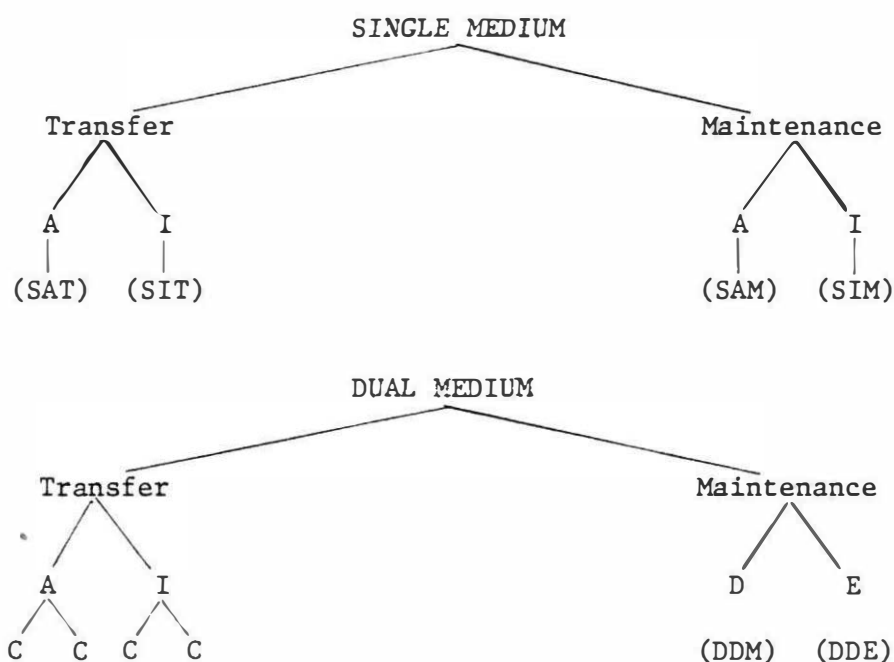
Most models in bilingual education as described in the literature have emerged from these ideologies. Two typologies will be described, notably that of Fishman and Lovas (1970) and that of Mackey (1970).

Fishman and Lovas (1970) proposed four categories of bilingual programs:

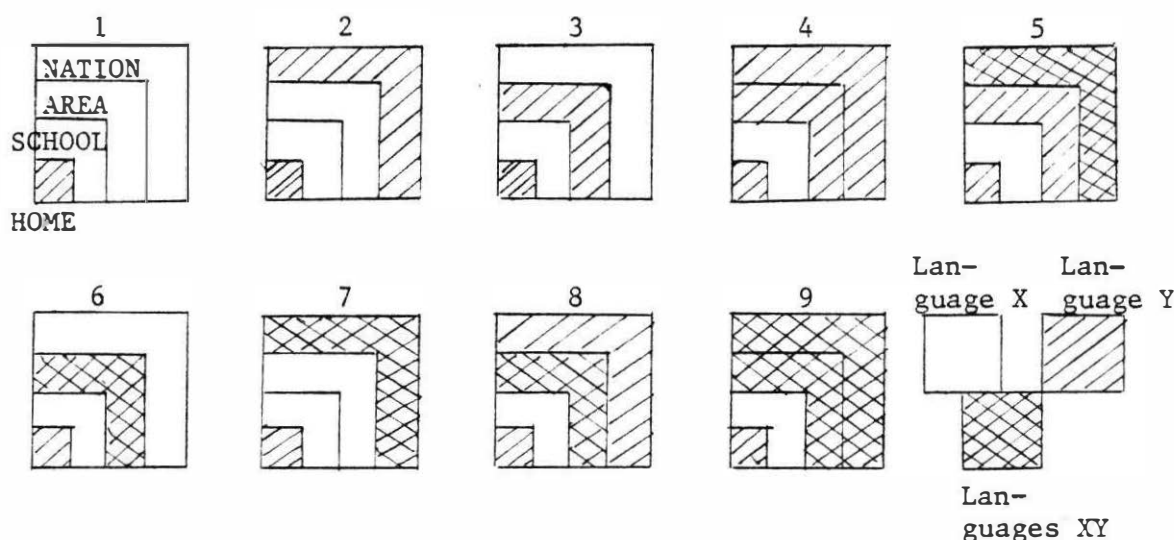
- Type I: Transitional bilingualism (as described above).
- Type II: Monoliterate bilingualism. Programs in which aural/oral skills are developed in both languages whereas literacy is only sought in L2. This type of program is "intermediate in orientation between language shift and language maintenance" (p. 14).
- Type III: Partial bilingualism. The aim of this type of program is fluency and literacy in both languages, however literacy in L1 is limited to some subject matters such as those related to the culture of the linguistic group. Programs of this type of orientation represent a step toward language and culture maintenance.
- Type IV: Full bilingualism. Students are taught all skills in both languages in all domains (see for example the instructional programs of the Coral Way Elementary School or those of Montreal, Lambert and Tucker, 1972).

Similarly, Mackey's type of programs can be described on a continuum (transfer, maintenance, and enrichment). Mackey has proposed the most comprehensive typology of bilingual education programs thus far in which he recognized ten different bilingual curriculum patterns. In his design, attention was given to a) the medium of instruction: one language (single medium (S)) or two languages (dual medium (D)), b) the aim of the curricula (maintenance (M) of the language(s) or transfer (T)

from one language of instruction to another one), c) the distribution of the languages (different (D) or equal (E)), d) the direction of the curricula (acculturation (A) or irredentism (I), and e) the manner in which change takes place (complete (C) or gradual (G)). The ten basic types of curriculum patterns which result from this classification are SAT, SAM, SIT, SIM, DAT-(C), DAT-(G), DIT-(C), DIT-(G), DDM and DEM. A hierarchical scheme of the patterns looks as follows:



Further, by accounting for variables such as the structures of the home, the area (or community), the school, and the nation, a total of ninety types of bilingual programs can be generated. The relationship between these variables is illustrated below:



The basic ten types of curriculum patterns function as follows:

1. Type SAT: In this model the school may transfer the language of learning from that of the home to that of the school. It is accultural if it takes no account of the language of the home (see the educational system of French Polynesia and New Caledonia).
  2. Type SAM: The home language is taught as a subject only.
  3. Type SIT: The home language is used as a medium of instruction.
  4. Type SIM: The language or dominant language of the country is treated as a subject, but not for teaching other subjects.
  - 5, 6. Types DAT-c and DAT-G: In this model the home language is used in the early years of schooling and then education is in a language of wider communication.
  - 7, 8. Types DIT-C and DIT-G: In areas long dominated by a foreign language, the medium of instruction may be reverted to the language of the home and the foreign language is kept as a subject.
  9. Type DDM: The two languages are maintained for different purposes.
  10. Type DEM: Both languages are given equal treatment in all domains.
- "This is done by alternating on the time scale" (p. 198).

### III. Suggested Plans

Two projects are proposed in this thesis to adapt the educational system to the background, the needs and the interests of the Polynesian children. The first project consists of a short-term program designed to return limited and non-French speaking children to the classroom as soon as possible. The second project is comprised of two long-range programs that would integrate bilingual education into the regular school curriculum. In addition to developing the affective, cognitive, linguistic and social abilities or skills of the children, it is hoped that these programs would also promote the academic achievement of those who participate in them, help a culture retain its language and a people its pride in its ethnic language.

#### The Short Term Program

The implementation of a bilingual program which would teach subject matter in French and Tahitian is impossible at this time. Many educational problems or issues remain to be overcome. Indeed, there are as yet no personnel trained specifically in bilingual education, very few teachers with native or near-native proficiency in all four skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) in Tahitian, very few teachers familiar with existing bilingual evaluation programs, and a restricted selection of educational materials written in Tahitian as well as bilingual texts in French and Tahitian.

The short-term program is intended to be a continuation of the initial experimentation which would serve to prepare the ground for the implementation of a bilingual program. Conceived for the pre-elementary

and elementary classes, the program would have for its immediate objectives helping the Polynesian children who have difficulty adapting to the French cultural and educational systems as exhibited by a below average academic achievement, and by providing literacy in Tahitian as a background for higher achievement in the content areas of the traditional curriculum. The long-term objectives of the program would be to test and revise the actual French/Tahitian curriculum for grades K through CM2, to provide effective methods of instruction and objectives for a complete elementary bilingual program, to provide training to increase and insure teachers' competencies and proficiency, to develop community and parental support, to provide materials effective for each grade of the bilingual instructional program (reading units, picture books, library books, . . .), to adapt the mathematics and environmental studies programs to the Tahitian language, and to identify the student population as to survey its needs.

The teaching model proposed here is commonly referred to as a transitional model of bilingual education since it aims at the gradual transfer from one linguistic medium to another. This type of model, although not desirable because it is transitional in nature, is recommended for French Polynesia because at the present time instructional materials and bilingual teachers are sorely lacking. The program would differ from the one actually being tried out in three areas: the grouping of the students, the organization of the language, and the classroom organization.

### Student grouping

The program would have as its primary aim producing Polynesian children who are bilingual in French and Tahitian. Native speaking French children would not be included in this program, although some classes would be mixed for the advantage of the Polynesian children learning French. French speaking children would receive similar instruction but through the medium of French.

This procedure is advisable for two reasons: a) more attention can be given to non-native French speakers without causing loss to the others, and b) non-native French speakers would be allowed to progress normally in the areas of the curriculum through the use of their mother tongue.

### Organization of the languages

The Tahitian language would be used on an informal basis in the school setting during recess, etc., and as a medium of instruction in kindergarten. Teaching in reading readiness and early concepts of numbers would also be done in and through Tahitian. French would be introduced through the use of games and songs where emphasis would be placed on teaching high frequency language and on making students aware of the new phonological system.

In the CP grade, special second language teaching methods would be used to build up the child's knowledge of oral French and to initiate students to reading and writing in French. Students would be grouped in accordance with their command of the second language. During the school year reclassifications and regrouping of the students would take place to keep students of the same level together. All other areas of the curriculum would be conducted in Tahitian.



During the CE1 grade, the amount of instruction in and through French would gradually be increased and would include the teaching of French per se.

From the CE2 through the CM2 grades, French would be the principle medium of instruction and Tahitian would be used for an hour daily to check on the students' comprehension of the subjects taught in French.

However, at any given grade level, those students who demonstrated sufficient oral/aural skills and reading abilities could be placed in regular monolingual French classes of the same level.

#### Classroom organization

From grade K through CP, instruction would be separated for all academic areas of the curriculum, but classes of Polynesian children and French speaking children could be mixed for physical education, art, music and supervised play, provided that directions and explanations are given in both languages.

In the CE1 grade, classes would be mixed for the portion of the day's curriculum to be taught in French, then Polynesian children would return to their regular classes for the remainder of the day for instruction through Tahitian.

From the CE2 through the CM2 grades, classes would be mixed, but Polynesian students would be removed from their classes for a period of instruction or review of the regular curriculum in Tahitian.

The curriculum and the objectives of elementary schooling would be similar for both groups, but the mediums of instruction would be different. The objectives actually set for the teaching of French would also be applicable to the teaching of Tahitian. In addition to

developing responsive listening habits in Tahitian, an ability to communicate orally in Tahitian, and beginning reading and writing skills, Polynesian students would also acquire concepts (in mathematics and environmental studies) through their language. The teaching of French as a second language would be geared toward preparing students to finish the elementary curriculum in that language.

### The Long-Range Program

The long-range objectives would be the implementation of bilingual education in all the elementary schools of French Polynesia. The two tentative programs suggested below are only theoretical models which would need to be adapted to the needs of each school population. Since secondary education is nationally administered no drastic changes are foreseen in the system to meet the needs of the territory. Therefore, the changes recommended here only concern the pre-elementary and elementary education.

The first program (program A) would aim at preparing Polynesian students for the French speaking environment of the secondary schools or, for those who would not wish to pursue such studies, to maintain and improve their knowledge of Tahitian while gaining skills in French. The objectives of the second program (program B) would be to develop bilingualism in both French mother-tongue and Polynesian mother-tongue students.

### Program A

This program would be a continuation of the short-term program previously described and would be implemented in schools where speakers

of a Polynesian language outnumber French speakers. A general description of the curriculum for these students is outlined below:

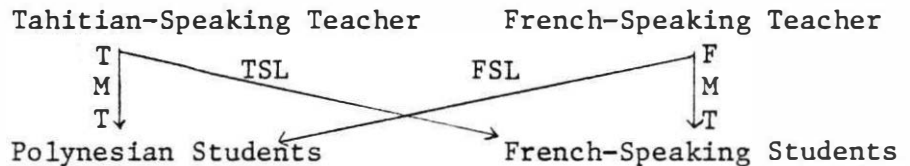
Grade	Language	Tahitian	French
K		Training in reading readiness, early concepts of numbers.	Games, songs, teaching of a few sentences.
CP		Reading and writing in Tahitian. Instruction in Tahitian of all regular academic subject matters.	Oral French (1 hour daily).
CE1		Reading and writing. Medium of instruction.	Oral French (1 hour $\frac{1}{2}$ daily).
CE2		Reading and writing. Medium of instruction.	Oral French (2 hours daily). Used for some instruction.
CM1		Study of literary texts and of the structure of the language.	Introduction to reading and writing. Medium of instruction for some courses.
CM2		Study of the language (1 hour daily). Used freely for explanations and for some instruction.	Used for instruction.
Secondary		Study of the language (3 hours daily).	Medium of instruction.

#### Program B<sup>48</sup>

This program would be applicable in all elementary schools where the number of French speakers and non-French speakers is approximately equal in each grade level.

Speakers of Polynesian languages and French speaking children would form separate courses during the first three years of elementary education or until each group had developed sufficient competence in the second language. In grades K through CE2 most instruction would be in and through the native language and focus would be on developing

basic language skills (in grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, reading, writing, and speaking) and concepts. Special language teaching methods would be used to teach each of the groups' second language. A representation of the class organization is included here.



TMT: Tahitian Mother tongue

FMT: French Mother tongue

TSL: Tahitian as a second language

FSL: French as a second language

Classes could be mixed during physical education, art, music or supervised play provided that both languages would be used as media of instruction.

In the CM1 and CM2 grades both languages would be used for instruction and for equal portions of the day. Classes would be mixed and would be composed of an equal proportion of students from each group (TMT and FMT). The French or the Tahitian language would be used for instruction and review sessions could be done in each group's native language as shown below:

Medium of Instruction	French	Tahitian
School activity	Lesson	Lesson
Composition of the class	$\frac{1}{2}$ FMT, $\frac{1}{2}$ TMT	$\frac{1}{2}$ FMT, $\frac{1}{2}$ TMT

Medium of Instruction	French	Tahitian
School activity	Review	Review
Composition of the class	FMT	TMT

#### IV. Suggested Methods and Techniques of Instruction

1. In teaching Polynesian children skills in their native language the teacher should begin at the level and the degree of linguistic proficiency that the student demonstrates.

2. The limited attention span of children between the ages of 5 and 7 suggests that the language lessons must be short, but regular. It is therefore necessary to include a variety of activities for each lesson.

3. Emphasis should be placed on practice with the language in meaningful situations rather than on recitation of grammar rules or drills of sentence structures.

4. Classroom activities should be organized around real-life situations to encourage personal interest, motivation, and student participation and should be implemented in large or small groups of students.

#### V. Basic Assumptions of All Three Programs

1. Initiation to the second language should begin at an early age so that students can acquire a reasonably native-like pronunciation.<sup>49</sup>

2. The native language is used as a medium of instruction first to allow children to acquire knowledge and skills through the language

they know best and during the period best suited for developing the cognitive abilities.<sup>50</sup>

3. The Tahitian language is the only Polynesian language recommended for instructional purposes at this time. Although it is not the mother tongue of all the Polynesian children, it is not a completely "foreign" language inasmuch as all the languages spoken in French Polynesia are closely related. Initiating instruction through Tahitian rather than French should therefore help the speakers of other Polynesian languages to continue to grow cognitively because they will be receiving schooling in a language they at least comprehend on a partial basis.

4. Neuro-physical clinical investigations suggest that the speech learning center of the brain is at its maximum capacity between the first and the ninth year of life and that therefore interference from the mother tongue is less before the age of ten.<sup>51</sup>

#### VI. The Teaching of Foreign Languages

The teaching of English or a first modern foreign language would begin at the age of eleven to give time for the basic mother-tongue skills to become established. It would be offered as a school subject and instruction would emphasize situational learning.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The overview of bilingual programs for French Polynesia presented in the preceding chapter underscores the need to raise a number of concerns in regard to the implementation of a bilingual program of whatever persuasion in French Polynesia. Indeed, there are still critical factors limiting the implementation of an effective educational program. The most salient obstacles are:

1. Lack of trained personnel
2. Dearth of appropriate educational materials
3. Availability of local funds for implementation, research and materials development

The following are specific aspects of these problems that need addressing.

1. Staff development needs: In addition to offering Tahitian lessons to all its student-teachers, the teacher training school should also aim at preparing some bilingual teachers. Teachers in bilingual programs need to be trained in the use of the Tahitian language in school environments and should have training in ways of teaching basic communication skills. Their education should include a) an understanding of linguistic and cultural differences, b) teaching of basic language skills in French and Tahitian, c) bilingual teaching strategies in subject matter areas, d) French and Tahitian as a second language methodologies, e) using bilingual aides in areas where competent bilingual teachers are lacking, f) evaluation of student progress, including entry/exit criteria, and g) teaching of extracurricular activities in Tahitian. Adequate teacher training opportunities should

be provided during the summer vacations and teachers in the outer islands should be provided with free transportation to attend such training. Bilingual education teacher training workshops should be offered to meet the most immediate needs of teachers in language teaching methodology, content area, curriculum development in French and Tahitian, assessment of pupils' language acquisition and maintenance, etc.

Other needs include the use of bilingual paraprofessional teachers and the certification of bilingual teachers. Scholarships should be awarded to all high school graduates who wish to study the Polynesian languages at the "Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales" (National Institute of the Oriental Languages and Civilizations, I.N.A.L.CO.)--the only university in France which prepares competent interpreters, linguists or teachers of Tahitian.<sup>52</sup>

2. Materials development needs: Suitable materials for teaching basic communication skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) need to be developed. Curriculum guides and teaching aids also need to be developed. Research is needed in such areas as vocabulary frequency, language transfer phenomena (phonology, syntax, and lexicon) in both French and Tahitian. New materials should be adaptable to different teaching situations and materials that already exist should be adapted to the objectives of the educational programs.

3. Funding: Since primary education is locally funded, there is a need for the government to fully support the development and the implementation of bilingual programs if these programs are to succeed. Actually, local funds are available for the Tahitian teaching



experimentation and territorial services<sup>53</sup> are working on research and material development. It is to be hoped that high priority will be accorded these programs when the territorial government plans its budget.

It is the underlying assumption of the writer that a bilingual approach to teaching provides alternatives for the students. Such an approach utilizes both the cognitive and affective areas of the educative process and places an emphasis on the native language and culture of the students. The utilization of the linguistic and cultural strengths that students bring to school is also dictated by necessity. Many Polynesian children speak a Polynesian language but have little, if any, literacy in either their native language or French. The Director of the Territorial Department of Education estimates<sup>54</sup> that with no changes in the educational system, the Polynesian languages will lose ground and will be extinct as a medium of day-to-day conversation within the next two generations. The maintenance of the Polynesian languages is at this time as important as the academic achievement and the intellectual and affective development of the Polynesian children. This thesis has suggested educational models for assisting the Polynesian students in school and for helping a language and its attendant culture to survive.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Bilingual education programs were one remedy suggested to meet the Lau vs. Nichols mandate (Office for Civil Rights, 1971).

<sup>2</sup>In his article "Bilingual Education in the United States, the Pacific and Southeast Asia" (1977), Lester indicated that at that time the word bilingual was taboo in the islands under French administration.

<sup>3</sup>Translation: . . . the teaching of the mother tongue /Tahitian/ must be promoted alive and active. It must take its motivations from the surroundings and must be closely related to feelings . . . .

. . . It /the school/ must promote an intercultural teaching based primarily on behavior forms, forms of expressions and sensibilities aesthetic and cultural activities as well. Such an approach leads to true bilingualism, the objective to reach.

<sup>4</sup>These criteria include "manner of living, level on the social and professional scale, economic behavior, choice of language, etc." (Lavondes, 1967, p. 256).

<sup>5</sup>Since June 12, 1936, Clipperton Island is administratively governed by the High Commissioner of French Polynesia. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the term French Polynesia will be used--unless otherwise mentioned--to refer to the five archipelagoes which were previously listed.

<sup>6</sup>Figure obtained through personal communication with the Director of the Institut Territorial de la Statistique, July 1981.

<sup>7</sup>These figures should be interpreted with caution because the participants in the census did not always understand the distinction between the terms Polynesian and Demi or did not classify themselves as Asians when they were the children of Polynesian and Asian marriages. In his article "Language Policy and Literacy in French Polynesia," Lavondes (1967) indicates how much this classification is a matter of opinion. He says:

. . . an individual may choose to be connected sometimes to the Polynesian and sometimes to the "Demi" category, depending on where and with whom he is; he may be a Polynesian in his home village and a "Demi" in Papeete.

<sup>8</sup>Translation: . . . constitutes in the bosom of the French Republic, according to the clause 72 of the Constitution, an Overseas Territory endowed of a legal status and an administrative and financial autonomy.

<sup>9</sup>See Chapter III for additional details.

<sup>10</sup> Every person of age fifteen and above was asked "whether he/she could read and write any language, and if so, the highest certificate he/she could have obtained." No measures were taken to ensure the validity of the responses.

<sup>11</sup> See Newbury, Colin, 1980, for a complete description of the evolution of literacy in French Polynesia.

<sup>12</sup> Since 1981 the M.J.M.C. has been called the Office Territorial d'Action Culturelle (Territorial Office of Cultural Action, O.T.A.C.).

<sup>13</sup> Data obtained from the Vice Rectorat, August 18-20, 1982, to be published.

<sup>14</sup> Mentioned in Toraille, 1980, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> In France, students are automatically moved through the stages, regardless of their academic achievements.

<sup>16</sup> The Haby Reform seeks

to ensure an equal, basic educational formation for all French school children by developing each child's abilities to the maximum degree, and by preventing premature choices from being made in his early school years . . . . This reform reaffirms the state's respect for the child's own personality and for the educative role of his parents (Cultural Services of the French Embassy, 1979, p. 8).

<sup>17</sup> Enrollment in the technical classes is included in this number, but details on these classes will be given in the following section.

<sup>18</sup> After the completion of the French master (Maitrise), a student may prepare for the "agregation" examination, a competitive national examination which constitutes the highest step in teacher education.

<sup>19</sup> "Les C.J.A.: Un Enseignement immédiatement applicable," Le Dépêche, October 28, 1981, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> "Les C.J.A.: Un Enseignement immédiatement applicable," Les Nouvelles, June 17, 1982, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> Cited in Circular No. 77.156, April 29, 1977.

<sup>22</sup> Translation: The teaching of French is . . . a tool of instruction; it trains attention, reasoning, judgement, memory and endeavor. It contributes to the elaboration of a way of thinking and behaving, while promoting the expression of sensibility and imagination.

<sup>23</sup>Foreign texts are studied in French rather than in their original languages.

<sup>24</sup>Circular no. 77-160 of April 29, 1977, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Data obtained from the Vice Rectorat, August 18-20, 1982. To be published.

<sup>27</sup>"L'Enseignement de la Langue Tahitienne," Memorandum from the Director of the Territorial Department of Education, March 24, 1978. Unpublished.

Translation: A good knowledge of the mother tongue is advantageous to the teaching of French.

<sup>28</sup>Procedure outlined in the teacher's manual, book 1.

<sup>29</sup>"Le Tahitien à l'Ecole: Bilan d'une Expérimentation," Le Journal de Tahiti, June 14, 1977, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>The Director of the Catholic Schools, Papeete, Tahiti, Letter about the Teaching of the Tahitian language in the schools in 1978/1979, February 10, 1979. Unpublished.

<sup>33</sup>Centre de Recherche et de Documentation Pedagogiques (C.R.D.P.) and Service de l'Education (S.E.), "Enseignement du Tahitien: Bilan d'une Annee d'Experimentation," July, 1981, p. 6. Unpublished.

<sup>34</sup>See for examples the interview of the High Commissioner in Les Nouvelles, August 4, 1978 and the article by Christine Bourne in La Dépêche, August 5, 1978.

<sup>35</sup>C.R.D.P. and S.E., July, 1981. Unpublished.

<sup>36</sup>Le Journal de Tahiti, June 14, 1977, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup>Drollet, J. D., Chef du Service de l'Education, Papeete, Tahiti. Letter about "Practice des langues Polynesiennes a l'Ecole Maternelle et a l'Ecole Elementaire," October 12, 1981. Unpublished.

<sup>38</sup>A new director of the Territorial Department of Education was appointed in July 1982. The information concerning the teaching of the Polynesian languages during the school year 1982-1983 was published in Les Nouvelles, August 25, 1982, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>Letter from the Director of the Catholic Schools, Papeete, Tahiti, February 10, 1979. Unpublished.

<sup>40</sup>See for reference: Law of January 11, 1951 (Article 6), Law of July 12, 1977 (Article 6), Decree of May 12, 1981 (Article 1).

<sup>41</sup>Mentioned in a letter from the Inspector of Academy, the Vice Rector, to the Minister of National Education, January 21, 1981. Unpublished.

<sup>42</sup>Letter from the Minister of National Education to the Vice Rector, June 30, 1978. Unpublished.

<sup>43</sup>Stipulated in the laws and decree previously mentioned.

<sup>44</sup>Based on the data given in the following sources: letters to the Vice Rector from

1) The Censor of the Co-Education High School, Uturoa, Raiatea, Letter about the Tahitian language in the "Baccalaureat," January 22, 1980. Unpublished.

2) The Director of the Catholic Schools, Papeete, Tahiti, January 21, 1980. Unpublished.

3) The Director of the Protestant College, Papeete, Tahiti, January, 1980. Unpublished.

4) The Head-Master of the "Lycee d'Etat du Taaone" and of the "L.E.P.," January 31, 1980. Unpublished.

<sup>45</sup>Data obtained from the Vice Rectorat, August 18-20, 1982. To be published.

<sup>46</sup>See for reference the publications by the G.P.E.N. (1979, 1980) and the C.T.A.L., et al. (1973, 1976).

<sup>47</sup>Data from the Service de l'Education and the Vice Rectorat. See bibliography.

<sup>48</sup>Modeled on the Coral Way Elementary School bilingual program.

<sup>49</sup>One of the implications of the work of Lennenberg (1969) is that native-like language learning ability remains a human characteristic up to the age of puberty.

<sup>50</sup>Penfield and Roberts (1956) maintain that the critical period for language learning and cognitive development is before the age of ten.

<sup>51</sup>Lennenberg, 1969.

<sup>52</sup>There are at the present time three persons from Tahiti who are finishing a Doctorate at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (I.N.A.L.C.O.) in Tahitian. More people with diplomas in Tahitian are needed for the elaboration and the implementation of bilingual programs as well as for teaching in the forthcoming university of French Polynesia--Department of the Polynesian Languages and Cultures. (Project approved in 1982.)

<sup>53</sup>These services include the C.R.D.P., the Tahitian Academy and the Service de l'Education.

<sup>54</sup>Data obtained from the Director of the Territorial Department of Education. Personal communication, July, 1981.

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