BRITAIN AS PERCEIVED BY ITALIAN STUDENTS OF ENGLISH:
A STUDY IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERCEPTION

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE
Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne per Interpreti e Traduttori
TRIESTE 1987
C.J.M. Kellett Bidoli

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1. INTRODUCTION

All individuals compose a distinct mental image of the environment in which they live. This unique impression is formed and altered through time by many factors. These include characteristics such as age, sex, personality attributes and cultural features, for example, nationality, the prevailing cultural milieu and access to information. One is further influenced by ones associates, adherence to a particular social sub-group, direct or indirect contact with new experiences and distant spatial surroundings (1). Each of us acquire our personal image through the input of information via the senses which is transferred to the brain. There follows a complicated mental processing which passes through various stages of filtering, coding, classification, analysis, memorization, decoding and retrieval.

To trace this process and give an accurate representation of this image is an arduous and almost forbidding task. Notwithstanding, a notable number of studies have been undertaken and have found that our mental images of absolute space and attitudes, if compared with reality, are often inaccurate and distorted by the influence of the above mentioned factors and other external causes.

Several years of teaching Italian university students about British life and culture have shown me that there are a wide number of misconceptions concerning various aspects of the United Kingdom. My interest was thus aroused and I decided to conduct a survey in order to attempt to determine these misapprehensions and contrive some form of measurement of the true mental perception of the country.

Since the 1950's a substantial quantity of literature has accumulated regarding "perception" especially in the fields of psychology, linguistics, geography, urban planning and more recently in sociology, political science and history (2). Most early work was carried out by environmental psychologists who developed two broad approaches.
One was behaviourist, much influencing study in the United States (see Skinner, 1953 and Tolman, 1952) to establish how peoples' mental views are explained by behaviour. The second was cognitive (see Bruner 1966, Piaget in Flavell 1963, Lewin 1951) and of particular interest to Europeans, and later European geographers, who became concerned with the mental images of the environment (3).

Earlier geographical studies dealt principally with the perception of the environment immediately around the individual in the U.S.A. (see Lowenthal, 1961, 1967) and later the U.K. (see Lowenthal and Price, 1964, 1965). Owing to the emerging interest, by architects and planners during the 1960's in city development and design, much research was (and still is) carried out in the urban context, for example to show how the individual judges distance (4) from a set of focal points or point location, such as famous landmarks or facilities (see Lynch, 1960). The first indications were discovered of how the mental image of each individual is greatly distorted from reality through place of residence, social status, age, etc (5). Other researchers developed a new school of thought mainly concerned with hazard perception and attempted to explain why people live in potentially dangerous areas at the foot of volcanoes, in known seismic zones or on flood plains (6).

Another branch of perception studies began to emerge known as preferential perception to test the preferential movement of people in a state or preferential residence in foreign countries (7).

A rather neglected perception theme has been the study of cross-cultural perception, some research by political scientists, sociologists and geographers has been undertaken to discover general views held about foreign countries or so-called extra-environmental perception studies dealing with the 'invisible landscape' or those areas not part of a person's habitual environment. A few of these studies have been limited to the perception of geographical location or distance by placing the names of
cities or states on outline maps or drawing free hand maps of whole continents (see Saarinen, 1973). Only a handful of papers have been concerned with a wider interpretation of the 'invisible environment' and have attempted to discern an overall comprehensive view by asking questions about many varied aspects (8). For example Goodey, in his paper on the Arizonan image of Britain (see Goodey, 1973 and an abstract account in Goodey, 1974), asked students for 'first impressions of Britain'. They were further required to write down descriptors of the 'average Briton' and British landscape and asked about their sources of information. In his conclusion he stated:

But the present study was undertaken as a student exercise, as an integral part of a course in political geography which aimed at developing not only traditional ideas on location, boundaries and international rivers but aspects of stereotyping and imagery which affect international relations.

(Goodey 1974, p. 77)

In linguistics, perception studies have been usually linked to broader cross-cultural studies in language and behaviour, borrowing much ground-work from the early behaviourist movement. The behaviourist linguist L. Bloomfield, believed that psychology should be included in all studies of language through the description of the behaviour of the speaker and listener (see Bloomfield, 1933). Another school of thought in linguistics, in which 'perception' played the key role, was that concerning the links between language and thought developed in the early part of this century and influenced by the writings of E. Sapir and B.L. Whorf (the so-called Sapir-Whorf theory of linguistic relativity). In short, they believed that different world views are held by the many peoples of the earth, owing to the different languages spoken. Thus according to this theory language can be seen as an obstacle to the true preception of reality. Sapir wrote:
we see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation.

(Sapir 1929, p. 210)

Whorf stated that a person's ideas are:

controlled by inexorable laws of pattern of which he is unconscious. These patterns are the unperceived intricate systemizations of his own language.

(Whorf 1956, p. 252)

Another view held by linguists is that it is social structure which moulds language (and thus perception). This has been extensively illustrated by scholars in the field such as E. Nida who has undertaken exhaustive research in intercultural communication. He has written at length giving examples of words and phrases (concepts) which are connected to areas of "distinctive specialization" such as fishing, hunting or farming activities, in a given society. He then illustrates how relevant terminology and thus concepts are less developed or lacking in other societies where the same activity is not fundamental or necessary. Often no equivalent or exact equivalent of a concept which is found in one society exists in another. However, Nida stated after several years of research, that there is:

no basis for concluding that language determines thought.

(Nida 1975, p. 185)

Yet many continue to believe there is such a connection. This very brief outline of the emergence of perception, especially environmental perception, as a science should serve to set this present work in context. The perhaps over ambitious purpose of this present study is
to attempt to unravel the 'invisible environment image' of the British Isles as viewed by Italian students thus touching on an overlooked aspect of perception at macro scale, following an independent methodology. Questions were prepared and divided into three sections covering a wide range of topics to gain information about their perception of geography, economy, institutions, politics and so on, as can be seen from the questionnaire (see Appendix).

A point not to be disregarded is that Great Britain is not a totally invisible environment for all the participants. In fact, an attempt was made to find if overall responses were affected by factors such as visits to the British Isles and length of stay.

2. THE SAMPLE

The survey was undertaken in the Autumn of 1981, involving 84 freshly enrolled Italian students of the first year English Language Course, at the Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne per Interpreti e Traduttori, of the University of Trieste. Thus the group was not formally sampled from a national population. However, the 84 participants were admitted on successful compilation of a highly selective admission examination, which is attempted each year by school leavers from all regions of Italy.

The 84 students were chosen from a large sample of people who applied randomly from all over the country and attempted the September 1981 admission exam. The sample was thus selected according to proficiency in writing and comprehending English, the students were assumed to be near equal in standard having congruous knowledge concerning the British Isles. As 95.24% were of Italian nationality, they had all presumably received a similar Italian state education, had a similar cultural background affecting their basic attitudes, and presumably had a higher than average interest in things British.
Thus the sample was of stratified nature including people of roughly the same age, with presumably a good or higher than average, near equal knowledge of the English language.

The advantages in having chosen a readily available student sample were convenience, a saving of time, energy and cost, but using such a select sample had obvious drawbacks, which must be borne in mind on interpretation of the results. It is clear that the survey cannot reflect a well-rounded national study of the mental images of all Italians of a certain age group. This survey could only produce an indication of Italian views yielded by a sample representative of only a small selective portion of the national population and might hopefully stimulate further research at other levels.

3. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The procedure used to obtain student responses was by means of the compilation of a written questionnaire, (see Appendix) rather than through an interview system. Students compiled the questionnaire under strict invigilation to save time and prevent any verbal exchange of information and copying of ideas.

A questionnaire approach was chosen because interview type surveys tend to be costly, take time to complete and if interviewers are not fully trained, they can unconsciously influence respondents attitudes and thus answers. The questionnaire form compiled by the student, is a structured system of gaining the required information in a short time with as little error as possible.

A pilot survey was conducted on a small sample of students in 1981 and from this, alterations, improvements and additions were made which resulted in the compilation of the final questionnaire after weeks of careful preparation and structuring.
Questions were of 3 types. Firstly of 'closed' structured nature (for example qu. 4, 6, 22, 39, etc.) which were kept as brief and to the point as possible. These questions offered the student the choice between several set answers which simplified coding and reduced error during quantification. Nevertheless the problem arose of alternative responses where more than one answer was given for the same question. However despite the added difficulty in coding and analysis, this led to the possibility of wider interpretations. Some of these closed structured questions were of a more 'open' nature (for example qu. 24, 32), in that they permitted only five possible responses (to simplify coding), but the participants were free to choose for themselves.

A second category of questions which can be called 'open', was given where no set choice was provided but the student was permitted greater freedom of expression (for example qu. 14, 19). Obvious difficulties arose in accurate interpretation of results and quantification. In fact, the responses were codified according to the truth or falsity of the statement.

The third type of question asked the student to locate certain geographical features and economic areas on an outline map of the British Isles, to produce an overall mental image. These questions led to the most arduous task in coding and great difficulty in finding an accurate and workable technique for producing the average mental map.

Despite all attempts to simplify the questionnaire design, the vast scope of the survey led to very lengthy and laborious undertakings such as coding responses, conversion of data onto a data matrix and various problems concerning the choice of analysis.

The questionnaire was divided basically into three sections, the first designed to obtain general background information. Individual structural variables were thus obtained from questions 1-7 and question 39 (of closed structured type). It was hoped that the second section would lead to the compilation of mental maps of city
location, general geography and economic features (questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 32). The third section included factual questions, covering a wide range of cultural topics, such as geography, economy, politics, institutions, religion, language, etc. (see questions 12–38).

One of the main problems encountered resulting from the use of individual form compilation was incompleteness, despite all attempts to avoid ambiguity. Although students had presumably reached a high level of knowledge concerning the English language, some of the questions were related to specialized fields and not all students were able to answer fully. As the Trieste school requires that English be used as a language of instruction, the questionnaire was written in English. Compilation was undertaken during the first normal lesson hour of the academic year and served the double purpose of extracting information for the survey and leading to active discussion about British life and culture (in English). The specialized nature of the student sample should have eliminated any fears of miscomprehension of the English text. During compilation, all students were free to enquire if they felt they did not fully understand what was being asked.

4. SURVEY RESULTS

a. Section one - General background information.

The first step taken after the 84 questionnaires had been collected, was to set about recording the responses on a data matrix in codified form. Later this information was memorized by a System 36 IBM Computer. Once this lengthy operation was completed, work could begin on the simple extraction of the first results related to the section on general background information (questions 1–7 and 39 of closed structured type), with relative description and graphic representation.
qu. 1 - Age

The response to question 1 on the age of the participants is shown in figure 1. As expected for a first year Italian university class, the mean lies between the 19-20 age group (19.59 years).

Fig. 1 - Age distribution of student sample
qu. 2 and 3 - Sex, nationality and residence

The divided circle to show sex distribution in figure 2, indicates the clear predominance of females over males (82.15% and 17.85% respectively). This notable discrepancy has tended to be the norm at the Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne over the years, maybe reflecting a public view that translating, interpreting and foreign language learning in general are more suitable as professions for females. Figure 2, also includes a divided circle showing nationality (question 3) and gives the geographical distribution of Italian residents. As expected, the majority, eighty students (95.24% of the sample), were Italian. The remaining four included one Australian and three of unknown nationality. Of the eighty students of Italian nationality, fifty-eight (70.73%) came from the north, fourteen (17.07%) came from central Italy and ten (12.02%) from the south and islands.

The regional distribution of residents for eighty-two (nationals and non-nationals) is made clearer in figure 3. Most Northerners came from the Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Emilia-Romagna regions. These three regions are in fact the closest to Trieste in terms of distance and probably diffusion of information concerning the Scuola Superiore di Lingue Moderne. Residents from central Italy came mainly from the Marches and of the ten Southerners, six were from Apulia. Only five of the twenty Italian regions were left unrepresented. Of the two remaining students not resident in Italy, one gave her habitual residence as being in Yugoslavia. The Italo-Yugoslav border lies only a few kilometers from the centre of Trieste permitting daily commuting for many. The other gave no answer.
Fig. 2 - Divided circles to show sex, nationality and Italian geographical distribution of student sample.
Fig. 3 - Regional distribution of students resident in Italy (one dot per student).
Legend

1. Only at school
2. At school and other
3. Not at school
4. In the U.K.
5. In the U.S.A.
6. In the U.K. and U.S.A.
7. From a parent
8. Other

Fig. 4 - How students learnt English
qu. 4 - Mode of English study

Having obtained and described the general information on age, sex and nationality, essential to most questionnaires of this kind, question 4 inquired as to how the participants had learnt their English (see fig. 4). 88.09% of the total sample (74 students), represented by the right hand semi-circle, learnt English as a foreign language at school. As some students gave more than one response, it was found that 62.16% (of the 74 students) had been instructed solely at school, whereas the remaining 37.84% had additional training in the U.K. or U.S.A. as shown in the bottom right hand pie diagram. Most probably this took the form of summer vacation language courses, staying in colleges or with families and relatives.

The remaining 11.90% (10 students) of the total student sample, represented by the left hand semi-circle, claimed to have received no school instruction in English but to have learnt through the sources represented in the bottom left hand pie diagram. Thus they probably learnt directly by living in an English speaking country or from an English speaking parent. In two cases, length of stay in Britain was claimed to be over 9 years and 18 years. Thus education in the British school system would have been influential. It results as expected from question 4 that by far the most widespread source of English for the sample was the Italian school system.

qu. 5 - Length of English study

Another significant measure of student knowledge about the British Isles was obtained by asking how long each student had studied English. Figure 5 shows that 53.57% of the sample studied from 6 to 9 years and 15.49% for over 9 years. Therefore the majority of the sample (58 students) studied from 6 to over 9 years confirming my assumption that the sample would have had good or higher than average quantity of instruction concerning the British Isles.
Fig. 5 - Length of English study

qu. 6 - Possible visits to the U.K.

Although lengthy study must have contributed to moulding individual knowledge and opinions about the British Isles, other variables thought capable of influencing responses were expected to be none the less significant. These included possible visits, their frequency and length. In fact it was found that 80.95% of the sample (68 students) had actually been to the British Isles and are represented in figure 6 by the right hand semi-circle. Of these, 39.70% (27 students) had been more than twice. The left hand semi-circle represents sixteen students who had never visited the country (19.05% of the sample). Length of stay is shown by the columnar diagram in figure 7. It can be seen that the largest divided rectangle represents forty-eight students (70.59% of the sample who visited the U.K.) who stayed from over one month to less than one year. 14.71% (10 students) stayed over one year.

Another factor considered vital to an understanding of responses was to find out whether the students went to the British Isles as tourists, employees, students at
language schools or other. Out of the 80.95% who had visited the country the two largest categories where found to be (as shown in figure 8), firstly guests in an English family and secondly students at language schools for foreign students (47.37% and 25.26% respectively). As many students gave more than one response it was not clear how many had lived in an English family without attending a language school. Only ten students claimed to have worked, a mere 10.53% of the sample.

![Fig. 6 - Frequency of visits to the U.K.](image)

![Fig. 7 - Length of stay in the U.K.](image)
qu. 7 - Areas of the U.K. visited

It was hoped that question 7 (illustrated by fig. 9), would give some indication of student knowledge about British regional geography and thus the results be useful to an understanding of student responses in section 2 (mental maps). As suspected most students (65.17%) who had visited the British Isles stayed in London and the S.E. (32 and 26 students respectively). Presumably they had little or no contact with other parts of the country. The second most frequented area was the S.W. of England (16.86%). Only four students were found to have visited the Midlands and eight the north of England. Reasons for the southern distribution illustrated are most probably the great attraction of the British capital as a tourist magnet, the warmer and relatively drier climate found in the south and the tendency for English language schools to be situated in the south of the country. It is a pity that so few students had contact with the Celtic Fringe (2 in Wales, 1 in Scotland) which makes up such a large and distinct part of the British Isles.
Fig. 9 - Geographical distribution of student visits to the U.K.
qu. 39 - Sources of information

The last question belonging to this first section (qu. 39) was placed at the end of the questionnaire as a logical ending. A question on information sources in a questionnaire of this type is essential as a key to the understanding of the responses of a participant and the degree of knowledge he or she possesses. One cannot attempt to answer questions about a foreign country if one's perception has not been influenced in some way during one's life by information filtered through indirect contact sources (school, various media sources) or direct contact sources (residence abroad, foreign holidays, frequent visits by foreign relatives or nationals).

Our memory, far from holding every sensory impression from our environment, selects and retains only a small portion. Our views of the world and about people and places in it are formed from a highly filtered set of impressions and our images are strongly affected by the information we receive through our filters.

(Gould and White 1974, p. 48)

An average child up to the age of 5-6 does not usually understand much about the existence of foreign countries in the world (see Piaget and Weil 1951). It will have learnt something of ethnic differences (e.g. negroes, Chinese, whites, etc.), of language differences (e.g. difficult communication with foreign children at holiday resorts) and of simple notions of territory (e.g. a particular city or area remembered because a likeable relative or friend lives there or a particular event took place). Yet clarity in these fields is not reached until the 7-8 age group. Ideas about nationality and patriotism are formed some two years later. According to Jean Piaget, a young child's ideas about other countries are shaped and moulded according to different home and social
environments (school, teacher and other children) and are not entirely its own. Therefore the first stereotyped ideas develop and often remain unchanged into adulthood. Typical examples are that Germans are aggressive and warlike, Americans rich, Russians unfriendly, etc.. The word stereotype was described by Walter Lippmann (9) as:

human tendency to prejudge objects in our environment, by classifying them first and then seeing them in terms of what we think we already know about members of that classification.

(Lippmann 1922, (9))

However instead of submissiveness to stereotyped ideas, some people enter a stage of reciprocity, i.e. an interchange of ideas and the making of one's own individual judgements and logical relationships from what one hears and sees for one's self. This stage can be reached partly through school, if children are not over influenced by a teacher's personal attitudes, and the mass media. Thus in most cases, we learn about a foreign country through indirect contact that influences our perception:

For the most part we do not first see and then define, we define and then see.

(Lippmann 1922, (9))

Some of us are also influenced by direct contact with foreign nationals or foreign countries.

Therefore, in my opinion in this present study, school, mass media and visits to the British Isles should be three very influential sources of information affecting the results of the survey, and attention will be focused on this point while describing the results of question 39.

From the analysis of responses, it was found that seventy-seven students answered question 39. Of these,
forty-two gave more than one response. Taking the first choice from the set answers, "Through school", a total of fifty-one responses were obtained (60.71% of the sample) of which twenty-two (26.19%) claimed school to be their only information source and nothing else. Thus as expected, school as an information source scored high (see fig. 10).

Mass media sources in the set answers given were only three, television, newspapers and books. Taken individually, television scored the highest number of responses, thirty-seven (44.05%). Only four (4.76%) claimed television as their only information source. The present university generation has been exposed to this mass media source for years and in Italy there is also good coverage of European affairs in news reports and documentaries. Most films and serials especially on the private channels, are from English-speaking countries. However these tend to portray American life and culture rather than British.

The answer on newspapers, revealed thirty-six total responses (42.86%), of which four claimed this media as their only source of information (4.76%).

Books were found to be less influential and were probably school text books, novels taught in literature classes and possibly also Italian translations of best-sellers. A total of eighteen responses was obtained (21.43%). Only two (2.38%) students claimed books to be their only source of information.

In the space provided for 'other' sources, no mention was made of radio (used more as a source of light music than news by this consumer age group), weekly magazines or periodicals. Only 8 students (9.52%) claimed their sources of information as 'other', specifying the source as, living in the U.K., travelling in the U.K. and contact with British people.

From the responses obtained, certain inadequacies were found. The question was too structured. Individual choice may have led to the mention of many more sources e.g. radio, films, correspondence, relatives, etc. No information was given about the types of programme
Fig. 10 - Sources of information
watched on television, the types of newspaper read, whether in English or Italian. No indication was obtained of total time spent with these media sources or frequency of contact. There resulted little data on direct contact from the answers, possibly because students had already answered question 6. However despite these drawbacks, it was still possible to compare the three factors mentioned above, which in my opinion are three very influential sources of information necessary in moulding one's cross-cultural perception: school, mass media, personal visits to the foreign country (U.K.).

**School**

60.71% of the sample acquired knowledge through school (only 26.20% of the sample acquired knowledge through school alone).

**Mass media** (television, newspapers and books)

61.90% of the sample acquired knowledge through the mass media (only 11.90% of the sample acquired knowledge through mass media alone).

**Visits to the U.K.**

80.95% of the student sample visited the U.K. (as this information was acquired from question 6, it is not known if anyone would have claimed to have acquired their knowledge from visits alone).
b. Section two - Mental maps.

Questions 8-11 and 32 can be grouped together as a separate part of the questionnaire as they require answers of a different nature with the specific aim of obtaining the student's mental image of the British Isles as regards geographical locations and economic factors. Analysis of the responses to this section proved arduous and intricate. At first the objective was to produce a single composite map from the student sample, but this resulted graphically and mathematically difficult and so each question was dealt with individually.

qu. 8 - Mental image of cities

Each student was provided with a blank outline map of the British Isles and instructed to locate twelve specific large cities and towns. For each location thus obtained, points were plotted on a cartesian axis with the true city location at the centre. This was done in order to fix the x y co-ordinates which were in turn placed on a data matrix of personal design and fed into a System 36 IBM Computer. This recorded the dispersion of points for each city around the true location. From the co-ordinates, twelve maps of city dispersion were compiled (see figs 15 to 26).

It can be seen from these illustrations that dispersion varied greatly from city to city. For example, the responses regarding Birmingham (fig. 15, page 35) were found as far as Wales, East Anglia, the South Coast and as far north as the Scottish Highlands. Great dispersion was found in the case of other industrial cities, Manchester, Newcastle, Glasgow and Sheffield.

Variations in responses (see fig. 12) would seem to indicate the least known cities, Dundee 16, a Scottish provincial town, Sheffield 25 and Newcastle 27 and the better known, London 82, Glasgow 61 and Liverpool 60. But on closer examination, of 'acceptable' locations, it was found in the latter cases that perception was not always as good as expected, for example Manchester.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
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<td>8.01</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 1 – Mean city location and standard deviation

From the maps (figs. 15 to 26) many cases of extreme responses can be observed which were found to greatly distort the mean value and are also reflected in the standard deviation (see tab. 1 and fig. 11). The greater the dispersion and number of extreme responses the higher the standard deviation. Therefore in order to reduce this effect, some other measure of dispersion had to be found which reduced the pull of extremes, used all the data and took all locations into account. It was decided to find some indication of student reliability in order to weight the responses. The Reliability Coefficient \( C_k \) was formulated for each student's questionnaire response.
Fig. 11 - Standard deviation values of the twelve cities
Number of total responses per city

Percentage of 'acceptable' city locations within a 25 km radius out of the total number of responses per city

Fig. 12 - Student response and 'acceptable' location of cities
\[ C_k = \frac{\sum NCA}{\sum TNA} \]

where NCA is the number of correct answers per student and TNA the total number of possible answers per student.

For the calculation of \( C_k \) only those answers from Section 3 were considered (question 12 to 38 excluding question 32). This Section tested student ability and knowledge asking a variety of questions on cultural, political, economic, etc. topics, whereas Section 1 (questions 1 to 7 and 38) was irrelevant to the calculation of \( C_k \), as it only contained background information and Section 2 was concerned with the producing of mental maps.

The value of the \( C_k \) coefficient ranged from 0<=\( C_k \)<=1, 0 indicating maximum error and 1 a maximum correct response. \( C_k \) was calculated for each student and then the \( x \) \( y \) co-ordinates for each location were weighted by multiplication with \( C_k \) to obtain a more homogeneous set of values around the mean. However it was realized that an absurd situation was created this way. Those students with a very good knowledge of the British Isles were penalized too much and those having less clear ideas appeared cleverer than was the case.

\[ \text{eg. - Student A with co-ordinates } -10/5 \text{ and a high } C_k \text{ of 0.8, received the weighted co-ordinates } -8/4. \]

\[ \text{- Student B with the same co-ordinates } -10/5 \text{ but with a low } C_k \text{ of 0.2, received the weighted co-ordinates } -2/1. \]

\[ \text{Therefore it would seem that student A with a better knowledge, produced a location with greater error than student B with less knowledge about the British Isles.} \]

It was therefore found necessary to modify \( C_k \) to \( C'_k \).

\[ C'_k = 1 - C_k \]
Each co-ordinate was weighted by multiplication with $C_k$. The arithmetic mean of the weighted co-ordinates was calculated for each location and 12 points were thus obtained (see fig. 13). These points were plotted on a final composite map (see fig. 14) to show the sample's mean perceived image of the 12 cities and towns of the British Isles.

Figure 14 shows a fairly good sample image of the cities. All twelve composite city locations are in roughly their correct geographical position (Birmingham in the Midlands, Glasgow in central Scotland, etc.). The two most displaced composite locations are, Newcastle placed too far south and inland and Cardiff also inland. Both had high standard deviations on both or one co-ordinate.

In order to obtain a further measure of student perception only those points falling within a 25 km radius from each true city location were counted. The number of 'acceptable' student locations falling within this area taken as a percentage of the total number of locations for each city are shown in figure 12.

Taking each city separately the following conclusions can be made:

i) **Birmingham** (fig. 15, page 35). Despite a fairly good response, this city location was not well known by the students. Although the resulting composite location was very close to true location, on further inspection great dispersion of points was found in all directions in all parts of Great Britain. The northern extreme locations led to high standard deviation of the $y$ co-ordinate and few students were able to give an 'acceptable' location.

ii) **Cardiff** (fig. 16, page 36). A fairly good response rate was obtained but there resulted widespread dispersion mainly in Wales, and the SW. Five students thought it to be in Scotland which led to a high standard deviation on both co-ordinates. The composite location was displaced inland, and there resulted a low percentage of 'acceptable' locations. Altogether students revealed poor perception of this city.
Fig. 13 - Mean weighted values of the twelve cities
Fig. 14 - Student composite mental map of twelve British cities. (Letters indicate real location, dots indicate perceived location)
iii) **Dundee** (fig. 17, page 37). This was the city about which the students had the least knowledge with response at its lowest. The few who answered, except one, knew Dundee to be in the Celtic Fringe, hence the distribution of points in Scotland or Ireland. A good composite location was obtained but there was much dispersion of points reflected in a high standard deviation for both co-ordinates and only one 'acceptable' location was attained.

iv) **Glasgow** (fig. 18, page 38). Glasgow received a very high response rate and concentration of points within Scotland, which despite extremes, resulted in a very good composite location. However standard deviation was high and students had inaccurate knowledge of true location, perceiving the city further north or on the west coast.

v) **Liverpool** (fig. 19, page 39). Overall, Liverpool was well perceived, obtaining a very high response rate and a concentration of points dispersed mainly in the west with a N-S tendency. Composite location was good, standard deviation low and a large number of student locations were 'acceptable'.

vi) **London** (fig. 20, page 40). The British capital was by far the best perceived city of the British Isles. Response was the highest, there was little dispersion, with distribution of points concentrated in the south east leading to a low standard deviation. A good composite location and the highest number of 'acceptable' locations were obtained.

vii) **Londonderry** (fig. 21, page 41). This Irish city received a good response rate and all but two knew it to be situated somewhere in Ireland, especially Ulster. This led to a good composite location, low standard deviation and overall good perception. But only one location was 'acceptable' as distribution of points was concentrated in central Ulster.

viii) **Manchester** (fig. 22, page 42). A good response resulted, but those who answered had confused knowledge about this city's location, reflected in the
great dispersion of points and only two 'acceptable' answers. Notwithstanding, the composite location was fairly close to the true point.

ix) Newcastle (fig. 23, page 43). As for Manchester, this city showed great dispersion of points which were few owing to a lower response. A high standard deviation caused by extreme southern distribution and composite location displaced inland indicated confused knowledge concerning this city.

x) Plymouth (fig. 24, page 44). Despite a fairly high response rate and tendency towards a southern coastal location, students overall perceived this city too far east and therefore 'acceptable' locations were fewer than expected. It received the most distorted mean weighted value.

xi) Sheffield (fig. 25, page 45). As for Newcastle, this city received a low response and was poorly perceived. Dispersion was in all directions leading to a good composite location but no 'acceptable' answers.

xii) Southampton (fig. 26, page 46). Southampton was well perceived, receiving a high response rate and a concentration of points in the south especially at the coast. The composite location was very good and the third most numerous 'acceptable' locations were attained after London and Liverpool.

Therefore the best perceived city in the mental image of the student sample was London, as expected, seconded by Southampton. It must be remembered that 65.17% of students had stayed in London and the SE (see fig. 9, page 18). But although 16.86% of students visited the SW (the second most frequented area), Plymouth fared less well than expected, being perceived too far east. Although few students visited the NW (5.62%) and none Ireland, Liverpool and Londonderry were well perceived. As location of the other British industrial cities resulted very inaccurate, it was unlikely that Liverpool was better perceived for its economic importance. More probably, students knew more about its location from the fact that it has been the centre of British modern popular music
for years, a subject of interest for this age group. In the case of Londonderry this result probably reflects the fact that information on the troubles of Northern Ireland, much publicized in recent years, must have reached the students through various indirect and direct sources.

A poor mental image of city location was found in the remaining cases, with least knowledge attributed to Dundee in Scotland. Scotland fared badly also in the case of Glasgow, but as only one student visited the country this result is not surprising. Only two students had visited Wales, possibly explaining Cardiff's inland displacement. Few students had accurate knowledge of the remaining industrial cities of England. A possible reason for such uncertainty was that these cities are located in the Midlands and North of England, which according to the results of question 7 were among the least visited parts of the British Isles (see fig. 9, page 18). It would be reasonable to presume a lower than average student geographical awareness of these parts of Britain. The NW (Manchester) was visited by only 5.62% of the students, the NE by 4.50% (Newcastle was displaced south), and the Midlands were visited by only 4.50% of the sample (Sheffield and Birmingham).
Fig. 15 - Student location of Birmingham
Fig. 16 - Student location of Cardiff
Fig. 17 - Student location of Dundee
Fig. 13 - Student location of Glasgow
Fig. 19 - Student location of Liverpool
Fig. 20 - Student location of London
Fig. 21 - Student location of Londonderry
Fig. 22 - Student location of Manchester
Fig. 23 - Student location of Newcastle
Fig. 24 - Student location of Plymouth
Fig. 25 - Student location of Sheffield
Fig. 26 - Student location of Southampton
qu. 9 - Mental image of rivers

In order to further test student geographical perception, students were required to place five rivers on the outline map provided. All student responses were plotted on five separate maps only (see figs 28 to 32), as it was found too great a task to prepare a single composite map of such irregular forms. Response rates varied greatly and are illustrated in figure 27. Any attempt to count the number of 'acceptable' locations was felt to be too subjective.

![Diagram](image)

**Legend**

- **H.** Humber
- **S.** Severn
- **T.** Thames
- **C.** Clyde
- **M.** Mersey

**Fig. 27 - Number of total responses per river**

The best results were obtained for the Thames, Britain's second longest and world famous river. The response rate was the highest, but in order to keep figure 28 as clear as possible, only the main trends out of sixty-six responses are illustrated on the map. Seven
students marked a N-S flow with the mouth of the Thames situated at the south coast without an estuary. (A check was made on their response to question eight and it was found that in all seven cases, the location of London was likewise displaced south). One student mistook the Thames for the river Severn, yet placed London in its near correct position. Overall, the students possessed good perception of this river.

Knowledge concerning the other British rivers was very poor as response rates were low. The few who did answer, had fairly clear ideas, except in the case of the Mersey and Clyde. Only six students placed the Severn, Britain's longest river, flowing into the correct estuary. Of these, one student placed the river in acceptable proximity to its true flow, the other five students placed its source too far north or east (see fig. 29). Others located it at random along the NE coast and in Scotland. One student confused it with the Thames and yet another placed it in Ireland probably confusing it with the Shannon. It is interesting to note here that the answer to question 15 on the longest river is 'the Severn'. Only twenty students answered correctly. Ten students located the river on the outline map. Of these, three near the correct flow into the Severn estuary and seven inaccurately.

Around the estuaries of the remaining three rivers (figs 30, 31 and 32), large urban and industrial areas of economic significance have developed (Humberside, Merseyside and Clydeside) about which students of English would most likely have heard. To the contrary however knowledge was lacking as no student knew the Humber to be only an elongated estuary and extended it, the Mersey was located very inaccurately and perception of the Clyde's location was null.
Fig. 28 - Student location of the river Thames
Fig. 29 - Student location of the river Severn
Fig. 30 - Student location of the river Clyde
Fig. 31 - Student location of the Humber
Fig. 32 - Student location of the river Mersey
qu. 10 - Mental image of upland areas

Six British upland areas were selected and students were required to locate them by placing their names on the outline map. It was decided to represent each student's rough location as a dot and see if this fell within the true geographic region (see figs. 34 to 39).

Response rates for this question are illustrated in figure 33, together with an approximate measure of 'acceptable' responses (those locations found to fall within the true geographic area, expressed as a percentage of total responses).

Number of total responses per upland area

Percentage of 'acceptable' locations out of total number of responses

Fig. 33 - Student response and 'acceptable' location of upland areas.
Taking each area in order of best response, the Lake District must be dealt with first (see fig. 33). Most students had heard of this area (geographically the Cumbrian Mountains, not to be confused with the Cambrian Mountains in Wales), despite the fact that it is situated in the NW of England and was visited by only five students. The Lake District is one of Great Britain's most popular tourist attractions and was also the home of famous British poets. These include William Wordsworth, himself a Lakelander, Thomas Grey, Hartley Coleridge and Alfred Tennyson, whose works the students will most probably have studied in their school literature classes. However, unexpectedly the students had the poorest mental image of its location. Despite the high response (60.71%), points were dispersed in all parts of the country (see fig. 34) and only three students out of fifty-one located it in an 'acceptable' position.

Two mountain regions were chosen in Scotland: the Highlands, which most geographers take to cover the area indicated in figure 35, and the Grampians (see fig. 36), which are really the southern part of the Highlands. The Highlands claimed the second best response (48.81%) and dispersal was concentrated within Scotland, except for three locations in the north of England. Perception of this area was the best with a very large percentage of students indicating an 'acceptable' location.

The Pennines illustrated in figure 37, obtained a good response and from the diagram (fig. 33) would seem to be the second best known upland area. Distribution of points, produced a good N-S trend in or near the correct location, apart from three points in the north of Scotland. An explanation could be, that the area's name resembles the Apennines in Italy, which likewise from a N-S backbone of mountains down the centre of the country.

The three remaining areas were poorly perceived. The Cambrian Mountains obtained a low response rate and inaccurate location, with dispersion throughout Great Britain (see fig. 38). The Grampian response (see fig. 36) was even lower, but perception clearer, with dispersion
Fig. 34 - Student location of the Lake District
Fig. 35 - Student location of the Highlands
Fig. 36 - Student location of the Grampians
Fig. 37 - Student location of the Pennines
Fig. 38 - Student location of the Cambrian Mountains
Fig. 39 - Student location of the Antrim Hills
concentrated in the north except in two cases. Obviously most students in the sample had never heard of the Grampians, yet had located the Highlands correctly of which the Grampians are part. The Antrim Hills fared the worst (see fig. 39). Of the five students attempting a location, no one pin-pointed the correct position. However all, except one, knew the area to be in Ireland.

A last point to be noted, is that from the maps it is clear that despite inaccuracies, the students tended to perceive the upland areas in the north and west of Great Britain, as is the case, despite the fact that these areas were among the least visited.

qu. 11 – Mental image of the location of some British products and industries

Respondents were required to locate the areas of production of the shipbuilding, motor-car, coalmining, pottery, cotton and woollen industries on the blank outline map provided. As each product has several major industrial locations in the British Isles, it was decided to illustrate and deal with each product separately showing both the real and perceived locations together for direct comparison (see fig. 41 to 46). The United Kingdom for certain planning purposes is divided into eight economic planning regions in England (Northern, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside, West Midlands, East Midlands, South West, South East and East Anglia), together with Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. These regions are illustrated on each relevant map and will be referred to during the description of results. A columnar diagram of student response is provided (see fig. 40).

There being several different sites for each product, students often located a single commodity more than once. No measure of "acceptable" location is illustrated with the response as there are too many possible real locations for each type of industrial product.
The principal British shipyards are found in all regions except in Wales and the East and West Midlands (see fig. 41). Student point distribution is in fact minimal within these three and is largely concentrated in expected coastal or near coastal locations apart from two points placed in the Pennines (Northern Region) and others imprecisely located inland in the South East. Perception of the industry in the South East region seems good at first glance but is distorted by one student providing four points around London alone. The two largest south coast centres are in reality Portsmouth and Southampton and to a lesser extent, Cowes on the Isle of Wight and the lower Thames Estuary. In the case of south west and north east Scotland, students viewed the shipbuilding industry as being located all along the coast, which would indeed tally with minor boat building, but not with the principal
centres of Devonport and Aberdeen respectively. The distribution of points, shows a southern concentration and indicates less knowledge about the larger centres namely, Clydeside, Furness, Merseyside and Tyneside and no knowledge of Humberside, Middlesbrough or Yarmouth. No one located points indicating Belfast in Northern Ireland Britain's largest and once most productive yard. Despite a good response, (see fig. 40) knowledge was overall imprecise or lacking.

In the case of the motor car industry (illustrated in fig. 42), 54% of total point distribution is concentrated in Britain's three principal producing regions; West Midlands (with the largest output), North West and South East. However, overall response was low, (see fig. 40) and knowledge was totally lacking concerning the industry in Wales and in the South West.

Coalmining, one of Britain's oldest extractive industries (see fig. 43), is practised in all regions except in East Anglia. This widespread diffusion is reflected in student point distribution, with point clusters concentrated in a band from south Wales to the southern borders of the Northern region. The high response for Wales clearly indicates that the students correctly associated Wales with a highly productive and profitable coalmining industry. Knowledge was strongly lacking concerning the once equally important Scottish and Northern fields, or Britain's largest and most productive Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire field.

Response to the location of the pottery industry was low (see fig. 44), indicating poor overall perception by the total sample. However the majority of the few respondents placed points in the appropriate regions (East and West Midlands, South West and South East).

Poor overall response was also obtained in the case of the British cotton textile industry (see fig. 45). Rather than a concentration of points in the North West, points are dispersed in a NW-SE band from the Northern region to the South East. Poor overall perception was evident.
Fig. 41 - Student location of the shipbuilding industry
Fig. 42 - Student location of the motor car industry
Fig. 43 - Student location of the coalmining industry
Fig. 44 - Student location of the pottery industry
Fig. 45 - Student location of the cotton textile industry
Fig. 46 - Student location of the woollen textile industry
A better result was obtained in the case of the woollen textile industry (see fig. 46), with a large cluster of points in Scotland and a scatter along the Pennines, the major sheep rearing and wool producing areas. The concentration of points in Scotland, indicated a lack of knowledge concerning the most productive British region, Yorkshire and Humberside, where 70% of the country's woollen textiles are produced (for example in Bradford or Leeds).

Figure 40 (page 63) illustrates highest response for coalmining and woollen textiles. Irrespective of response the best locations (figs 41 to 46) were again for coal and wool, and pottery.

**qu. 32 - Mental image of places in the British Isles which attract most foreign tourists**

This is the last question dealing with geographical features to obtain the student's mental image and therefore a part of section two, as it deals with point location. However on the questionnaire, it was felt that this question was better placed towards the end after general geographic knowledge had been tested. Students were asked to name five places in the British Isles which they retained would most attract tourists (no outline map was provided). A total of 303 (72.14%) responses was obtained out of a possible 420. It emerged from the results that the term 'places' was too imprecise, leading students to include anything from large geographic areas, to cities and landmarks, which caused difficulty in graphic representation.

The most mentioned 'places' were towns and cities. Of these, seven appeared in question eight (Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Plymouth, Southampton). The last two of these and another six are south coast towns, where many English language schools for foreign students are located and a number of respondents may have studied there (Bournemouth, Brighton, Hastings, Isle of Wight and Torquay). A high number of
Fig. 47 - Student perception surface of places in Britain which most attract tourists
responses resulted for the following: Oxford and Cambridge, clearly perceived as Britain's most distinguished university towns, Canterbury renowned for its cathedral, Edinburgh the capital of Scotland and Stratford-on-Avon, Shakespeare's birth-place. As expected, London scored best being mentioned by 76.19% of the sample. Three students specified landmarks within London: Buckingham Palace, Carnaby Street and Picadilly Circus. Stonehenge was the only other famous landmark mentioned by five students.

Geographical 'places' apart from towns and cities, varied from Loch Ness (one mention), Islands (five) and three counties: Devon, Cornwall and Yorkshire (one mention each). Large geographical areas were the Lake District (which received the highest response in question 10) and general reference was made to Ireland, Scotland, the South Coast and Wales.

No mention was made of places in Ireland, probably because the socio-political trouble there discourages tourism. Broad news coverage by the Italian press of the death of Robert ('Bobby') Sands, an IRA member who died on the 66th day of a hunger strike in Maze Prison near Belfast, in May 1981, was probably still vivid in the minds of students at the time of the survey. Likewise no mention was made of the central part of England, probably associated with British industry rather than tourist resorts.

In order to produce some form of graphic representation of the data, the percentage of mentions was calculated for each 'place' and then the values obtained, were converted onto a 1-100 scale. Places of equal value were linked by iso-lines to produce a perception surface, to illustrate which parts of the British Isles emerged as the most attractive to tourists in the eyes of the Italian student sample.

A problem arose in the case of those wide geographic areas which could not be pin-pointed on the map and were thus omitted (Ireland, Scotland, the South Coast and Wales). However in all cases except Scotland, no
difference in the general trend resulted. Ireland received two mentions which left it clearly below iso-percept 10. Likewise in the case of Wales with five mentions and the South Coast with three. Scotland received fifteen 'general' mentions which could not be used.

In figure 47 the resulting perception surface shows two strongly represented areas in east and southern Scotland and S.E. England with a distinct NE-SW perceptual trough in between. The most attractive of the two, is the S.E. of England with a steep perceptual gradient, producing a wide dome over the London Basin. A similar but less accentuated effect, can be seen over Edinburgh. Attraction declines westwards, except for the extreme S.W. reaching zero in Ireland and Wales.

Accounting for results is always difficult but in the case of Ireland the reason mentioned above concerning socio-political troubles, is probably valid. As for the West Coast in general, distance, remoteness or lack of information as to the natural beauty, could all be considered. In the case of other areas on the map, it would seem that most areas chosen were those visited by the students.

By comparing the results with those of question 7 (page 17), it was found that the students did indeed identify with the places they had visited, but with the exception of Scotland. In figure 9 (page 18), 65.17% of the student sample visited or stayed in London or the S.E., 16.86% visited the S.W. which could possibly explain the increased perceptual surface value in the S.W. (see fig. 47) and another 16.86% visited the N.E., N.W., Midlands and Wales (see fig. 9, page 18), which would tally with the iso-percept 10 running from the N.E. down through the Midlands, touching Wales down to the South Coast (see fig. 47). Yet despite only 1.12% (one student) having visited Scotland, this region attracted a high percentage of the sample, more than any other unknown, 'invisible' part of the country.
c. Section three - General knowledge test.

The third and final part of the questionnaire, comprises factual questions (question 12 to 31 and 33 to 38) mainly on British geography, economy and institutions in order to test student knowledge and gain an insight into the common misconceptions held about the United Kingdom and thus improve my own teaching.

qu. 12 and 13 - British Geography
Climate - Heaviest rainfall and warmest weather

Most Italians when packing their suitcases for a trip to the United Kingdom automatically include warm clothes, a raincoat and umbrella, no matter which season it is, imagining the climate as being always cold and wet, which is indeed true for certain parts of the country, but not all. Questions 12 and 13 were aimed at obtaining a rough indication of the mental distribution of heavy rainfall and warm temperatures.

The general pattern of rain and temperatures is briefly described as follows. Rainfall in the British Isles is adequate and well distributed throughout the year, with heaviest showers and often excessive quantities in the western and northern hills and mountains (up to 5,000 mm at a few points in the north west of Scotland, Cumberland and north Wales compared to around 500 mm in parts of the south east). Temperatures for the latitude are higher than would be expected, due to the proximity of the Atlantic Ocean and prevailing south west winds and surface warm water currents (Gulf Stream). In the Western Isles of Scotland, the average temperature can reach 9°C over the latitude average, and in August, mean sea temperatures along the west coast can reach around 17°C. However this by no means makes the west and north west 'warm' all year (although sub-tropical plants are grown in gardens in sheltered bays). The north and west are by nature's intent the most hilly and mountainous,
Fig. 48 - Percentage of total responses per question out of the total possible answers.
and thus temperatures inland are much reduced by altitude and the influx of cold continental and polar air streams from the north and east during the long winter. Therefore weather in the British Isles is generally unsettled and very changeable, with most rain usually in northern and western districts. Brighter, warmer weather is to be found in the south and east, the most equable in the south west.

Student response to question 12 was good (65.48% see fig. 48). From the pie diagram (fig. 49) it can be seen that only wide geographical regions were mentioned by the student sample. As no cardinal direction was required or indicated, except in the case of 'west' coast, it was impossible to produce an areal distribution map to indicate western or southern concentrations of points and thus give a visual representation of density. Better and clearer results would have been obtained if the students had indeed been asked to place the areas of heavy rainfall on an outline map.

The pie diagram shows that a significant percentage of the sample (46.30%) mentioned Scotland and the North (in general), which are indeed among the wettest regions in their western districts. A much lower percentage mentioned the West Coast, Ireland or Wales (5.56%, 5.56% and 3.70% respectively) which as described above, all receive abundant precipitation. Undue emphasis was placed on rain in the South (31.48% of the sample compared with 25.92% for Scotland).

The results of question 13 were better with a total response of 76.19% (see fig. 48) and most respondents gave a correct southern coastal location (95.3%). As students were not required to mark an isotherm on an outline map, it was impossible to illustrate the results of this question. The only other three places mentioned, were the Midlands, Wales and "the coast effected by the Gulf Stream" each representing an insignificant percentage of the total answers.

In conclusion, the sample perceived heavy rainfall to precipitate in all parts of the country with predominance
Fig. 49 - Areas thought to have the heaviest rainfall in the U.K.
in the north and west. The south was perceived to be as wet if not wetter than Scotland, which is not the case. The mental image of warm temperatures was better than that of rainfall distribution and was not far removed from reality.

qu. 14 - British Geography

Relief - Which is the highest mountain?

Questions 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 23 were all intended to test student knowledge about the geography of the British Isles and results were placed together in the form of a columnar diagram, see figure 48.

For question 14 it can be seen from the figure that only 45.24% of the sample attempted an answer and only 39.29% knew that Ben Nevis in the Scottish Highlands is the highest mountain in the country. Two students mentioned Snowdon which is the highest mountain in Wales, another confused the two and wrote Ben Snow and yet another wrote the Peak, probably intending the highest mountain in the Peak District of the Pennines. A fifth mentioned Mount MacKinley which has a Scottish sounding name but is the highest mountain in North America situated in south-central Alaska.

qu. 15 - British Geography

Rivers - Which is the longest river?

The results of this question have already been partially discussed in the comments about river location for question 9 (page 47), where knowledge was found to be deficient. In figure 48 (page 76) the response for question 15 is 59.52%. Only two rivers were mentioned. 35.71% incorrectly gave the Thames as the answer and 23.81% correctly gave the Severn. However, as there is only a one mile difference in length between the two and the Thames is world-renowned, it is not surprising that the Thames was mentioned most frequently. That the Severn be mentioned to such an extent was unexpected.
As for question 9, only ten students located it on the outline map (see fig. 29, page 50) and of these, only three near the correct flow.

qu. 16 - British Geography
Lakes - Which is the largest lake?

The lowest response was obtained for this geographical question (see fig. 48, page 76). Only 14.28% of the sample attempted to answer, of which only two mentions were correct. Lough Neagh is the largest lake in the British Isles, situated in Northern Ireland. Of the incorrect answers, three mentioned Loch Lomond, the largest lake in Scotland, four mentioned Loch Ness, Scotland’s most famous and deepest lake, and three mentioned Lake Windermere the largest in England.

qu. 17 and 22 - British Geography
Cognitive distance

These two questions are dealt with together as they both require the students to provide a measure of cognitive distance. The measure of distance between two fixed locations is a method of assessing spatial perception which together with the methods of point location and general questioning used so far, is another means of adding to the understanding of the student’s mental image of the British Isles.

In most studies of cognitive distance, the urban system has been analysed calculating perceived distance between several nodes (such as landmarks or facilities) and taking into consideration such variables as mode of travel, familiarity with the environment, age, etc. (10). In this study, the respondents dealt with an unfamiliar unit of space: the British Isles. Here the aim was simply to compare the subjective underestimation or overestimation of distance by the sample against objective real geographical distance between only four nodes (points).

Respondents were required to make only one simple
Fig. 50 - Cognitive distance
binary judgement for each question between two fixed points. They were required to give estimated straight-line distance judgments for the shortest English Channel crossing (nodes being the two closest points along the English and French coasts) and the straight-line distance between the nodes London and Edinburgh. Direct surface distance was calculated and found to be about 35 km and 533 km respectively.

For question 17, 57 direct kilometer distances were obtained, providing a 68.31% response and a foreshortening of perceived distance in all cases (48.81% underestimated the distance from 5-15 km, the remaining 19.5% from 15-30 km, see fig. 50). One may assume that as 80.95% of the students had visited the British Isles, most must have flown rather than use the traditional Channel ferry crossing as so many gave no answer or wide underestimations.

It is a strange coincidence that the total percentage of students 80.95% who gave no answer or a widely inaccurate underestimation of distance, is exactly the same as the percentage of students who visited the British Isles (see qu. 6, page 15). It would therefore have been interesting to ascertain whether the mode of travel was by air in all cases as suspected.

For question 22 there was a greater response (85.71%), which produced 72 direct kilometer distances. Also in this case distance was completely underestimated at 300-400 km in 45 responses and 400-500 km in 27 responses (see fig. 50).

As both questions were of 'closed' structured nature, offering the students the choice between several set answers, and results yielded were poor, it would have been interesting to compare results with another sample given wider freedom of estimation ('open questions'). Because of this 'closed' structure, the results of these two questions were not included in figure 48 but are illustrated separately in figure 50.
qu. 18 - British Geography

Seas - Which sea is found off the east coast of Scotland?

The next question to be dealt with, is question 18, and from figure 48 (page 76) it can be seen that out of the 66.67% response, most of the students (54.76%) correctly gave the North Sea as the answer. Of the ten incorrect responses, six mentioned the Baltic, one the Channel, one the Atlantic, another invented the East Sea and the last simply wrote the Ocean.

qu. 19 - British Geography

Islands - How many islands comprise the U.K.?

From the results (see fig. 48, page 76) it is clear that this was the geographical question the students found most difficult to answer, with only a 28.57% response and no acceptable answers. By asking "How many islands comprise the United Kingdom" it was intended to find out whether the students regarded the country as comprising only Great Britain and Ireland and one or two clusters of small islands (eg. Shetlands, Orkneys) or whether they realised there are scores of smaller islands around the two main ones. The average atlas names some 150 islands of all sizes, but there are certainly over 500 if the smallest habitable and uninhabitable are to be included.

Of the twenty-four responses, six indeed mentioned only Great Britain and Ireland, and fourteen gave a low estimate with numbers ranging from 4 to 30. Thus 58.33% of the respondents considered only a few islands, probably the largest and most mentioned in their school text books. Only one student gave too high an estimate of 'thousands' and three simply wrote a vague, indefinable 'many'. 
qu. 20 - British Geography

Seas - In which sea is the Isle of Man situated?

Although the number of correct responses to question 18 on the North Sea was high, in the case of this question, only 14.29% of the sample knew the answer to be the Irish Sea (see fig. 48, page 76). Of the numerous incorrect responses, one student named the Atlantic, but the most mentioned location was the Channel. The Channel in English is usually taken to mean the English Channel and not St. George's Channel, although this is indeed situated to the south of the Irish Sea and hence is relatively near the Isle of Man. St. George's Channel was given only two specific mentions.

The second most mentioned incorrect location was the North Sea. Six of the students who gave these eight responses had correctly named the North Sea in question 18. Therefore these students clearly perceived the Isle of Man as lying off the east coast of Scotland.

qu. 21 - British Geography

Lakes - In which country is Loch Ness to be found?

Of all the geographical questions in this section, question 21 was the best perceived. Response was the highest at 89.23% (see fig. 48, page 76), with 84.53% of the sample giving Scotland as the correct answer. The two main reasons for such good results are probably that the term 'loch' is the Scottish word for lake and secondly Loch Ness is famous not only in the British Isles but throughout the world for its legendary monster Nessie. However despite such celebrity, there remained approximately 15% of the sample which either gave the wrong answer or none at all (4.70% and 10.71% respectively).

qu. 22 - See question 17 page 80.
qu. 23 - British Geography
Cities - Which is the second most populated city?

It is surprising that students having studied English knew next to nothing about Birmingham, Britain's second city with well over a million inhabitants. The city is one of Europe's largest industrial areas. Coal and iron extraction over the decades have generated the manufacture of a wide range of goods, plastics, chemicals and glass products. Birmingham is also an important cultural centre being the seat of two universities.

From figure 48, page 76 it can be seen that response to this question was average (58.33%), but the percentage of correct answers was very low (16.66%). 83.34% of the sample mentioned a city other than Birmingham or nothing at all. It is interesting to note, that from the results of question 8, Birmingham was not well perceived and there was great dispersion of points throughout Great Britain (see fig. 15, page 35).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Percentage of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>11.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>19.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 2 - Incorrect responses to qu. 23

Of the incorrect answers, (see tab. 2) Edinburgh was mentioned by six students. A possible explanation for this response could be that Edinburgh is the capital of Scotland and as such is the second most eminent and interesting city mentioned in Italian school text books. The remaining three cities mentioned (Glasgow, Liverpool and
Fig. 51 - Percentage of total responses per question out of the total possible answers.
Manchester), were all on the list of cities required to be located in question 8 of the questionnaire. Of these three, only Liverpool was well perceived in question 8 the other two fared poorly.

qu. 24 - British Economy
Exports

In section two, question 11 was aimed at obtaining the mental image of the location of only six major industries and their resulting products. In order to obtain a clearer student image of what the United Kingdom produces, question 24 was designed to permit a free choice of up to five British exports. The results are illustrated in figures 52 and 53 where real and perceived exports are compared side by side. Standard economic headings of principal commodities are used.

Before discussing each commodity separately, it must be noted that the three exports which received by far the highest number of mentions were cars, coal and wool. All three were tested in question 11 and both coal and wool were well perceived and received the highest responses (see fig. 40, page 63). All other products associated with question 11 were named as exports.

Comparison between the first commodity "food and live animals", indicates a slight overestimation. Several types of meat as well as cheese, butter, fish and tea were mentioned. Much greater error can be noted in the case of "beverages and tobacco", where more emphasis was placed on whisky exports than is the case. Underestimation resulted for "crude materials" such as wood. Perception appears not far removed from reality concerning "mineral fuels". However there resulted an exaggerated high percentage of mentions for coal which disguised a strong lack of knowledge about British oil and petroleum exports. Mention was made of all standard commodities except two: "animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes", and "chemicals and related products". By far the most frequently named and widely overestimated commodity was
Fig. 52 - Real British exports (1980)
Fig. 53 - Student perception of British exports
"basic manufactures", owing to the numerous mentions of woollen products, iron and steel. "Machinery and transport equipment", Britain's highest single export commodity at the time of the survey, was greatly underestimated with cars providing the majority of answers. Other products included by several students under this heading were general industrial machinery, ships and boats. Electrical machinery, motor vehicle parts, transport equipment and arms received one mention each. No one included agricultural machinery, civil engineering and contractors' equipment, office machines, automatic data processing equipment, telecommunications and sound recording apparatus or aircraft, all British products exported in large quantities to the EEC and overseas. The principal "miscellaneous manufacture" was pottery (see fig. 44, page 68) although response to the location of the pottery industry in question 11 (page 62) was poor. This was followed by clothes and one mention for each of the following: boots, cutlery and sound records.

Response in the case of exports was low at 49.05% as illustrated in figure 51 where the percentages of correct and incorrect answers can be compared for all those questions of closed structure where five responses were permitted. Only ten students provided the full five answers required. Of those who answered, perception was good in the case of the following: "food and live animals", "crude materials", "mineral fuels" and "miscellaneous manufactured articles". Of the remaining four, two were underestimated (especially "machinery and transport equipment"), and two were overestimated (especially "basic manufactures"). Overall, sample perception was poor.

qu. 25 - British Economy
Imports

Having dealt with exports, it is now appropriate to discuss those goods thought to enter the British Isles from abroad. Results can be compared to real imports in
figures 54 and 55. Before discussing individual standard commodities, it must be noted that in sixteen cases the following six Italian products were mentioned among British imports: citrus fruits, footwear, leather, silk, spaghetti, and wine.

From figure 55 the immediate impression gained, is that of great overestimation of the first four standard commodities ("food and live animals", "beverages and tobacco", "crude materials", "mineral fuels"), which take up a full 85% of the diagram. Food is imported in large quantities but not to the extent of 40% of the total as perceived by the sample. Fresh fruit, was the most cited commodity, cereals and tea came second, butter, coffee, meat, spices and vegetables were mentioned to a lesser degree. Under the heading "beverages and tobacco", wine was by far the most frequent item. Raw cotton imports caused overestimation in the case of "crude materials". This was a logical response in accordance with student location of the cotton industry in question 11 (page 62), although the results of overall perception of location of that industry were poor. A further indication of poor knowledge concerning petroleum production in the British Isles is provided by the great number of mentions of petroleum and petroleum products as imports and not exports as should be the case under the heading "mineral fuels". Chemical imports were named but underestimated in the form of plastics. Underestimation resulted in all three remaining commodities especially "basic manufactures" and "machinery and transport equipment" which at the time of the survey both constituted 45.94% of total imports. The fact that Britain in 1980 imported almost as much of these two commodities as she exported (48.86%) was unknown to the student sample. Underestimated miscellaneous goods mentioned were clothing and footwear. "Animal and vegetable oils, fats and waxes" were excluded as in the case of exports.

Overall response to question 25 on imports was very low at (28.57%), (see fig. 51, page 86) lower than response on exports. Only four students provided the full
Fig. 54 - Real British Imports (1980)
Fig. 55 - Student perception of British imports
five answers required. No single import commodity was perceived in its correct or near correct proportion. Commodities were generally wildly exaggerated or underestimated. Overall, perception of British import trade was very poor.

qu. 26 - English language
Dialects

A total of 163 responses were obtained for this question which required students to name five dialects spoken within the United Kingdom. This response was the lowest of those questions requiring five answers as shown in figure 51, only 38.81% of the possible total (sixteen students gave no response whatsoever). Only sixty-three (15.00%) correct mentions were made of dialects illustrated in figure 56 with 33.74% for Cockney alone. Only five dialects were known to the student sample, all from England. Three were from the SE and SW (the most visited areas of Britain): Cockney, Cornish and Worcester dialect. No mention was made of other southern dialects such as Devonshire, South West or East Anglia. Another was the Midlands dialect, a rather broad division, and the only northern dialect mentioned was Yorkshire (see fig. 56).

From these results and remaining 100 responses, it was clear that the students had very little knowledge about dialect and very confused ideas regarding the difference between language, dialect and possibly accent. At school, Italian students as most foreign learners of English, are taught standard English and 'received pronunciation' as the correct models to follow. Undoubtedly there is a tendency for the better educated British and those belonging to the upper social scales to use only Standard English and speak with an RP accent. It is right that foreign learners from all countries be taught what is considered the 'best' English, however it is probable that not enough emphasis is given at school to the fact that only some 3% of British people speak the 'best' English. Hence the considerable surprise of most foreigners on arrival to
Legend

C. Cockney       W. Worcester
Co. Cornish      Y. Yorkshire
M. Midlands      U. Unacceptable

Fig. 56 - English dialect perception
Britain for the first time, when they cannot understand much of what is said. The English these foreigners hear, will vary greatly from the Standard English model not only in sound, if accent is strong, but also in structure, if dialect is spoken. Dialects are ways of speaking peculiar to a particular geographical area (a county e.g. Cumbria, Lancashire or wider area crossing over such boundary lines into more extended regions, e.g. North East, South Wales). Dialect is a variation of language having its own distinguishing vocabulary, idioms, grammar (and pronunciation) which therefore make it similar or different from the parent language to varying degrees. Where pronunciation features are similar in a certain area, this is known as accent, whether dialect is spoken or not (e.g. the broad divisions of northern and southern accent or Scottish and Welsh accent, or more local divisions such as Geordie (Tyneside) and Liverpudlian (Merseyside) (11).

Not only was knowledge poor concerning dialect within England but nothing was known of speech in the rest of the United Kingdom. What was clear from the remaining 100 responses was that the students considered Gaelic a dialect, which is incorrect.

Gaelic is a language in that like Italian, Arabic or Chinese, it has a completely distinct vocabulary and way of using it. Furthermore its origins are far removed from those of English. The Gaelic of the Scots, Irish and Manx (Goeldellic) is similar, yet differs from that spoken in Wales and once spoken in Cornwall (Brittonic). This difference should be made clear to foreign students of English who wish to learn more of British language and culture. It should be explained that today there are people in Wales, Scotland and Ireland who are bi-lingual, speaking two distinct languages and possibly dialect in those two languages. There are others who live in the same areas who cannot speak Gaelic but only the local Scottish English, Irish English or Welsh English dialect with a distinct accent. Yet others living there may speak only Standard Scottish English, Standard Irish English or Standard Welsh English with or without an accent.
Mention was made of the following which could not be accepted as dialect and thus illustrated as unacceptable responses: Celtic (3 mentions), Gaelic (13), Irish (19), Manx (1, spoken by the elderly and in parliamentary and legal circumstances), Scottish (31), Welsh (32). Furthermore, where for example a student wrote 'Welsh', it was impossible to know whether Welsh Gaelic or Welsh English dialect was intended. Confusion was evident in the case of the term Celtic. One student placed both Celtic and Gaelic on the questionnaire. Celtic can be taken to mean the language of the Scottish, Irish, Manx, Welsh and Cornish Celts but Gaelic is the more usual term.

Lastly of the hundred unacceptable responses, one in particular should be mentioned: Urdu. Urdu has indeed become a very common sound to the ears of British people living in certain industrial areas of Britain, especially in the Midlands where large communities of Pakistanis and Muslim Indians have developed. Yet just as Italian, Chinese or Jamaican communities have sprung up in London, their languages cannot be accepted as 'English' dialects as they are not varieties of the English language. Like Gaelic and English, Urdu is of Indo-European origin deriving from Hindustani a language that spread through most of the Indian subcontinent after the thirteenth century from the Delhi region. Persian was the official court language of the Mogul Empire and the introduction of Persian (and Arabic) words into Hindustani, gave gradual rise to Urdu in spoken and written form (in Persian script). Being the language of educated Muslims, it become the official language of West Pakistan after the separation of Pakistan and India. Hindi, another variation of Hindustani, borrowing heavily from Sanskrit became the official language of India. The student who mentioned Urdu most probably spent time in a city with a large Indian immigrant population and was much impressed by the extent to which Urdu is heard.
The Royal Family

QUEEN VICTORIA, 1819-1901,
m. Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (Prince Consort)

KING EDWARD VII, 1841-1910,
m. Princess Alexandra of Denmark
(QUEEN ALEXANDRA, 1844-1925)

KING GEORGE V, 1865-1936,
m. Princess Mary of Teck (QUEEN MARY, 1867-1953)

2 brothers and 3 sisters

Duke of Windsor,
1804-1972,
KING EDWARD VII,
(abdicated 1936),
m. Wallis Simpson

KING GEORGE VI,
1895-1952,
m. Lady Elizabeth Bowes-
Lyon (QUEEN ELIZABETH
The Queen Mother)

Mary,
Princess Royal,
1897-1965,
m. Earl of Harewood

Henry,
Duke of Gloucester,
1900-1974,
m. Lady Alice Montagu
Douglas Scott

George,
Duke of Kent,
1902-1942,
m. Princess Marina of Greece

Prince John,
1905-1919

Princess Alice,
1843-1978,
m. Grand Duke
Louis of Hesse

Princess Victoria,
1863-1950,
m. Marquess of Milford Haven

Princess Alice,
1885-1960,
m. Prince Andrew
of Greece

Philip,
Duke of Edinburgh,
b. 1921, m. Princess
Elizabeth
(QUEEN ELIZABETH II)

QUEEN ELIZABETH II,
b. 1926,
m. Philip, Duke of
Edinburgh

Princess Margaret,
b. 1930, m. Antony,
Earl of Snowdon
(divorced 1978)

David,
Viscount Linley,
b. 1961

Lady Sarah
Armstrong-Jones,
b. 1964

2 sons

Princess Anne,
b. 1950, m. Captain
Mark Phillips

Prince Andrew,
b. 1960

Prince Edward,
b. 1964

Charles,
Prince of Wales,
b. 1948, m. Lady
Diana Spencer

Peter Phillips,
b. 1977

Zara Phillips,
b. 1981

Prince William,
b. 1941-1972,
m. Birgitte van Deurs

Richard,
Duke of Gloucester,
b. 1944,
m. Birgitte van Deurs

Lady
Alexandra
Earl of Ulster,
b. 1974

Lady
Davina Windsor,
b. 1977

Lady
Rose Windsor,
b. 1980

Lord Nicholas
Windsor,
b. 1972

Lady
Gabriella
Windsor,
b. 1981

Lord Frederick
Windsor,
b. 1979

Princess
Alexandra,
b. 1936,
m. Hon.
Angus
Ogilvy

Prince Michael,
b. 1942,
m. Baroness
Marie-Christine
von Reibnitz

Edward,
Duke of Kent,
b. 1935,
m. Katharine
Worsley

Lady Helen
St. Andrews,
b. 1962

Fig. 57 - The Royal Family
qu. 27 - British Institutions
The Monarchy

Of the several Royal families spread throughout the world today, the British Royals are among the most publicized in the Italian press. Popular Italian magazines continually inform the public about the latest private events at Buckingham Palace or the slightest hint of scandal. It is therefore not unexpected that this question received such a high response, 95.48% (see fig. 51, page 86) with such a large number of correct answers. Queen Elizabeth II as head of the present Monarchy did not receive the most mentions (see fig. 58), but came a close second to Charles, Prince of Wales. This could be attributed to two facts. Firstly, Charles receives a substantial portion of publicity compared to other members of the family being first in line of succession to the throne and secondly, the main Royal event which took place before the survey was taken, was the Prince's wedding on July 29th 1981, to Lady Diana Spencer. The Royal Wedding gained the attention of countries outside the British Commonwealth through wide television and press coverage. It is surprising that the now Princess of Wales did not receive a larger share of mentions in the survey (see fig. 58). The only other member of the House of Windsor to receive a significantly high response was Princess Anne. Her husband was named only twice. No one managed to give the correct title to the Queen's consort and most wrote Prince Philip or King. Few mentioned the Queen's fourth child Prince Edward still a schoolboy in 1981.

Of the incorrect responses, mentions were made of Albert, Carl, George and Victoria. One respondent wrote Prince Edward of Edinburgh, which could have been meant to mean either the Duke of Edinburgh or Prince Edward. Queen Elizabeth I was mentioned twice.

Overall, response was excellent, knowledge adequate and perception at a high level. No indication was given regarding whatsoever the Kent or Gloucester Branch which is considered part of the Royal Family by the British (see fig. 57).
Fig. 58 - The dotted segment represents the percentage of mentions out of the total number of answers.
Twenty-five of Britain's forty-seven universities were mentioned by the student sample as shown in table 3. By far the best known and clearly perceived together are Oxford and Cambridge, receiving 79.00% and 80.00% of total correct responses respectively. This result tallies with question 32 in section two, which tested the mental image of those places in the British Isles which attract most foreign tourists. Oxford and Cambridge together, received a high response among the most mentioned towns.

London as expected, and Edinburgh, received third and fourth highest response. In this last case no mention was made of Heriot-Watt.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
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<td>Newcastle</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scottish Universities</th>
<th>1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinburgh</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Andrews</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 3 - British Universities correctly mentioned
Of the few incorrect responses, Eton, Britain's most famous private secondary school, was mentioned by eleven respondents. Three students were unaware that polytechnics are not universities although they do provide courses which may lead to degrees. One student wrote Magdalene, Trinity and King's Colleges which are all part of Cambridge University (Magdalen and Trinity are also found at Oxford). Two respondents named Cardiff which forms part of seven constituted institutions making up the federated University of Wales. Overall response was high (see fig. 51, page 86), but despite the large number of universities named, perception was mainly focused on the first four mentioned above.

qu. 29 - British Institutions
Newspapers

From figure 51 (page 86) it can be seen that this question received the second best response of those questions requiring five answers. All the main national daily newspapers printed in Britain were mentioned (see tab. 4). Both popular and quality names were known to the sample. However, whereas the average Briton recognizes this distinction through major differences in style, content and format of the papers in question, there was no way of judging whether the students were aware of this difference. Respondents also included all the Sunday national papers except News of the World (one incorrect mention was made of the World News).

The quality papers received a higher number of responses with The Times receiving 23.12% of the total correct answers. Most foreigners seem to view The Times as 'the' British newspaper when in actual fact circulation is not high and in 1980 together with its sister paper the Financial Times, had the lowest circulation of any national daily (279,059 and 196,495 respectively) except for the Morning Star (32,676). At the time of the survey, the most widely circulated paper was The Sun (3,741,373) followed by the Daily Mirror (3,598,678). Students tended to
confuse The Times with Time Magazine an American publication. A reason for such a high response in the case of The Times could be, that in 1980 the paper’s ownership changed into the hands of Rupert Murdoch, an Australian newspaper owner and already owner of The Sun. Groups contested this and called for government action under antimonopoly legislation. The event received much press coverage in Britain and to a lesser extent in Italy which could have influenced student choice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Dailies</th>
<th>Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Populars</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Daily Telegraph</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Express</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Mail</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Mirror</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Star</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sun</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Telegraph</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Times</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Times</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Sundays</th>
<th>London evenings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Express</td>
<td>The Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Mirror</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Observer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday Times</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 4 - Newspapers correctly mentioned

Incorrect responses are shown in table 5. Six students gave the names of journals or magazines and seven American publications (including the defunct Life magazine). A full twelve responses were invented, often with rather convincing titles.
Weekly Journals
The Economist 2
The Listener 1
Punch 1

Magazines
Melody Maker 1
Woman 1

American Publications
Life 1
Herald Tribune 4
Time Magazine 2

Invented newspapers
Daily Newspaper 1
The Daily News 4
The Daily Main 1
The World News 1
Saturday Evening Post 1
Sunday 1
Sunday Magazine 1
Sunday News 1
Thames 1

Tab. 5 - Incorrect answers to question 29

qu. 30 - British Institutions
Political Parties

It is evident from the results that students had a clear idea about the dominance of two parties in the British political system up to 1981 (see tab. 6). Of these two main parties, the Conservatives (the party in power at the time of the survey) gained 33.2% of total correct mentions. Labour came close with 32.4% and the Liberals came third with 19.8%. Table 6 shows how close the percentages given by students were to the percentages of all votes in the general election of 1979.

Perception was next focused firstly on the Communist party, which is very strong in Italy but weak in Britain having gained no seats in Parliament since 1945, and secondly the Socialist Party (see tab. 7).
No mention was made of Britain's two nationalist parties the SNP and Plaid Cymru and some other minor parties (see tab. 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Votes 1979</th>
<th>% of all votes</th>
<th>Number of seats</th>
<th>% of student mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservatives</td>
<td>13,697,753</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>11,509,524</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>4,313,931</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNP</td>
<td>504,259</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaid Cymru</td>
<td>132,544</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Front</td>
<td>191,267</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>971,512</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 6 - Real and perceived strength of Parliamentary representation using 1979 general election statistics.

The most interesting fact which emerged was that only ten students knew of the SDP which emerged as a new political force in Britain in March 1981. This was a much publicized event in Britain and European political circles, as the Labour Party, owing to its leftward path in 1980, caused three pro-European "right-wing" former Labour Cabinet ministers, David Owen, William Rodgers and Shirley Williams to break away. Official recognition was gained by the newly formed Social Democratic Party which became Britain's third most important political party in Parliament with fourteen MP's, all but one of whom had defected.

Incorrect answers which were few (see fig. 51, page 86), included mention of the Radical Party (an official party in Italy with parliamentary representation), the
Whigs (the original name for the Liberal Party), The Independent Party (possibly confused with independent MP's) and the Democratic Party (of the USA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>No of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Conservative and Unionist Party</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Labour Party</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Democratic Party</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Communist Party of Great Britain</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Co-operative Party</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecology Party (Green Party in 1985)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Marxist Group</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Front</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Party</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plaid Cymru (Welsh National Party)</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish National Party</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party of Great Britain</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Worker's Party</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers' Revolutionary Party</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 7 - Number of student mentions of Parties existing in 1981

quin. 31 - British overseas relations
Commonwealth

Question 31 required students to choose and write down the names of five British Commonwealth countries. 268 total responses were obtained (63.81% response rate, see fig. 51, page 86), of which little over half (53.81%) were correct. Of the incorrect responses (see tab. 8), two respondents understood the question to mean Common
Market countries and they included Belgium, France, Italy, Germany and Spain (not even in the EEC at the time the sample was surveyed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No of mentions</th>
<th>% of total references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Ireland</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 8 - Non-Commonwealth countries mentioned

Other respondents included non-member countries (see tab. 8): New Caledonia, a French Pacific territory (originally British, named by Cook and ceded to the French in 1853), Pakistan which left the Commonwealth in 1972, splitting into two countries West Pakistan and Bangladesh (Bangladesh joined that same year), South Africa which left of her own accord in 1961 and the Republic of Ireland which left even earlier in 1949.

Another type of error was the writing of the names of the political sub-divisions (see tab. 9) of larger Commonwealth or non-Commonwealth countries as follows: British Columbia, the westernmost province of Canada, Hawaii the 50th state of the U.S.A., Northern Ireland part of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No of mentions</th>
<th>% of total references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 9 - Political sub-divisions mentioned belonging to Commonwealth countries

U.K., and lastly Tasmania an island and state off the south east tip of Australia.

A last type of error was made by one student who mentioned the general term 'West Indies' which indeed includes the member countries of Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, but as these were not mentioned singly they are not included in the overall results.

Of the correct responses students made no distinction between member countries, territories and dependencies. Of the 44 Commonwealth countries existing at the time of the survey (see fig. 59, page 110), the students mentioned 15 (34%). The most frequently named can be picked out in table 10 and are Australia, Canada, India and New Zealand (72% of total mentions).

Zimbabwe was named correctly by only one student (Rhodesia in the remaining 3 cases) which was surprising as in 1980 the 10-year civil war came to an end and the country gained its much publicized independence (Rhodesia in effect left the Commonwealth in 1966 when she broke off relations with Britain until 1980).

It should be noted that students did not know 'Ceylon' is no longer used in British English and that Sri Lanka is the correct term used today.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No of mentions</th>
<th>% of total references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>15.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 10 – Commonwealth Member Countries mentioned.

Of the numerous British Territories and dependencies only four were mentioned as shown in table 12 (page 112) and not being member countries, are not included in analysis of the results.
Country and date of joining the Commonwealth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>12 Ghana</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>13 Grenada</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>14 Guyana</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>15 India</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>16 Jamaica</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>17 Kenya</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1931</td>
<td>18 Kiribati</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>19 Lesotho</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>20 Malawi</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>21 Malaysia</td>
<td>1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Gambia</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>22 Malta</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23 Mauritius</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24 Nauru</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25 New Zealand</td>
<td>1931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26 Nigeria</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27 Papua New Gu</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28 St. Lucia</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29 St. Vincent</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 Seychelles</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31 Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32 Singapore</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33 Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34 Sri Lanka</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 Swaziland</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36 Tanzania</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37 Tonga</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38 Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39 Tuvalu</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40 Uganda</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41 Vanuatu</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42 Western Samoa</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43 Zambia</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44 Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tab. 11 - Countries of the Commonwealth (1981)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No of mentions</th>
<th>% of total references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bermuda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibraltar</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Man</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tab. 12 - British territories and dependencies mentioned**

**qu. 32 -** See page 71 Section two on mental images.

**qu. 33 - British Institutions**

Political Parties - Which is at present in power?

The remaining six questions (question 39 on information sources has already been dealt with in section one, see page 19) were all of 'open' type, leading to one correct or incorrect answer and codified according to the truth or falsity of the resulting statement (as for questions 12 to 23). Findings are illustrated together in figure 60 for comparison. In all cases except for question 39 concerning British entry to the EEC, response was high and near accurate.

For question 33, 83.33% of the total answers were correct, giving the Conservative Party as the party in power in Autumn 1981. This also tallies with the high response the Conservative Party received in question 30 (see page 104 and fig. 51, page 86). Labour was the only party incorrectly cited.
Fig. 60 - Percentage of total responses per question out of the total possible answers.
qu. 34 - British Institutions
   Political Parties - Who is the head of the British government?

   The head of government in Britain became known as Prime Minister in the eighteenth century and by modern convention sits in the House of Commons deriving authority from majority support in Parliament. The Queen is Head of State and thus personifies it as head of the executive and judiciary. She is commander-in-chief of all armed forces of the Crown and 'supreme governor' of the established Church of England but not head of government.

   From the 92.86% response (see fig. 60), 82.15% correctly named Mrs Thatcher or Prime Minister. All incorrect responses gave the Queen as the answer.

qu. 35 - British Institutions
   The Police Service - In which city is Scotland Yard to be found?

   Response to this question was high, but lower than expected at 79.76% (see fig. 60), given the high popularity of British detective novels and films mentioning or depicting Scotland Yard. Only three students (3.57%) fell into the trap of giving a Scottish location (precisely Edinburgh) as the answer. The rest correctly named London as the home of this world famous institution.

qu. 36 - British Institutions
   Churches - Which is the main religion in the UK?

   In Britain all individuals have the right of religious freedom. Therefore many churches and religious societies exist. The established Church of England or Anglican Church was formed as a national institution by Henry VIII in 1534 through the Act of Supremacy, by which, the
Monarch replaced the Pope as head of the church. Gradually, organization within the Church of England changed over the centuries and today it has the largest church following in Britain. There also exist the established Church of Scotland which followed presbyterianism after the sixteenth century and the unestablished churches of Ireland and Wales.

The question included the term "main", which could be taken to mean the principal or that with most membership. In both cases, the correct answer remains the Church of England. Response to this question was the highest of this last group at 95,24% (see fig. 60), with only one incorrect response: Roman Catholic Church. However only three students named the Church of England, all others gave 'Protestant' or 'Anglican'.

qu. 37 - British Overseas Relations
European Community - How many years has Britain been in the EEC?

Britain joined the European Community on January 1st 1973 (membership was endorsed in a national referendum in 1975). At the time of this present survey, Britain had been a member for eight years.

The response rate for this question was the lowest of this last group and perception was very poor (see fig. 60). Only 8.33% of total responses, gave the correct answer. Of the incorrect responses, twenty-nine students underestimated membership from 3-7 years with a peak at 5-6 years. Overestimation was made in only five cases. Two answers were unacceptable being imprecise "less than five" and "five to ten".
qu. 38 - British Institutions
Political Parties - Where does the British Prime Minister live?

From the results obtained it was realised that this was a rather vague question which in many cases led to "London" as the obvious answer. Response was high with 80.95% correct answers (see fig. 60, page 113) and only one unacceptable answer: Westminster Palace.
Number 10 was often confused with numbers 1, 9, 13 or 11 and so simply "Downing Street" or less precisely "London" was accepted. No one mentioned Chequers the Prime Minister's country mansion in Buckinghamshire.

qu. 39 - See page 19, Section one on general background information.
5. FINAL ASSESSMENT

On completion of data analysis for all three sections, it was initially planned to formulate a set of hypotheses and to run detailed correlations between section one (background data) and the results of sections two and three in order to suggest reasons for student responses. However, the great number of questions led to such a large quantity of diverse information that the task proved excessive and too complex. Therefore this survey merely unravels a part of the students' "invisible environment image", by touching on a few interesting aspects of cross-cultural perception and raises questions which could generate further study. For example, how are the responses to question 31 (Commonwealth) influenced by variables such as size of a country, distance from Italy, G.N.P., or cultural affinity? In the case of question 39 (Information sources), what is the link between media messages and far-place images? This would first require a complex survey of Italian news coverage to find out what percentage of local and national news is carried against national, before researching further.

Without running complex statistical tests the following conclusions have been reached:

Section two

In this section which dealt with mental maps of Britain it was impossible to produce one single composite mental map for the sample covering questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 32. The only composite data that can be illustrated is the number of total responses for the first four questions of this section as shown in figure 61.

Response to question 32 does not appear in this figure. Being of 'open structure' with no point location required, it cannot be compared to the other questions in this section.

It would appear from this diagram (fig. 61) that perception was best concerning questions 8 on cities and 11
Fig. 61 - Number of total responses to question 8, 9, 10 and 11.
on products. The purely geographical questions 9 (rivers) and 10 (uplands) fared badly with the exception of the world famous Thames, Lake District and Highlands. However high response was no accurate measure of perception as in the case of the Lake District where only 3 students out of fifty-one located it in an acceptable position (see fig. 34 page 56) or in the case of cities like Glasgow or Manchester (see fig. 12 page 27) which both likewise received high response but knowledge was inaccurate concerning real location.

In the case of the first three questions of this section, it was found that students generally had good perception of the geographical features under examination located in the south and south east of the country. There was obviously greater geographical awareness of those parts of Britain most visited by the student sample. The only exception was in the case of the Highlands of Scotland with both high response and a good percentage of "acceptable" locations.

British industrial products are not visible landscape features and therefore in the case of the fourth question of this section southern location was not reflected in the results. In fact coal and wool were the two best perceived products and are both located principally within the students' "invisible environment" image (i.e. west and northern Britain).

**Section three**

By taking response rates and the percentage of correct and incorrect answers to the general knowledge test, as illustrated in figure 62, it can be seen that student perception is visibly poorer in the case of questions on geography compared to those on institutions, these being the two largest categories of questions in this section. Correct responses illustrate this more precisely with the exception of geographical question 21 on Loch Ness location which was well perceived and institutional question 37 on E.E.C. entry which was poorly perceived.
Fig. 62 - Percentage of correct and incorrect responses
Better results would have been expected for the geographical questions considering that such a high percentage of students had visited the British Isles. Geographical landmarks are usually rendered more tangible to the average tourist or foreign student than institutional features, as the former are seen during tours whereas the latter need to be sought out through visits to museums, stately homes, parliament, law courts, etc. As knowledge about British institutions was clearly better than geographical this would suggest some variable other than visits to the United Kingdom as being more influential in forming the students' mental image of the country.

Concerning the remaining two very small categories of questions on language and economy, response was average to below average with poorest perception in the case of British dialects with much confusion over the differences between dialect and language. In the case of imports and exports such a wide range of possible goods was involved that no incorrect answers were accepted. On closer inspection of those who answered, only a few participants were able to give the full five commodities required, ten and four students out of the total sample of eighty-four for exports and imports respectively, which indicates an evident area of perceptive opacity.

Section one

To summarise briefly, four key variables were felt to be important in the formation of student perception of which visits to the British Isles was one:

a) Personal visits to the U.K. - These lead to direct contact with British people, life and customs and should provide foreign visitors with a partial "visible environment image" (question 6, page 15).

b) Duration of English language study - Languages in themselves are barriers to free information flow. Thus it would be expected that the amount of information filtered to the brain is proportional to the length of
Fig. 63 - Plot of $C_k'$ of respondents who visited the U.K. 1 or did not 2

1

Students

$C_k'$

0.1
0.2
0.3
0.4
0.5
0.6
0.7
0.8
0.9
1.0
10
study and thus level of proficiency in a language (question 5, page 14).

c) Duration of visits - The longer the time spent in a country, presumably, the greater the quantity of cultural knowledge that is acquired and stored (question 6.2, page 15).

d) Media sources - The greater the number of sources available and utilized the greater the diffusion of information (question 39, page 19).

In order to find some measure of the influence of each of these four above mentioned variables, it was decided to plot the Reliability Coefficient $C_k$ for each participant, modified to $C_k'$ as explained in question 8 (see page 25). $C_k'$ for this particular sample fluctuated in the middle range mainly between 4 and 6 with the mean at 0.58. This was a rather modest result considering that the sample was expected to have a higher than average knowledge of British culture, geography, etc.

The first plot of points illustrated in figure 63, takes the first key variable (personal visits to the U.K.), and compares the $C_k'$ of those students who visited the British Isles with those who did not (12). Bearing in mind that 1 is equivalent to maximum error and 0 is equivalent to maximum correct response, it can be seen that the mean $C_k'$ of the first category of students is better than that for those students who had never visited the country. However the difference between the two mean values is not as marked as was expected. Therefore whether a student had visited the United Kingdom or not appeared to have less influence on the overall results than anticipated. This would confirm either that another key variable is more influential or that students tended to identify only with those places they had visited which was predominantly the SE (65.17% of the sample). Only 16.86% visited the SW, 16.86% the NE, NW, Midlands and Wales and 1.12% Scotland (see fig. 9, page 18). Therefore to most students the north and west remained an "invisible environment" which could explain poor geographical knowledge, as questions 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 23 were all
Fig. 64 - Plot of $C_k'$ of respondents who studied English:

1. less than 3 years  
2. from 3 to 6 years  
3. from 6.1 to 9 years  
4. over 9 years
concerned with features in the north and west of the country.

$C_k'$ was plotted according to 'Duration of study' (see fig. 64) whether less than 3 years, from 3 to 6 years, from 6.1 to 9 years or over 9 years. The logical assumption that better perception is proportional to length of language study and thus proficiency was not confirmed by the plot. It would therefore seem in this survey and particular sample that length of study is not as important a variable in the formation of student knowledge about Britain as is the first or third. It must be pointed out however that the difference in the mean value for each of the four categories of student is minimal, between 0.5 and 0.6, and therefore almost insignificant, never far removed from the total sample $C_k'$ mean of 0.58. It would be interesting to compare these results to those of a larger sample with groups of students of equal number per category.

Figure 65 illustrates the $C_k'$ plot of respondents who stayed in the U.K. divided into four categories from less that one week to more than one year. There results a clear downward trend of the mean confirming improved knowledge the longer the stay, although also in this case it must be pointed out that the difference in the four mean values is minimal.

Unfortunately in the case of the last variable 'Media Sources' it was impossible to obtain any exact measure as to which was the most influencial source, because many students gave multiple answers. The list of structured responses in question 39 should have been extended to include a wider range of information sources with ranking of answers according to the degree of influence. Questions on length of exposure to each source and language used during contact, would have improved the understanding of perception and could have led to more detailed analysis.

Despite an improved $C_k'$ in the case of students who visited the United Kingdom and especially in the case of those who stayed for a longer period of time, geograph-
Fig. 65 – Plot of $C_k'$ of respondents who stayed in the U.K.:

1. less than one week  
2. less than one month  
3. less than one year  
4. more than one year
ical perception is seen to be overall poorer than institutional. As length of study gave no evidence in the case of this particular survey and sample, of improved perception, some other key variable is more influential in imparting institutional knowledge. This key variable could very well be media sources. As the very question dealing with that variable was not structured in a way so as to provide more precise and varied data for analysis and comparison this survey was unable to determine which of these four key variables from section one was the strongest single factor in influencing the sample's response in sections 2 and 3. It would be interesting to undertake further work in this direction.
6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion it must be remembered that this survey in cross-cultural perception can only produce an indication of Italian views yielded by a very small selective portion of the national population presumably having a higher than average knowledge of things British. Despite the inadequacies of this survey, it is hoped that even when read at several years remove from the initial sampling, these observations will be useful for Italian teachers of English, geographers, social scientists and possibly tourist boards. It is of vital importance for teachers to impart as accurate a mental image of a country as possible. Our mental maps and impressions, form a sound framework on which our views about the world and resulting judgments are based. Our thoughts en masse mould public opinion which in turn may have international repercussions. In Don Martindale's words:

The more fully they understand their social characters the more possible it is for contemporary men also to overcome their unique parochialism and to devote their human and physical resources to the formation of a world community to benefit all mankind.

(Martindale 1967, preface (13))
NOTES


(2) Early works on perception in psychology are:
Gibson (1950), Bruner and Minturn (1955), Piaget (1956), Skinner (1953), Tolman (1952) and more recently Altman (1975), Altman and Wohlwill (1976);
in linguistics:
Sapir (1929), Whorf (1956), Nida (1975);
in geography:
Lowenthal (1961, 1967), Gould (1965), Lynch (1960), Sonnenfeld (1967);
in urban planning:
in sociology and political science:
Almond and Verba (1965) (a report on perception studies in the secondary schools of five countries), Jahoda (1963), Searing (1973), Weissberg (1972);
for recent work on the perception of history see:

(3) For the Italian readers of this publication Italian geographers have been among the growing number of non-English-speaking researchers in the field of environmental perception since the mid 1970's. Early Italian bibliographical recording (both national and international) has led to strong psycho-geographic
interest in the urban field. For further reference see the following edited publications which contain many various contributions:

Corna-Pellegrini (1980), Geipel and Bianchi (1980), Perussia (1980, 1982);

individual work can be found in:


The French represent another European group undertaking research in this field, see:


(6) Early studies in flood hazard perception are discussed in White (1964) and Burton, Kates and Snead (1969). A study on drought hazard is to be found in Saarinen (1966). Natural hazard research has developed into a well documented cross-cultural component of environmental perception in the 1980's in America, for example see Mitchel (1984). An Italian study on Earthquake hazard perception by Geipel is found in Geipel and Cesa-Bianchi (1980).

(7) Studies on residence desirability are to be found in Gould (1965, 1970 and 1975) concerning Tanzania
and Sweden. For preferential perception of American states see Goodey (1968).

(8) American student views of the world are found in Saarinen (1973). For studies by various authors on invisible environments, see Downs and Stea (1973a). For the perception of world powers through geographical, industrial, military, educational and other data see Taylor and Hudson (1973). For the finding of descriptors, or selected list, to describe the USA, Australia, France and South Africa and the development of national stereotypes, see Haddon (1960). For the Mexican view of Britain, see Cole (1972). Nigerian views of Africa are found in Lewis et al. (1980). Locational preference by two different language groups in South Tyrol is surveyed in Hölluber (1980). For world views held by ethnic groups, ancient and modern, see Tuan (1974). Cross-cultural studies in the 80's have developed into such fields as natural hazard perception (see note 6). Children's views of the world see Catling (1979), Hart (1984), Matthews (1984), and quality of the life see Burgess (1982), Pacione (1982), Cutter (1985). A collection of case studies on the perception of Europe and Europeans, America and Americans, Asia and Asians by mainly school children, are found in Haubrich (1984). Since the "cognitive renaissance" of the 60's (Saarinen et al., 1984) the growth of behavioural and perceptual studies in various disciplines, but especially in geography and psychology has been considerable. The approaches and methods used vary enormously over a wide range of themes which in Goodey and Gold's view (1985), has led to an "aura of disarray in behavioural and perceptual geography". Most research has continued to concentrate on the city scale and little attention has been devoted to the macro global scale.
(9) Walter Lippmann's studies (1922, 'Public Opinion') are mentioned in Christenson R.M. and McWilliams (1964) 'Voice of the People'. (Quotations p. 54 and 99).


(12) For research on how high geographic mobility affects the development of cognitive mapping skills see Murray and Spencer (1979).

APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE - THE BRITISH ISLES PERCEPTION STUDY

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES UNLESS A WRITTEN ANSWER IS REQUIRED (IN BLOCK CAPITALS). IF IN DOUBT LEAVE A BLANK.

1. AGE

2. MALE 1) □  FEMALE 2) □

3. NATIONALITY
   ITALIAN 1) □  CANADIAN 4) □
   BRITISH 2) □  AUSTRALIAN 5) □
   AMERICAN 3) □  OTHER 6) □

3.1. IF ITALIAN, HABITUAL REGION OF RESIDENCE IN ITALY

3.2. IF NOT ITALIAN, HABITUAL REGION OF RESIDENCE IN ITALY

4. HOW DID YOU LEARN YOUR ENGLISH?
   AT SCHOOL 1) □  FROM YOUR MOTHER 4) □
   IN THE U.K. 2) □  FROM YOUR FATHER 5) □
   IN THE USA 3) □  OTHER

5. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN STUDYING ENGLISH?
   < 3 YEARS 1) □  6 - 9 YEARS 3) □
   3 - 6 YEARS 2) □  > 9 YEARS 4) □

6. HAVE YOU EVER VISITED THE U.K.?
   YES 1) □  NO 2) □

6.1. IF YES
   ONCE 1) □
   TWICE 2) □
   SEVERAL TIMES 3) □

6.2. IF YES, HOW LONG HAVE YOU STAYED IN THE U.K. ALTOGETHER?
   LESS THAN ONE WEEK 1) □
   LESS THAN ONE MONTH 2) □
   LESS THAN ONE YEAR 3) □
   MORE THAN ONE YEAR 4) □

6.3. IF YES, DID YOU STAY
   AS A GUEST IN A HOTEL 1) □
   AS A GUEST IN AN ITALIAN FAMILY 2) □
   AS A GUEST IN AN ENGLISH FAMILY 3) □
   AS AN EMPLOYEE 4) □
   AS A STUDENT IN A LANGUAGE SCHOOL 5) □
   OTHER

7. IN WHICH PART OF THE U.K. DID YOU STAY?
   LONDON 1) □
   S.E. ENGLAND 2) □
   S.W. ENGLAND 3) □
   N.E. ENGLAND 4) □
   N.W. ENGLAND 5) □
   MIDLANDS 6) □
   WALES 7) □
   SCOTLAND 8) □
   N. IRELAND 9) □
8. Place the following cities on the map of the United Kingdom, which is provided, by placing the number for their exact location:

1. Birmingham
2. Cardiff
3. Dundee
4. Glasgow
5. Liverpool
6. London
7. Londonderry
8. Manchester
9. Newcastle-on-Tyne
10. Plymouth
11. Sheffield
12. Southampton

9. Place the following rivers on the map (from source to mouth):

- Humber
- Severn
- Thames
- Clyde
- Mersey

10. Place the names of the following mountains on your map:

- The Pennines
- The Grampians
- The Cambrian Mountains
- Antrim Hills
- Lake District
- The Highlands

11. Place the following initials on the map to locate the products and industries:

- S. Shipbuilding
- M. Motor Car Industry
- C. Cotton Textiles
- P. Pottery
- W. Woollen Textiles

12. Which part of Britain receives most rainfall?

13. Where is the warmest weather to be found in the U.K?

14. Which is the highest mountain?

15. Which is the longest river?

16. Which is the largest lake?

17. How wide is the shortest channel crossing?

- 5 - 15 km
- 15 - 30 km
- 30 - 45 km

18. Which sea is found off the east coast of Scotland?

19. How many islands comprise the United Kingdom?

20. In which sea is the Isle of Man situated?

21. In which country is Loch Ness to be found?

22. How far is London from Edinburgh?

- 300 - 400 km
- 400 - 500 km
- 500 - 600 km
- 600 - 700 km
23. WHICH IS THE SECOND MOST POPULATED CITY?

24. WHICH ARE BRITAIN'S 5 LEADING EXPORTS:
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
   3. __________________________
   4. __________________________
   5. __________________________

25. WHICH ARE BRITAIN'S 5 LEADING IMPORTS:
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
   3. __________________________
   4. __________________________
   5. __________________________

26. NAME 5 DIALECTS FOUND IN THE U.K.:
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
   3. __________________________
   4. __________________________
   5. __________________________

27. NAME 5 MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH ROYAL FAMILY:
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
   3. __________________________
   4. __________________________
   5. __________________________

28. NAME 5 BRITISH UNIVERSITIES:
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
   3. __________________________
   4. __________________________
   5. __________________________

29. NAME 5 BRITISH NEWSPAPERS:
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
   3. __________________________
   4. __________________________
   5. __________________________

30. NAME 5 POLITICAL PARTIES:
   1. __________________________
   2. __________________________
   3. __________________________
   4. __________________________
   5. __________________________
31. NAME 5 COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES:
   1. ____________________________  4. ____________________________
   2. ____________________________  5. ____________________________
   3. ____________________________

32. NAME 5 PLACES IN THE BRITISH ISLES WHICH ATTRACT MOST FOREIGN TOURISTS:
   1. ____________________________  4. ____________________________
   2. ____________________________  5. ____________________________
   3. ____________________________

33. WHICH POLITICAL PARTY IS AT PRESENT IN POWER?

34. WHO IS THE HEAD OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT?

35. IN WHICH CITY IS SCOTLAND YARD TO BE FOUND?

36. WHICH IS THE MAIN RELIGION IN THE U.K.?

37. HOW MANY YEARS HAS BRITAIN BEEN IN THE E.E.C.?

38. WHERE DOES THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER LIVE?

39. WHERE DID YOU OBTAIN YOUR INFORMATION?
   THROUGH SCHOOL ........... 1) ☐
   THROUGH TELEVISION ....... 2) ☐
   THROUGH NEWSPAPERS ....... 3) ☐
   THROUGH BOOKS ........... 4) ☐
   OTHER (SPECIFY) __________

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