

PSYCHOLOGY

Language Shows Prejudice

English- and French-speaking Canadians hearing recordings of their separate languages revealed prejudices in favor of the English and against the French—By Elizabeth Mirel

➤ JUST HOW GREAT a barrier language really is was brought out at the 17th International Congress of Psychology in Washington, D. C.

Merely hearing recordings of the French and English language called up the stereotypes and prejudices of English-speaking Canadians to French-speaking Canadians, Dr. Wallace E. Lambert of McGill University, Montreal, Canada, found.

English-speaking students rated an anonymous man behind an English voice as more attractive, intelligent, dependable, kind, ambitious, and as having more character and being taller than the man behind a French-speaking voice.

Actually, the man was the same—only the language was different.

Surprisingly, Dr. Lambert said, French-speaking students also had a more favorable attitude toward the English-speaking man. They thought the English voice, in comparison to the French-Canadian, belonged to a better-looking, more intelligent, ambitious, sociable and likable tall man.

The French-Canadians, Dr. Lambert explained, may feel they belong to an inferior group and they may have taken the stereotyped attitudes of the majority group to heart.

In contrast to the derogatory attitude to

the French speaker with a Canadian accent, Dr. Lambert and his associates found a favorable attitude toward the voice with a Parisian accent.

French-Canadian males, he said, were more subject to prejudice than French-Canadian women. His findings go so far as to show that a "jury" of high school students reacted more favorably to a case presented by an attorney speaking pure Canadian-style English than an attorney speaking English with a French-Canadian accent.

The prejudice against a national or cultural group that shows through in reactions to language is well formed and strong by college age. However, Dr. Lambert said, research on ten-year-olds revealed that the unfavorable stereotypes were not yet formed.

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Changes in Middle East

➤ THE CHANGING SCENE in the Arab Middle East is reflected psychologically in the people, Dr. Levon H. Melikian of American University, Beirut, Lebanon, reported.

From 1952 to 1963, tests on Moslem and Christian students indicated, authoritarian attitudes among the people have increased. The people's growing tendency to dictate to others corresponds to an Arab trend toward increasingly authoritarian forms of government, Dr. Melikian said.

Other social changes that have psychological consequences for the people are an increase in the role of the army, and a change in the way of thinking about national problems, Dr. Melikian told the 17th International Congress of Psychology meeting.

The growing strength of the army leads to a fear in the minority group of Christian Arabs that it will be engulfed by a religious, Moslem state.

The trend to think that national problems arise from within, rather than from outside forces, also creates new uncertainties and instabilities, he said.

Dr. Melikian interpreted the changing attitudes as moves of the Arabs to protect themselves from the insecurities the social changes create.

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Power Over Achievement

➤ THE NEED for power over others is beginning to exceed the need for personal achievement in the U. S., a Canadian psychologist reported at the International Congress of Psychology in Washington, D. C.

When power is more important to a people than achievement, he warned, a country is on the way down.

Studies of lands around the world have shown that their civilizations rise with the need for individual success and fall with the need for dominance over others.

Power and achievement needs, Dr. Stanley A. Rudin of Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada, explained, are measured by analyzing children's books and popular literature.

A strong achievement drive is associated in a nation with internal development, he said, and a strong power drive is associated with internal suppression and war.

In the Soviet Union, Dr. Rudin said, the need for achievement seems to be increasing. This would indicate Russia is heading towards a peak in its history.

Dr. Rudin also said that a strong power drive is associated with high death rates due to alcoholism, suicide and murder, and that a strong achievement drive is associated with high death rates due to ulcers and high blood pressure.

These causes of death, he explained, are generally psychological. With the need to achieve come inhibitions and repression of natural tendencies that lead to ulcers and high blood pressure.

With the need for power, inhibitions are relaxed, inclinations are readily expressed and murder, suicide and alcoholism are often the result.

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Pleasure Differs in East

➤ A CHILD of the Western World learns he has to eat his spinach before he can go out to play, but a child of the Eastern World learns he can pursue pure pleasure.

These contrasting approaches to enjoyment have emerged in studies of 170 Thai and German children, reported at the 17th International Congress of Psychology.

The findings for Thailand and for Germany may be applicable to East and West in general, Dr. Ernest E. Boesch of the University of Saar, West Germany, believes.

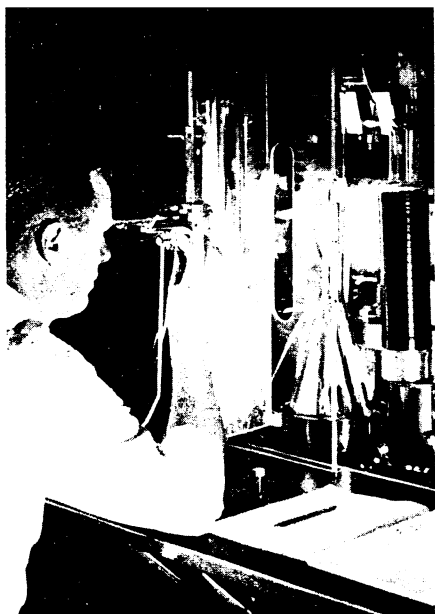
The German child's regulated approach to play and the Thai child's indulgent approach are taught by their cultures, Dr. Boesch said. The contrast in the children's attitudes toward enjoyment is also seen in their schoolwork.

At an early age, Dr. Boesch explained, the intellectual performance of Thai and German children is the same. Later in elementary school, Thai children lose their desire for intellectual achievement. For they are brought up to be cooperative rather than competitive, and they do not challenge the superior knowledge of their teachers. Although intellectual avenues are blocked, the paths to enjoyment are left open by the society.

The German child's ambition does not decline. Like most children of the Western World, the German is pushed to excel and achieve.

The German child, he said, tended to be realistic. His stories mentioned practical matters more often than the Thai.

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National Research

ULTRA-PRECISE—A National Research Corporation scientist uses a new ultra-precise device to calibrate vacuum gauge for measuring pressures less than one ten-billionth of sea level atmospheric pressure.