

**English language learning in New Caledonia: A report on the proficiency achievements and motivation of students at or near the point of entry to tertiary study**

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**Abstract**

In the context of an introduction to New Caledonia and its languages, this paper reports on a research project whose aims were to provide a snapshot of the English language proficiency achievements of New Caledonian students at the point of entry to tertiary study and to investigate possible relationships between proficiency achievements, learning context and motivation. In 2006, a sample of students (274) took a C-test (one that was initially used in a major European language proficiency survey) and completed a questionnaire relating to motivation and attitudes towards the English language. The overall mean C-test score was considerably lower than that of students who did the same C-test at a similar educational stage in the European study. Some schooling contexts appear to have had a positive impact on proficiency development, as did some factors relating to motivation. On the basis of this study, it is suggested that educational authorities in New Caledonia should consider looking carefully at the factors that affect to the teaching and learning of English in schools.

**Overview of the research project**

The primary aim of the research project reported here was to provide a snapshot profile of the English language proficiency (based on a C-test) of a sample of 274 New Caledonian students at or near the point of entry to tertiary study and to identify (on the basis of an analysis of some aspects of learning context and responses to a self-completion questionnaire) factors that appeared to have an effect impact on proficiency achievement.

**An introduction to New Caledonia and its languages**

New Caledonia is a small country with 2,254 km of coastline, situated in the South Pacific Ocean to the east of Australia and north east of New Zealand.

**Figure 1: Location of New Caledonia within the Pacific (Leclerc, 2006)**



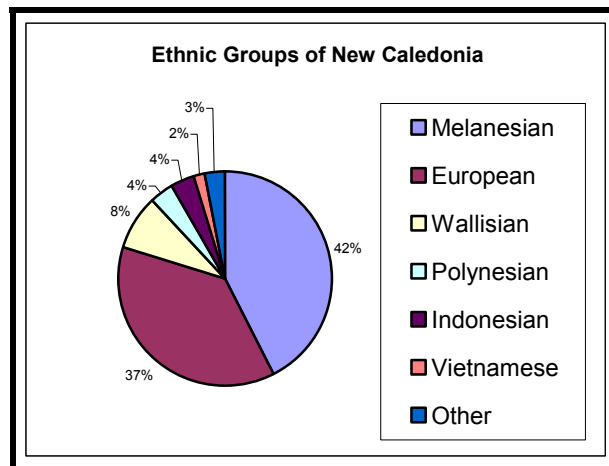
New Caledonia was named by Captain James Cook, the British explorer, who encountered the islands on the 4th of September 1774 on his way to New Zealand. Later, other explorers, including Lapérouse and Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, navigated the waters around New Caledonia, incorporating the islands into the world maps that were being drawn and revised at the time. In September 1853, Février-Despointes officially proclaimed the annexation of New Caledonia to the French nation and in June 1854, the first town, Port-de-France, was established on the same site as the current capital of New Caledonia, now known as Nouméa. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was marked by the arrival of missionaries – Protestants on the Loyalty Isles, and Catholics on the mainland. This era had a significant impact on the traditional life of the indigenous Melanesian tribes of New Caledonian (the *Kanak*). Even today, there are traces of missionary influence in Melanesian village life, languages and clothing and the people retain a strong commitment to Christianity.

New Caledonia became a strategic maritime port in a triangular commercial enterprise involving China and Australia. It was of particular interest to China because of its sandalwood production, for which China traded wood for iron, material for clothing, glass pearls and tobacco. The wood from China was exchanged for tea which was then sold in Australia. This enterprise led to the first European settlements in New Caledonia. These settlements involved land distribution to new migrants, something that increasingly antagonized Kanak chiefs. From 1862 onwards, New Caledonia was managed as an autonomous colony and in 1867, tribal reservations were created. In 1878, opposition to the annexation of land led to numerous acts of rebellion during which more than 1,000 people were killed. In an attempt to re-establish order the then governor, Orly, granted a pardon to opponents of French rule. After the end of World War II, everyone in New Caledonia was given French citizenship. Only then were the Kanak people granted the right to vote. In 1946, New Caledonia became an overseas territory (TOM, Territoire Outre-Mer) rather than a colony and in 1956, a territorial assembly and a governmental advisory body were created.

The 1960s was a very prosperous period for New Caledonia as nickel production boomed. As a result, France sought more control, reducing the responsibilities of the territorial governing body. Between 1984 and 1988, local opposition to French control led to violence, in response to which a treaty was signed on 26th of June 1988 (*Les Accords de Matignon*) that established a more autonomous administrative structure and created three provinces: *Nord* (North), *Sud* (South), and *Les Iles* (the Islands). Initiatives whose aim was to promote Kanak culture, language and identity also began at this time. Following the signing of *Les Accords de Matignon*, a referendum was held in 1998 to decide on whether New Caledonia should become autonomous. This led to the signing of a new treaty, the Nouméa Treaty (*Les Accords de Nouméa*) making New Caledonia a specific collectivity of the French republic until, over a twenty year period, it became autonomous.

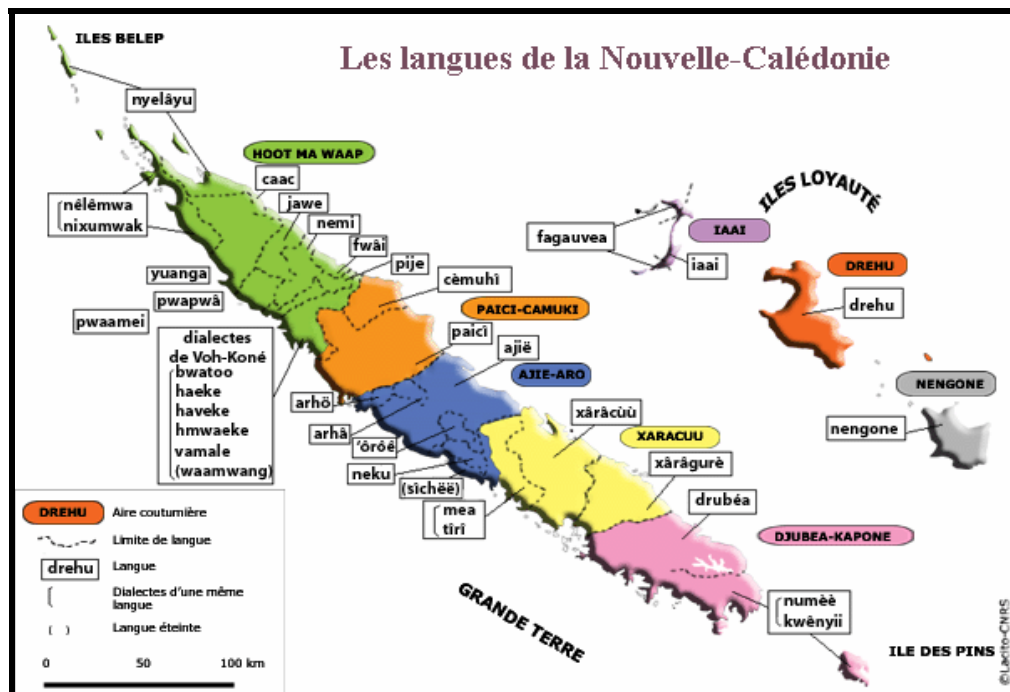
In July 2005, New Caledonia had a population of approximately 216,494 inhabitants, with 64.6% of the population aged between 15 and 64, and a median age of 27.5. The two main ethnic groups were Kanak (Melanesian) (42.5%) and Europeans (37.1%). However, numerous other groups of people of Asian and Polynesian origin added to the islands' overall ethnic mix (L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde. n.d.). The ethnic makeup of New Caledonia is illustrated in *Figure 2* below.

Figure 2: Ethnic Groups in New Caledonia



The New Caledonian population is highly literate and many of its citizens are either bilingual or multilingual (L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde, n.d.). French is the official language and there are over thirty other languages spoken. Approximately 80% of Kanaks live among 328 tribes, whose languages belong to the Oriental Malayo-Polynesian group (a sub-group from Oceania) of the larger Austronesian family. The exception to this is *Faga-ueva*, a language belonging to the Polynesian group that is spoken on the Island of Ouvéa. Figure 3 below is a linguistic map of New Caledonia.

Figure 3: The Languages of New Caledonia (Leclerc, 2005)



The 1996 New Caledonian census (Service des statistiques, n.d) indicated that the five Kanak languages that are the most widely spoken are:

- *Drehu* – spoken on the island of *Lifou* by 11,338 people

- *Nengone* – spoken on the island of *Maré* by 6,377 people
- *Paicî* – spoken at *Poindimié*, *Ponérihouen*, and *Koné* by 5,498 people
- *Ajië* – spoken at *Houailou* by 4,044 people
- *Xârâcùù* – spoken at *Canala* and *Thio* by 3,784 people.

Some Kanak languages are, however, spoken by fewer than 100 people. The languages spoken on the Loyalty Islands are more effectively maintained than those of the mainland. This is largely because the population of the islands is predominantly Kanak and because there is a greater linguistic homogeneity on the islands than on the mainland. Since 1990, some Kanak languages have been being taught in primary schools, with five hours of tuition per week being provided at elementary school level. The *Accord de Nouméa* (the Noumea agreement) in 1998 recognized Kanak languages, along with French, as *langues d'enseignement et de culture* (heritage and community languages). Even so, application of this policy and the quality of language teaching vary greatly from one province to another (Sam, 2002).

There are approximately 67,000 citizens of European origin in New Caledonia. Of these, 62.6% are *Caldoches* (people who were born in New Caledonia, but who are of European origin) and 37.3% are *Métropolitains* (people who have migrated to New Caledonia, mostly from France). The *Caldoches*, the Kanaks and others in the locally born population use a variety of French referred to by some linguists as *le français calédonien* (New Caledonian French). Although this variety of French is generally readily comprehensible to speakers of French from France, it differs in a number of ways, including some phonological, syntactic and lexical differences. There have been, for example, some syntactic borrowings from Kanak languages (*L'aménagement linguistique dans le monde*. n.d.).

Within New Caledonia, especially in and around Nouméa, there are speakers of other Polynesian languages, including Wallisian, Futunian, Tahitian, Tuamotu and Marquisian. Other languages spoken include pidgin Bislama and Kanak languages (spoken by migrants from Vanuatu) and Asian languages, principally Vietnamese, Hakka Chinese, Javanese and Malaysian. While many Polynesian communities have maintained strong cultural and linguistic bonds with their islands of origin, other groups of people who have lived in New Caledonia for several generations have largely lost their heritage language and culture.

Wallis and Futuna, French Polynesia and New Caledonia itself are among the very few territories in the Pacific where French is widely spoken. Among New Caledonia's nearest neighbours are the predominantly English speaking countries of Australia and New Zealand and numerous islands making up Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, and Micronesia that have strong historical and political associations with Australia and New Zealand. This means that it is considered important within New Caledonia that New Caledonian people should be proficient in English, particularly as tourism is an important part of New Caledonia's economy. Moreover, while metropolitan France is still a significant factor in the day to day operation of New Caledonia's infrastructure, its citizens, particularly the young, in common with many of their counterparts from elsewhere in the world are increasingly adopting a global perspective. Many New Caledonians now choose to pursue tertiary education in Australia or New Zealand, in the USA, Canada or the UK, or at prestigious English-medium universities in countries such as Japan and Singapore. For all of these reasons, English language tuition plays an important role in

the New Caledonian education system. It is important therefore to determine how effective this English language tuition actually is.

### **A review of selected literature on C-testing and motivation and language learning**

#### **The C-test as a test of language proficiency**

The C-Test was developed by Raatz and Klein-Braley (1982) at the University of Duisburg, in Germany. It is related in style to the cloze test but differs in some fundamental ways. In the a C-Test, a 'rule of two' is applied, that is, the second half of every second word in a passage of around 30 words is deleted from the second sentence on. As Klein-Braley (1994a & 1994b) notes, C-tests have been exhaustively researched. From that research, a number of test characteristics have emerged that are of particular significance so far as this research is concerned. Firstly, C-tests measure what Bachman (1990) refers to as 'operational competence', that is, "the superordinate category for lexical, morphological, syntactical, graphological knowledge on the sentence level, and . . . knowledge of cohesion and rhetorical organization on the text level" (Raatz, & Klein-Braley, 2002, p. 83). Furthermore, as Coleman (1996) indicates, C-tests have excellent reliability, are fast and convenient to administer and score, and provide an economical way of obtaining a snapshot of learners' general language competence. According to Dörnyei and Katona (1992, p. 203), "the value of C-testing as a measure of global proficiency in second language has been demonstrated too many times to be open to dispute". Thus, for example, Jakschik (1996) obtained significant correlations of .38 to .54 for speaking proficiency, and .34 to .55 for writing proficiency in correlating the scores of adult second-language speakers on a C-test with various global teacher ratings. In refuting the arguments of those who have claimed that C-tests are, in effect, simply tests of reading comprehension rather than overall language proficiency, Grotjahn and Tönshoff (1992) demonstrated that test takers with high reading comprehension ability may actually achieve a low C-test score and others, including Klein-Braley (1996) and Kontra and Kormos (2006) have demonstrated that C-tests involve macro-level processing as well as micro-level skills. One of the most significant studies of C-testing to date is that of Eckes and Grotjahn (2006) who undertook a major study involving 843 participants who took a German C-test along with the TestDaF (Test of German as a Foreign Language), subjecting the results to "Rasch measurement modelling and confirmatory factor analysis and concluding that the C-test in question a highly reliable . . . instrument, which measured the same general dimension as the reading, listening, writing and speaking sections of the TestDaF" (p. 290).

#### **Motivation and language learning**

Second language motivation studies began in Canada, where the government encouraged researchers in the social sciences to explore the challenges resulting from the coexistence of Francophone and Anglophone communities. Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two major orientations towards language learning, integrative and instrumental. Learners who have positive perceptions of the target language and of its speakers and culture and who express a desire to integrate into the community of speakers of the language were described as having *integrative motivation*; learners who view the target language as a medium via which other benefits can be obtained were described as having *instrumental motivation*. It was claimed that learners whose motivation was primarily integrative were more likely to be successful language learners. Although Gardner and Lambert's (1972) work has been extremely

influential, it has been seen as having some limitations. For example, Ely (1986) argued that the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation was by no means clear-cut and that this type of binary classification failed to take account of the full array of student motivation. These views were endorsed by Oxford and Shearin (1994) who found that more than two thirds of participants in a study of American learners of Japanese expressed motives for learning Japanese that fitted neither of these two categories. Green (1999) expressed reservations about the operationalization of the Gardner and Lambert framework, arguing that although it might be applicable in the case of the primarily bilingual society out of which it emerged, it was not applicable in the case of a complex cultural and linguistic setting, such as that of Hong Kong. Green also argued that further weaknesses of the Gardner and Lambert framework are its conceptualization of motivation as “immutable and non-manipulable” (p. 267) and its failure “to provide a meaningful developmental model for students and teachers” (p. 265). It is now widely believed that motivation for language learning is subject to change, being influenced by, for example, perceptions of competence (Dörnyei, 2003; Green, 1999; Porter-Ladousse, 1981; Van Lier, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

Dörnyei (2003) observes that psychological research has undergone a cognitive revolution since the work of Gardner and Lambert was first published, a revolution that has had a profound effect on second language (L2) motivation research. He identifies three theories of cognitive motivation that have strongly influenced L2 motivation research: *self-determination theory*, *attribution theory*, and *goal theory*. The first two are outlined below and related to three major concepts which are commonly associated with them: *autonomy*, *anxiety* and *self-confidence*.

One of the most influential approaches to motivational psychology has been the *self-determination theory* (also referred to as intrinsic/extrinsic motivation theory) of Deci and Ryan (1985, 2002). Deci and Ryan (1985) refer to intrinsic motivation as involving the engagement of motives that provide enjoyment and satisfaction, and to extrinsic motivation as a label for instrumentally driven actions. Although Deci and Ryan’s model has strong similarities to Gardner and Lambert’s (1972) framework, their theory of self-determination was related to L2 concepts of integrative and instrumental orientations only in 2000, through the work of Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand (2000). Prior to this, the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation theory had had little impact in the field of SLA (Green, 1999). More recently, it has been examined in relation to other concepts such as student and teacher autonomy (Noels, 2001). In the 1980s, Wang and Peeverly (1986) noted that independent learners were capable of managing their own learning by establishing their own goals and undertaking strategies to achieve them. Others (Dickinson, 1997; Knowles, 1975) have demonstrated that autonomous learners usually have higher levels of motivation and achieve better results than dependent learners. Hence, the concept of autonomy is often now addressed in motivational research.

In the 1980s, a new model became influential in L2 motivation research: *attribution theory*. In summary, this involves relating people’s past experiences to future achievements on the basis of what is known as causal attribution. Weiner (1992) demonstrated that if a person has previously been subject to a negative experience, he or she is likely to experience failure again in the future. Other qualitative research has confirmed the influence that attributional processes can play on a person’s motivation to learn a language (Williams & Burden, 1999; Williams, Burden, & Baharna, 2001).

In the same way that self-determination theory is intrinsically related to the concept of autonomy, attribution theory is closely linked with the notions of *confidence* and *anxiety*. Thus, a person's confidence can be affected by past negative experiences and result in increased anxiety, a reduced level of motivation and subsequent failure. Conversely, high self-confidence engenders stronger motivation, therefore more practice and better results. The research of Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1994) highlights the link between anxiety and communication proficiency, and demonstrates the powerful influence of self-confidence on motivation, notably in foreign language learning settings.

In the 1990s, cognitive psychology became strongly influenced by neurobiological research, which led to the creation of a new field of investigation commonly referred to as cognitive neuroscience (Dörnyei, 2003). Neurobiological research involves an examination of the brain mechanisms that operate during a given activity. Schumann (1997) was the first to explore L2 motivation using neuroscience technology, concluding that human actions are largely stimulated by *novelty*, *pleasantness*, *goal/need significance*, *coping potential*, and *self- and social image*.

Following the cognitive revolution with its new theoretical approaches to L2 motivation studies, an educational shift and motivational renaissance took place. This led to an emphasis on *situated approaches* to L2 motivation which emphasise the influence of the learning environment and related elements (e.g., course design, teacher characteristics, learners characteristics), and examine their impact on learners' motivation and learning outcomes. Collentine and Freed (2004) have identified two coexisting lines of research that have contributed to ongoing debates in this area. The first follows an essentialist tradition; the second a social constructivist one. The work of Long (1997) can be described as belonging to the essentialist tradition to the extent that language acquisition is conceptualized largely in psycholinguistic terms, largely divorced from external or social factors. The work of Firth and Wagner (1997), on the other hand, emphasizes the role of external factors and their impact on psycholinguistic elements. This perspective is also evident in the work of Batstone, 2002; Carson and Longhini, 2002; Collentine and Freed, 2004; Ellis, 1994; Segalowitz and Freed, 2004.

A number of researchers have proposed ways of classifying aspects of learning context. Batstone (2002) discusses both communicative contexts and learning contexts. Communicative contexts locate learners in social environments where use of the target language is necessary for interaction to occur; learning contexts locate learners in classroom situations. The language used in both situations will vary in terms of the intended communicative and social outcomes. This distinction is a necessary one since, as Ellis (1994) notes, learners' motivations are clearly affected by institutional environments. Thus, for example, when students are in a context where they have no option but to use the target language, they will generally display stronger integrative motivational factors than they do in language classrooms where they have very little or no contact with the target community. Collentine and Freed (2004) report on several studies (Spanish, French and Japanese) that have compared the impact of three different contexts (formal language classroom, intensive domestic immersion contexts and study abroad contexts) on language acquisition. Thus, for example, the research of Carson and Longhini (2002) indicates that the learning strategies used by students are influenced by context, that of Segalowitz and Feed

(2004) demonstrates that students' oral fluency and overall proficiency are significantly improved by experience of living in a country where the target language is spoken. However, Collentine (2004) demonstrates that although there is evidence of more improvement in the use of discourse features when learners are living in a community where the target language is the language of every-day interaction, formal classroom instruction has more impact on lexico-grammatical competence. Furthermore, Díaz-Campos (2004) has argued that phonological abilities are less strongly influenced by the study abroad context than by the length of time spent learning the target language. Studies of this type are complemented by studies in which the focus is on willingness to communicate (Julkunen, 1989; 2001) and task motivation (Bygate, Skehan & Swain, 2001).

Finally, there are *process-oriented* approaches to motivation which emphasize the dynamic nature of motivation, that is, the fact that motivational characteristics vary according to the stage that learners have reached in achieving their goal. Dörnyei (2003, p. 18) notes that process-oriented approaches “[break] down . . . motivational processes into several discrete temporal segments” that are organized in terms of progression towards transforming “initial wishes and desires . . . into goals and then into operationalized intentions”. Green (1999, p. 265) argues that a process-oriented approach to motivation enables teachers to identify the motivational position of their students and to “manipulate motivational variables to bring about optimal learning outcomes”. Based on the work of Corno (1993), Dörnyei (2001) proposes a four-dimensional framework for motivational teaching and a framework involving the classification of self-motivating strategies into five different categories.

### The research project

A sample of 274 students (a sample of convenience) participated in this research project. The majority of participants were in their final year of high school (*Terminale*). However, some were two levels below (*Seconde*) and others had already left high school and were in the first year of polytechnic. All of the participants had attended, or were attending one of four different schools (A; B; C and D) whose characteristics are outlined in *Table 1*.

**Table 1: Summary of the schools' characteristics**

	<i>Outside Nouméa</i>	<i>Within Nouméa</i>	<i>General Curriculum</i>	<i>Technical Curriculum</i>	<i>Vocational Curriculum</i>	<i>Private Institution</i>	<i>Public Institution</i>
<b>School A</b>	x		x	x			x
<b>School B</b>		x	x	x		x	
<b>School C</b>		x	x	x			x
<b>School D</b>	x				x	x	

Two of the participating schools were located in Nouméa, (the capital city); two in rural locations. Two of the schools are in the public sector; two in the private sector. Across the schools, three types of curriculum were represented: general (40% of participants), technical (40% of participants) and vocational (20% of participants) (see Table 2). The number of participants per location and curriculum type is listed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Participant location and curriculum type**

	Number of Participants		
	Within Nouméa	Outside Nouméa	Total
<b>General Curriculum</b>	57	52	109
<b>Technical Curriculum</b>	66	45	111
<b>Vocational Curriculum</b>		54	54
<b>Total</b>	123	151	274

From the overall participant group, three smaller sample groups were selected. The first sample group (Group A) was made up of the ten participants with the highest scores in the C-test; the second sample group (Group B) was made up of ten participants from the middle range of performance in the C-test; the third sample group (Group C) was made up of the ten participants with the lowest scores in the C-test. All of the participants included in the second group had C-test scores around the overall mean score. Every third participant from the 30 who scored closest to the mean score was included in the second sample group.

**Table 3a: Sample 1**

Top 10 students	
<i>Performance on the C-test</i>	44%
	44.80%
	47.20%
	48.80%
	49.60%
	53.60%
	54.40%
	54.40%
	56%
	56.80%
<b>Average</b>	<b>51%</b>

**Table 3b: Sample 2**

Middle 10 students	
<i>Performance on the C-test</i>	20.80%
	20.80%
	20.80%
	20%
	19.20%
	19.20%
	18.40%
	18.40%
	18.40%
	17.60%
<b>Average</b>	<b>19.36%</b>

**Table 3c: Sample 3**

Bottom 10 students	
<i>Performance on the C-test</i>	1.60%
	1.60%
	1.60%
	2.40%
	2.40%
	3.20%
	4%
	4%
	4%
	4%
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

The test instruments used in this study (with permission) were originally developed and used for a major European survey of language students' proficiency, the *European Language Survey*, conducted between 1993 and 1995 and led by Professor Jim Coleman. These were an English C-test and a questionnaire. The C-test contains five short texts in ascending order of difficulty. Each of the short texts has 25 incomplete words – a total of 125 incomplete words. It is not possible to include this test here as that would compromise its use in future research. The questionnaire is designed to provide background information about the C-test participants. It focused

on “age, sex, institution, course, language background and qualifications, motivation, attitudes, expectations, personality” and “the learners’ own evaluation of their linguistic competence and metalinguistic knowledge” (Coleman, 1994, p. 232). It was adapted slightly for use in the New Caledonian context and translated into French (see *Appendix*).

The overall research question was:

*What range of English language proficiency do a sample of 274 New Caledonian students exhibit at or near the point of entry to tertiary study and what factors appear to have an influence on proficiency achievements in the case of a sample of participants whose C-test result were in the top, bottom and middle range of the C-test scores for the sample as a whole?*

The more specific research questions are included in the results section.

Before they did the C-test and completed the background questionnaire, the aims of the research were explained to the students. In addition, they were given instructions about the procedures that should be followed. They were then given 25 minutes to do the C-test and a further 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Students were not asked to supply their names. Instead, each pair of C-test sheets and questionnaire forms was given a number so that students could be given feedback.

The first stage of C-test data analysis involved recording all scores, relating them to student groups and calculating the overall mean and the mean for each group. The second stage involved identifying, on the basis of C-test scores, which 30 participants would be included in a study of the relationship between C-test scores and questionnaire responses and then carrying out an analysis involving correlation of C-test results and questionnaire responses.

### **The results**

The first research question was:

*What range of language proficiency in English do a sample of 274 New Caledonian students exhibit at or near the point of entry to tertiary study?*

The results (reported in percentage terms) are provided in *Table 4* below.

**Table 4: Overall C-test score ranges (%) and mean (%)**

	<b>Range of scores (%)</b>	<b>Mean (%)</b>
<b>School A</b>	1.6% - 54.4%	20%
<b>School B</b>	4.0% - 56.8%	22%
<b>School C</b>	1.6% - 56/0%	21.71%
<b>School D</b>	2.4% -29.6%	12.98%
<b>National</b>	<b>1.6% - 56.8%</b>	<b>19%</b>

The mean C-test score was 19%. The mean score of pre-tertiary Portuguese students who took the same English C-test as part of the European survey was 41.52% (Palma, 2002).

The second research question was:

*Are there any differences in C-test performance between test participants in the three sample groups who attended secondary schools in urban areas and those who attended secondary schools in rural areas?*

As indicated in *Table 5*, school location did appear to have an influence on C-test performance, with 7 of the 10 top achievers in the C-test being educated in city schools and 6 of the 10 students with the lowest C-test scores being educated rural schools.

**Table 5: Location of schools (urban or rural) of attended by students in the three sample groups**

	<b>Noumea schools</b>	<b>Rural schools</b>
<b>Group A</b>	7	3
<b>Group B</b>	3	7
<b>Group C</b>	4	6
<b>Totals</b>	14	16

The third research question was:

*Are there any differences in C-test performance between test participants in the three sample groups who attended public secondary schools and those who attended private secondary schools?*

As indicated in *Table 6* below, there appears to be no difference, in terms of the C-test performance between students in the sample groups in terms of whether they attended private or public secondary schools.

**Table 6: Type of school (public or private) attended by students in the three sample groups**

	<b>Public School</b>	<b>Private School</b>
<b>Group A</b>	4	6
<b>Group B</b>	4	6
<b>Group C</b>	4	6

The fourth research question was:

*Are there any differences in C-test performance between test participants in the three sample groups who followed a general curriculum, a technical curriculum and a vocational curriculum?*

As indicated in *Table 7* below, 9 of the 10 students who had the highest scores in the C-test had followed a general curriculum, whereas only 2 of the 10 students who had the lowest C-test scores had done so.

**Table 7:** *Type of curriculum (general, technical, vocational) followed by students in the three sample groups*

	General	Technical	Vocational
<b>Group A</b>	9	1	0
<b>Group B</b>	3	4	3
<b>Group C</b>	2	5	3

The fifth research question was:

*Is there any difference in terms of integrative/ intrinsic motivation between students in the three sample groups?*

In relation to this research question, responses to *Questions 16* and *19* in the background questionnaire were taken into account. *Question 16* asked participants to select (from a list of 16) their 6 main reasons for learning English.<sup>1, 2</sup> Some of the possible responses were clearly instrumental (e.g., *because learning English is compulsory; because it is needed for my career*), others were clearly integrative (e.g., *to get to know speakers of the language*). *Question 19* asked participants to choose between two options (one of which involved more likelihood of having to use English) in a number of hypothetical situations (e.g., *If you were in a county where English is spoken and you needed some bread and cheese, would you prefer to go to a small grocery store or go to a self-service supermarket?*).

So far as *Question 16* is concerned, students in all three sample groups selected *Because it is an international language; To travel to different countries; and To meet a greater variety of people in life*. Overall, however, the students in Group A (the top ten achievers in the C-test) selected more responses that were indicative of integrative motivation than did the students in the other two groups.

So far as *Question 19* is concerned, once again the students in Group A (the top ten achievers in the C-test) consistently selected more responses that are indicative of integrative motivation than did the students in the other two groups.

The sixth research question was:

*Is there any difference between students in the three sample groups in terms of the extent to which they perceive English to be useful?*

*Question 18* asked participants to rate the likely importance of English (*very important; important; a little important; not important*) in relation to certain activities (e.g., *reading literature in English*) when they finished their English courses. The first group (the top ten achievers in the C-test) selected *very important* (52%) or *important* (29%) for most of the specified activities. The results for all three groups are indicated in *Table 8*.

**Table 8: Percentage of activities rated as being (a) very important; (b) important or (c) a little important or not important by students in the three sample groups**

	Very important	Important	A little important or not important
<b>Group 1</b>	52%	29%	19%
<b>Group 2</b>	31%	40%	29%
<b>Group 3</b>	28%	34%	38%

The seventh research question was:

*Is there any difference in terms of reported frequency of use of English between students in the three sample groups?*

Question 20 asked participants whether they *never*; *rarely*; *sometimes* or *often* used English in specific situations. Their responses were weighted to give a global score for each respondent. The results for each of the three groups are indicated in Table 9.

**Table 9: Percentage of activities in which students use English (a) often, (b) sometimes, (c) rarely, or (d) never**

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>Group 1</b>	42%	28%	17%	13%
<b>Group 2</b>	10%	20%	33%	25%
<b>Group 3</b>	8%	15%	38%	39%

The results indicate that the students in Group A (the top ten scorers in the C-test) were considerably more likely, in terms of their own reports, to use English than were the students in the other two sample groups.

The final research question was:

*Is there any difference, in terms of reported willingness to use English outside of class between students in the three sample groups?*

Question 20 asked participants to indicate whether, outside of class, they sought out opportunities to use English such as, for example, watching TV or films in English. The number of responses of students in each sample group that indicated willingness to communicate in English or unwillingness to communicate in English are indicated in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Percentage of responses indicating willingness or unwillingness to communicate in English of students in three sample groups**

	Responses indicating willingness to communicate in English in hypothetical situations	Responses indicating unwillingness to communicate in English in hypothetical situations
<b>Group A</b>	73.5%	26.5%
<b>Group B</b>	43.7%	56.3%
<b>Group C</b>	50.5%	49.5%

## **Discussion**

This study reported here was concerned with some aspects of student achievement in English language within a context (that of New Caledonia) in which no previous research of a similar type appears to have been undertaken. The number of participants involved was relatively small (274) and correlations between C-test results and questionnaire findings involved only 30 of these participants in three groups (the top ten and bottom ten performers in the C-test and ten of those whose performance was close to the mean for the group as a whole). The findings should therefore be viewed as indicative rather than conclusive.

The mean percentage C-test score of the New Caledonian students (19%) in this study was considerably lower than that of Portuguese students in the European study (41.52%) who took the same C-test at a comparable stage of their education. When the C-test performance of some of the respondents (the ten top performers in the C-test; 10 whose performance was close to the mean score; the bottom 10 performers) was related to their questionnaire responses, it was found that those from city schools tended to outperform those from rural schools and those who had followed a general curriculum tended to outperform those who had followed technical or vocational curricula. The questionnaire responses of the group of students who performed best in the C-test indicated a higher level of integrative motivation than did those of the other two groups, and the students in the highest C-test performance group reported using English more frequently than the those in the other two groups and also appeared more willing to seek out opportunities to use English outside of class.

While metropolitan France is still a significant factor in the day to day operation of New Caledonia, its citizens, particularly the young, like many of their counterparts elsewhere in the world, are increasingly adopting a global perspective, and many students now choose to pursue their tertiary education in Australia or New Zealand, in the USA, Canada or the UK or at prestigious English-medium universities in countries such as Japan and Singapore, rather than in France. However, the overall picture that emerges from this research is that, in spite of there being a clear need for New Caledonian citizens to have a high level of English language proficiency, the current levels of achievement of students about to enter tertiary study are significantly lower than might have been expected in a country where English language teaching has been a core part of educational programmes for a considerable period of time. This may, ultimately have an adverse effect on the Capacity of New Caledonia to participate fully in a global community in which the English language plays a significant part (Graddol, 1997; 2006). In light of this, it seems important that the work of Education officials, advisors, teachers and students in the area of the teaching and learning of English should be underpinned by a coherent programme of relevant research. If these findings reported here were to be confirmed in a more broadly-based study and supplemented by a longitudinal study involving school and university students, they would provide educationalists in New Caledonia with information that could be useful in reviewing policies and practices relating to the teaching of English.

### Endnotes

1. Only those responses selected by at least half the participants from each sample were retained.
2. The questions were in French in the questionnaire. Samples in the main body of the text are, however, provided in English.

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**Appendix: C-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE**

Ce questionnaire a été traduit, avec permission, de l'adaptation utilisée lors d'une étude Anglo-Européenne dirigée par le Professeur J. Coleman de l'Université de Portsmouth

Le test et le questionnaire ci-joints font partie d'une étude sur l'apprentissage de l'anglais en Nouvelle Calédonie.

Vous êtes invité(e)s à participer à ce projet en complétant le questionnaire et test suivants.

Nous n'exigeons pas que vous nous révéliez votre identité, mais nous vous demandons de bien vouloir préciser le nom de l'établissement où vous étudiez, ainsi que le détail des cours de langues vivantes que vous avez suivis.

Les individus et établissements cités dans ce questionnaire ne seront identifiables ni dans les rapports concernant cette étude, ni dans aucun autre contexte.

En complétant ce questionnaire et ce test, vous consentez à participer au projet et à la publication des résultats comme établis ci-dessus.

Cette déclaration est établie en accord avec la loi sur la protection de la vie privée de Nouvelle Zélande.

**\* Répondez à un maximum de questions, SVP.**

\* Répondez de façon spontanée. Ne vous attardez pas sur vos réponses.

**\* Vous avez 15 minutes pour compléter ce questionnaire.**

**Section A**

1. Sexe: **Masculin / Feminin** (entourez la bonne réponse)
2. Date de naissance (jour/mois/année): \_\_\_\_\_
3. Nom de l'établissement scolaire où vous étudiez actuellement:  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. En quelle classe êtes-vous? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Quelle option ou spécialité avez-vous choisi? (ex: L, S, ES)  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Quelle est votre origine ethnique? \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B**

7. Quelle est la langue maternelle de votre mère? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Quelle est la langue maternelle de votre père? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Quelle a été la première langue que vous ayez apprise? (langue maternelle) Si vous en possédez plus d'une, précisez.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Est-ce toujours la langue que vous utilisez généralement avec vos parents et famille/amis?  
**Oui Non** (entourez la bonne réponse)
11. Êtes-vous déjà allé(e) dans un pays où la langue parlée est une langue que vous étudiez?  
**Oui Non** (entourez la bonne réponse)

Si **Non** passez à la question 12. Si **Oui**, allez à la question 15.

12. Combien de fois avez-vous visité un tel pays? Entourez la bonne réponse.  
i) 1 fois      ii) Au moins 5 fois      iii) Plus de 5 fois
13. Combien de temps êtes vous resté(e) au total? Entourez la bonne réponse.  
i) Moins d'1 semaine      ii) 1 semaine à 1 mois  
iii) 1 mois à 1 an      iv) Plus d'1 an

14. Dans quelles conditions (ex: séjour en famille d'accueil, vacances, travail, etc)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Section C**

15. SVP, répondez à la **Partie A** si vous êtes à l'**université**  
SVP, répondez à la **Partie B** si vous êtes dans le **secondaire**.

**Partie A – Étudiants universitaires uniquement**

a) Quelle(s) qualification(s) aviez-vous en anglais avant de venir à l'université? Cochez la ou les cases appropriée(s) et précisez votre note dans la colonne correspondante.

Cochez ici	Examen	Score ou note
	Baccalauréat	
	IELTS	
	Autre (précisez): _____	

b) Combien de modules d'anglais avez-vous déjà complétés et à quels niveaux? (ex: 1ère/ 2ème année de DEUG, licence)

\_\_\_\_\_

c) Avez-vous passé des examens dans d'autres matières en relation avec les langues? Si oui, quelle(s) langue(s) et quel(s) examen(s)?

**Partie B – Étudiants du secondaire uniquement**

a) Depuis combien d'années (celle-ci exclue) étudiez-vous l'anglais?

\_\_\_\_\_

b) Avez-vous déjà des qualifications en anglais? Si oui, précisez.

\_\_\_\_\_

c) Avez-vous passé des examens dans d'autres langues? Si oui, quelle(s) langue(s), quel(s) examen(s) et quel(s) étai(en)t votre/vos note(s)?

\_\_\_\_\_

**16. Quelles sont vos raisons principales pour étudier l'anglais?**

Cocher jusqu'à 6 réponses dans le tableau ci-dessous.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Pour apprendre à connaître les gens parlant cette langue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pour votre carrière
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pour voyager dans différents pays
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pour devenir une personne plus cultivée
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que vous avez eu un bon professeur d'anglais
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pour mieux comprendre la vie des gens dans les pays Anglo-Saxons
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que c'est une langue internationale
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que vos ami(e)s le faisaient
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que vos parents voulaient que vous le fassiez
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que vous étiez fort dans cette matière
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que vous avez de la famille dans un pays Anglo-Saxon
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que vous aimez cette langue
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que les gens sont plus respectueux envers ceux qui parlent d'autres langues
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pour rencontrer une plus grande variété de gens dans votre vie
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parce que vous aimeriez vivre dans un pays où cette langue est parlée
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pour d'autres raisons (précisez):

17. D'après vous, comment les adjectifs suivants s'appliquent:

- (a) Aux gens de **votre nationalité**
- (b) Aux **anglophones**

SVP, utilisez les chiffres ci-dessous pour évaluer chaque adjectif

1 = Pas du tout; 2 = Rarement; 3 = Quelques fois; 4 = Souvent

	(a)	(b)
Émotif		
Arrogant		
Sérieux		
Amical		
Confiant		
Logique		
Généreux		
Calme		
Fainéant		
Serviable		
Efficace		
Impatient		
Têtu		
Honorable		
Compétent		
Marrant		
Timide		
Honnête		
Travailleur		
Patient		
Bruyant		
Tolérant		
Économe		

18. A quelles fins désirez-vous utiliser l'anglais? SVP, évaluez chaque activité selon les indices suivants:

3 = Très important; 2 = Important; 1 = Moins important

Conversation de tous les jours avec des natifs de la langue anglaise	3	2	1
Regarder des films et la TV en V.O.	3	2	1
Lire de la littérature anglaise	3	2	1
Écouter la radio en anglais	3	2	1
Avoir des conversations de niveau académique avec des natifs	3	2	1
Écrire des lettres en anglais	3	2	1

Travailler en milieu professionnel	3	2	1
Lire le journal et des magazines en anglais	3	2	1
Se faire des ami(e)s parlant anglais	3	2	1
Téléphoner	3	2	1
Autre? Précisez, SVP	3	2	1
<hr/>			
Conversation de tous les jours avec des natifs de la langue anglaise	3	2	1
Regarder des films et la TV en V.O.	3	2	1
Lire de la littérature anglaise	3	2	1
Écouter la radio en anglais	3	2	1
Avoir des conversations de niveau académique avec des natifs	3	2	1
Écrire des lettres en anglais	3	2	1
Travailler en milieu professionnel	3	2	1
Lire le journal et des magazines en anglais	3	2	1
Se faire des ami(e)s parlant anglais	3	2	1
Téléphoner	3	2	1
Autre? Précisez, SVP	3	2	1
<hr/>			

**19.** Supposez que vous êtes dans un pays où l'anglais est parlé. Que feriez-vous dans les situations suivantes? Entourez la réponse appropriée.

(a) Vous avez 2 heures pour déjeuner avant de prendre le train. Vous allez:

- i) Dans un café local ou un restaurant
- ii) Dans un fastfood

(b) Vous avez besoin de pain et de fromage. Vous allez:

- i) Chez le boulanger et le fromager
- ii) Dans un supermarché

(c) Vous écoutez la radio. Est-ce que vous:

- i) Écoutez les stations locales
- ii) Chercher une station où votre langue est parlée

(d) Un nouveau film dans votre langue est à l'affiche au cinéma. Est-ce que vous:

- i) Y allez immédiatement
- ii) Faites autre chose à la place

(e) Le tabac-journaux vend la presse locale ainsi que deux ou trois journaux dans votre langue. Est-ce que vous:

- i) Achetez la presse locale
- ii) Achetez un journal dans votre langue
- iii) Achetez les deux

(f) Vous avez l'opportunité de regarder la TV. Préférez-vous:

- i) Regarder les stations locales
- ii) Chercher une chaîne dans votre langue

(g) Avec un groupe d'ami(e)s vous décidez d'aller à un spectacle/musée/match de football. Est-ce que vous vous portez volontaire pour acheter les billets?

- i) Oui
- ii) Non

(h) Vous devez confirmer des projets que vous avez avec la famille d'un ami qui vit à 20 minutes à pieds de chez vous. Est-ce que vous:

- i) téléphonez
- ii) leur rendez visite

(i) Lorsque vous rencontrez des gens de votre nationalité, est-ce que vous avez tendance à:

- i) engager la conversation
- ii) les ignorer

**20.** Lorsque vous êtes dans votre pays, et en supposant que vous en ayez l'opportunité, avec quelle fréquence effectuez-vous les activités suivantes? Cocher la case appropriée.

- 1 = Jamais
- 2 = Rarement
- 3 = Parfois
- 4 = Souvent

	1	2	3	4
Parler à des natifs anglais				
Socialiser avec des natifs anglais				
Parler avec des ami(e)s en anglais				
Regarder la TV ou des films en anglais				
Lire pour le plaisir en anglais				
Écrire en anglais				

21. Entourez la réponse appropriée:

(a) Dans votre ville, vous apercevez un groupe de gens qui consultent une carte. Est-ce que vous les aidez?

- i) Oui            ii) Non

(b) Vous êtes chez un(e) ami(e) très proche et le téléphone sonne. Est-ce que vous répondez?

- i) Oui            ii) Non

(c) Vous vous rendez compte que le sèche-cheveux que vous venez d'acheter est rayé. Est-ce que vous?"

- i) Faites avec    ii) Le ramenez au magasin et demandez à le changer

22. Entourez la réponse appropriée:

(a) Lorsque vous parlez en anglais, est-ce que vous:

- i) Êtes gêné(e) lorsque vous faites des erreurs  
ii) N'avez pas peur de faire des erreurs

(b) Aimerez-vous que l'on pense que vous êtes un natif de la langue anglaise?

- i) Oui            ii) Non

(c) Aimerez-vous que vos enfants grandissent:

- i) Dans un pays où l'anglais est parlé  
ii) Dans ce même pays tout en étant capable de parler une autre langue  
iii) Dans ce même pays, et il est de leur libre choix d'apprendre d'autres langues

(d) Est-ce que vos parents parlent une ou d'autres langues que celles mentionnées dans la section B?

- i) Oui            ii) Non

(e) Est-ce qu'ils vous encouragent de façon active à apprendre une langue étrangère?

- i) Oui            ii) Non

(f) Est-ce qu'ils ont des ami(e)s à l'étranger à qui ils rendent visite?

- i) Oui            ii) Non

(g) Est-ce que vos frères et soeurs aiment les langues étrangères?

- i) Oui            ii) Non            iii) Enfant unique

23. Si l'on vous le demande, seriez-vous capable d'expliquer les termes grammaticaux suivants, ou de donner un exemple? SVP, **entourez** ceux que vous pouvez **expliquer**, et **soulignez** ceux pour lesquels vous pouvez donner un **exemple**. Si vous pouvez faire les deux, entourez et soulignez le terme.

Sujet	Objet direct	Objet indirect
Modalité	Genre	Temps
Aspect	Passif	Indicatif
Impératif	Transitif	Subjonctif
Infinitif	Participe	Gérondif
Préposition	Conjonction	Pronom relatif
Article	Déterminant	Prédicat

**24.** Parmi les types d'exercices suivants, lesquels avez-vous déjà fait (a) en classe (b) en tant qu'examen? Mettez une X dans les colonnes correspondantes:

	En classe	Dans un examen
Rédiger une rédaction en anglais.		
Écrire un résumé en français		
Écrire un résumé en anglais		
Compréhension orale		
Compréhension écrite		
Parler avec un natif de la langue anglaise		
Traduire un texte français en anglais		
Traduire un texte anglais en français		
Dictée		

**Merci d'avoir pris le temps de remplir ce questionnaire**