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ABSTRACT

The results of a questionnaire designed to investigate Puerto Rican students' attitudes toward learning English show that there is a predominantly positive attitude toward English-as-a-second language in the Puerto Rican town studied in this survey. The questionnaires solicit information from students in grades five through eight concerning personal data, students' contact with English, amount of English used, parental attitudes, and student attitude toward learning English. The shortcomings of Puerto Rico's standardized English curriculum may result from inappropriate teaching methods rather than from a negative attitude on the part of the students. The students may be receiving too much language material in too little time without reinforcing what is learned in class through use outside of class. English might be better taught as a foreign language. English and Spanish versions of the questionnaires are provided along with graphs illustrating the results of this survey. (VM)

A Study of Student Attitudes Toward English as a Second Language in Puerto Rico

John V. Adams and Wallace K. Ewing

PREFACE

In any discussion involving attitudes, there are apt to be more questions raised by the reader than are answered by the author. The following study is certainly no exception to the above statement. Therefore, while reviewing the material presented in this report, it is important for the reader to keep in mind that the primary goal of the study is to discover the attitudes of the students toward English as a second language in either positive or negative terms. The underlying reasons pertaining to the expressed positive or negative attitudes are suggested only in reference to the available data from the questionnaire and from the author's personal observations as a teacher of English as a second language. The reader will note that there is a distinction made by the author between attitudes toward English as a second language and attitudes toward the components of the formal English as a second language classroom situation.

The series of graphs contained in the appendix are meant to aid the reader in understanding the material presented in the body of the report. The numerical percentages on the graphs represent totals for grades five through eight of each school.

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A Study of Student Attitudes Toward English as a Second Language in Puerto Rico

Though Spanish is considered the native language of the island, throughout much of Puerto Rico's modern history, there has been considerable controversy surrounding the official language of instruction in the Island's educational system. The roots of the controversy lie in the nineteenth century, when the Spanish-American War of 1898 resulted in the acquisition of Puerto Rico by the United States.

Beginning in 1900 when the first Commissioner of Education was appointed by the United States government, there followed a forty-eight year period when the official policies regarding the respective places of English and Spanish in the educational system fluctuated dramatically. When Puerto Rico was granted Commonwealth status from the United States in ¹⁹⁵²~~1948~~, and as a result, gained control over its own educational system, it was decided that the language of instruction would be Spanish. English was made a preferred subject and was to be taught as a second language from grades one through twelve. At present, with this policy remaining in effect, the status of English is still the subject of much debate within all levels of the Puerto Rican society. The topics for discussion range from the proper methodology for instruction to the exclusion of English from the curriculum entirely. Perhaps these points of contention are not yet settled in their final form, but given the fact that the present policy is in effect and that the expressed goal of the policy is to produce a person who

is competent in both English and Spanish, there remains the problem of achieving the desired objectives in light of the above mentioned controversies.

As teacher in the public school system, this author has witnessed numerous expressions of opinion regarding English within the educational system. Perhaps the comment heard most often is that the students do not like English class. The extended meaning of such a statement will vary with the person speaking, but most people seem to imply that the students do not like English as a subject and as a result are not learning English. In terms of the goal of the Ministry of Education, it is difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the accomplishments of the English program without the aid of valid diagnostic tests. To date, there are no such tests available, though some work has been started in that direction. Therefore, the effectiveness of the present program is left open to speculation, but judging from what seems to be the prevailing opinion expressed by teachers and students, one would be forced to assume that the program is not achieving its full potential due to the students' negative attitude toward English. In assessing such an assumption, it is necessary to consider some of the broader aspects of second language learning as related to Puerto Rico.

In Puerto Rico, as well as in all other places, the degree to which a person learns a second language is dependent upon a great number of personal factors, not all of which can readily be accounted for. According to Bernard Spolsky, as reported in the February, 1971, issue of the TESOL Newsletter, there are four significant factors related to second language acquisition. The factors he reported are: method of instruction; age; aptitude; and attitude.¹ Other more specific factors generally will fall under the broader titles listed above. On method of instruction, various studies have brought into question the proposition that one method is significantly better than another. Each method tends to stress a different aspect of production with a resulting rise in the learner's ability to produce within that area. In Puerto Rico, the principles and methods utilized for the teaching of English as a second language are identified with Dr. Charles C. Fries, who led in the development of a series of teacher's guides and textbooks used by the Department of Education throughout the Island for all grade levels. Thus, Puerto Rico has attempted to standardize the method of instruction within its schools, since each teaching step is spelled out in detail for the teacher to follow. English supervisors are employed by the Department of Education to insure that the established method of instruction is adhered to by the teachers. This does not imply that the individual classroom

teacher always follows the textbook procedures explicitly, but it is doubtful that any radical changes in method exist in a significant number of cases. In Puerto Rico, the ability of the teacher to use English probably has a greater effect on what goes on in the classroom than the prescribed method of instruction, since a higher level of ability will allow the teacher to be more innovative in applying the textbook material. Whether or not the present prescribed method is the best possible for teaching English as a second language to Puerto Rican children is a question that is open to speculation. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the English curriculum could be a factor in producing negative attitudes in both the teachers and the students. Spolsky's second factor, age, represents a generally accepted variable in second language acquisition. The optimum period for second language acquisition is pre-puberty with a seemingly greater difficulty encountered beyond that stage. For the students in Puerto Rico, formal English instruction begins in the first grade and continues through to grade twelve. Aptitude toward second language learning is the third factor outlined by Spolsky. Obviously it can be assumed that the children possess some degree of aptitude toward language learning, though it will vary among individuals. The fourth factor, attitude, often accounts for variations in the other learning factor mentioned above. In Puerto Rico, owing to the amount

of controversy surrounding the teaching of English as a second language, attitudes may be a significant factor influencing the achievements of the English program. According to Joseph Kavetsky in his article dealing with teacher training in Puerto Rico, the students' attitude toward English must be positive for effective learning to take place.² Since a positive attitude is essential for the learning of a second language, and Puerto Rico has a history of controversy surrounding the use of English in its school system, it is important to begin an assessment of the Island's English program with an examination of attitudes. While the attitudes possessed by teachers have an influence on the children, central to the program are the attitudes of the students, since they are the ones who are faced with prospects of learning. The initial step is to evaluate how the students feel toward English as a second language. Once this is accomplished, then it is feasible to look deeper into the attitudinal components of English as a formal subject in the classroom. During a study of the latter topic, such things as methodology, age and aptitude could be considered.

Thus far, the discussion has centered around the Island-wide English program. In an attempt to critically view the attitudes of the students toward English as a second language, the following study was confined to one Puerto Rican community.

Since conditions vary around the Island, no attempts will be made to generalize the findings for the entire Island, though it is suspected that the results would prove valid if applied to a much wider area than the single community under consideration. The basis for this observation is that the questionnaire utilized in the study was applied at random to schools outside the study area with the results proving similar. The focal point of the study is the community of Quebradillas, which is located on Route 2, approximately seventy miles west of the capital city of San Juan. Most guides list the population of Quebradillas as 13,000, but this figure includes the people living in outlying areas surrounding the town proper. The main source of income for the community comes from light industry and services supplied to the surrounding agricultural community. Tourism is a source of income, but it is limited to a small portion of the community's wealth. The three schools utilized in the study represent the total student population of the community for the grades five through eight. They can be classified into three types: rural, urban, and private. Both the rural and the urban schools are public institutions. The rural school, S.U. Luis Muñoz Rivera, is located in barrio Los Cocos about five miles from the center of Quebradillas. Most people refer to the school simply as Cocos, and that name ~~shall~~^{will} be applied whenever the school is referred to in this paper. The majority of the students at

Cocos live in barrio Los Cocos or the surrounding area. The school contains the grades one through nine. There were 270 students from Cocos participating in the study. The urban school is actually two separately administered units, but they are located adjacent to one another and share the same physical structures. The elementary school is named Ramon E. Betances, and the junior high is named Manuel Ortiz de Renta. For convenience they will be referred to by the more locally popular name of Betances. Together the schools cover grades one through nine, with the break between elementary and junior high coming at the sixth grade. Betances is located in the center of Quebradillas, and the majority of its students come from the community itself, although a number of students commute from outlying areas. The total number of students from Betances participating in the study was 435. The third school is the Colegio San Rafael, which is a private, Catholic supported, elementary school. Unlike the public schools, which ^{subscribe} ascribe to the official policy of using the vernacular for all subjects, San Rafael attempts to conduct all classes in English. More flexibility is allowed in the methods used for English instruction, though the desired goals are the same as for the public schools. San Rafael is also located in the center of Quebradillas, but it draws its student body from a wider area than either Cocos or Betances. Because of tuition charges and its relatively small size, San Rafael is fairly

restrictive in its admission policies. Colegio San Rafael covers the grades one through eight. ^{One hundred and five} ~~105~~ students from San Rafael participated in the study.

Three methods of research were utilized in gathering the necessary data for the study. The first was personal observations by the author as a result of having spent the 1970-71 academic year as a teacher of English as a second language in the Cocos elementary school. The author taught two sixth grade classes and one fourth grade class. The second method was conversations with administrators, teachers, and members of the Quebradillas community. The third, and most extensively utilized, was a questionnaire given to 810 students in the three schools previously described. This number represents almost the entire student population available. Since the main method of gathering data was the questionnaire, the grades one through four were eliminated from the study because it was felt that reliable information would be difficult to obtain owing to the students' lack of experience with questionnaires and their limited knowledge of written Spanish at that age. This opinion was shared by the English supervisor for Quebradillas and the director of Cocos. In light of the comparative nature of the study, eighth grade was the upper limit due to the fact that San Rafael does not have a ninth grade at present. The questionnaire was designed to be readily

comprehensible to the students in all grade levels administered, a factor which accounts for the rather simple wording in most questions. It was thought that if more definitive answers were requested, a certain amount of confusion might occur, especially in the lower grades, and possibly invalidate the results. As an alternative, the questions were kept general in nature, appealing to trends rather than sorting out specific ~~answer~~ differences. ^{in answers} Once the questionnaire was developed in English, it was then translated into the vernacular by the English supervisor for Quebradillas, Mrs. Sonia Borges. The translator was requested to translate as precisely as possible so as not to change the intended meaning of the questions. The only significant change made from the original copy was in question fourteen. The original question was to have read, "Have you ever lived in an English speaking community?" In the Spanish version, the term community was changed to read country. It was maintained by Mrs. Borges, and subsequently verified by other members of the teaching community, that the students would not be familiar enough with the intended meaning of the term English speaking community to be able to distinguish between a community where English is used and a community where English is the predominant language. As a final check of the questionnaire, a bi-lingual, native English speaker was asked to translate the questionnaire from Spanish back to English. The only information supplied to

the translator was that it was a questionnaire and that it was intended primarily for students between the grades five and eight. The translation indicated that the Spanish version was accurate in expressing the intent of the original. Copies of the original and the two translations can be found in the appendix. The questionnaire was then duplicated in the vernacular and submitted to a test sample involving one class each, fifth through eighth, at Cocos and one sixth grade at Betances. The results failed to indicate any discrepancies in the questionnaire design, so that it was then administered to all the classes from fifth through eighth grades at the three schools involved in the study. The questionnaire itself was administered by the classroom teacher following a set of instructions written in the vernacular. A copy of the instructions can be found in the appendix. In addition to the written instructions, the author also conferred with the individual teachers as to the content of the questionnaire. In the case of San Rafael, the director of the school assumed the responsibility of instructing the individual teachers by using the written instructions and by following the oral instructions given to her by the author.

The primary goal of the questionnaire was to measure the attitudes possessed by students in the grades five through eight toward English as a second language. The questionnaire was ^{focused on} ~~towards~~ spoken English, but because of the general

nature of the questions, other forms, such as written ^{English} were not necessarily excluded. The questionnaire was intended to reflect the students' personal point of view within the broad context of the formal English classroom situation and was not intended to measure the broader economic, political, or social ramifications surrounding the teaching of English as a second language in Puerto Rico. Because it is realized that the students' personal point of view cannot be completely separated from these broader aspects, an attempt was made to avoid any such references to keep the direct influence to a minimum.

To obtain an overview of the general trends produced by the questionnaire, each answer was assigned either a positive, negative, or neutral value. A positive value constituted a factor which indicated a favorable or positive attitude toward English. For example, in question number seventeen, a "yes" answer, which states that the respondent would take English if it were not required, was scored as a positive factor. The factors which would indicate an unfavorable attitude toward English were assigned a negative value, as, for example, in the case of a "no" answer to question number seventeen, which states that the respondent would not take English if it were not required. A neutral value was assigned to those answers which would not indicate either a clear positive or negative response. The resulting value for the entire

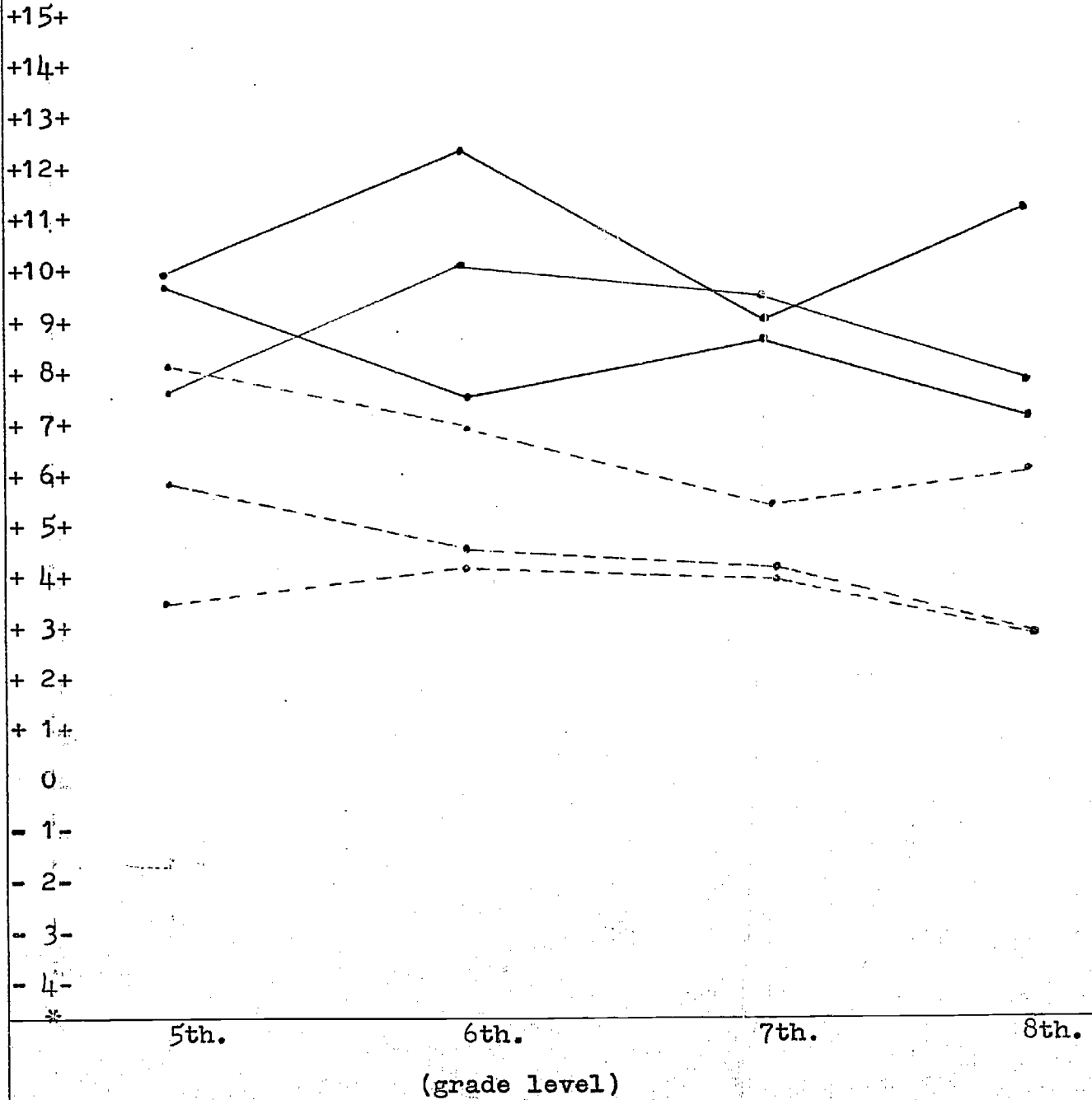
questionnaire ranged from a positive fifteen to a negative fifteen. Each questionnaire was then totaled in terms of the number of positive or negative factors indicated. A high number of positive factors would indicate a generally favorable attitude toward English, and, conversely, a negative number of factors would indicate an unfavorable attitude toward English. To test the validity of the scale, the students were divided into two separate groups. The first group consisted of those students exhibiting a probability of a high level of achievement in English language acquisition. The second group was made up of those students with a limited probability of a high level of achievement in English acquisition. It was concluded that those students with a higher level of achievement would possess a more positive attitude toward English than those students with a lower level of achievement. The criteria for placement in group one was derived from data in question fifteen. Group one was identified as those students who had spent at least one continuous year in an English speaking environment beyond the age of five. The period of one year was to insure sufficient contact with native speakers of English. The five year old age limit was established to insure a higher probability of contact with English outside of the home. It was reasoned that below the age of five, the child would largely come into contact with his Spanish speaking family. Only when the child was

old enough to attend school would outside contact be most likely. Obviously, such criteria have numerous exceptions, but in this author's opinion, such standards offer a fairly reliable indicator of a higher level of achievement in spoken English. The second group, which comprised the majority of the student population, consisted of those students with limited or no extended contact with an English speaking environment. Again, there are exceptions to the second group, since a number of students obtain a high degree of proficiency in English without coming into contact with an English speaking environment. Also, this does not imply that a person cannot have a positive attitude toward English unless he has a command of the language. With these two groups established, the scores were then tabulated for the two groups by grade and school. The results are graphically represented in figure 1 on page 14. As can be seen^{by}

the graph, the first group exhibited a substantially greater number of positive factors at all grade levels than those in group two. From this it can be concluded that there does exist a positive relationship between the score obtained by a student and his attitude toward English.

Assuming that the devised scale represents an accurate indication of positive and negative student attitudes toward English as a second language, the scale can then be applied

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FACTORS



*(lower section of graph excluded)

Group one Cocos _____

Group two Cocos - - - - -

Group one Betances _____

Group two Betances - - - - -

Group one San Rafael _____

Group two San Rafael - - - - -

to the total tested student population of each school in question. The relative placement of a school would reflect the prevailing positive or negative attitudes possessed by the students and in turn suggest the type of student-created environment that exists toward English as a second language. Since all three schools placed within the positive range on the scale, as shown in figure 1, it can be concluded that there does exist a predominantly positive attitude among the students in Quebradillas toward English as a second language. On a breakdown by individual schools, San Rafael placed the highest on all grade levels. The probable cause for San Rafael's higher placement lies in the nature of the Catholic private school system, which uses English as the medium of instruction, and as a result, requires the students to develop a degree of proficiency in that language. Between the two public schools, Betances ranked slightly higher than Cocos on all grade levels. This would suggest that the urban schools project a more positive environment toward English as a second language than do the rural schools. This stands to reason, since it might be expected that students in an urban environment would be able to realize a need for English along socio-economic lines at an earlier age than rural students. Based on the evidence suggested by the positive-negative scale, it can be further concluded that San Rafael exhibits the most positive student created environment toward English

as a second language of the three schools tested. Betances and Cocos exhibit similar environments with Betances being slightly more positive.

Based on the conclusion that the students between the grades five and eight possess a generally positive attitude toward English as a second language, the responses given by the students for each question can be analyzed to find out what are the determining factors in producing the prevailing attitude. Such an ^{analysis} ~~analysis~~ would also indicate some of the factors effecting the relative placement of one school to another in terms of student attitudes. To do this, the questionnaire was divided into five topical areas. The first part was used to obtain statistical data relating to age, sex, year in school, and grades received in English. The second area dealt with the background of the student with regard to his contact with English. Questions six, seven, eight, and fourteen fall within this category. The third area measured the amount of English used by the student. In question number nine, tabulations were made using only those students who answered A or B to either question six or seven, or answered "yes" to question number eight. Thus, only those students having an opportunity to use English in accordance with the questions were considered. In questions ten and eleven, the entire tested population was considered. Two questions were

devoted to the fourth area, parental attitude. Questions twelve and thirteen dealt with this topic. The last section of the questionnaire, and the most extensive, covered the area of the student's felt needs as related to his acquisition of English. This topic was broken down into two parts, one being the student's present felt need for English and the other being the student's future projection of his need for English. Questions sixteen through twenty-one relate to this area.

Since the first part of the questionnaire is largely statistical data about the students, we can begin with a consideration of part two which deals with the student's background in relationship to English. In question number six, each student was requested to rate his father's ability to speak English by selecting one of the answers that were provided. No guidelines were established for the students to follow in their evaluation, and as a result, each student was to rely upon his own perception of his father's ability to speak English. Taking the totals for all of the students in the test group, 36% estimated that their fathers spoke English very well, and 30% of the students rated their fathers as speaking some English, giving a combined total of 66% of the fathers being rated as having some ability in spoken English. The remaining 34% rated their fathers as having no speaking ability in

English. The fact that a majority of the tested students perceived their fathers as having some ability in English would, in terms of this paper, constitute a positive influencing factor in producing a favorable attitude on the part of the students toward English as a second language. The results of question number six, as broken down by individual school, stated that 59% of the students tested from San Rafael rated their fathers as speaking English very well. The two public schools had a much lower percentage, with 35% of the Betances students rating their fathers as speaking well and 30% of the Cocos students rating their fathers as speaking well. Of significance is that 90% of the students from San Rafael rated their fathers as having some ability in spoken English, while at Betances only 65% similarly rated their fathers. Cocos had the lowest combined total of the three schools with 59% rating their fathers as having some ability in English. As can be seen in graph 6.1 in the appendix, San Rafael had a higher percentage of fathers speaking English very well on all grade levels. The two public schools, however, did have a certain amount of variation by grade level in relation to each other. Dramatic fluctuations such as shown in graph 6.2 for the seventh grade at Cocos could have resulted through influence from the teacher or other students in the room. A comparison of graphs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 indicates that the students'

perception of their fathers' ability in English is not influenced greatly by the students' age, since the results were generally stable by grade level. The wording in question number seven was the same as in question number six with the exception that the word mother was substituted for the word father. The results for questions six and seven were similar though a slightly lower percentage of mothers were rated as speaking English very well. For the total tested population, 23% of the students' mothers were classified as speaking English well, with 37% rated as speaking some English. The combined total of mothers rated as having some ability in English was 60% as compared to 66% for the fathers. Again, as in the case of the fathers, 90% of the students from San Rafael felt that their mothers had some ability in English. In contrast with the above percentage, the students from the public schools indicated that less than fifty percent of their mothers spoke any English. The combined total in the two public schools was 48% and 44% for Betances and Cocos respectively. In graphs 7.1 and 7.2, it can be seen that the public school figures fluctuated in relation to each other by grade level, while San Rafael maintained the highest percentage along all grade levels for the three schools. The combination of questions six and seven indicates that parental ability in English is a positive factor influencing the general attitude of the students tested. The fact that a

higher percentage of parents at San Rafael tend to speak English as compared to the parents of the public school children could explain a more positive attitude among the students at San Rafael towards English as a second language. In question number eight, the student was asked if anyone other than his father or mother spoke English. The student was not asked to estimate the degree of ability but rather to simply respond with a "yes" or a "no." The type of relationship was not specified, since in Puerto Rico, due to the closeness of the extended family, persons other than the immediate family may be living within the same household. 64% of the total tested population answered "yes," stating that there was someone living in their house who spoke English. San Rafael and Betances reported similar results with 78% and 71% respectively saying "yes." Cocos, on the other hand, reported that only 49% of the students had someone living in their house who spoke English. One explanation for the lower percentage at Cocos may be in terms of the contrastive environments of urban versus rural. The people living in Los Cocos would be less likely to be dependant upon English in supporting themselves, since many are self-employed in agriculture or work in small businesses catering to a localized Spanish-speaking clientele. Between the two public schools, the higher percentage of English speakers in the urban households would be a factor accounting for a greater

positive attitude toward English as a second language among the students at Betances than at Cocos. Concluding part two of the questionnaire concerning the students' contact with English was question number fourteen, which asked if the student had ever lived in an English speaking country. All of the students who responded "yes" to this question designated the United States as the country they had lived in. Almost one-third, ~~or~~ (29%) of all the students tested said that they had lived in the United States during some period of their lives. All three schools reported similar results, though San Rafael had the highest percentage, followed by Betances and Cocos. The large number of students in the test population that had spent a part of their life in the United States would be an influencing factor in producing a generally positive attitude of the students toward English as a second language.

The third section of the questionnaire deals with the students' use of English outside of the formal classroom setting. As stated earlier ^{the discussion of} in question number nine, only those students were considered who indicated in questions six, seven, or eight that there was someone living in their household who had some ability to speak English. Question number nine asked how often they spoke English to the people living in their house. Only 7% of the total tested population checked

that they spoke English often, while 64% said that they almost never spoke English in the home. The remaining 29% indicated that they sometimes used English in the home. San Rafael, with 14%, had the highest percentage of students who said they spoke English often, but this figure is possibly misleading due to the large number of students in the sixth grade who said they spoke English often. The disproportionate percentage in the sixth grade may have been caused by a comment made by the teacher giving the questionnaire or by some other unknown factor. Betances and Cocos both had an identical figure of 6% of the students saying they spoke English often. On the opposite end of the scale, San Rafael had the lowest number of students ^(39%) saying they almost never spoke English. Betances and Cocos had noticeably high percentages at 65% and 71% respectively. The extreme difference between the public and private schools may be caused by a greater ability to use English on the part of the private school students, since they are more dependent upon English production in the classroom than are the public school students. It is clear from the responses to this question that English is seldom used in the home to any great extent. Perhaps much is due to an inability to use English, but in the case of the San Rafael students, where supposedly there is sufficient ability coupled with a large number of parents who speak English, Spanish is still the predominant

language used at home. Question number ten asked the students to estimate the amount of English language television they viewed. Radio was excluded because of the limited amount of English language broadcasting received within the Quebradillas area. With regard to television broadcasting, it must be taken into account that the majority of programming received in Quebradillas is in Spanish or with Spanish dubbed over the original English. There still remains, however, a considerable amount of English language programming available within the area.

Only 27% of the total test group reported that they almost never watched English language programs. The majority (73%) said they watched some English language programs. The three schools presented similar results though the San Rafael students had the highest figures for indicating that they watched ^{English language} television often. As shown in graph 10.1, it would seem, with the exception of Cocos, that the younger students perceived themselves as watching more television than do the older students. Aside from the students' relative ability to perceive amounts, two factors may account for this tendency. One is that the younger children are sometimes required by their teachers to view specific programs in English. Such is the case with the fifth and sixth grades at Betances. Also, many of the cartoon shows which would appeal more to the younger children are not dubbed into Spanish. Generally, though, there is

little consistency by grade level in relationship to English television viewing. Based on the results of question number ten as compared with questions nine and eleven, it would seem that English language television is one of the major contacts that the students have with spoken English outside of the English classroom. In question number eleven, the students were asked to estimate how often they spoke English outside of the home. The students were not to consider their English class in answering the question. The results indicated that the students were more apt to use English outside of the home than inside. 64% of the students at Betances and 69% of the students at Cocos said that they almost never spoke English outside of the home. By contrast, only 36% of the students from San Rafael stated that they almost never spoke English outside of the home. For the total test group, only 9% stated that they spoke English very often. 29% said that they spoke English sometimes, while the majority ~~or~~ (62%) of the students reported that they almost never spoke English outside of the home. Concluding section three, it can be seen fairly clearly that Spanish is the medium for personal communication. The use of English is confined largely to the classroom or to situations where English is necessary to achieve the desired communication.

Section four concerns itself primarily with parental attitudes

toward their children learning English. Questions twelve and thirteen analyze this aspect of the questionnaire. Question number twelve asked the student if he felt his parents wanted him to learn English. The results for the tested population indicated that the parents were overwhelmingly in favor of their children learning English, with 88% of the students answering "yes." For those who did not check "yes" to the question, only 1% said "no," while the remaining 11% indicated that they did not know. It would seem then that the students, in most cases, sense a strong, positive attitude on the part of their parents ^{toward} ~~for~~ their learning English. If there exists a less than positive attitude in some parents, it probably reflects more of a lack of concern than outward opposition. At San Rafael, where English is the language of instruction, the lack of opposition to English would suggest that one of the reasons that parents send their children to that school is so that the children may learn English. 96% of the students at San Rafael answered "yes" to question twelve, while 4% answered that they were not sure. Betances and Cocos registered only 1% of parents in opposition, with 88% and 85% respectively in favor. The remaining percentages of students in the two schools were uncertain as to their parents' attitudes. Therefore, even though Spanish is the vernacular, the parents of the public school children are strongly in favor

of their children learning English. The results of question thirteen possibly shed some light on the type of concern the parents have for English. 61% of the students tested indicated that they felt their parents place about the same value on English as on their other subjects. That the parents did not place English above the other subjects perhaps suggests that they see English, when combined with the other subjects, as a necessary tool for their children's future rather than as an end in itself. Even with that possibility in mind, 36% of the students did check that they thought their parents were more concerned about their English grades than the other subjects, suggesting that for some, English is still regarded as somewhat special. 3% of the students felt that their parents were less concerned about their English grades. One reason for this could be an obvious lack of concern on the part of the parents. Another reason might be that the parents felt that their children were getting an adequate background in the language, so that additional concern was not needed. Still another reason could be that the parents do not see a need for English instruction in their children's education. Cocos, with 47%, had the highest percentage of students stating that their parents were more concerned about their English grades, indicating perhaps a greater sensitivity among rural parents to the future mobility offered to their children via an ability to use English. The two urban schools

reported similar results, with Betances at 31% for more concerned and San Rafael at 30% in the same category. Perhaps as a result of the private school's use of English in the classroom, ^{at} San Rafael ~~had~~ 5% of ^{the} ~~its~~ students state that their parents were less concerned as compared to 4% for Cocos and 2% for Betances. From the two questions, it is easily concluded that the parents are very much in favor of their children learning English. The children, then, are subjected to a positive influence from their parents for learning English. Since the students tested are relatively young and for the most part under the influence of the parents, it can be suggested that the students' attitudes ^{reflect} ~~are much~~ their parents' attitudes.

In the fifth section of the questionnaire, questions sixteen through twenty-one deal with the students' personal attitudes toward English as a second language. In question sixteen, the students were asked if they thought that English should be a required subject in the schools. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of English being required, with 95% of the total test group answering "yes." 2% indicated that it should not be required, while the remaining 3% said that they were not sure. All three schools produced results within three percentage points of each other, with San Rafael at 93%, Betances at 94%, and Cocos the highest at 96%. The

remaining percentages for each school were split between the answers "no" and "not sure." As can be seen in the graphs in the appendix, there was little variation by grade level. The results of question sixteen clearly indicated that the students felt the need for English within the curriculum or at least accept the English requirement in the schools. The results of question number seventeen offer an interesting contrast to those of number sixteen. Question seventeen asked the students if they would take English if it were not a required subject. While the results implied that the students were strongly in favor of taking English, the percentages were significantly lower than those in question sixteen. Only 81% of the students said that they would take English if it were not required as compared to the 95% who had previously stated that English should be required. 8% of the students said that they would not take English if it were not required, and 11% said that they were not sure. As with question number sixteen, all three schools reported similar results. From the graphs shown in the appendix, it is suggested that the number of students who would take English if it were not required decreases in the upper grade levels. A comparison of questions sixteen and seventeen suggests that, while the students feel a strong need for English as a second language, they are perhaps less enthusiastic about the prospects of attending a formal class in English. The results of question number

eighteen, which asked the students if they considered English more, less or of equal importance in relation to their other subjects, followed the same pattern as those in question number thirteen, which had to do with their perception of their parents' attitude toward English. 41% of the students felt that English was more important than their other subjects, while 56% said that it was of equal importance. Only 3% indicated that they thought English was less important. As can be seen in the graphs in the appendix, there was very little consistency between the grade levels. In question nineteen and twenty, the students were asked if English was important to them now, and if they thought it would be important to them in the future. The results of both questions were only two percentage points apart, stating overwhelmingly that they felt that English was important. For question nineteen, 90% of the students said "yes," and in question twenty, 92% said "yes." It can be projected that one of the major reasons for the positive response to question nineteen is the fact that the students are required to take English in the schools. This is in light of the fact that most of the students indicated very little usage of English outside of the formal classroom setting. Surprisingly enough, the students at San Rafael had the highest percentage of "no" answers to question nineteen, but again the difference was not great enough to support any definite conclusions. In

both questions, there was a higher percentage of uncertainty than negative feeling toward the value of English either for the present or in the future. In the final question, the students were requested to indicate where they thought they would use English after the age of twenty-one. The students were given three choices relating to future situations (university, job, and travel) and one choice to indicate that they felt that they would not use English. Due to the lack of specific instructions in the questionnaire, the students in some classes checked more than one item, while in other classes the students indicated the one area they felt they were most likely to use English. However, the results as a whole suggest trends relating to the students projections for future use of English. Out of the 810 students involved in the study, only 21 indicated that they would not use English after they were twenty-one years old. The majority of the students indicated that they felt they would use English and checked the three choices in fairly equal proportions. More specifically, university was checked 469 times, jobs 396 times, and travel 355 times. It would seem that many of the students are motivated to develop an ability in English by a desire to continue their education beyond high school. This would also indicate a felt need to develop an ability in English to meet professional requirements.

Conclusion

From the evidence presented in this study, it can be concluded that there does exist a positive attitude toward English as a second language among the majority of the students between the grades five through eight in Quebradillas, Puerto Rico. It can be further concluded that the attitudes toward English as a second language are more positive at Colegio San Rafael than at the two public schools involved in the study. Finally, between the two public schools, the students at Betances exhibit a slightly more positive attitude toward English as a second language than do the students at Cocos.

While the evidence does not demonstrate that the popular contention cited earlier in the study regarding negative attitudes on the part of the students toward English class is invalid, it does indicate that the proposed negative feelings are not specifically directed toward English as a second language itself. As a result, if such negative feelings do exist, they would be directed toward some aspect of the formal classroom structure. One possibility for this negativism, as suggested by the evidence contained in the questionnaire, is with respect to the method of instruction. As stated earlier, Puerto Rico has adopted a standardized English curriculum for the teaching of English as a second

language. This method is based on the assumption that English is used extensively throughout the ^{learner's} environment.

While the questionnaire indicated that a large number of persons do possess a degree of ability in spoken English, it is also demonstrated that within the area under study, English is not utilized as a personal means of communication. This observation, coupled with the fact that an overwhelming number of students expressed a felt need for English, would suggest that English is regarded as useful for professional rather than personal encounters. Therefore, since English does not assume an important position with respect to the students' personal lives, it might be concluded that English might better be taught as a foreign language, concurrent with the manner in which English is presently used in the area. This observation would need to be substantiated by further research, but in the experience of the author as a teacher, the present prescribed method of instruction attempts to cover too much language material and ^{in too little time} ~~too quickly~~ in light of the fact that the students are not reinforcing what is learned in class through use outside of class. Even though the student may desire to develop an ability in English, he is generally not able to digest the volume of information quickly enough and, as a result, falls behind and becomes frustrated by his lack of progress in terms of the material being presented. Teaching English as a foreign language

takes into account that the student generally will not make continued use of the language outside of the formal class and structures the flow of material accordingly.

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

I

1. Name of school _____
2. Age _____
3. Sex _____
4. Year in school _____
5. What grade did you receive in English for:
First grade period? _____
Second grade period? _____
6. How well does your father speak English?
A. _____ He speaks English very well.
B. _____ He does not speak English very well.
C. _____ He does not speak any English.
7. How well does your mother speak English?
A. _____ She speaks English very well.
B. _____ She does not speak English very well.
C. _____ She does not speak any English.
8. Does anyone in your house other than your mother and father speak English?
_____ Yes _____ No
9. How often do you try to speak English to the people living in your house?
_____ very often _____ sometimes _____ almost never
10. How often do you watch English language T.V. programs?
_____ very often _____ sometimes _____ almost never
11. How often do you speak English outside of your house (do not count English class)?
_____ very often _____ sometimes _____ almost never
12. Do you think that your parents want you to learn English?
_____ Yes _____ No _____ Do not know
13. Are your parents as concerned about your English grades as they are about the grades in your other subjects?
_____ more concerned _____ less concerned _____ about the same
for all subjects

CUESTIONARIO

1. Escuela _____
2. Edad _____
3. Sexo _____
4. Grado _____
5. ¿Qué nota tuviste en inglés en:
 Primer trimestre _____
 Segundo trimestre _____
6. ¿Cómo habla tu papá el inglés?
 A. _____ Habla inglés muy bien.
 B. _____ No habla inglés muy bien.
 C. _____ No sabe hablar inglés.
7. ¿Cómo habla tu mamá el inglés?
 A. _____ Habla inglés muy bien.
 B. _____ No habla inglés muy bien.
 C. _____ No sabe hablar inglés.
8. ¿Hay alguien en tu casa además de tu mamá y tu papá que hablen inglés?
 _____ Sí _____ No
9. ¿Hablas inglés con las personas que viven en tu casa?
 _____ a menudo _____ a veces _____ casi nunca
10. ¿Ves programas de televisión en inglés?
 _____ a menudo _____ a veces _____ casi nunca
11. ¿Hablas inglés fuera de tu casa en situaciones que no sean la clase de inglés?
 _____ a menudo _____ a veces _____ casi nunca
12. ¿Crees que tus padres quieren que aprendas inglés?
 _____ Sí _____ No _____ No sé
13. ¿Se preocupan tus padres por tus notas en la clase de inglés tanto como en las notas de las demás clases?
 _____ más preocupados _____ menos preocupados _____ igual por todas las clases

14. ¿Has vivido alguna vez en un país donde se hable inglés?

Sí No

15. Si tu contestación a la 14 fue Sí, ¿dónde viviste? _____

¿Por cuánto tiempo viviste en ese país? _____
(meses) (años)

¿Qué edad tenías cuando fuiste ahí por primera vez? _____

16. ¿Crees que debes coger clases de inglés en la escuela?

Sí No No sé

17. ¿Cogerías clases de inglés si no tuvieras que hacerlo?

Sí No No sé

18. ¿Crees que el inglés es tan importante como la historia, la matemática, y la ciencia?

más importante menos importante igual de importantes

19. ¿Crees que es necesario para tí saher inglés ahora?

Sí No No estoy seguro

20. ¿Crees que saher inglés será necesario para tí después que tengas 21 años de edad?

Sí No No estoy seguro

21. ¿Dónde crees usarás el inglés después de tener 21 años?

universidad trabajo viajes no usaré inglés

22. Si tienes comentarios que hacer en cuanto el aprender inglés, por favor escríbelos en el espacio a continuación. Puedes usar inglés o español.

Questionnaire (Retranslation)

V

1. Name of school _____
2. Age _____
3. Sex _____
4. Year in school _____
5. What grade did you receive in English in:
First quarter _____
Second quarter _____
6. How well does your father speak English?
A. _____ He speaks English very well
B. _____ He doesn't speak English very well
C. _____ He doesn't speak English
7. How well does your mother speak English?
A. _____ She speaks English very well
B. _____ She doesn't speak English very well
C. _____ She doesn't speak English
8. Does someone else in your family (house) other than your mother or father speak English?
_____ Yes _____ No
9. Do you speak English with the people who live in your house?
_____ regularly _____ sometimes _____ almost never
10. Do you watch T.V. programs in English?
_____ regularly _____ sometimes _____ almost never
11. Do you speak English outside of your house in situations other than the English class?
_____ regularly _____ sometimes _____ almost never
12. Do you think your parents want you to learn English?
_____ Yes _____ No
13. Are your parents as interested in the grades you receive in the English class as in the rest of your classes?
_____ more interested _____ less interested _____ equally interested

14. Have you ever lived in an English speaking country?

Yes No

15. If your answer in number fourteen was Yes, where did you live? _____

How long did you live in this country? _____
(months) (years)

How old were you when you went there for the first time? _____

16. Do you think that you should have to take English in school?

Yes No Don't know

17. Would you take English if you didn't have to?

Yes No Don't know

18. Do you think English is as important as history, math, and science?

more important less important equally important

19. Do you think it's necessary now for you to know English?

Yes No Not sure

20. Do you think it will be necessary that you know English after you're twenty-one?

Yes No Not sure

21. Where do you think you'll use English after you're twenty-one?

university job travel I will not use English

Instructions for the teacher:

This questionnaire is part of a master's thesis by John Adams, a teacher at Los Cocos. There are no correct answers to the questions so that no matter how the student answers, it cannot be considered either right or wrong. It is very important that the student attempts to answer each question on his own, as honestly as possible. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

How to give the questionnaire:

1. Give each student a questionnaire.
2. Read the entire questionnaire including answers to the students.
3. Explain to the students that they are to read each question and then pick the best answer. They are to put a check mark (✓) on the line next to the answer they want.
4. Explain to the student that no one will know how he answered the questionnaire.

Instrucciones para el maestro:

El siguiente cuestionario forma parte de la tesis para la maestría del Sr. John Adams, maestro en Los Cocos. No hay contestaciones correctas de modo que no importe como conteste el estudiante porque ninguna contestación no puede ser considerada ni buena ni mala. Es importante que cada estudiante conteste todas las preguntas sin ayuda y con sinceridad. Su cooperación sería muy apreciada.

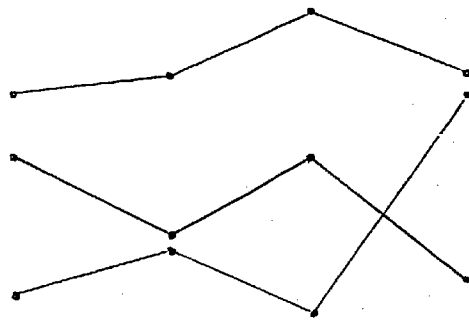
Como llenar el cuestionario:

1. Dea cada estudiante un cuestionario.
2. Lealo todo a los estudiantes incluyendo las contestaciones.
3. Explique a los estudiantes que deben leer cada pregunta y escojer la contestación que mejor convenga. Deben indicar la buena contestación por un ✓ en el blanco a su lado.
4. Explica al estudiante que nadie sepa como contestó las preguntas.

GRAPH 6.1

A. Father speaks English very well

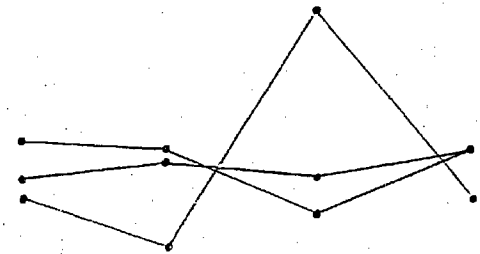
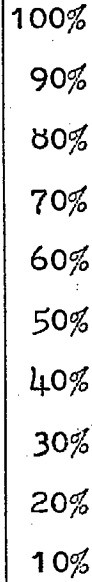
Cocos 30% Betances 35% San Rafael 59%



GRAPH 6.2

B. Father does not speak English very well

Cocos 29% Betances 30% San Rafael 31%



5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

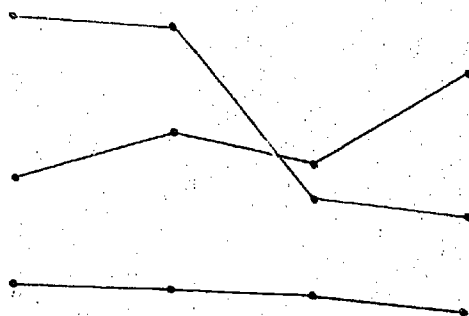
grade level

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 6.3

C. Father does not speak any English

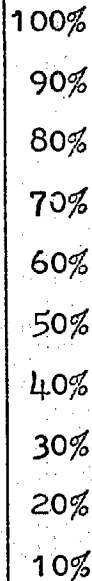
Cocos 41% Betances 35% San Rafael 10%



GRAPH 6.4

Totals per answer:

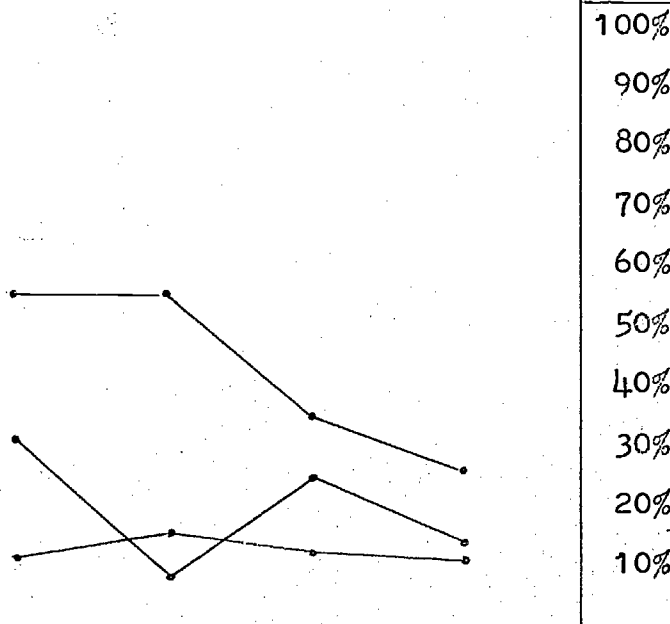
A 36% # B 30% # C 34%



GRAPH 7.1

A. Mother speaks English very well

Cocos 12% Betances 19% San Rafael 44%

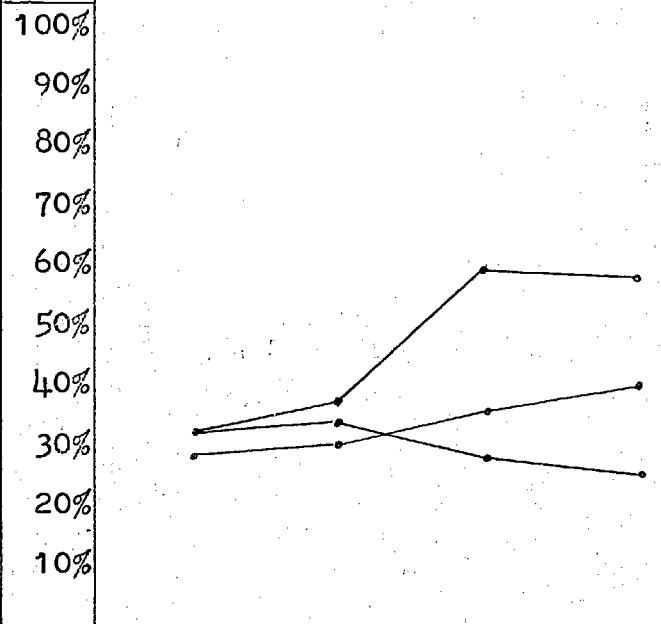


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 7.2

B. Mother does not speak English very well

Cocos 32% Betances 29% San Rafael 46%

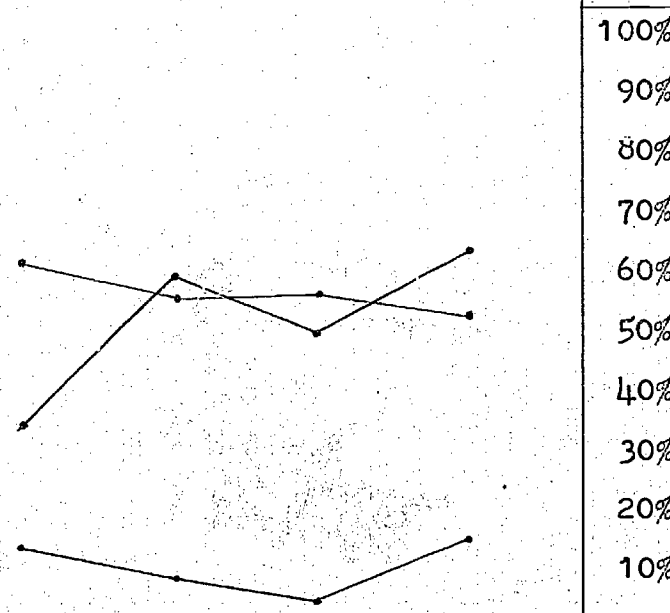


grade level 5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 7.3

C. Mother does not speak any English

Cocos 56% Betances 52% San Rafael 10%

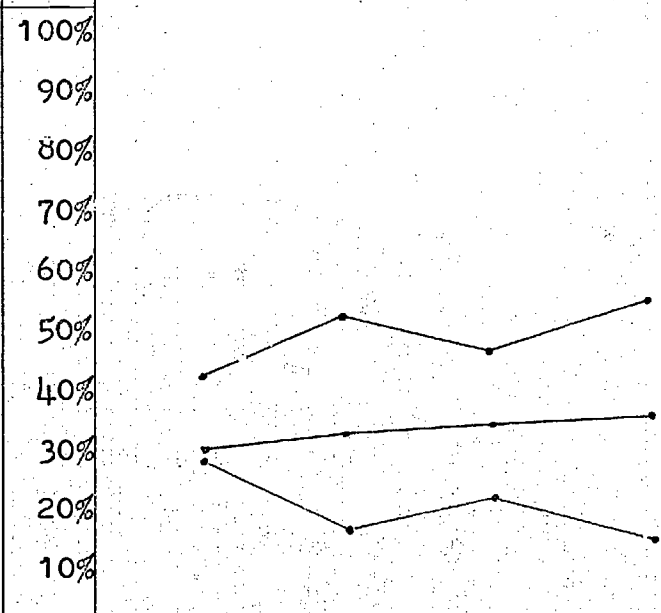


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 7.4

Totals per answer

A 23% # B 37% # C 40%

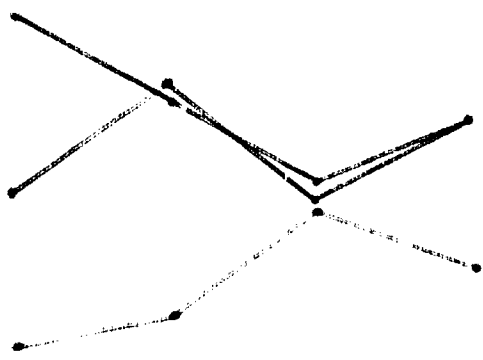


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 8.1

A. Yes, someone in house other than parents speak English

Cocos 49% Botances 71% San Rafael 78%

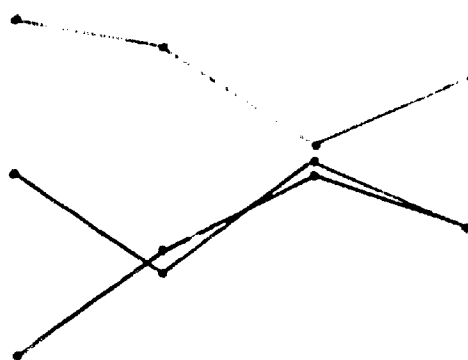
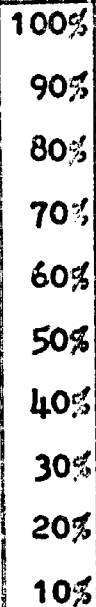


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 8.2

B. No, no one in house speaks English (other than parents)

Cocos 51% Botances 29% San Rafael 22%



5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 8.3

Totals per answer

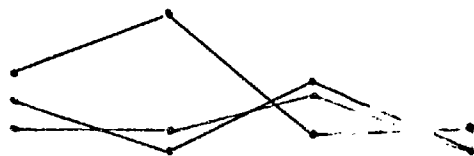
A 64% # B 36%



GRAPH 9.1

A. Try to speak English in house very often

Cocos 6% Betances 6% San Rafael 14%

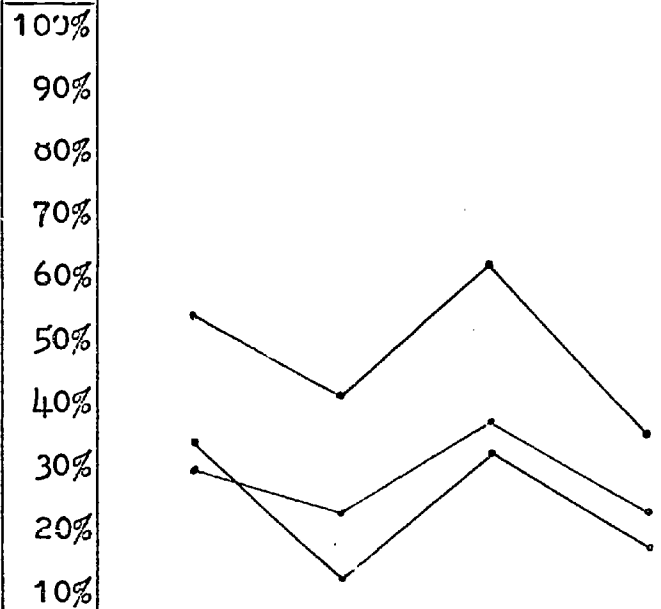


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 9.2

B. Sometimes try to speak English in the house

Cocos 29% Betances 23% San Rafael 47%

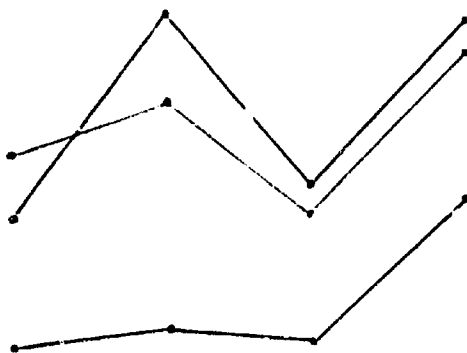


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 9.3

C. Almost never try to speak English in the house

Cocos 65% Betances 71% San Rafael 39%



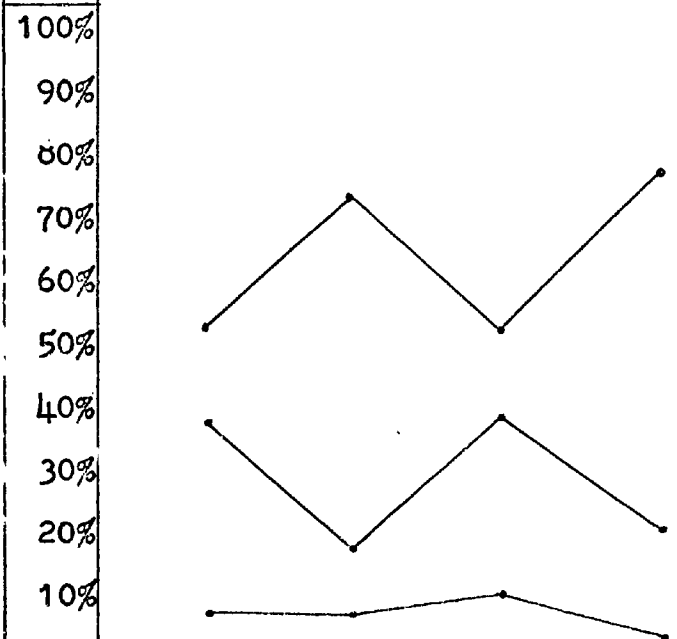
5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

grade level

GRAPH 9.4

Totals per answer

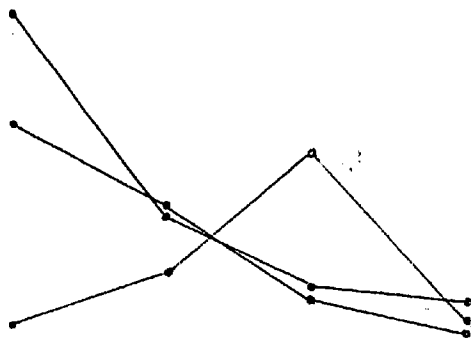
A 7% # B 29% # C 64%



GRAPH 10.1

A. Watch English language T.V. programs very often

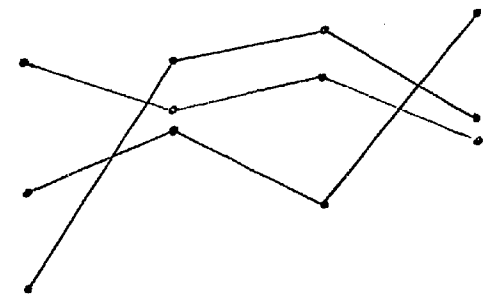
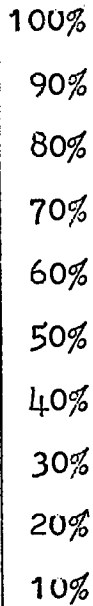
Cocos 20% Betances 26% San Rafael 32%



GRAPH 10.2

B. Sometimes watch English language T.V. programs

Cocos 49% Betances 49% San Rafael 44%



5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

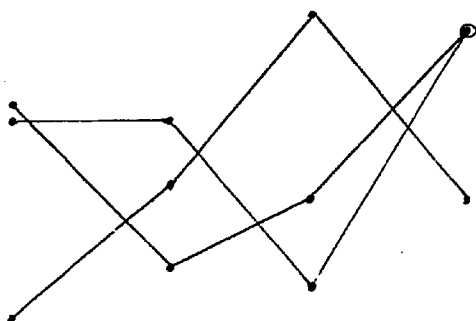
grade level

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 10.3

C. Almost never watch English language T.V. programs

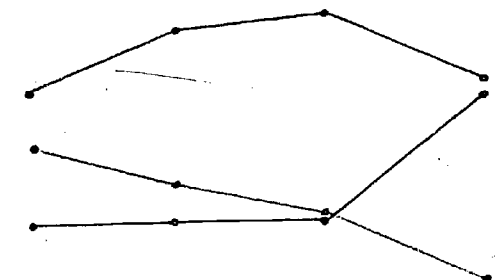
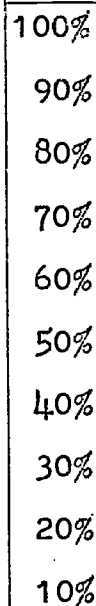
Cocos 31% Betances 25% San Rafael 24%



GRAPH 10.4

Totals per answer

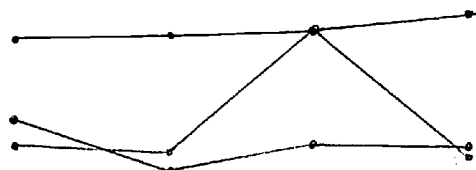
A 25% # B 48% # C 27%



GRAPH 11.1

A. Speak English outside of house very often

Cocos 9% Betances 6% San Rafael 23%

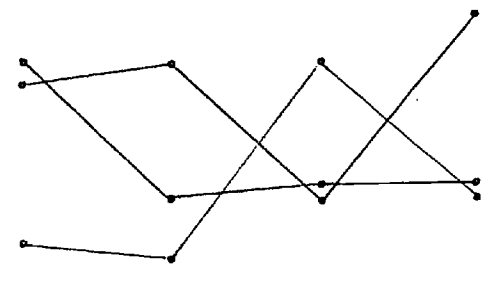
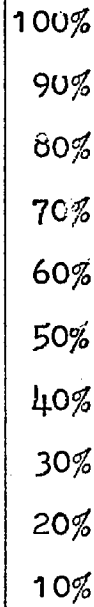


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 11.2

B. Sometimes speak English outside of house

Cocos 22% Betances 30% San Rafael 41%



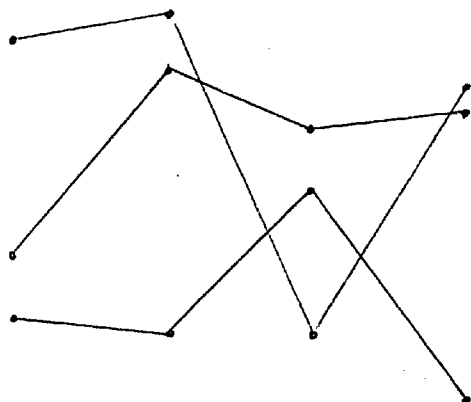
5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

grade level

GRAPH 11.3

C. Almost never speak English outside of house

Cocos 69% Betances 64% San Rafael 36%

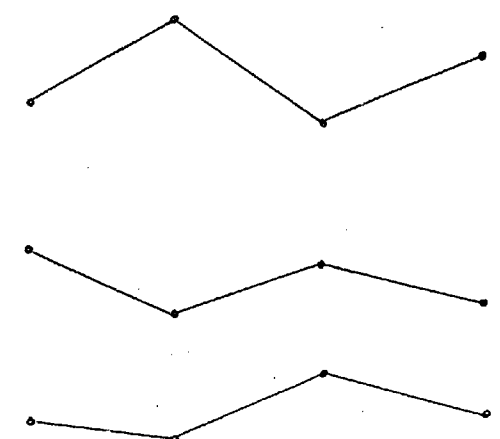
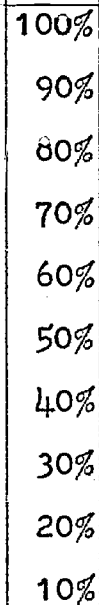


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 11.4

Totals per answer

A 9% # B 29% # C 62%

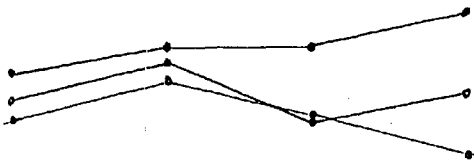


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPG 12.1

A. Yes, parents want student to learn English

Cocos 85% Betances 88% San Rafael 96%



GRAPH 12.2

B. No, parents do not want student to learn English

Cocos 1% Betances 1% San Rafael 0%



100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

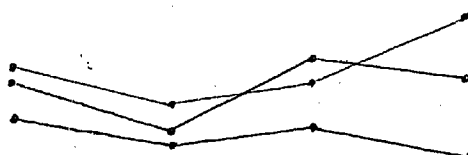
grade level

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 12.3

C. Do not know if parents want student to learn English

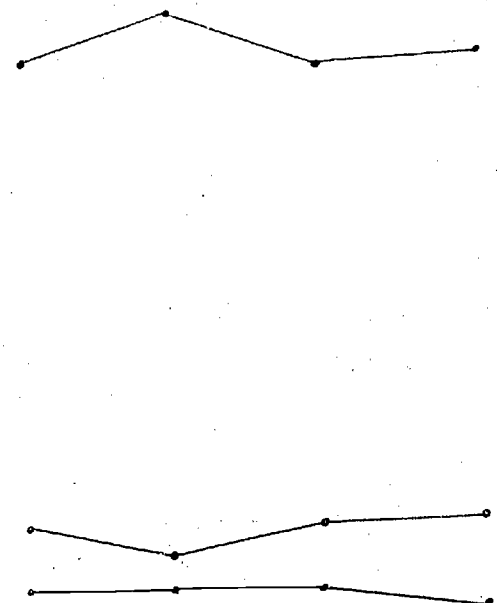
Cocos 14% Betances 11% San Rafael 4%



GRAPH 12.4

Totals per answer

A 88% # B 1% # C 11%

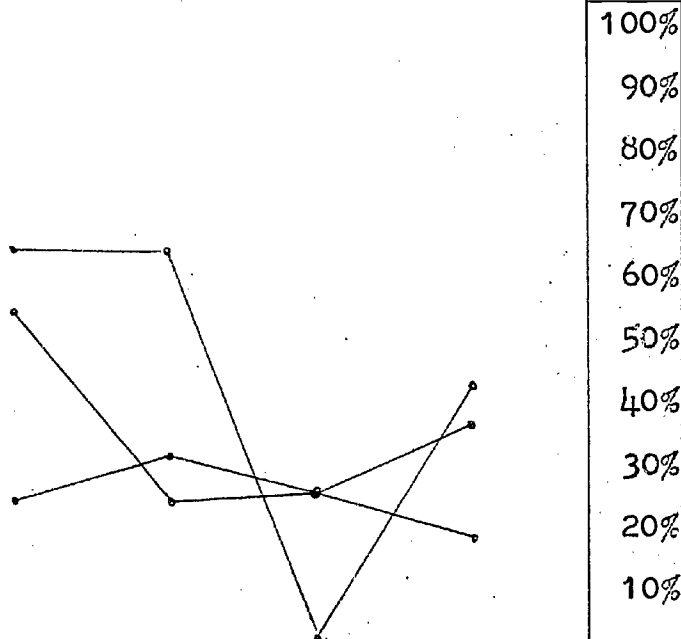


100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%

GRAPH 13.1

A. Parents are more concerned about English grades

Cocos 47% Betances 31% San Rafael 30%

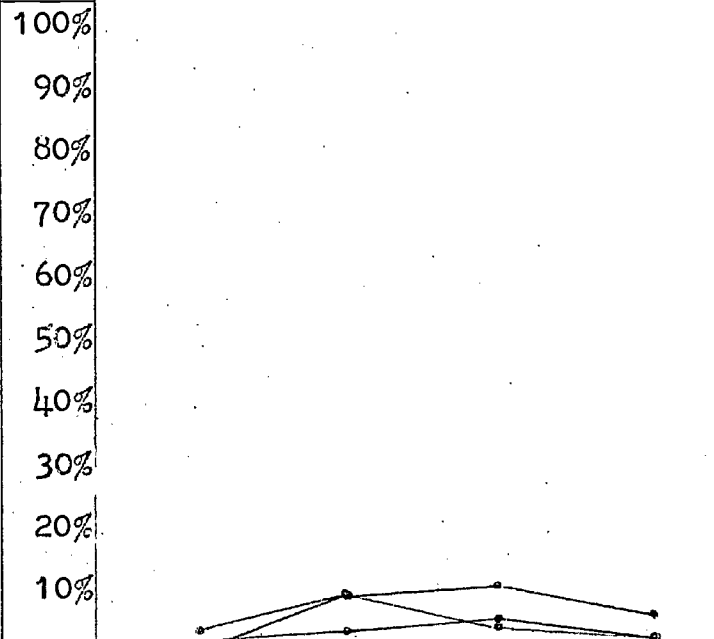


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 13.2

B. Parents are less concerned about English grades

Cocos 4% Betances 2% San Rafael 5%

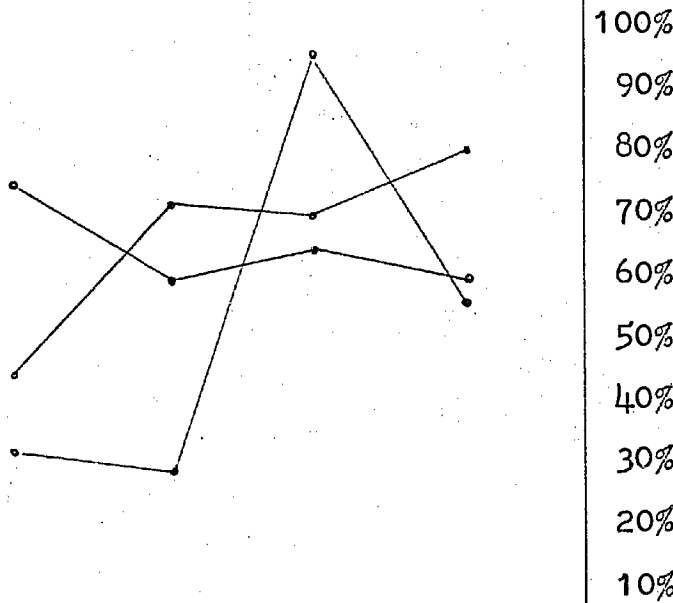


grade level 5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 13.3

C. Parents have about the same concern for all subjects

Cocos 49% Betances 67% San Rafael 65%

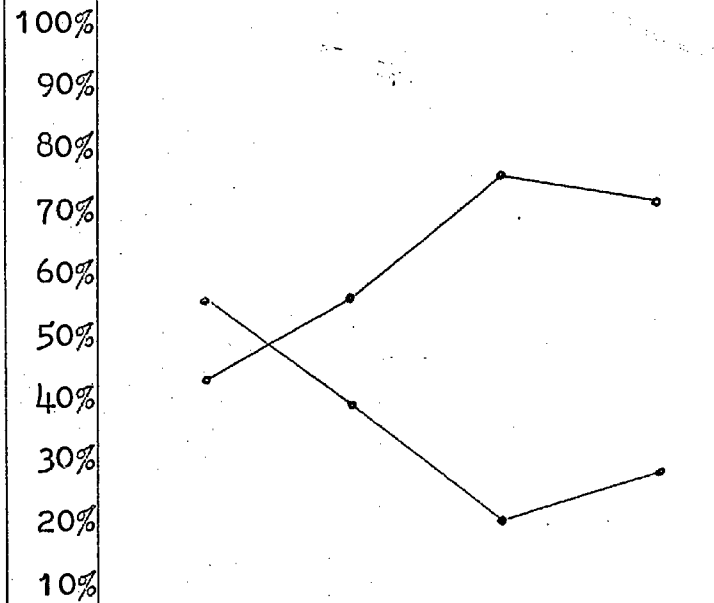


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 13.4

Totals per answer

A 36% # B 3% # C 61%

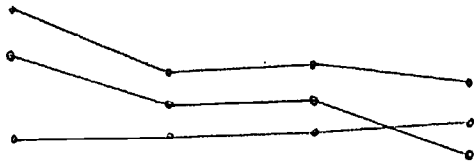


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 14.1

A. Yes, student has lived in an English speaking country

Cocos 25% Betances 29% San Rafael 37%



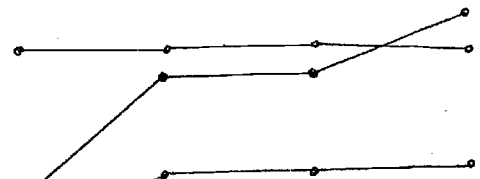
5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 14.2

B. No. student has not lived in an English speaking country

Cocos 75% Betances 71% San Rafael 63%

100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%



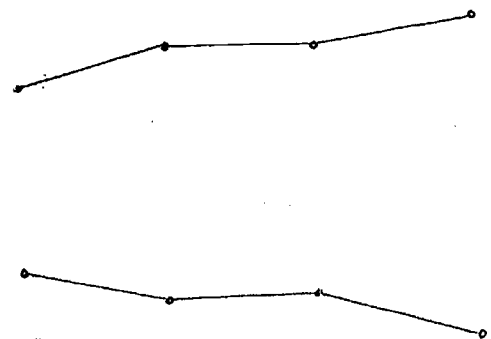
5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 14.3

Totals per answer

A 29% # B 71%

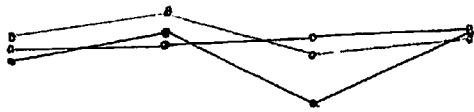
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%



GRAPH 16.1

A. Yes, student should have to take English in school

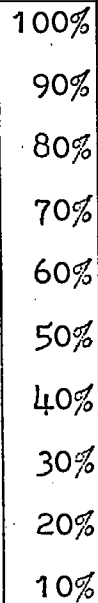
Cocos 96% Betances 94% San Rafael 93%



GRAPH 16.2

B. No, student should not have to take English in school

Cocos 2% Betances 2% San Rafael 3%



5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

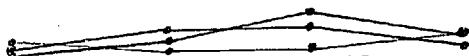
grade level

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 16.3

C. Do not know if student should have to take English in school

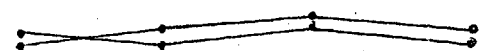
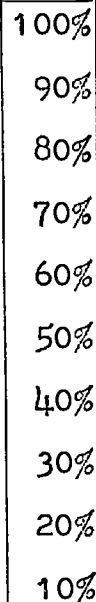
Cocos 2% Betances 4% San Rafael 4%



GRAPH 16.4

Totals per answer

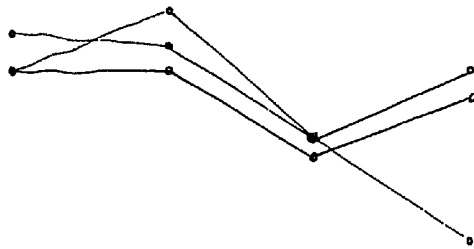
A 95% # B 2% # C 3%



GRAPH 17.1

A. Yes, would take English if did not have to

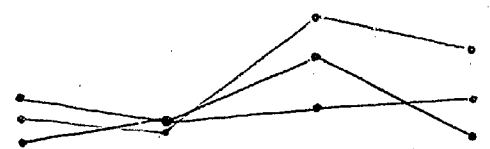
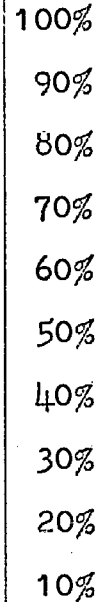
Cocos 80% Betances 81% San Rafael 36%



GRAPH 17.2

B. No, would not take English if did not have to

Cocos 10% Betances 7% San Rafael 6%



5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

grade level

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 17.3

C. Not sure if would take English if did not have to

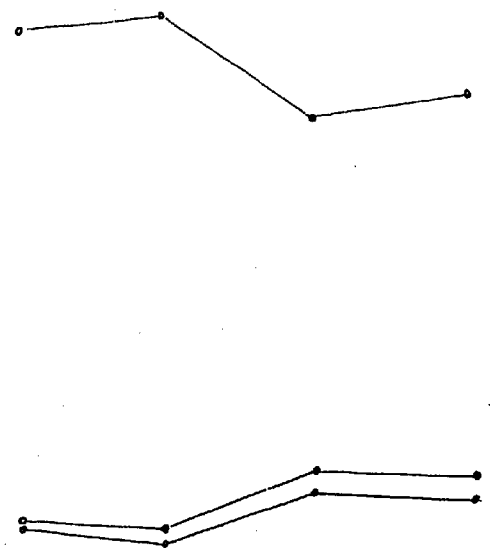
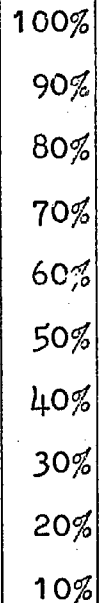
Cocos 10% Betances 12% San Rafael 3%



GRAPH 17.4

Totals per answer

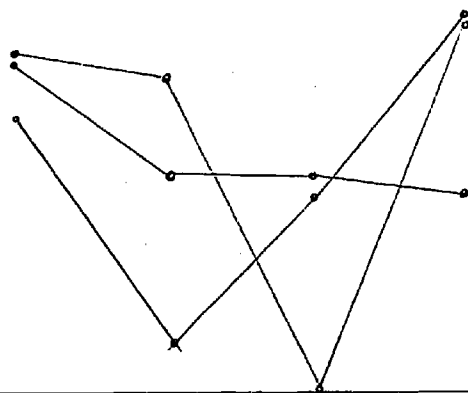
A 81% # B 8% # C 11%



GRAPH 18.1

A. English more important than other subjects

Cocos 43% Betances 40% San Rafael 36%

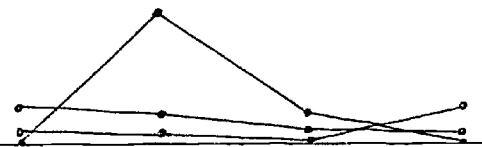
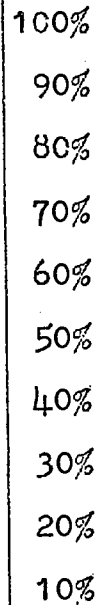


5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 18.2

B. English less important than other subjects

Cocos 2% Betances 3% San Rafael 6%



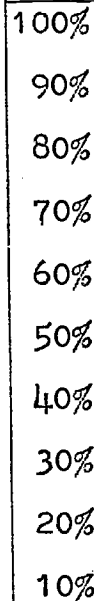
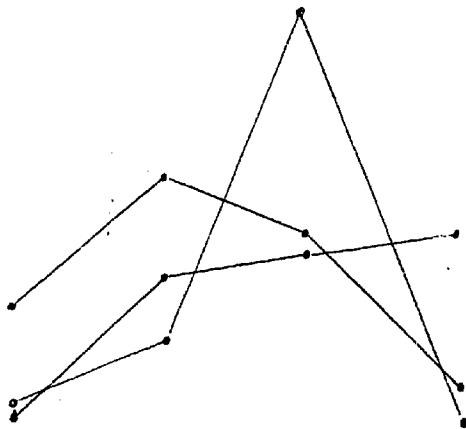
5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

grade level

GRAPH 18.3

C. English has about the same importance as other subjects

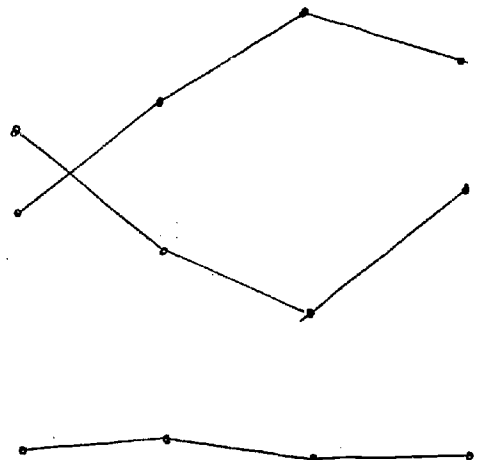
Cocos 55% Betances 57% San Rafael 58%



GRAPH 18.4

Totals per answer

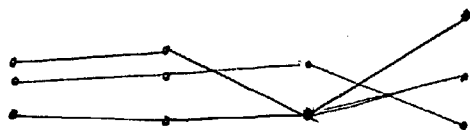
A 41% # B 3% # C 56%



GRAPH 19.1

A. Yes, knowing English is necessary now

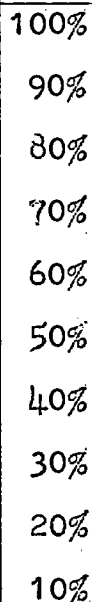
Cocos 89% Betances 91% San Rafael 89%



GRAPH 19.2

B. No, knowing English is not necessary now

Cocos 3% Betances 2% San Rafael 4%



5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

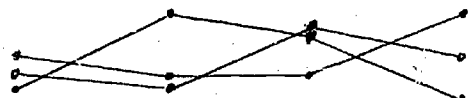
grade level

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 19.3

C. Not sure if knowing English is necessary now

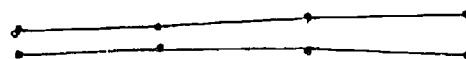
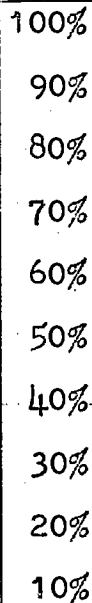
Cocos 8% Betances 7% San Rafael 7%



GRAPH 19.4

Totals per answer

A 90% # B 3% # C 7%



GRAPH 20.1

A. Yes, knowing English will be necessary after age 21

Cocos 90% Betances 93% San Rafael 90%



GRAPH 20.2

B. No, knowing English will not be necessary after age 21

Cocos 4% Betances 3% San Rafael 4%



100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

grade level

5th. 6th. 7th. 8th.

GRAPH 20.3

C. Not sure if English will be necessary after age 21

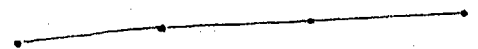
Cocos 6% Betances 4% San Rafael 6%



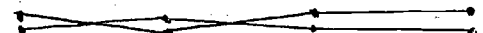
GRAPH 20.4

Totals per answer

A 92% # B 3% # C 5%



100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%



FOOTNOTES

- 1 Bernard Spolsky, TESOL Newsletter; February, 1971.
- 2 Joseph Kavetsky, "Teacher Training in English as a Second Language at the University of Puerto Rico," Preparing the EFL Teacher: A Projection of the 70's, Vol. 7 (The Center for Curriculum Development, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa., 1970), p. 186.

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- Kavetsky, Joseph. "Teacher Training in English as a Second Language at the University of Puerto Rico," Preparing the EFL Teacher: A Projection of the 70's, Vol. 7 (The Center for Curriculum Development, Inc., Philadelphia, Pa., 1970).
- Spolsky, Bernard. TESOL Newsletter; February, 1971.