The Development of Language Acquisition in a Mature Learner

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Submitted for a PhD

The Institute of Education

London University

2007

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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Word count 76,811 words

(excluding the Bibliography and Appendices)

Abstract

    The primary objective of this study is to provide

insight into the advancement of my knowledge and

understanding of Spanish and of the process of language

acquisition in a mature learner. While learning Spanish as a

beginner, I kept a diary for two-and-a-half-years in which I

recorded detailed, reflective responses to my language

acquisition experiences. The diary data was recorded under

prompt headings. At the end of the learning period, I

approached the data from different perspectives. I

summarised the content of the diary in the form of four

different charts. Then I analysed the contents of the charts

and the whole diary and these analyses indicated salient

themes that emerged during my observations of the language

acquisition process.

    A first quantitative preliminary study of the entries

under the prompt headings in the charts indicated most

frequently mentioned phenomena. A second, closer analysis of

the content of the diary entries re-interpreted the entries

under the prompt headings to reveal specific aspects of

these phenomena that were incorporated in the process of my

language acquisition. In the third interpretive analysis, I

ignored the prompt headings and looked at the entries individually in terms of implicit and explicit phenomena indicated. This analysis revealed four main phenomena involved in the development of my language acquisition: language source material, method of learning, my attitude as the learner and memory. In the fourth and final analysis, I interpreted the individual entries of the whole diary in terms of the insight they gave to a detailed description of the nature of the advancement of my knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of the process of my language acquisition.

Finally, the study revealed the significance of the language acquisition process itself in contrast to the products of language acquisition which currently form a major part of language acquisition theory.

Although this study concerns an individual, and the language development of this individual is unique, the insight into the process of the development of acquisition involved in this individual has significant implications for further research into the development of the language acquisition in other learners of similar age and background.

CONTENTS

1. Chapter one: Introduction

Constantly changing perspectives and developments in language learning theory and the variability of individuals make a description of the development of language acquisition in a mature learner problematic. Few investigations have studied the language learning process by focusing on the experience of an individual based on reflective observations by that individual. While establishing the validity and reliability of a study of an individual such as that considered in this thesis is difficult, it has much to offer by providing insight into the language learning process, for the observations recorded stem from the internal processes of the mature learner's thinking, thus providing observations that have not been possible in more externally driven studies. This study is a study of the advancement of knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of the language learning process by a mature student. Knowledge, for the purpose of this study, is interpreted as the acquisition of understanding and skill in the use of the Spanish language, its lexicon, its grammatical structures and its phonology gained through the learning experience. Understanding is interpreted as the realization of how the language learning process works for the individual studied. The mature individual recorded

reflective observations of her language acquisition experience in her diary entries which were kept over a period of two-and-a-half-years. The entries were analysed from four different perspectives and the findings verified by internally constructed checking mechanisms.

The significance of salient phenomena incorporated within the reflective observations of the diary, the subtle changes within the learner's approach to the language learning experience and developments within the learner's attitude to the target language, to learning strategies and to acquisition techniques provide insight into the nature of her language learning process. Age is commonly believed to have an effect on language acquisition and a learner in his or her fifties would be expected to have some difficulty in acquiring a second language. This study traces the development of a mature learner's successful acquisition of Spanish and provides insight into the effect of her engagement with the language learning process and of the subtle changes and developments within her learning process. As a mature learner in her fifties, the learner observed the gradual advancements of her understanding and knowledge while learning Spanish as a beginner. She reflected on the most salient features of her learning experience in her learning diary in order to provide a rich description of the

developmental process of her language acquisition. Her bias (her preconceived ideas and assumptions) was incorporated in the reflective observations so that the study provides new insight into the nature of the development of her language acquisition in terms of her individual understanding. The way in which her ideas and assumptions were observed to change during the gradual development of her language acquisition provides insight into the nature of this development.

The data in the diary are analysed quantitatively at first to indicate which phenomena featured most prominently. This was followed by a second more focused quantitative and qualitative analysis of specific aspects of the observed phenomena. Two final analyses interpreted the individual diary entries closely in order to provide a final rich description of the developments within this individual's language acquisition.

A study of this magnitude indicates a need for a formal approach. However, this study is also a very personal account and the use of the first person is increasingly accepted as a suitable manner of expression. Accordingly, this study uses a more formal approach in the Literature and Methodology Chapters and adopts a more personal style when describing the core analysis and the analysis of the

developmental trends within the personal diary. The formal approach assists in authenticating and developing themes that originate from others, the more personal style reinforces the notion that the content relates specifically to the subject of the study and may not relate to others to the same extent as the themes developed in the more formal sections.

While these findings relate specifically to an individual and are thus unique, they provide a resource for further and deeper studies of the process itself in terms of individual development. While our world consists of a population of variable individuals, there will always remain the problem of the weakening of findings as they become part of a more generalized discussion. In addition, this study offers data that is not within the reach of external observers. Incorporated in the observations of this empirical study are the internal reflections and decisions made by an individual during the language learning experience. Impregnated within all of the comments made by this individual is the effect of her attitude. Finally, this study emphasizes the need for us to observe the language learning process itself and the subtle changes and developments within the process within an individual.

2. Chapter Two: Literature

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2.1 Introduction

Over time, language learning theories have diversified, shifting their focus from pedagogical issues and a formal approach that is externally driven in a classroom situation, to an interest in social and psychological issues and an informal approach that is learner-driven in real situations. In addition, changed priorities have altered the focus from the nature and significance of linguistic systems, to an interest in the characteristics of the phenomena involved, the role of communicative practice and the effect of individual characteristics. This Chapter reviews the literature on adult second language acquisition relevant to self-report, age and the individual learner. The topics reviewed include language, language learning and language acquisition, the language acquisition process, developmental stages in language acquisition, language learning strategies, teaching methodology and the individual learner, naturalistic and instructed second language acquisition, the characteristics of the learner language, external and internal factors and individual learner differences.

Clearly, there is no definitive solution to the problem of shifting theoretical perspectives and there is no clear explanation of how a language may be learnt successfully. In addition to this, a search of the research

available reveals very few studies that have thoroughly researched the development of language acquisition in a single mature learner. Very few studies have been written from the perspective of a learner, also the researcher, who has considerable experience in the language learning field as a learner and as a teacher. Very few of the studies that are available record the learner's language learning experience over a period of more than one year.

There is one study, however, that has similar goals to this study and provides a useful point of reference. Schmidt and Frota's case study of Schmidt learning Portuguese while resident in Brazil for five months is similar to this study in many ways (Schmidt and Frota 1986). In a comparable manner, Schmidt kept a diary of his language learning experience. This diary included self-report and reflection that provided insight into the nature of his language acquisition. However, Schmidt and Frota's study focuses more on an external assessment of precise grammatical forms that Schmidt acquired over time (Schmidt and Frota 1986:249-265). Other self-observed studies are not as directly applicable as Schmidt and Frota's for they adopt a different perspective: they do not incorporate firsthand accounts by the learners or they concern languages that are quite distinct from the Romance

languages of Schmidt and Frota's study and this study (Portuguese and Spanish).

There are examples of other studies of individuals' learning experiences, for example, Schumann(1977), Schumann and Schumann (1980), Bailey's study on the effect of anxiety (1983), Bailey and Ochsner's review of diary studies (1983), Brown (1985), Fry (1988) and the Learners' Stories in Benson and Nunan (2004), but these are not specifically focused on the same goal as Schmidt and Frota's study or this study: i.e. to examine the general development of language acquisition within an individual as closely as possible. This thesis is focused on gaining insight into the process of language acquisition in an individual learner and it was the process rather than the end-product that formed the main thrust which sets it apart from other similar studies.

The problems inherent in diary studies are generally acknowledged (Benson and Nunan 2004:3). The main difficulty is the problem of validating the claim by the learner that language acquisition has developed and that it has developed in the manner the learner describes. However, if it is understood at the outset that the purpose of the research is to examine the learner's subjective observations for the insight they provide and if the

learner's achievements in language acquisition are assessed by an external observer, much of this difficulty is alleviated. The external assessor of Schmidt's language acquisition (Frota) examined the specific language forms Schmidt had successfully acquired. The external assessor of the learner in this study examined the individual's ability to use the language effectively in a recognized examination format. Although there is no study that can provide a definitive description of the development of language acquisition, there are different theories and studies on related issues that offer insight into some of the most prominent contributory phenomena involved in the process and, above all, it is in relation to these phenomena and their development within the process of language acquisition that this investigation aims to provide insight.

Learning a language incorporates a developmental process in all language learners. No learner spontaneously acquires a language instantly; language acquisition develops over time, and the length of time taken varies according to the learner and the learning conditions. While the specific languages being learnt may differ, all learners have similar prerequisites for acquiring their target language. To learn a language, any language,

knowledge of the script, the sounds, the structure, the semantics and the communicative functions of the language is essential. This knowledge may be explicit or implicit. All language learners need to be aware of (or 'notice') the language structures and functions of the target language. If their purpose is to communicate successfully, they need to use the language in communicative situations if they are to acquire the language successfully. If their goal is to read the literature of the language, they need to 'notice' the language structures and functions as they read. The manner and degree to which individual learners satisfy these prerequisites in accordance with their own language learning needs necessarily affects the development to different degrees of success of their language acquisition. These more general principles of language learning theory apply to the acquisition of all languages and one of the most prominent of these languages is English. Consequently a large proportion of the discussion in this thesis focuses on the theories presented by Ellis (1994), who is generally acknowledged as one of the most important authorities on second language acquisition and on Schmidt and Frota's study which is also based on an examination of the development of the language acquisition of an individual (Schmidt and Frota 1986).

2.2 Language

   Language is described according to many different perspectives ranging from a quantifiable, explicit set of definable elements to a communicative tool describable only in terms of the relationships between language elements. Isolating and understanding specific language elements, meaningful language units and an understanding of the function of these units provides accurate models for the learner to imitate and repeat. An awareness of the function of inflectional morphemes, for example, is especially important in the learning of Spanish. There are a greater number of words that change to indicate person, tense, gender and number. For example, 'I am going to the white house' and 'We are going to the white building and the apartments' are translated into 'Vengo a la casa blanca' and 'Vamos a el edificio blanco y los pisos' respectively. Similar to the English language, the words change to indicate person (I, we/ combined in Spanish to vengo, vamos) and tense (am going, are going/ vengo, vamos) but contrary to English language construction, in Spanish, nouns and adjectives are also inflected to indicate gender and number. 'The white house, the white building and the apartments' become 'la casa blanca, el edifice blanco and los pisos' respectively. The nouns are masculine or

feminine, and the adjectives have inflectional morphemes that indicate their association with a particular noun.

Identification of specific language elements and their function within the syntax such as the previous examples provides profitable language elements for comparison and association when learners apply specific cognitive strategies that depend on such associations. In the process of learning Spanish, knowledge of French, whilst instigating interference also contributes to successful learning (Biggs and Moore 1993). An understanding of the significance of inflecting nouns as masculine or feminine in French compares readily with similar inflections in Spanish.

Another important feature of language is the sound of the language and the ability to pronounce the language intelligibly so that communication is effective. Knowing how different language elements are pronounced separately, where the stress lies and how these elements are pronounced differently in combination is crucial if the individual is to understand the meaning of language and to use the language profitably (Yule 1985). Some authors believe that the meaning of a text rather than its exact wording is more memorable for learners (Anderson 1995:216). To understand the meaning of the language input, an appreciation of the

way in which a language changes according to regional differences is also essential. A clear example of this is the effect of different varieties of the language.

There is no doubt that focusing on the separate constituents of language is beneficial to language learning but being aware of the way a language is constructed and being able to recognize elements of the language is not sufficient if learners are to retain the language well enough for successful use in communication. In addition, learners need to absorb the information about language they have received effectively so that the information becomes an inextricable part of the learner's knowledge. This knowledge can then be used by the learner as intelligible output for communication. Such concerns are explored further in the description of theories of language learning and language acquisition that follows.

2.3 Language 'learning' and 'language acquisition'

Opposing beliefs contend that language is learnt by a conscious process (Ellis 1994; Krashen 1988; Poon et al 1989; Gruneberg 1987) or that language is acquired gradually and by immersion i.e. through constant exposure to the language in real communicative situations (Vygotsky 1962; Mezirow 1997; Williams and Burden 1997; Stevick 1989). Many theories support Krashen's belief that 'learning' should be interpreted as a conscious approach to develop an understanding of a second language that leads to effective use of the language. This 'learning' is said to differ from the notion of 'acquisition' in that, on the one hand, learners make a conscious effort to focus on language elements in order to increase second language knowledge and proficiency. On the other hand, 'acquisition' is defined as subconscious absorption of a second language by a gradual process that develops according to the acquirer's understanding of appropriate input of the language (Krashen 1988:1). Much subconscious learning is described by many authors in terms of 'induction' (e.g. Anderson 1995:375).

Although the distinction between learning and acquiring appears to be clear in the above explanation, there is some doubt about the validity of such a clear distinction. One area of difficulty is apparent in

Krashen's monitor hypothesis. In Krashen's monitor hypothesis learned rules are believed to have the sole purpose of monitoring the learner's use of subconsciously acquired language. This hypothesis is questioned, for there is a strong case for believing that learned rules can be learned consciously and used consciously and this undermines the importance of the monitor hypothesis as a subconscious feature of language acquisition (Schmidt and Frota 1986:281). The term 'acquisition' in this study matches the definition offered by Anderson: acquisition is "the process by which new [memories are] encoded into long-term memory" (Anderson 1995:415). However, in this study the terms are not as readily distinguished as Krashen maintains. Although it appears that, in Krashen's terms, language is 'acquired' subconsciously and 'learnt' consciously, it is difficult, if not impossible, to clearly mark the boundaries that separate these terms. In a study such as the one reported here, most of the acquisition may appear to be 'learnt'. Much of the language that can be automatically produced may have been consciously committed to memory first, rather than subconsciously absorbed or developed by subconscious monitoring over time. It is not possible to distinguish between the two satisfactorily to determine precisely which language is learnt consciously or

which language is acquired subconsciously. In addition, language may not have been judged to have been 'learnt' until the language had become fully embedded in the memory and, in time, could be recalled automatically i.e. until it had been fully 'acquired'. Learning and acquiring language may be said to involve both conscious and subconscious activity. It should be noted, however, that this study generally uses the term 'language learning' mostly when focusing on the nature of the conscious approach to the language and 'language acquisition' mostly when focusing on the language already fully incorporated in the learner's language knowledge. Nevertheless, this usage incorporates an acknowledgement of the mutual dependency, and of the complicated interaction of subtle differences and similarities of the two terms.

It is evident that a central concern in our understanding of language acquisition incorporates the contrastive notions of explicit and implicit knowledge (Birren and Schaie 1996:256). Explicit knowledge is 'conscious' knowledge – knowledge of which the learner is aware and knowledge that the learner can verbalise. This awareness of language incorporates the notion of the need for the learner to 'notice' certain language forms. The learner gradually becomes more aware of these forms as they

are noticed in the learner's exposure to the language. In contrast to this explicit knowledge is 'implicit knowledge'. Implicit knowledge is 'unconscious' knowledge that the learner has and can use, but it is knowledge of which the learner is unaware. Implicit knowledge nevertheless contributes to the learner's language use.

Different theories of language acquisition range in perspective from precise descriptions of physical responses to complex issues of social influence or cognition. Behaviourist theory explains learning in terms of physical responses (Skinner 1957). Learners acquire language by responding to stimuli in a physical rather than a mental way. Language forms that the learner acquires may be practised constantly so that they are acquired as a matter of habit rather than cognitive application (Ellis 1994:299). This is evident in Schmidt's experience when he inadvertently 'learnt' the word 'marida' by regular use of the word that he had originally created in error (Schmidt and Frota 1986:264). However, there is some disagreement about the extent to which behaviourism affects language acquisition. Krashen, Scarcella, and Long (1982), for example, argue against an explanation of language learning in terms of a strict behavioural approach. They reason that longer periods of exposure (providing a longer conditioning

process) do not necessarily result in superior linguistic performance. However, there is no doubt that social issues affect language acquisition and that language learning is influenced by social context (Halliday 1978). "When people integrate the context with their memories, they show enhanced recall if they are put back in that context." (Anderson 1995:280)

Important relevant issues (such as social class, educational level, type of education, age, sex, ethnic origin) are given prominence in the study of sociolinguistics (Trudgill 1983). Evidence of social influence is clearly provided in Schmidt's experience for he observed how his language acquisition largely depended on the supportive and informed society in which he practised (Schmidt and Frota 1986:247). However, the strength of such influence varies considerably and social issues represent only one aspect of a very complex process. Relying on an explanation of only one source of influence on the language acquisition process is unsatisfactory, and this applies to a sociological approach as well. For example, Krashen, Scarcella, and Long (1982) refute a description of the language learning process purely in terms of a 'social learning' approach (e.g. Gardner et al, 1976). The 'social learning' approach holds that "the

cultural and sociolinguistic milieu in which individuals find themselves affects the attitudinal and motivational factors which determine success or failure, irrespective of age factors" (Krashen, Scarcella, and Long 1982:60). That is to say, Krashen, Scarcella and Long argue that the differences such as age factors have much more effect than other social issues. This may be true, but there is clearly no single answer to the problem of defining language acquisition theory. Individual differences (which include age differences) have a considerable influence on learning experience as do social factors. (Social influence is discussed in more detail in this thesis in sections 2.9 and 2.10 below.)

Cognitive theories discuss language acquisition in terms of the learner's thought processes. Cognitive science draws on linguistics, psycholinguistics, and artificial intelligence, and cognitive psychology deals more immediately with the processes involved in thought, perception, comprehension, memory and learning (Richards, Platt and Platt 1985). Most theories of learning incorporate an understanding of the significant effect of cognition or the mental processes of an individual. There is some debate about how, in a physical sense, the brain functions as linguistic abilities are developed. On the one

hand, the brain is considered to have specific areas of prominence - learning is separated into arbitrary areas in which specific skills are developed. Certain areas of the brain have been shown to be responsible for the growth of specific aspects of development. Language, for example, is said to be learnt and function in one area of the brain, mathematics in another (Birren & Schaie 1996; Van Halen-Faber 1997; Peters 1983). Yule (1989) describes how it has been shown that language ability is located in the left hemisphere of the brain. However, Yule also points out that this localization view does not take into account the 'extremely interdependent nature' of the brain (Yule 1989:127).

Other theorists acknowledge that the brain is a complex unit that has yet to be described comprehensively enough for any definitive theory of brain function. Recently there has been some indication that the function of the brain can only be described when full consideration is given to the brain working as a whole unit, particularly with regard to 'whole brain' teaching. The inter-relationship of the different cognitive areas over and above a description of separate constituent parts and the outcome of their combined contributions are important for an understanding of how the brain works and how we learn

(Knowles 1978; Stevick 1989; Obler 1989).

Whether one supports the localization view or the opposing holistic view of cognition, cognitive events, no matter what form they take, clearly have a significant role in language learning. This study does not attempt to isolate specific brain functions that support successful learning in a biological sense, but rather aims to provide insight into this area of discussion and to add to a description of prominent cognitive strategies that are used in language acquisition. Cognitive issues are discussed in more detail in this study in the discussion of learning strategies (2.6). However, the influence of cognitive issues cannot serve as the only explanation of the process. As Krashen et al argue "those who posit that cognitive structures provide the sole basis for language acquisition (e.g. Sinclair, 1975) are left with the task of explaining why, upon the onset of formal operations (the highest level of cognitive development) at about puberty, the capacity to master a second language appears to greatly subside" (Krashen, Scarcella, and Long 1982:60). Clearly there is no simple answer to this complex area and none of these positions expressed should be taken as the final solution.

There is much discussion of cognitive factors in relation to inherent or observed 'intelligence'. Hatch (1983) offers a description of the different interpretations of 'intelligence': 'intelligence' is viewed as the ability to think and act effectively, the ability to think abstractly or an ability that has two different forms: a general intelligence that affects all activities and specific intelligence factors that allow an individual to excel in one field and not another. 'Intelligence' for the purpose of this study is discussed mostly in terms of the ability to process information, although the holistic approach of this study embraces most aspects of intelligence that engage in the process of language acquisition. Information processing is especially the area which is most relevant to the needs of a study such as this – i.e. in terms of the language processing of the learner as the language is gradually acquired. There are other conceptions of intelligence that have some bearing on language learning.

Two kinds of intelligence that affect observations of an individual learner are the nature of 'fluid' and 'crystallized' intelligence described by Merriam and Caffarella (1999). Fluid intelligence is "*the ability to perceive complex relations and engage in short-term memory, concept formation, reasoning and abstraction*". "*In contrast,*

crystallized intelligence is normally associated with acculturated information – those sets of skills and bits of knowledge that we each learn as part of growing up in any given culture, such as verbal comprehension vocabulary [and] the ability to evaluate experience. […] Examples of measures of crystallized intelligence include vocabulary and verbal comprehension […] and an individual's ability to extract information from the environment. […] Another popular understanding is that fluid intelligence is more innate and therefore depends on the neurophysiologic base." (Merriam and Caffarella 1999:175)

These different perspectives provide evidence that the concept of intelligence is not easily defined and similar to many of the concepts contained within a discussion of language learning, are expressions of integral, interrelating elements of a cohesive process. An individual who demonstrates vocabulary and verbal comprehension ability, for example, does not solely provide evidence of a measure of crystallized intelligence. The individual may be equally capable of demonstrating a high level of fluid intelligence and can think and act abstractly, and process information effectively.

2.4 The language acquisition process

The above theories approach language acquisition from a wide variety of perspectives but they all contribute to our understanding of a single, complex process that is at the heart of this study: the developmental process of language acquisition. Fitts and Anderson (1995) offer a description of stages of skill acquisition that extends beyond the boundaries of language acquisition. Three stages are recognized as the cognitive stage, the associative stage and the autonomous stage. In the cognitive stage learners work from instruction or given examples, in the associative stage, they use the knowledge gained in a gradual process until they can act with fluidity and accuracy and in the autonomous stage, cognitive involvement becomes more limited as the processes are automated (Anderson 1995:310). More specifically related to the language acquisition process, theories endeavour to determine the precise nature of the contributory aspects ranging from the nature of the language resource as input and intake and the manner in which the intake is incorporated within memory, to the manner in which the acquired language is used by the learner in language production. In addition, the nature of the language during processing is dependent on a number of factors, although it is commonly accepted that one of the most essential factors

is lexicon.

2.4.1 Input

The process of language acquisition is discussed in this thesis frequently in terms of lexical acquisition for "*it is the lexical level that adult second language learners claim is most important. When our first goal is communication, when we have little of the new language at out command, it is the lexicon that is crucial.*" (Hatch 1983:74) The term 'lexicon' is distinguished from the term 'vocabulary'. For the purpose of this study the term 'lexicon' is considered a unit of one or more meaningful words (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:130). 'Vocabulary', on the other hand, is more concerned with the meaning incorporated within lexicon in terms of their associated value within texts. 'Vocabulary', for example, may refer to specific lexicon related to a specific field of discussion e.g. 'vocabulary' associated with certain topics such as shopping, food or travel. Consequently, when discussing single units of language, this study often refers to words, when discussing two or more words combined as meaningful units, this study uses the term 'lexicon' and when lexicon are specifically related to a topic, the term 'vocabulary' is used. Occasionally these terms may appear to be

interchanged, but this occurs only when it is important to reflect the ideas of authors who use these terms with slightly different nuances of meaning.

The importance of the lexicon is well documented. Levelt (1989) comments that lexicon serve as the mediator of the "*conceptualization and the encoding of grammar and phonology*" (Levelt 1989:181). Added weight is given to the importance of lexical knowledge by Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003:130) who refer to a number of studies of the relationship between lexical knowledge and comprehension (Laufer 1991; Mecartty 2000) and between lexical knowledge and listening (Kelly 1991, Mecartty 2000). There is no doubt that lexicon have a significant role to play in the nature of language input.

The process of learning requires the learner to receive language input effectively. 'Intake' is described as 'input' "*which is actually helpful for the learner. Some of the language input which the learner hears may be too rapid or difficult for the learner to understand. …Intake [also] incorporates different levels of awareness.*" (Richards, Platt and Platt 1985) Much discussion of input relates to specific qualities and effects of the input. Day (1986:291) comments on Schachter's suggestion that, for example, "negative input" (including but not limited to correction),

is probably a universal input condition for successful second language acquisition. The degree to which input is received successfully so that it becomes real 'intake' for the individual is another difficult area of definition. Williams and Burden point out that during the learning process, learners are constantly engaged in "*actively making sense of the information provided to them*" so that each individual constructs a different message from the input received and this is not always necessarily a conscious process (Williams and Burden 1997:205).

Gass (1988) distinguishes four stages in the process of 'noticing' or being aware of the language that serves as a language source for the learner. The four stages are apperceived input, comprehended input, intake and integration. 'Apperceived input' is the initial stage of the intake period. This stage is when the learner is aware of the saliency of the language input i.e. particular language aspects are 'noticed'. The learner then engages with the noticed language input, using previously acquired knowledge, in order to comprehend the messages contained within the input language. This comprehension depends to a certain extent on the previously acquired knowledge of the learner. In common with language acquisition, "*The course of skill acquisition is determined by the learning history of the*

individual productions that make up the skill" (Anderson 1995:337) i.e. the learner develops the intake as comprehensible input in terms of what the learner understands (Swain 1985). When the learner has comprehended those elements of the language input that the learner can understand, the most salient elements of this comprehended input to the learner mediate with the previously acquired language knowledge of the learner i.e. the learner arrives "*at an interpretation through an active process of matching features of the utterance at various levels with representation …stored in [the] long-term memory*" (Fairclough 1989:10-11). This mediation process leads to the integration of the newly noticed language forms with the learner's knowledge system. These forms then become part of the learner's knowledge system which engages with the learner's language intake and output. Thus language learners 'notice' the language and store the language in the memory in order to make comparisons and associations and to manipulate the elements of language into meaningful messages.

Schema theories attempt to explain the manner in which knowledge is represented in the memory. Anderson (1995) offers a description of different schema theories (Anderson 1995: 348-350), however, schema theory with particular

reference to second language acquisition (e.g. Bartlett 1958), attempts to explain the manner in which *language* is stored in the memory. Language morphemes are believed to be stored in interconnecting networks according to semantic or phonetic similarity. Evidence of these connections is provided by common errors in speech. Morphemes are sometimes erroneously recalled or erroneously pronounced. Malapropism, when a speaker accidentally exchanges morphemes (e.g. instead of saying mujer (woman) in Spanish, the speaker says mejor (better)) indicates that both words are stored in close 'proximity' in the memory according to their phonemic similarity, making the error so readily possible. Similarly, when recalling a word such as 'knife' different sounding words connected in meaning are quickly recalled according to their semantic similarity e.g. spoon, fork etc.

Those who support schema theory are distinguished as 'connectionists'. Connectionists' views are described by Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003:132-133). They posit that the connectionist view asserts that lexicon *"must"* *"be organized into efficient (neurological) networks"* (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:133). This reflects the difficulties created when authors interpret the beliefs of others: it might be argued, for example, that while connectionists believe that lexicon are stored in

neurological interrelated networks, efficiency of storage may not be directly unequivocal or discernable. Evidence of efficient storage may be more specifically due to efficiency of retrieval rather than efficiency of storage. The difference, although subtle, is critical.

Whichever perspective is adopted, there is no doubt that within the process of language acquisition, intake is absorbed within the memory of the learner as language knowledge. Once the message has been 'noticed' and received as 'intake' the process of absorbing the message as part of an individual's memory is initiated. The role of schema theory as discussed above has a significant influence on our understanding of the nature of intake as do a number of other approaches to the way in which lexicon are stored in our memory. Some theories, for example, focus on the acquisition of the grammatical significance of the language intake, others, on the syntactic, semantic or phonological qualities of the intake. There is also evidence of approaches that acknowledge a need for a comprehensive and cohesive view of our understanding of lexical storage. There is evidence, for example "*that our mental dictionaries must code lexical items for* syntactic class- *parts of speech, [as well as] by* semantic features…[*according to*] …*time and space … and* phonological shape* " (Hatch 1983:63-64). Estarellas

(1963) provides evidence of the significance of the phonological content of morphemes. In the early stage of learning a second language (in this case Spanish) Estarellas recommends a phonological approach first combined with visual reinforcement of the sounds the student hears. This approach precedes the period of learning when the student "*moves to the confusing world of meaning and structural syntactical patterns*". (Estarellas 1963: Introduction and Forward to the Teacher)

2.4.2 Internalization

Theories of how input is incorporated as part of our acquired knowledge of language have included the notions of a Reinforcement Theory (Skinner 1957) and of a Language Acquisition Device (Chomsky 1980). However, the notion of language acquisition in terms of selective reinforcement during the learning process and of a language acquisition 'device' are generally assumed to focus on first language acquisition. The child is believed to acquire language gradually in a process influenced by reinforcement of correct forms during use or the child's mind is believed to have a natural ability to acquire language due to a special innate propensity (or 'device') for the mind to acquire language. As this study concerns adult language acquisition

the importance of the language acquisition device is overtaken by issues regarding explanations in terms of theories of the way in which adult language acquisition develops. Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003) distinguish three different approaches to the nature of lexicon as they are incorporated in the language acquisition and production processes. 1) Lexicon are believed to "*reside in one's peripheral grammar, receiving little assistance from the innate … principles of language*" (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:132), 2) Lexicon knowledge is interdependent on syntactic knowledge (structure dependency principles) and 3) "*the "Minimalist Program*" that "*posits that all linguistic idiosyncrasies reside in lexicon*" (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:132). The predominance of the need for a cohesive approach to our understanding of language acquisition development in this study favours the third approach in which lexicon contain 'all'.

There are other factors that affect the way in which lexicon is stored in the memory. These other factors include two that particularly relate to this study: the characteristics of the target language and the characteristics of individual learners. Our understanding of the nature of the target language is specifically related to a description of the nature of word knowledge described by

(Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003). A description of specific significant elements is extended to include the language's: "*spoken and written form, frequency, grammatical patterns and collocations, semantic, pragmatic, stylistic and register constraints, sociolinguistic aspects and connotations*" as well as its "*associations with other related words*" ((Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:124 citing Nation 1990; Nation and Waring 1997). Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003) also indicate the significant effect of the learner and the different characteristics of the learner. They report the significance of Meara's (1996) proposal that 'true vocabulary' is exemplified by the effectiveness of connection between words in the learner. "*Mere lists of words*" are thus considered insufficient signifiers of word knowledge (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:134).

Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003) give a comprehensive description of studies that have highlighted specific characteristics of the target language that affect the relative ease with which learners are able to acquire words (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:134). However, individual variability and the fact that "*no study of these issues has been carried out using adult L2 learners of Spanish*" (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:135) alert us to

the more important focal point of their study and this
study: namely, the acquisition of Spanish in particular. A
more complete explanation of the developmental process of
the acquisition of Spanish in the individual adult learner
in this study is effected by focusing more closely on the
nature of Spanish in relation to the individual
characteristics that relate to this particular adult
learner.

Knowledge of Spanish words and how this is affected by
individual variability is highlighted by Lafford, Collentine
and Karp's (2003) description of different types of word
knowledge with examples provided in Spanish. They cite a
description offered by Henricksen (1999) that "*distinguishes
3 types of knowledge of a word: partial/precise knowledge;
depth of knowledge about a word; and receptive/productive
dimension*" (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:135). Depth of
word knowledge relates strongly to the notions within this
study of different degrees of familiarity. Also, of
particular interest to this study is the comment made by
these authors about student errors. They suggest that
students may make mistakes because they have "*naïve
assumptions [[...]]that words have exact equivalent in
difference languages*" and "*A student of Spanish … might
overgeneralize the extension of pescado to both food and*

live fish" (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:135).

Such statements may lead the reader to assume that this is the case for most learners, but such occurrences may occur for different reasons (other than naïve assumptions). Errors that appear to be caused by overgeneralization may be caused by circumlocution i.e. by the learner, being unable to recall the correct word and its connotation, producing a similar 'incorrect' word knowing that the interlocutor will understand the meaning intended. Such difficulties about authors' assumptions about reasons for learners' behaviour during production may not be entirely alleviated by this study, but our understanding may increase with insights from observations of an individual inextricably involved in this production process.

Similarly, the assumption by Lafford, Collentine and Karp (citing Laufer 1991) that '*false cognates*' are '*not helpful*' for successful language acquisition may be misleading. 'False cognates' may indeed support the strategy employed for the acquisition of these words. The example Lafford, Collentine and Karp offer is the Spanish word for 'pregnant' ('embarazada'). These words appear to be entirely different and it is understandable that these authors believe that the Spanish learner may easily interpret 'embarazada' as 'embarrassed'. However, using Gruneberg's

technique of interrelating images, picturing a pregnant woman 'embarrassed' by her condition may be contrastingly helpful in the acquisition of the Spanish word 'embarazada'.

A third confirmation of the significance of individual differences is offered by Lafford, Collentine and Karp in their example of the way in which learners may multiword units in "*a given discursive context*". Their example consists of the Spanish phrase 'con permiso'. These authors suggest that the phrase may be used in error instead of the more appropriate 'perdón'. The learner may equally deliberately misuse lexicon in order to hypothesise about language usage. Alternatively, the student may know the correct usage 'perdón' but may deliberately use an incorrect Spanish interpretation in order to avoid uttering alternatives arising from the interference of other partially acquired languages. Phrases with similar semantic qualities, such as 'Enschuldingen mir' (German) and 'pardonnez-moi' (French) may have interfered with correct Spanish usage. The student may be aware that 'pardonnez-moi' is very close to the correct Spanish phrase required, but nevertheless, in order to force his or her thoughts to focus on Spanish rather than French, the learner may deliberately utter an incorrect lexicon because of its phonological distance.

Clearly, evidence provided by error analysis (as with most 'evidence' provided in studies of language acquisition) is seriously affected by individual variability. Furthermore, error analysis is made difficult by the way in which native speakers' use of language is so variable (Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes 2006:54). A fourth indication of the seriousness of influence of individual characteristics concerns the belief of Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes that errors are often exacerbated by the learner's lack of sociocultural background knowledge. The example given is the idiom "*Hay moros en la costa*" (There are Moors on the coast meaning "*The walls have ears*"). The extent of knowledge that these authors contend is necessary for the learner to understand and acquire this particular idiom does not need to be as specific or as extensive as implied. The learner may comprehend and acquire this idiom by association of 'moros' with Moroccans some of whom are viewed as unwelcome strangers in Spain where they currently reside. Finally, individual variability also has a significant influence in the development of cognitive style within an individual.

There is no doubt that learning is affected by cognitive factors whether consciously or subconsciously (or 'automatically') applied (Richards and Rodgers 1996;

Lightbown and Spada 1993; Oxford 1999). 'Cognition' in terms of the functioning of the brain and cognitive strategies used during the learning process are described above (2.3). However, different perspectives on cognitive style have led to different definitions. Wittrock (1978) views cognitive style as a relatively stable condition that can alter in time according to contextual needs. Anderson, in relation to memory, states that we have separate codes for encoding verbal and visual material. "*Verbal information is stored as sequences of words, and visual information is stored in picture-like memory records.*" (Anderson 1995:210) However other theories incorporate both verbal and visual material during the storing process (e.g. Gruneberg (1987) and Stevick (1989) whose work is described in the paragraphs below). A number of descriptions focus on differences in relation to 'field dependence' or 'field independence'. 'Field dependence' is described as a global cognitive style in which learners do not differentiate between the different components of a field (Witkin et al 1977) and 'field independence' is described as a more analytical cognitive style in which learners focus on specific items irrespective of background and context (Richards, Platt and Platt 1985).

One of the most effective descriptions of cognitive style that complements the learning techniques suggested by

Gruneberg and Morris (1978) is offered by Stevick (1989). In common with studies in the 1980s which discovered that interactive images are believed to help memory (Anderson 1995:214), Stevick emphasizes the important role of 'image' in the way in which our thinking and memory are engaged during our development of strategies during the language learning process. Stevick's concept of imagery defines the term as 'spontaneous' and 'transitory' and incorporates responses relating to the "*five senses as well as emotions, purposes, duration, frequency and remoteness in time*" (Stevick 1989:139). Stevick believes that non-verbal and verbal imagery provides the basis for the meanings and modalities we interpret and convey in language use. Data from one meaning or modality can trigger other, quite different meanings and modalities. In his description Stevick also emphasizes the significance of the effects of kinaesthetic links, the auditory part of verbal imagery and the particular sound of a language that trigger responses and meanings in the learner. Other authors emphasize the impact of images that are bizarre, helping learning because they are distinctive (Gruneberg 1987; Anderson 1995:214).

Clearly a description of cognitive style is not a simple matter and this complexity is further exacerbated by the way in which images inextricably infiltrate and affect

the bank of learned rules of language already acquired by
the learner (Stevick 1989:138-145). This description is
particularly relevant to the study of language acquisition
for an individual learner, for it concerns the internal
workings of the individual learner's cognitive activity, a
fundamental aspect of Stevick's and of this study. Although
Stevick maintains that much cognitive activity in adults is
an unconscious process, he acknowledges that this is not
always the case. What is certain is that an individual can
reflect, remember and re-interpret each event in terms that
are inextricably tied with his or her beliefs and actions.
These varied descriptions of cognitive styles do not
necessarily mean that only one style will be applied during
an individual's learning experience – "*it is quite possible
for one to use different cognitive approaches at different
times and still show a preference for one style over the
other*" (Hatch 1983:224).

2.4.3 Output

Receiving and processing input (as described above) is a prerequisite for using the language acquired and there are numerous interrelated factors that contribute to a learners' 'output'. These include significant factors incorporated in the process of language production as well as the nature of interlanguage systems, the different concepts of competence and performance, language use and language usage, and Speech Act Theory. The language production process is described in four stages by Spiele and Griffin (2006). Learners first prepare to communicate by forming a 'message'. This 'message' contains the conceptual and pragmatic information needed. In the second stage learners select lexical representations called 'lemmas'. Phonological encoding follows and finally these representations are produced with retrieval of 'motor programmes' for articulating the syllables (Spiele and Griffin 2006:293). Stated more simply, at the beginning of this output production process, language for use is retrieved from the memory. The retrieval process itself is not easily described, for example, "*We may store everything we attend to, and memory failure may be due to forgetting and retrieval factors rather than to acquisition factors*" (Anderson 1995:225). There is no doubt that word retrieval is a complex and varied process

especially in the light of individual differences. Adults, in particular, have numerous complex interrelationships between lexical items stored in the memory to assess in this retrieval process: "*second language learners, especially adults, are sensitive to the differences in the range of word meaning, to sound similarities, and to differences in word forms as well*" (Hatch 1983:70).

Language production or 'output' has recently become a particular focus for developing theory. Swain, for example, has developed a more formalized version of Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Grove 2003) and this shifts the perspective to focussing more directly on output, especially Swain's three functions of output (Swain 1985). Swain stresses the importance of negative input which causes the need for 'pushed output' when the learner is forced to find alternative language to communicate successfully. Swain also stresses the importance of learners using their linguistic resources in the process of negotiated meaning and having the opportunity to test hypotheses about linguistic forms (similar to Krashen's theory but with less reliance on subconscious activity). Swain also contends that the learner's language production assists in the acquisition process by forcing the movement from semantic to syntactic processing. Most importantly for the needs of this study,

Swain contends that learners should *reflect* on their language production so that they can improve the comprehensibility of their utterances (Swain 1993; Swain 1995; Swain and Lapkin 1995).

Interlanguage, defined as "*the type of language produced by second and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a language*" (Richards, Platt and Platt 1985:186), has some relevance to the discussion. The learner uses the target language incorporating errors that are not completely transferred from first or second language knowledge. Cotterall's study (2004), however, indicates that some students are likely to understand the importance of syntactic processing in their output at the start. Harry, a 29 nine year-old native speaker of English who took a course in learning Spanish, believed that in language speaking practice form-focused language use, in particular, was more beneficial than fluency-focused language use (Cotterall 2004:112). Recently theories have depended on the identification of specific language elements and their function within the syntax in common usage, and suggest that this identification provides profitable language elements for comparison and association during the learning process. Learners apply specific cognitive strategies that depend on such forms. Frota in Schmidt and Frota's study of 1986

assesses Schmidt's language acquisition in terms of the accuracy of his language use in terms of accepted usage.

This study, as mentioned above, acknowledges that an appreciation of language form is important in the process of acquiring Spanish. Previous knowledge of French, for example, whilst instigating interference in some cases, also contributes to successful learning (Biggs and Moore 1993). An understanding of the significance of inflecting nouns as masculine or feminine in French compares readily with similar inflections in Spanish. However, it is arguable, as mentioned above, that lexicon and other salient phenomena may have a more significant role in the developmental stages of language acquisition.

2.4.4 Competence

Other important issues relating to language production concern interpretation of what using language 'successfully' or 'competently' means (Segal, Chipman and Glazer 1985; Widdowson 1990; Lightbown 1990). Using language in a perfectly correct way, e.g. grammatically, is not necessarily the most effective way to communicate in terms of communicative competence. Schachter (1990) believes that issues concerning both textual knowledge and pragmatic knowledge are also pertinent in a discussion of language

competence although Schachter favours a more precise investigation of actual linguistic forms incorporated in language use (Schachter 1990:46). Schachter is also concerned with the need to reach native-like competence thus favouring a comparative approach comparing learners' competence with native speakers of similar age. Widdowson (1991) approaches this problem by distinguishing between different accounts of competence: the medium account focusing on the 'semantics of sentence grammar' and the mediation account focusing on the pragmatics of language use (Widdowson 1991:118). Widdowson asserts that all language communication depends more on the outcome of negotiated meaning than on the content of the text in use. These issues are particularly relevant to a study of an individual learner.

   As mentioned above, Schmidt and Frota's study (Schmidt and Frota 1986) focuses more particularly on Schmidt's accurate use of Portuguese and Frota's analysis of his correct usage during Schmidt's language production provides the most substantial evidence for Schmidt's language acquisition. Accurate usage of language is generally considered necessary if communication is to be immediately successful. However, accurate usage not only concerns particular grammatical and syntactical forms, but also the

use of appropriate lexicon. This is particularly important in the use of vocabulary specific to the place in which the target language is being acquired. Language usage may differ according to the changeable tendencies of different dialects. Using unacceptable word endings that indicate the subject of the communication and using the wrong inflectional morphemes often lead to confusion and misinterpretation. In terms of performance, a learner may use incorrect grammatical forms, while communication may still be successful in spite of such poor language usage. The listeners on these occasions make allowances for limited language competence and make efforts to accommodate their own language use and to interpret the learner's language in accordance with the learner's understanding and intentions (Wolfson 1983:63).

Canale (1983) outlines a theoretical framework for consideration of the nature of communication and other factors that are implicated accordingly: Communication is "*(a) normally acquired and used in social interaction; (b) involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message; it takes place in ….contexts (c) provides constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances; (d) is carried out under limiting psychological … conditions such as memory*

constraints, fatigue and distractions; (e) always has a purpose; (f) involves authentic, as opposed to textbook-contrived language and (g) is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes" (Canale 1983:3-4). These aspects and more (such as affective factors) all contribute to the complexity of the nature of communication and a discussion of this necessarily incorporates distinguishing between 'language competence' and 'language performance' (Segal, Chipman and Glaser 1985; Widdowson 1991; Lightbown 1990).

Theories of competence are commonly based on how well a learner understands a second language particularly in terms of its grammatical structure and its lexical content. This understanding is implicit rather than explicit and evidence of competence differs according to the specific aspects of competence measured, for example, error analysis provides one set of data, while results from comprehension tests another. In addition, breadth of lexical knowledge has become a recent phenomenon in discussion of competence (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:133-134). Theories of performance, on the other hand, relate more specifically to how well a learner uses the language in communicative situations. Judgements are made about learners' awareness of the appropriateness of the language and their own language

behaviour in relation to the situation (Richards, Platt and Platt 1985). Such judgements involve complex issues for evidence of effective performance incorporates consideration of numerous interacting and interrelated factors. These factors include different repertoires, styles and registers as they are affected by domain, context, topic, participants and channel (Brière 1980:89).

Individual self-observers are unable to make accurate judgements about their competency and performance in terms of others' perceptions. In order to address this problem, Schmidt's experiences were evaluated by another linguist: Frota. Schmidt's competence during use was assessed by means of four tape recordings which were analysed according to his successful acquisition of specific language forms (Schmidt and Frota 1986). Schmidt's experience also included other informal testing to indicate his level of progress. Additional information was provided by other contributors to language interaction (Schmidt and Frota 1986). Clearly some form of testing is needed for successful evaluation of a learner's language acquisition if the description of this acquisition is to be valid.

In evaluating a learner's competence and performance issues relating to speech act theory have some relevance. The above description of judging competence in terms of

grammatical accuracy during spoken language production by the learner concerns the 'propositional' or 'locutionary' meaning of the learner's language production (Richards, Platt and Platt:343-4). Complementing this is concern for the illocutionary meaning i.e. the effect the learner's production has on the listener. The appropriateness of language use in performance, for example, is directly related to the receptiveness of the listeners, to the background knowledge of the interlocutors and to the specific circumstances of the situation as well as to the interlocutors' understanding and application of Speech Act concerns. Issues relating to Speech Act theory include politeness, implications, relationships (special, temporal, personal and social) and presuppositions. Although researched, these issues have never been fully resolved (Koike, Pearson and Witten 2003:161-163). Just as the process of language production is a complex matter, so an evaluation of language production success is complex. Numerous factors interact and interrelate simultaneously during the language production situation and each situation will always be a unique experience when the aim is to observe this experience as closely as possible.

2.5 Developmental stages in the language acquisition process

Language acquisition is a gradually developed process. Different authors describe this developmental process in different ways. Some authors, for example, provide evidence of this process as a description of the natural order of the acquisition of specific grammatical structures. Others consider the order of acquisition of specific grammatical structures in relation to observations of specific learners, in terms of the errors learners make, or according to accumulative competence. Finally, others approach the issue of the developmental nature of language acquisition as a field that is best approached in terms of individual differences. The insight established by means of observation of the developmental progress of an individual learner is the focus of the enquiry. (This study is based on the latter approach).

The natural order of acquisition is described by Krashen (1982). He claims that there is an 'average' order of acquisition of certain forms which he describes in four stages: progressive (-ing), plural and copula ('to be') forms followed by the acquisition of auxiliary (progressive, as in 'he *is* going'), and the article (a, the); a third stage of grammatical structure acquisition is represented by acquisition of irregular past forms and the final stage is

represented by the acquisition of regular past, third person singular and the possessive forms. The order, Krashen contends, is the same for first and second language acquisition – i.e. for children and adults. He admits, however, that in general the "*auxiliary and copula tend to be acquired relatively later in first language acquisition than in second language acquisition*" (Krashen 1982:12-13). It is accepted that Krashen's description represents an 'average' order of acquisition but it is important to consider this order may differ considerably in individuals according to the individual's language aptitude and previous knowledge especially regarding the structures concerned.

Anderson reports that "*As part of memory reconstruction, subjects infer and recall information that was not actually studied*" (Anderson 1995:289). A learner's background knowledge in relation to specific contexts is particularly influential on the structures acquired and in the way in which they are used (Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes 2006:66). In Schmidt's acquisition, as expected, he acquired copula late in his learning period, but as an individual he omitted grammatical morphemes and the rate of this deletion remained unchanged over the entire period of the study (Schmidt and Frota 1986:262). It would be reasonable to assume that as Schmidt's acquisition developed errors that

he made early in his learning period would be gradually

corrected. This was not the case. Thus, if we are to develop

a more complete understanding of the process, it is crucial

that individual differences are taken into account on a more

substantial basis.

Other studies describe the developmental progress of

language acquisition in terms of errors: interference errors

(from the influence of knowledge of another similar

language), intralingual errors (from the influence of

incomplete knowledge of the language structure) and

'developmental' errors (from hypotheses formed from limited

knowledge) (Ellis 1994:58). The example in the previous

paragraph indicates the danger of relying solely on an

understanding of errors. Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes, for

example, warn against relying on error analysis when

assessing learner choice (Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes

2006:53). However, analysis of errors has some value. Hatch

(1983) incorporates the notion of interlanguage development

within her description of different approaches to error

analysis and the effect of proficiency tests (Hatch

1983:102-106). It is clear that even error analysis is no

simple linear matter. Hatch points out there is *"a good deal*

of overlap … of even one learner moving from one stage to

the next …While [errors] may be systematically described,

the correct/incorrect forms may shift back and forth several times …" (Hatch 1983:105). Hatch also notes that evidence from studies of errors indicates that when we first acquire lexicon the correct syntactical form is usually acquired in addition for we seldom try "*to substitute a verb for a noun or an adjective for a noun*" (Hatch 1983:59). The study of one factor or one type of error may necessarily depend on incorporating the study of another factor or type of error simultaneously for different factors may be inextricably involved in the development of an individual's language acquisition. However, Hatch favours the notion of universal characteristics and relies to some extent on the existence of an interlanguage system in the developmental process. "*Despite the variability found within the data of one subject and in the data between subjects most researchers still believe there is enough similarity to allow us to talk about Interlanguage as systematic.*" (Hatch 1983:105) In similar, more general terms, Krashen describes the progress of language acquisition in terms of "*stage i, where i represents current competence, to i + 1, the next level*" (Krashen 1982:20-21). Staube (1980), in a discussion of negation, uses the terms Basilang, Mesolang and Acrolang to describe the developmental process. Basilang refers to learner language that is "*furthest from the target*

language"; Mesolang refers to 'intermediate variations' in the learner language and Acrolang refers to language that is identical with the target language system (Staube 1980:46).

Clearly, there are different stages of development in the language acquisition process. However, these stages have no definitive boundaries. "*There is plenty of evidence that acquisitional sequences are not completely rigid. For example, in the case of pronouns all learners seem to go through a stage when they overgeneralize. A sequence can also be influenced by the learner's L1 [(first language)].*" (Ellis 1994:111-112) Thus the starting point for the acquisition of the target language word order [e.g. in German] seems to vary according to the basic word order of the learner's first language. Ellis continues: "*There is the question of individual learner differences and what causes them. Learners set about the task of acquiring an L2 in different ways. They differ with regard to such general factors as motivation and aptitude, and also in the use of various strategies such as inferencing, and self-monitoring for obtaining input and for learning from it*" (Ellis 1994:18).

One aspect of the development of language acquisition that has not been fully researched is the depth of knowledge of lexicon, especially on an individual basis (Lafford,

Collentine and Karp 2003:139). An understanding of the way
in which different lexical items relate to one another
within the thought processes of the learner would provide
real insight into the way in which language knowledge is
developed. There is general agreement that "*Learners need
optimal neurological networks… achieved through the creation
of "intentional links" and "sense relations" between
lexemes*" (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:139). The way in
which an individual builds up this knowledge relates to the
unique way in which connections are made according to the
learner's unique experience and their unique previously
acquired language knowledge.

The need for attention to individuals in this matter is
supported by Lafford, Collentine and Karp's statement
regarding the development of lexicon in Spanish: "*English-
speaking students may continue to rely on ser for most
copula functions for a long period because es (third person
singular form of ser) is so similar to English "is""*
(Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:141). There are numerous
cases when this would not apply. For example, an adult
learner who has embedded knowledge of grammatical issues
that relate to the usage of the different verbs 'to be' may
become aware of the different functions of the verbs ser and
estar very early in their language development. The

variation of usage of *ser* and *estar* in Spanish is clearly described by Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes (Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes 2006:60). Awareness of these differences necessarily influences the learner's usage. Informed linguists learning Spanish may well begin to try to use these verbs (albeit with regular errors) within the very first stages of learning Spanish. Stauble and Schumann (1983) in their intense scrutiny of language acquisition development regarding the sequence of acquisition of English negation by Spanish speakers concludes that language learners differ considerably depending on the particular aspects of interlanguage that are being examined (Stauble and Schumann 1983:91).

　　Thus it appears that close focus on the finer details of the acquisition of language structures creates difficulties in applying findings generally. Clear evidence of this difficulty is provided by Larsen-Freeman in her attempt to assess "global second language proficiency" while at the same time attempting to establish a "second language index of development". The tasks were found to be too impractical to realize because of the complexity of the problem (Larsen-Freeman 1983:287). However, there remains a general understanding that language acquisition is a developmental process: one that is gradual and that

incorporates a slow accumulative advancement of language knowledge and language competence in the individual. At the preliminary stage of acquiring a new language, the learner has little or no language knowledge and at the extreme end of this developmental continuum, the language learner uses the language as fluently and as accurately as a native speaker.

A more manageable approach is, however, accepted and in spite of its shortcomings, will be adopted in this study. For example, Grove (2003) draws attention to widely accepted principles of development that are initiated by a 'natural approach' in instruction: e.g. comprehension precedes production. This 'natural' approach allows for a silent period when the learner may refrain from producing any of the target language for some time. Other widely accepted principles (based on Krashen and Terrell's ideas) include an agreement that production emerges in stages. Stage one is represented by a silent/pre-speech period, Stage two is represented by a period in which single word responses emerge and stage three is represented by a period in which phrases, sentences and finally more complex discourse emerges in the output of the learner (Grove 2003).

2.6 Learning strategies

In the development of learning strategy theory, early classifications of learning strategies focused on the researchers' interests and on specific situations, subject matters and learning environments (see Ellis 1994:529-60 for a review). These early categorizations of strategy categories were unsatisfactory because they were incomplete. A comprehensive list of learning strategy features is offered by O'Malley and Chamot cited in Ellis (Ellis 1994:537-8) which suggests that Ellis believes that our understanding of these strategies depends on the closeness of our definition of these as separate entities. Ellis praises Oxford (1990) for detailed categorization and the "*organization of specific strategies into a hierarchy of levels and the breadth of taxonomy*" (Ellis 1994:539).

Nevertheless, Ellis acknowledges that the line between different strategy categories is unclear and that categories are not equal in dimension. In addition to this, "*People categorize objects by multiple means*" (Anderson 1995:354) as researchers categorize similar data differently depending on their different objectives and their different perspectives. Some of the problems of this lack of clarity may be alleviated from a more detailed description of the nature of the learning process and of the different learning

strategies applied concurrently and interdependently by an individual. Consequently discussion of 'categories' and 'strategies' may not be limited to a determination to evolve a more closely defined and narrowly bounded description of known 'categories' but to develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of a more holistic appreciation of 'phenomena' within the language learning of an individual who is both the subject and the researcher of the study. Any 'categorization' of strategies is extended to include strategies that the learner has already acquired as part of his or her previously acquired background knowledge, as well as strategies and approaches generated by the learner as her language acquisition develops. It should be noted, however, that such strategies must be considered in conjunction with the added effects of the learner's personality, learning characteristics, age, motivation, interest in the subject material and attitude if the data and conclusions are to be valid.

Categorization of learning strategies into direct and indirect strategies is a useful descriptive device for further exploration. Direct strategies are defined as those that incorporate cognitive, memory and compensation strategies and indirect strategies incorporate metacognitive, affective and social strategies (Oxford

1990:16). This categorization provides a useful list for discussion of the research but not for a full, valid interpretation of the nature of the strategies and of the extent and manner in which they are applied. For example, a learner may use memory strategies, but in so doing, the learner may also use a combination of other strategies at the same time. In order to remember vocabulary, for example, the learner may use cognitive abilities to focus and 'notice' the vocabulary. However, at the same time, the learner may also use compensation strategies that allow for any lack of ability to retain large chunks of language. Metacognitive strategies that rely on background world knowledge to create associations with the vocabulary being learnt may also have a significant part to play.

The use of affective strategies (for example, endeavouring to create a 'feel good' factor in the situation so that learning would be successful) and social strategies (for example, carefully learning the vocabulary to be pronounced in the way that would allow the learner to integrate in the social situation) are also important. Distinguishing between which strategy or strategies are paramount within given situations is not easily determined, but in the current study, where the learner can reflect on the strategies that the learner consciously adopts, new

insights into the nature of these strategies and their
hierarchical structure within specific learning situations
may be provided.

In the current research, Oxford's definition of
strategies may be extended to include an understanding of
their application related to experience rather than from a
theoretical dissection and compartmentalization of bounded
connotations of 'strategies'. In the literature, there are
also issues that relate to how strategies are observed to be
constructed and implemented (Oxford 1990) and in reporting
strategies that are evolved internally by the individual
(Naiman, Frühlich and Stern 1978). One of the major purposes
of the current study is to provide new insight into an
individual's approach to constructing and implementing
strategies and perception and understanding of the process
of language acquisition.

2.6.1 Cognitive strategies and memory strategies

In this thesis, learning strategies and cognitive
strategies are often treated as synonymous terms as the data
depends mostly on the reporting of consciously applied
strategies i.e. the cognitive application of strategies or
'cognitive strategies'. Consequently the terms 'learning
strategy' and 'cognitive strategy' are often interchanged

when strategies include cognitive aspects, but there are also times when the term 'strategy' is extended to include 'non-cognitive' activities that may be consciously adopted within the wider context considered at the time. Such non-cognitive strategies are represented, for example, by 'affective' strategies that are designed to engage the interlocutor's sympathy. Further to this, the terms 'cognitive strategy' and 'memory strategy' are often treated synonymously.

Although a clear distinction can be made between cognitive activities and activities that are specifically related to memory alone, in this study, the importance of memory in the development of language acquisition in a learner makes such a distinction almost redundant. Memory strategies are inextricably part of the description of cognitive activity in an individual learner's reflections on cognitive strategies. However, there is no doubt that cognitive strategies are particularly important in a self-reflective study of a learner observing personal development of language acquisition. In addition to the insights provided by Pickett (1978) one of the most significant contributors to this area of learning theory is Stevick (1989). Learning strategies vary considerably and may include the use of repetition, expanding language, the

development of understanding from the use of the target language, the significance of specific reference material, relating new information to physical actions, using particular methods of translation, grouping the material to be learned, applying methods of note-taking, using deduction by applying rules, applying a re-combination of known language elements, use of imagery, and auditory representation.

Although much of the research in this area has focused on the way in which "*cognitive strategies such as [those described above] appear to be directly linked to the performance of particular learning tasks*" (Ellis 1994:536), the use of cognitive strategies has much wider implications. In language learning, not only are such cognitive strategies linked to particular learning tasks, they are integral contributors to the gradual development of language acquisition in an individual that is not possible to define in precise, causal terms. However, evidence of cognitive strategies can be shown to have been applied in a learner's experience during language acquisition. Schmidt provides such an example when he reports in his diary that he refused to speak sentences that he did not understand i.e. his cognitive strategies included developing his understanding of his target language from meaningful use of the target

language (Schmidt and Frota 1986:244). Cognitive strategies

during language learning are variable in nature, depending

on the learner's needs at the time of application. The use

of 'repetition', for example includes different *kinds* of

repetition used and the kinds of repetition vary according

to particular learning contexts. In order to remember

vocabulary, for example, repetition of the word(s) is

applied internally in the thinking of the learner and

externally as the learner repeats the word(s) in spoken form

within a purposeful language communication event.

2.6.2 Compensation strategies

Compensation strategies are an integral part of a

discussion of the effect of age on the acquisition of

language. However, age is not the only influence on

learners' applications of compensation strategies. Further

issues relate to individual characteristics, for different

learners have different learning characteristics that have

direct effects on compensatory strategies used. Ellis

remarks that Oxford is not in line with most authors and

"*somewhat confusingly, [Oxford classifies] 'compensation*

strategies'… as a direct type of 'learning strategy'" (Ellis

1994:539). On this issue, this author agrees with Oxford,

and compensation strategies reported in the observations of

a learner necessarily have to be 'direct' and discernable compensatory strategies, although the existence of indirect compensatory strategies is not denied.

Bull and Yingxin (2001) in discussion of raising the awareness of strategies in learners offer different categories of compensatory strategies which include selecting topics, avoiding communication, adjusting the message, getting help, using alternative synonyms, coining (making up) words and mime (Bull and Yingxin 2001:8). However, observing other learners' strategies, in whatever form they take, remains problematic while the observer is not the learner concerned.

2.6.3 Metacognitive strategies

Ellis distinguishes cognitive strategies as strategies that are specifically related to the thinking processes of the learner "*(for example, relating new concepts to other information in memory)*" (Ellis 1994:37) and metacognitive strategies as strategies that are more external in approach "*(for example organizing a personal timetable to facilitate effective study of L2)*" (Ellis 1994:37).

In this study, reference to 'metacognitive strategies' incorporate accepted usage i.e. conscious preparation, decision-making, selection, monitoring and appraisal of the

learning material, the learning event and of the 'finished' linguistic product during use (Richards, Platt and Platt 1992:227). Learners are sometimes more aware of these aspects than external observers, for learners are capable of reflecting on their thinking processes and the way in which they engage with the particular strategies employed. Schmidt, for example, describes the effect of an act of conscious preparation when he prepared to tell a joke. He wrote out the joke (using his dictionary) and memorized and practised the joke before telling it in class the following day. The teacher was unaware of the extent of his preparation so judged that Schmidt was showing considerable improvement in his language acquisition. However, Schmidt comments that in spite of the teacher's erroneous assumption, he, in conjunction with the teacher, was 'satisfied' with his progress (Schmidt and Frota 1986:245). Schmidt's conscious strategy had an effect on his acquired competence.

2.6.4 Affective strategies

Much of the discussion on affective factors is incorporated in the sections below, regarding attitude and salient phenomena. Other passing references have been made to affective strategies in this thesis above (e.g. 2.6).

There is no doubt that affective strategies have a significant influence on the development of language acquisition. Our language learning is affected by attitudes, emotions, motivation and personality. Although the degree of this influence is difficult to determine, there are numerous studies that indicate that affective factors influence specific learners in specific learning situations. Anderson reports that "*People may encode less of what they experience in a high arousal state, but they may better retain what they do encode*" (Anderson 1995:262). Ellis cites several reports as evidence of affective factor influence on language learning: F. Schumann needed to make her learning environment more comfortable before she felt she could learn successfully (Schumann and Schumann 1977), a learner was unable to learn because of a boyfriend problem in the study by Ellis and Rathbone (1987) and Bailey (1983) reported a classroom difficulty arising from the students' reactions to a test they believed to be inappropriate. These references refer to the negative impact of these factors. However, such affective factors can be incorporated in learning strategies much more positively. Learners who take into consideration their attitudes, emotions, motivation and personal characteristics at the time of a specific learning event can use this understanding to good effect in their general

strategic approach at that specific time.

The changeable nature of affective factors makes it difficult to define exactly which affective factors are contributing to a learning situation and the extent to which these factors affect the learning at the time. However, some insight is provided by individual diary observations. Schmidt reported how strongly he felt when he was asked to take part in a drill. Although he was perfectly aware of the learning method and its value, because he felt it imperative to speak the truth, he was unable to engage with the learning positively (Schmidt 1986:243). His attitude, in turn, became part of his strategic approach and he refused to say sentences he did not understand (Schmidt 1986:244). He felt that this would have a positive effect on his language acquisition. Affective factors and strategies that take these factors into consideration seem to have a significant role in the development of language acquisition.

2.6.5 Social strategies

Discussion on social factors is incorporated in the discussion above and in sections below regarding 'external factors' and 'naturalistic and instructed language acquisition' (2.9). Learners' strategic approaches often include considerations of these social factors at the time

of learning. Although many of the social factors are externally determined and cannot be directly influenced by the learner, learners' adaptations to meet their needs within particular social environments can affect their learning considerably. Schmidt found the social environment of the classroom irksome at times, but within this difficult situation, he devised strategies that helped to satisfy his needs as a learner. He doggedly went against the teacher's wishes, and tried to form complete, meaningful sentences instead of repeating the simpler forms the teacher was teaching. Although his actions created a negative reaction from the teacher, Schmidt's more realistic appreciation of his learning needs were satisfied. He took account of the 'social environment' and acted according to his own needs (Schmidt 1986:244). However, much of Schmidt's learning incorporated an appreciation of the important influence of social factors and his constant reference to his desire to socialize with native speakers testifies to his constant use of 'social strategies' even though these strategies may not have been clearly defined. For example, "*R felt that the most significant expansion of his interaction and ability in Portuguese came when he began spending most of his free time with an informal social group of Brazilians*" (Schmidt and Frota 1986:247).

2.7 The relationship between learning strategies and language learning

Studies that have investigated the relationship between the use of strategies and successful language learning have varied according to the special focus of the research. Aspects that have been investigated include the nature of the specific strategies used, the relationship between strategy use (with regard to both frequency and type) and criterion measures of learning, and correlation of variables (Ellis 1994). These studies include 'good language learner studies', studies of the significance of language input, vocabulary-learning strategies and learning strategies in relation to second language development. Much of the discussion relating to this topic has been covered above, particularly in the previous discussion of cognition as the application and effect of strategies on second language acquisition is often dependent on the engagement of cognitive activities.

The most significant studies that relate to the empirical research in this study are 'the good language learner studies'. Interpreting the word 'good' as 'effective', studies of successful language learners necessarily contain attempts to describe ways in which these learners approached the learning, how they applied their

respective strategies and how these strategies contributed to their language acquisition. In Schmidt's diary, self-reported observations describe his different approaches, how he applied certain strategies and how he believed these strategies contributed to his language acquisition. Confirmation of Schmidt's beliefs was provided to a certain extent by the assessment of Schmidt's competence by Frota, a linguist and a speaker of the language Schmidt attempted to learn (Schmidt and Frota 1986:237-322). Most studies of the good language learner acknowledge that this is one of the most difficult fields of research to investigate in terms of forming generalized principles.

The different approaches these studies have taken have ranged from investigation of specific successful language learners who were interviewed and/or asked to complete questionnaires (Ellis 1994 citing Naiman et al.1978; Lennon 1989), to comparisons of more and less successful learners (Ellis 1994 citing Reiss 1985; Huang and Van Naersson 1985). Jones (1996) extends the discussion to include consideration of a number of different correlated contributory factors within individual learners. He reports, for example, on the links that have been found to exist between certain aspects of the good language learners' approaches and their differing levels of language learning success: for example,

"*Perceptions of language aptitude etc. (EXPERTISE) are linked to the EFFORT/PLANNING skills of Self-Discipline and Time management*" (Jones 1996:216). However, there is no doubt that attempts to correlate strategies with success cannot be easily determined or generalized.

It is also apparent, as Jones (1996) has demonstrated, that studies of individual learners provide insight into this area. For example, Stevick (1989) studied seven successful language learners and offers insight into the nature of language learning strategies used by these different successful language learners. In order to learn vocabulary, for example, verbal and non-verbal images are used. Stevick's acknowledgement that different learners used strategies differently is crucial (Stevick 1989:138-145). However, Stevick, as Ellis states, "*nevertheless thinks it is possible to identify an 'overall pattern'*" (Ellis 1994:546) which is of benefit to developing language learning theory.

More support for a holistic approach is offered by Jones in his description of the constantly changing nature of strategy use mentioned above (Jones 1996:138). Clearly researching such activity is not a simple, easily bounded matter. However, the findings of Schmidt's and Jones's studies nevertheless provide important focal points from

which other language learners can develop successful strategic styles on an individual basis. Another study that offers insight into language learning strategies and their effect in adult language acquisition that is worthy of inclusion in this discussion is the study by Pickett (1978). In his study, thirty adult learners were asked to record their language learning experiences in the form of self-reports to prompt headings.

In Pickett's study many of the comments reflected on the success of strategies that suited the personal preferences of the subjects and these often gave insight into the possible causal effect of some of their strategies. An example is offered by contributor H: "*[…] contributor H remembers words better when she sees them written down. She also mentions the value of association in learning vocabulary as she translates from journals or newspapers: …* "*the material itself is interesting, of course - also because knowledge of the subject matter is an aid and finally because the association enables me to remember the structure and lexis*"" (Pickett 1978:71).

Ellis identifies five major aspects of successful language learning as "*(1) a concern for language form, (2) a concern for communication (functional practice), (3) an active task approach, (4) an awareness of the learning*

process, and (5) a capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with task requirements" (Ellis 1994:546-7). Schmidt exhibits these five aspects within his diary entries. As a linguist, he was constantly concerned with language lexis and form. In his first example he reports that he was aware of the repetition of a particular word in conversation. After consulting a dictionary he reported not only the meaning of the word but the fact that is was an adverb (Schmidt and Frota 1986:240). He focused on functional practice in communication. He expressed frustration in class when he was not encouraged to use language that could be used functionally in real communicative events. He wanted to use language that commented on his marital status, but within the class context, the language forms required were not included in the language forms to be learnt at that time (Schmidt and Frota 1986:243). Schmidt also engaged in active tasks during his language learning experience. He described the effectiveness of his first experience in a class where the learners within the class were encouraged to actively introduce themselves using new language that had just been introduced (Schmidt and Frota 1986:243). Schmidt's comments revealed his apparent awareness of the learning process. As mentioned previously with regard to social factors, he

reports that the most significant expansion of his ability in Portuguese came when he spent time in an informal social group of native speakers (Schmidt and Frota 1986:247).

Finally, in accordance with the five major aspects of successful language learning listed by Ellis (Ellis 1994:546-7), Schmidt's capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with task requirements was also in evidence. At one stage, his learning needs seemed to conflict with the teacher's methods. In order to avoid conflict he adapted his strategies for learning so that instead of endeavouring to say meaningful sentences as part of his learning process (not required by the teacher) he asked questions to achieve the same end (Schmidt and Frota 1986:244).

It may be argued that the five major aspects of successful language learning offered by Ellis are far too few and far too generally expressed to provide real support for developing theory. For example, Jones (1996) lists more detailed variables known to affect learning strategy use. These variables show a correlation between increased use of strategies with second languages that are believed to be inherently difficult, include the notion that females seem better strategy-users and demonstrate the all-important effect of learners' positive attitudes. There are also correlations between increasing proficiency in the second

language and the range of strategies used, and the strength

of motivation with the amount of strategy use (Jones

1996:64). More detailed research into motivational factors

is offered by Noels (2003). Noels views motivational factors

in terms of three inter-related types of orientation: one

that is 'inherent in the language learning process', a

second that lies on 'a continuum of self-determination' and

a third 'relating to positive contact with the language

group' (Noels 2003:98). While Ellis does not offer precise

detail of the interrelating affective factors, the

difficulties in this area of research created by too much

generalization are acknowledged: "*It is easy to overstate

the commonalities in strategy use among good language

learners*" (Ellis 1994:546) but if theory is to progress,

more focused investigation and analysis is needed and a

further exploration of the five different aspects indicated

by Ellis is warranted.

(1) A concern for language form

    Ellis expands the aspects offered extensively, but more

in terms of the research that is available, rather than

addressing these issues directly. Ellis's first major aspect

of successful language learning (a 'concern for language

form') offers little explanation of the kind or the depth of

concern, and 'language form' does not distinguish between

lexical, grammatical, semantic or functional forms, nor does it reflect the relationships between the forms acquired in the learner's mother tongue and how this knowledge affects the forms of the target language. In addition, the remaining aspects, namely, a concern for communication (functional practice), an active task approach, an awareness of the learning process, and a capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with task requirements, are discussed mostly from only one point of view i.e. an *external* approach that relates to settings devised by others. Schmidt's comments provide an individual learner's perspective, although the application of his strategies is not generally explicitly expressed. Comments in the diary kept by Jones provide details about his attention to language form as a learner. For example, "*Intake of new word-families and grammar appeared at least partially dependent on medium-focused tasks … such as dictionary work, grammar look-up or memorisation*" (Jones 1996:140). There is obviously a need for much more detailed research in this area.

(2) A concern for communication (functional practice)

Ellis's second aspect: a concern for communication (functional practice) (Ellis 1994:546-7) is at the centre of a number of studies. In Ellis's comments, attention to form and attention to communicative needs are separated into two

distinct issues. Placing boundaries on form and function may support research that can make clear apparently unequivocal statements about the learners' experiences but form and communicative needs are so inextricably combined, separating them leads to research that is perhaps not as revealing as more comprehensively holistic research. Focusing on the endings of Spanish verbs in order to express the future, for example, is both paying attention to form *and* to communicative need. However, attention is not focused towards only form and communication needs, as described by Ellis, but on the language's communicative usefulness in a way that incorporates not only its form and its function but *all* of the associated embedded semantic, cultural and social ingredients in addition. The choice of future forms and vocabulary that the interlocutors prefer, the formality of the language required depending on the relationship of the learner with the interlocutors and the degree of certainty the learner intends to convey are a few of the infinite number of influences that are incorporated in the concern for communication. Jones provides further evidence of the complexity of this issue in his diary entries, for example he states:" *Communicative strategies" … slow down output until one can process all parts of the message (communicative/personal meaning, vocabulary, grammar."*

(Jones 1996:149) Communication is not a simple process.

(3) An active task approach

Ellis's third aspect: an active task approach (Ellis 1994:546-7), acknowledges Pickett's finding that successful language learning involves an active 'task' approach but attention needs to be paid to the effect of the nature of these tasks and their respective levels of difficulty in relation to the learner's characteristics. Jones extends the discussion of 'an active task approach' to a discussion of the fluctuations of contributory effects during learners' engagement within the learning process. The insight his diary entries provides, for example, indicates the fluidity of the nature of the learning strategies used. He describes them as neither 'static' nor 'evolutionary' but appearing "*to undergo radical shake-ups as developments in underlying proficiencies fed each other and permitted new strategies to come into play*" (Jones 1996:138). His 'approach' was clearly more than a 'static' task approach. Pickett provides more examples of the detail required for comprehensive coverage of learners' active task approaches. For example, he reports that "*Contributor A found that understanding was the most difficult, and translating into the foreign language the second most difficult task while the easiest task of all was translating from the foreign language*". (Pickett 1978:82)

It is clear that learners' success can come largely from learners' approaches that incorporate active engagement. Schmidt and Frota's study provides evidence of this (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986:244). There is no doubt that learners' control of themselves and the situation is important for success (Biggs and Moore 1993). Good language learners more than take an 'active' approach; they maintain full responsibility and control of their learning. Learner-driven learning is likely to be more effective than teacher-driven learning, for only the learner has full access to how he or she interprets the learning material i.e. the language – the content of the language being taught as well as the instructions given by the teacher. No learner receives instructions in the same way, for unique individual interpretation is inevitable. In addition, "*Significant instructional gains can be achieved by ensuring that students have mastered earlier material before progressing to later material*" (Anderson 1995:387) i.e. different individuals develop understanding in different ways and depending on different previous learning experiences. The concepts of self-instruction and autonomy and their implications are also important. These aspects are comprehensively covered by Jones in his study of the lone learner (e.g. Jones 1996:347).

(4) An awareness of the learning process

   Ellis's fourth aspect: an awareness of the learning process relates to the aim of this study to arrive at a comprehensive description of this learning process from the learner's point of view. It is evident that Schmidt was aware of many aspects of the learning process and recorded them in his diary, although the significance of his comments is not thoroughly explored. In Ellis's words "*successful learners are …aware of themselves in relation to the learning process. They take conscious decisions and they follow their own preferred learning style. These are the learners who are able to talk effectively about their language learning because they have a well-developed metalanguage for doing so.*" (Ellis 1994:546-7) However, the example given by Ellis, taken from Reiss (1983), assumes that "A" grade students were superior largely because of their ability to give very specific accounts of how they would approach different learning tasks and less successful learning learners were observed to be less precise in their descriptions of their approach to a task. This assumption, which may well be true in a very narrow sense, fails to include other vital contributory phenomena described by Schmidt and Frota (1986). These will be considered in the study reported here.

It is commonly accepted that a student who is articulate in their first language is very likely to reach a high level in any second language they learn. Some students have a better aptitude for language learning than others, and this aptitude may not be consistent with their ability to express themselves effectively. Obler (1989) describes an individual who was shown to possess a particular aptitude for verbal memory, but this aptitude was restricted to an aptitude for formal relationships between words. It did not apply to the semantic relationships between the words (Obler 1989). Different students have different aptitudes that can not be universally applied. A student, who shows no aptitude for self expression, is not necessarily a student who has little metalanguage understanding. Cotterall's subject, 'Harry', for example, indicated that his aptitude in English Literature and his ability to 'cram' for examinations in English Literature had little in common with the way in which he needed to approach his learning of Spanish. "*Clearly, in his view, learning a foreign language demanded a different learning approach involving systematic, cumulative effort over time.*" (Cotterall 2004:113) Conversely, the ability to provide a comprehensive description of events during the language learning process does not necessarily mean that language learning success

originates from this ability to define the metalanguage contributions within the approaches taken. The observed success, in comparison with other learners, may be due to an ability to be articulate rather than the learners' extent of metalanguage knowledge. Students that are not able to express their personal learning processes precisely nevertheless *can* understand which approaches may be more successful for themselves as individuals. They need to be given the opportunity to overcome previous negative learning experiences and if they are encouraged to take an active role in the learning approaches they use, they may well be more successful than previously assumed (Westwell TES article "Imagine that!" TES 6 June 2003 Teacher Supplement p.9).

(5) A capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with task requirements

Ellis's fifth aspect: 'a capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with task requirements' also has a significant role to play (Ellis 1994:546-7). There is no doubt that flexibility in the use of strategies (or 'adaptability' – the term used in this study) is an important attribute of the successful language learner. Ellis acknowledges the considerable contributions that have been made. However, it is important to realize that most of

the evidence provided in current research is not
comprehensive. The evidence is most frequently based on the
teachers' perspectives, rather than students' perspectives,
or on the teachers' interpretation of students' self-
reporting. For example, the students in the study Ellis
cited were classified as 'effective' or 'ineffective' by the
teachers. Evaluative classification by its very nature can
never be irrefutably precise. One teacher's opinion about
the effectiveness of a student differs from another
teacher's opinion, depending on the aspects included in the
teachers' assessments and upon the depth of interpretation
expected. Many of these aspects would be based on different,
individual, (often hidden) assumptions.

Schmidt's observations provide more cohesive and
specifically relevant evidence for the need for flexibility
in the learner and that the learner can develop
effectiveness in their language learning by means of a
flexibility that extends beyond the use of strategies for
achieving certain specific tasks. Schmidt constantly refers
to his conscious development of acquisition by means of
interaction with native speakers. The nature of the
interactions in his diary entries is variable according to
the nature of the interlocutors, the contexts and purposes
(e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986:243,246, 247 and 248).

As mentioned above, Jones (1996) indicates that adaptability is an integral part of the language learning process and interactions, whether student initiated or not. He comments, for example, on the constantly changing nature of learning strategies within his experience. Further support for adopting a more detailed approach to research explaining the relationships between strategy use and success within a cohesive and inclusive framework is offered by Macleod (2002). In her study of two language learners and the strategies they used, she found that learners' strategy use was affected by a number of factors. For example, their strategy use "*did not seem to be affected by their particular motivational orientation but, rather, by motivational level, attitudes towards language learning, personal learning style, teaching method and certain personality characteristics …the study … supported the case for [an] integrated, rather than separate*" approach (Macleod 2002:1).

2.8. Implications of teaching methodology for the individual learner

In this thesis the term 'methodology' is chosen in preference to 'methods'. Methodology, method and approach are terms that are frequently used in a discussion of teaching and learning. The difference between the terms 'method' and 'approach' in learning and in teaching are usually distinguished in the following description concerning learning: "*the meaning of approach as a relatively stable predisposition towards learning suggests that 'approach to learning' and 'learning style' … are closely related concepts. There are, however, important differences. A learning style is like a cognitive style … in that it is a permanent personality characteristic or trait that is displayed over a range of tasks and situations and develops independently of schooling. An approach to learning, on the other hand, reflects the interaction between a student's current motivation and the teaching context and is modifiable. Further, an approach has an affective component in the form of motivation, whereas a style is purely cognitive*" (Biggs and Moore 1993:314). Thus the term 'approach' is often used in this context.

'Approach' within this study incorporates the affective components of Biggs and Moore as well as an understanding of

the nature of language and of language learning in terms of the acquired background knowledge of the learner. 'Approach' in this study is used in its widest conception in contrast to the more focused, more narrowly bounded details of the term 'method'. Methodology, or a consideration of the principles incorporated in teaching, is more relevant to this research than a description of various methods, or 'planned ways of teaching or learning'. In addition, the experience of the learner as a teacher necessitates a consideration of pedagogical methodology. There is no doubt that successful language learning is affected by the way in which the language is taught and by the characteristics and the aims and strategies of the teacher (Sidwell 1987, Cleugh 1970), Lightbown 1990 and VanPatten 1998).

Schumann reports how "*the diary study method shows that some learners react so negatively to language teaching methods they do not like that they eventually abandon language study completely*" and how "*On the other hand, there are those learners who continue studying in the face of such a situation and often will attempt to augment the classroom instruction by seeking outside resources such as tutors*" (Schumann 1980:52). There is a constant debate about which teaching methods are the most successful and the problem is unlikely to be resolved while phenomena constantly change.

Language is constantly evolving, different teaching methods are preferred according to pedagogical philosophy at the time and language learners are unique, constantly developing recipients that provide no firm foundation for comparison.

The terms 'learning' and 'teaching' are often incorporated in this study as one concept within the learning situation and experience. A language learner, who is also a practising language teacher, has intimate knowledge of the learner's needs and is likely to address such needs as both ' a teacher' and 'a learner' especially in self-learning situations that frequent this study. The teacher-learner may be said to adopt a similar approach to other teachers or learners. A teacher who teaches a student who has little aptitude or motivation for learning a language approaches the lesson in a very different way to a lesson for a very able and motivated student. The teacher evaluates the learner's needs from initial interaction within the lesson or as part of a more formally constructed assessment. The findings of this assessment are then incorporated in a plan for the lesson in which goals are set. These goals indicate the aims of the lesson. The aims in turn indicate the content of the lesson and during the learning period, the teacher constantly evaluates the learner's success (or lack of success) in acquiring the

language forms within the lesson content. The learner, who is also a teacher, is aware of this teaching process and incorporates this knowledge within their language learning as an individual. This process may be consciously applied, but more often, this is unconsciously and automatically applied to learning. Consequently, within this study, discussion of 'learning' necessarily incorporates most aspects of teaching within the same learning situation. Accepted theories of language teaching approaches encompass 'methods' such as the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, The Audio-Lingual Method, The Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response Method, the Communicative Approach and the Natural Approach (Richards and Rodgers 1986; Larsen-Freeman 1983).

It is argued here that no single 'method' is relevant in isolation. Instead, certain *principles* contained within each method have some relevance to the different approaches adopted. The importance of the contribution of teaching methods and external stimuli to successful language learning is described by Stevick (1989). He details how methods that incorporate different forms of communication and response trigger the learner to produce verbal and non-verbal images in their mind that form a vital part of language acquisition and language retrieval in effective communication. These

methods include the Direct Method, Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach and the Silent Way (Stevick 1989:144).

Principles adopted from the Grammar-Translation Method, include learners learning by focusing on the literature of the language, learning grammar rules and translating directly from the text. An autonomous learner can learn much from the use of parallel texts in which both languages are presented side by side. Vocabulary within the target language text is presented in context and the learner gradually comprehends the content of the text by translating words directly into the native language by referring to the accompanying translation. Translating from one language into another is common practice in most language learners, especially in the early stages of learning (Pickett 1978:102). This method appears to disadvantage the learner when restricting the learner to a word-for-word approach which is not always successful, for example, in the translation of idioms. However, if translation incorporates semantic knowledge of the words, this method offers some advantages. The possibility of seeing the written word in the initial stages of approaching the target language is particularly beneficial. Semantic and syntactical operations can be provided in translations offered by parallel texts.

Parallel texts provide a considerable body of language in a cohesive textual framework that also incorporates cultural elements and textual collocations in the target language. These are often absorbed consciously and subconsciously as the learner attempts to read for gist rather than by applying a word-for-word approach.

Principles acquired from the Direct Method include focusing solely on use of the target language (Yule 1985:153). Meaning is interpreted directly from the language rather than the directly translated native language. There are mixed responses from students who have experienced this method, and for some learners the benefits this method offers the autonomous learner are particularly relevant. As learners try to use the target language to communicate with native speakers, the target language is the sole language and the effort of constantly recalling the target language (using the language in a similar manner to the 'pushed output' suggested by Swain 1993) or of finding ways to overcome difficulties created by a limited knowledge of vocabulary by learners, creates a context in which learners can improve their language acquisition during real communicative situations. If interlocutors are aware of the principles of the teaching and learning that are being applied, as most experienced teachers are, and if the

interlocutors are sensitive to the learner's language needs, the language is usually modified to meet the learner's more limited language competence. Communication is thus successful in spite of the limitations of the participants. If the participants are not sensitive to the learner's language accommodation needs, then communication is not likely to be successful and language learning progress is hindered.

The Audio-Lingual Method offers principles of learning in common with behaviourist theory that support the belief that language learning is largely the acquisition of correct language habits. Correctly formed phrases from the target language are presented for the learner to repeat until these phrases can be used by the learner to form new units of language by replacing single words in the previously drilled phrase. This approach is especially noticeable when learning particular grammatical constructions, such as the conjugation of verbs. However, as language production seems to play a more important part in the long-term retention of the target language, other more interactive methods of learning are often used in preference. In common with Gattegno's Silent Way another approach encourages the student to be self-reliant in their learning. Errors are considered a natural and necessary part of language learning

development. Allowing errors during language production makes it possible for the learner to progress gradually and to gain confidence to correct commonly made errors. Eventually the learner gains enough confidence to produce the correct forms in conversation at the outset, with no loss of face or motivation even when errors remain within the language production of the learner.

Lozanov's Suggestopedia supports the view that the learner needs to be free from anxiety during the learning process. Absorption of the target language can occur largely through listening. The students' imaginations are stimulated as they engage with the target language (Lozanov 2007). Similar to Curran's Community Language Learning principles the learner is central to the learning process. All aspects of the student (including cognitive and affective) are taken into account.

Asher's Total Physical Response Method indicates more principles that are applied in successful language learning. These result from emulating the way in which children first learn a language (Asher 1977). The language is presented to the learners who gradually develop an understanding of the target language through listening comprehension and by practising the language through actions. Learners apply a contrasting comparative approach to the language content.

Listening and viewing television constantly may be used by some learners although this approach is more likely to be suited to developing a general appreciation of the sound of the language rather than a means for acquiring specific lexicon. Some theorists firmly believe that TV has little or no role to play in teaching methodology. This is certainly the view of Schmidt: "*There's a TV in the lobby. While that may be culturally interesting, I've been giving my students the line for years that you can't begin to learn a language from television.*" (Schmidt and Frota 1986:242) On the other hand, others believe that TV watching and listening has some as learners can listen so that they become familiar with the connected sounds of the language although this activity does not match the efficacy of other more focused methods of language acquisition, particularly those that focus on the acquisition of vocabulary.

The Communicative Approach stresses the importance of communicative competence, even over and above linguistic competence (Pickett 1978; Larson-Freeman 1983; Widdowson 1990). Students practise the language by negotiation activities in the language. Particularly pertinent to this study, language learning is not viewed as a linear process but rather a gradual development that fluctuates in terms of varying degrees of success influenced by the state of the

learners, the previous experience of the learners and the effect of exposure to the language in context.

Terrell and Krashen's Natural Approach has much to offer to the principles incorporated in language learning theory. (Terrell and Krashen's Natural Approach is not to be confused with Natural Method which is synonymous with the Direct Method.) (Richards and Rodgers 1986) The Natural Approach encourages learners to listen to appropriate input of the target language and to develop the ability to communicate in the language in a way that is comprehensible but not necessarily correct, grammatically speaking. The above list of principles developed from various teaching methods is not definitive. There are a considerable number of different approaches and methods that are used in teaching and learning, many of which have not assumed specific names but which have become an integral constituent of most teachers' teaching approach and the learner's learning approach. Identifying these approaches and methods is problematic, especially when these approaches and methods have been unconsciously incorporated. However, there is no doubt that language learners who have also had experience as teachers, incorporate their teaching and learning experiences into their language learning approach.

2.9 Naturalistic and instructed second language acquisition

Most theories rely on a distinction between naturalistic and instructed settings in second language acquisition. Such distinction is based on whether the language has been acquired "*through communication that takes place in naturally occurring social situations*" (Ellis 1994:12) or through instruction in a classroom situation. It is interesting to note that Ellis believes that it is not possible to determine whether the process of acquisition is the same or different in naturalistic or classroom settings (Ellis 1994:12).

However, studies that are centred on concerns directly related to particular language acquisition settings can nevertheless provide insight into salient characteristics of these different settings and of the nature of their influences. Indeed, there is evidence that naturalistic and instructed acquisition have both similarities and differences depending on the perspectives adopted. Schmidt and Frota's study, for example, treats settings that involve instruction as separate and different experiences to those involving interaction.

Both naturalistic and instructed acquisitions are incorporated in their study as separate conditions and their study attempts to deal with the basic issue of "*the ways in*

which both instruction and conversational interaction contributed to learning the language" (Schmidt and Frota 1986:237) i.e. the different ways in which the different instructional and naturalistic approaches affected Schmidt's language learning. Within their study, periods of 'instruction' and 'interaction' are clearly marked (Schmidt and Frota 1986: figure 1 Page 241), implying that these terms are distinct and should be treated separately. The use of the term 'instruction' in Schmidt and Frota's study implied that acquisition was developed during classroom attendance when language was acquired by instruction from a language teacher. On the other hand, the use of the term 'interaction' implied that acquisition was developed by means of more naturalistic settings in which the learner (Schmidt) interacted with other speakers of the target language who helped him to acquire the language through this interaction. Schmidt and Frota's study appears to focus mostly on the acquisition of the second language by means of naturalistic setting: Schmidt immersed himself in the language of the country he resided in over a period of 5 months. Within the study, notions of 'instruction' and 'interaction' are included, but the finer detail of the interpretation of the terms 'instruction' and 'interaction' are not included (Schmidt and Frota 1986).

Another study assuming a different perspective (such as the study in this thesis) may offer similar illuminative data from a diary, but such data may be approached differently and have a different, more central influence on the insights provided. The findings of a qualitative approach (rather than the quantitative error analysis in Schmidt and Frota's study) alter the nature of the study significantly. A linguist, such as Schmidt, focuses on the linguistic acquisition that has been assisted by interaction and instruction. The nature of the learner, the nature of the instruction, and the interaction between them are secondary to the language acquired. In contrast, in a qualitative study, 'interaction' and 'instruction' may no longer be clearly bounded, different terms. In a qualitative analysis of the diary of an individual learner, the nature of 'interaction' and 'instruction' depends primarily on the characteristics of the learner and on a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the 'interaction' and 'instruction' in terms of this learner's experience.

In common usage, 'interaction' and 'instruction' are distinguishable separate terms relating to different learning settings. 'Interaction' refers to two or more participants in a social interactive setting in which the principles of Speech Act Theory (Richards, Platt and Platt

1985:342-3) are integral parts. On the other hand, 'instruction' (Ellis 1994:12) refers to a one-way process in which a teacher or other person 'instructs' or teaches a learner, usually in a classroom setting. The different participants' roles are not equally weighted; the instructor has a greater part to play than those who are being instructed.

However, in the experience of an individual learner who assumes more control of the interaction in a more central, pivotal, role, the nature of the 'interaction' and of the 'instruction' is altered. The learner learns only from that part of the interaction and the instruction that the learner understands and to which the learner attends or 'notices'. Interaction in a social setting may be altered to become 'instruction' when the learner seeks assistance in learning the language over and above reciprocal communication. 'Instruction' may become 'interaction' in a situation (even in a class room) in which the learner assumes an equal contributory role in the interaction, for example, by seeking control of the learning and by seeking guidance from the teacher. In these situations, 'interaction' and 'instruction' are almost synonymous terms in the situations in which the learner acquires language in terms of their needs and their needs alone.

A study by Kjellin (2005), although focusing on child learning, provides insight into teacher-student interaction during 'instruction'. In her examination of areas of instruction and in agreement with the discussion above, special credence is given to the importance of learner perception. In her criteria for assessment of instruction situations for example, "*both teacher's and the pupil's opinion of what can be comprehended through the senses is valid*" (Kjellin 2005:153).

2.10 External and internal factors

"*Learner-external factors relate to the social context of acquisition and to the input and interaction which the learner experiences*" (Ellis 1994:17) and there is no doubt, as mentioned previously, that social factors influence language meaning and communication (Vygotsky 1962). There is a consensus of opinion that no learner learns within a vacuum. The learner is inextricably part of a social grouping and is consequently influenced by social factors that are incorporated in the language and in the society in which the learner is situated (Wertsch 1998). Any form of communication necessitates interaction between members of society and all language learners have to interact in some way with society in order to learn their language(s)

(Williams and Burden 1997; Wertsch 1998). An essential part of communication is interpretation and there is no doubt that interpretation cannot occur in isolation (Denzin and Lincoln 1998). The interpretation of a single unit of meaning is always influenced by an indefinite number of individual experiences. The sense of a language unit is impregnated with an indefinable but undeniable accumulation of meanings that the individual has acquired (McMahon 1999; Fairclough 1989).

There is much evidence that language learning strategies are influenced by different situational and social phenomena. Ellis (1994) citing Chamot et al (1989) provides evidence that task type in a classroom environment had a marked influence on learners' "*choice of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies. For example, vocabulary tasks led to the use of the cognitive strategies of 'resourcing' and 'elaboration' and the metacognitive strategies of 'self-monitoring' and 'self-evaluation', while listening tasks led to 'note-taking', 'elaboration', 'inferencing' and 'summarizing' as cognitive strategies, and to 'selective attention', 'self-monitoring', and 'problem-identification' as metacognitive strategies*" (Ellis 1994:554). However, the internal dynamics of the classroom situation need to be taken into account. A large class of

mixed ability learners of varied nationalities creates a
very different situation from a class lesson on a one-to-one
basis. Chamot at al's study may well have been an accurate
and complete description of the classroom activity studied,
but the same problem described above is apparent. The nature
of the truth underlying the evidence is skewed by virtue of
isolating the components in externally observed situations.
In addition, the degree and manner of the application of
strategies are unique to the individual and so observing
general strategic approaches in a classroom dilutes the
knowledge obtained by the researcher. Kirkwood (2003), for
example, describes the variability of choice by individuals
in their use of media technologies (Kirkwood 2003:173).

There is no doubt that diversity and theoretical
eclecticism within learning approaches are also important
(Morrone and Tarr 2005:7). When learning Spanish vocabulary
– in the classroom, within a conversation or during a
session of self-study at home – an individual learner will
use the above strategies and more in their learning
approach. To suggest that the learner is more likely to use
certain strategies in certain situations is not as important
as an acknowledgement that strategies (including hidden
ones) are an integral part of the development of language
acquisition which is a complex multifaceted process. Social

activities include: cooperation and questioning for clarification, requesting correction during language use in speech, applying non-verbal signals in communication, sympathetic adaptation of vocal inflection and terminology to the local language characteristics and conscious application of principles of social behaviour that encourage communication. When the purpose of using the target language (e.g. Spanish) is to engage in conversation, the learner will consciously and subconsciously use these social activities not only to ensure meaningful communication but as a tool for learning new language. If a new word is needed, the learner can request examples from the listener. Social activities depend on the characteristics of the people who form part of the social environment and Schmidt and Frota's study includes frequent references to Schmidt's socialising with speakers of the language he wanted to acquire (Schmidt and Frota 1986). More specific to the observations in the study, the individual characteristics of these people affect the social phenomena.

A significant phenomenon in the sociological perspective is the social environment. No matter how the language is learnt and no matter what approach is applied, the environment in which the learning takes place has an undeniable influence on the learning and on the language

learned. Schmidt's experiences in the classroom testify to this fact (Schmidt and Frota 1986). The language the environment offers and the cultural characteristics inextricably incorporated in the language provide the content of the language for learning. Context (the field of discussion) and situation (where the communicators are placed) are significant influential phenomena (Halliday 1978). The theme of a conversation affects meaning in the text; a bat in the attic is quite different to a bat in a game of cricket. In Spanish, 'es' can mean 'he is', 'she is' or 'it is' depending on the theme of the conversation. Situation also affects language communication. The language used in a business negotiation is different to language used on holiday.

Schmidt's experiences differed in the different settings related to work and to integrating with native speakers outside (Schmidt and Frota 1986). In addition to the effect of context and situation on text, psychological factors incorporated in the situation affect meaning for they are an integral part of the communicative exchange. Meaning is dependent on the power relations between the communicators. "Would you like to help?" is a polite request or a command depending on the respective degrees of authority each communicator holds.

This is particularly relevant to the mature learner for a mature adult is considered by society to have more authority than a younger person and this authority gives the adult some control over the language communication situation. The younger listener may automatically defer to the adult and listen more carefully to the message the adult gives. Mediation is skewed in favour of the adult so the language used by the adult may be communicated successfully to the younger person even when the adult's language is not as competent as the younger person's. The younger person has to make more effort to make the language comprehensible to the less competent adult. It is often contended that it is more important to determine (as closely as possible) the nature of the learner and of a single learner's and paired interlocutor's characteristics within the social environment than which strategies succeed within the more general notion of a 'social environment'. The marked effect of the specific characteristics of individuals on observations of language use is provided in Broner's study of English and Spanish language use in a full immersion classroom (Broner 2005). The development of language acquisition in an individual is rather more than the success achieved by a general 'group' of learners and this is important to this study reported here. Situation, while maintaining a position of influence,

assumes a subservient role to learner characteristics.

In addition to the influence of external factors, the learner's internal reactions to these external factors influence the acquisition process. Theories relating to learner-internal mechanisms attempt to explain how such language acquisition takes place much of which has been discussed above. They relate specifically to a study of an individual learner such as Schmidt and Frota's (Schmidt and Frota 1986). The learner's internal cognitive processes involve a number of factors described by Ellis (1994:18). These are represented in Schmidt and Frota's study: the transfer of knowledge from Schmidt's first and other languages, how he notices and reconstructs input in terms of his current second language knowledge, his use of innate knowledge of linguistic universals, and his processes for using second language knowledge in performance especially in real communicative situations. In Schmidt's experience, transfer of knowledge of his mother tongue English and of his knowledge of Arabic are reported (Schmidt and Frota 1986 (English) 251; (Arabic) 241). Schmidt reports his 'noticing' and reconstructing input in terms of his current second language knowledge when he attempts to provide his class example by putting the forms presented in his own constructed sentences (Schmidt and Frota 1986:244). As a

linguist, Schmidt's internal knowledge of language universals is perhaps more explicitly apparent than in other studies, an example of which is offered in his description of the way in which he perceives the Portuguese word 'dever' is used (Schmidt and Frota 1986:246). Schmidt's processes for using second language knowledge in performance especially in real communicative situations are described comprehensibly in Schmidt and Frota's discussion of their analysis of the conversations held as 'real' communicative events i.e. the topics discussed were wide, varied and not preconceived. It is therefore understandable that such internally originated influence of the learner within the language acquisition process is considered a valid source of information in a comprehensive description of this acquisition process in other individuals.

'Learner contributions to language learning' in the publication of the same name describes in more detail the effect of internal factors in language learning in terms of individual cognitive and affective contributions and strategies as they initiate action by the learner (Larsen-Freeman 2001:12-24). Chamot focuses on the strategies learners use in order to make their language learning more effective (Chamot 2001:25-43). However, the question of "*What is the actual relationship between learning thinking*

and learner action?" remains unresolved while we cannot clearly define how much learners' background knowledge and previously acquired strategies influence the learners' interpretation of their learning tasks (Breen 2001:174-175).

2.11 Individual learner differences

Although different individual learners' experiences may be similar, such experiences must also contain elements that are irrevocably different. "*[…] each learner is different, and will bring to the learning process a unique set of personal attributes preferred ways of learning and learning strategies. Learners will make sense of the learning situation and learning tasks in ways that are personal and unique to them […]*" (Williams and Burden 1997:205). Skehan concludes that "*two people with the same overall aptitude […] may have different component abilities*" such as "*a language analytic capacity; memory ability; and phonemic coding ability*" (Skehan 1989:137). The diary studies reported by Schumann show that individual differences vary widely regarding which material learners find interesting and rewarding (Schumann 1980:52).

Personal differences are crucial to the development of learning theory. Without including the contributory effect of individual differences, a theory remains a separate,

incompatible concept disassociated from the world it purports to describe. Now that language learning theories are focusing more strongly on the needs of the learner, learners' needs and characteristics have become more significant aspects of developing linguistic theory. The learner's needs are directly related to the learner's characteristics and learning is successful only when the learner's characteristics are appropriately accounted for and incorporated in the learning programme. Successful learners know their own strengths and weaknesses and will take account of these during the learning process (Hay 1973; Campione and Armbruster 1985; Brookfield 1986; Sidwell 1987; Stevick 1989; Biggs & Moore 1993; Esch 1994; Van Halen-Faber 1997; Williams and Burden 1997; VanPatten 1998). Consequently learner-characteristics and the nature of learning are inextricably related and theories of learning are discussed accordingly in the following paragraphs.

Learner factors that influence language learning are generally categorized as those pertaining to the physical, psychological and social characteristics of the learner. Prominent physical characteristics that may affect the development of language acquisition may be those associated with the age of the learner. It is often assumed that young children learn a first language more easily than an adult

learning a second language. Spiele and Griffin, for example, have investigated age differences in language production and comment on 'an age-related increase in time' to produce specific language items (Spiele and Griffin 2006:294). However, the physical characteristics of the learners of different ages may have little to do with the language acquisition. The greater experiences of older learners may be the affecting factor; chronological age may have little to do with resolving the differences. "… *with the right attitude, learning could be successful regardless of chronological age*" (Benson and Nunan 2004:153).

Klatzky (1988) purports that "*The cognitive effects of aging are related to the concept of capacity. A generalization emerges […] that ageing effects become more salient, the greater the demands of the task under study. But […] no simple capacity hypothesis seems likely to receive full support*" (Klatzky 1988:14). As a consequence of this undoubted complexity, in a study of an individual, learner characteristics may be best described according to prominent phenomena and these prominent phenomena may be categorized finely, but, it should be noted, only in terms of the learner as an integrated person.

Discussion of one phenomenon that influences a learner necessarily incorporates an understanding that the findings

are only valid if considered in terms of the hidden, but essential, added contribution of the other phenomena within the learner's experience. If the learner approaches the target language in a way that compensates for apparent difficulties of learning accounted for by the age of the learner, for example, the learner is, at the same time, approaching the learning in a manner that also suits the learner's personality, background experience and knowledge at the time of the learning event. The value of the findings of a study of an individual learner are in developing a more thorough understanding of the phenomena that are salient features of the acquisition process in an integrated manner over a period of time in which the learner gradually acquires their target language. These comments are strongly supported by Benson and Nunan (2004): "*Although SLA research tells us a good deal about the factors that 'make up' learner diversity, … little attention is paid to the ways in which these factors develop over time or as a consequence of individual experiences of language learning*" (Benson and Nunan 2004:11-12). Psychological and social characteristics of the learner are important but not unique contributors to the language acquisition process. In a description of phenomena, the physical, psychological and/or social implications of the phenomena exhibited in the individual

learner are incorporated within this description.

2.12. Age

Theories about the age of the learner in a language learning situation vary from theories that believe that age makes no difference at all (Rieber and Carton 1987) to theories that believe that even a few years' difference in the age of a learner makes an important difference in successful language learning (Harley 1986; Krashen 1982; Singleton 1989).

There is some debate about the impact of age differences and when people are considered to be 'old' or 'mature' and what characteristics in young learners are shared or not shared by mature learners. Comparison between adult and younger learners in this study refers, in the most part, to learners who are 18 years and under, compared with learners who are over 18 years. Further distinction is made between 'adult' and 'mature' learners. 'Adult learners' refers to learners over the age of 18. 'Mature' learners are considered to be those who are at a stage when it is believed that adults' capabilities begin to decline as they develop towards old age.

The age of maturity, when physical and mental capabilities have reached their full potential, is accepted

by many as being around the age of 30. MacKay and Adams (1996) believe for example, that ageing begins at about 37 years, and it is on the age of about 40 onwards that this investigation focuses. The difficulty in delineating the point at which a person begins to be mature is exacerbated by the constantly changing variables that occur in discussion of people and their capacity for learning and in their ability to maintain their learning capabilities. "*Peak performances*" Sutherland (1997) states: "*are thought most likely to occur for people in their thirties although it would seem that very competent performance can be maintained into the forties and fifties at least*" (Sutherland 1997:19). It is this continuation of competent performance that this study supports.

    In the field of second language acquisition, in their study of younger and older adults, Altmann and Kemper (2006) determined that age does not handicap language production as much as is commonly assumed. Altmann and Kemper (2006) discovered that, for example, there were few age differences in response times or accuracy when particular types of sentence structure were produced (Altmann and Kemper 2006:351). It is interesting to note that the question of 'age' did not arise explicitly in Schmidt and Frota's study (Schmidt and Frota 1986). The reader is led to assume that

the learner Schmidt is an adult of unspecified age, probably well under the age of 40. Yet, differences in age are believed by some to affect language acquisition. At the age of forty, for example, a variety of cognitive activities are commonly accepted as being less effective than in younger learners. These include visualizing capabilities, processes of maintaining immediate awareness and speed of comprehension and arriving at decisions. However, it has also been found that increased carefulness and persistence with age can compensate for the decline (Sutherland 1997).

In some studies there are features of ageing that have been shown to increase in competency. Memory span tests have shown that "*the number of unrelated separate items of information that can be held in short-term memory increase with age to approximately six items of unrelated numbers or words in adolescence*" (Boulton-Lewis 1997). Indeed there is much to be said for the effectiveness of compensatory approaches that can overcome or negate the detrimental effects of age. Compensation strategies are an integral part of a discussion of the effect of age and the acquisition of language and many of the issues are contained within the discussion of the age phenomenon below. However, age is not the only influence on learners' application of compensation strategies, for, as mentioned previously, different learners

have different learning characteristics and needs and consequently these have direct effects on compensatory strategies used.

The nature of phenomena engaged in the relationship between *cognition* and *age* is another important area to explore. There is no doubt that the brain changes that occur after the early twenties are detrimental (Biggs and Moore 1993:56; Fisher, Duffy and Katsikopoulos 2000:87-125; Parking and Java 2000:188-204). However, it is important to consider the effect of the combination of all the contributory phenomena that lead to successful language learning. In addition to the chronological age of a learner, a great deal of difference is created by the individual differences of the learners. For example, the effects of other phenomena (alcohol consumption, chemicals, e.g. aluminium, and factors affecting oxygen supply) along with hereditary phenomena bring about noticeable differences in the rate at which the brain deteriorates in individuals.

Evidence of the possibility of successful cognitive functioning in learners over forty in a physical sense is offered by Merriam and Caffarella (1999): "*The fourth and fifth decades tend to be the physiological turning-point for most adults, although the effects of these changes may not be felt until the sixth or seventh decade of life*" (Merriam

and Caffarella 1999:95). Further support for the call for a study such as the one reported here is provided by authors expressing the need for further research in the area of assumed physiological decline in cognition as learners get older: "*Although we know that both the weight and the number of cells in the brain decline and the connections between these cells become less numerous with age, we do not know what impact, if any, these changes have on the learning process. During the prenatal period, for example, unborn babies lose many more cells as a consequence of normal brain maturation than the cell loss adults experience later in life*" (Merriam and Caffarella 1999:98).

There are different descriptions of cognitive development and the ageing process. The importance of approaching the issue of how ageing affects cognition in terms of a holistic approach is confirmed by Merriam and Caffarella (1999:166) who stress the significance of dialectic thinking – thinking that "*allows for the acceptance of alternative truths or ways of thinking about the many contradictions and paradoxes that we face in everyday life*" (Merriam and Caffarella 1999:166). In addition, there is some consensus that fluid intelligence declines with age sooner than crystallized intelligence. Fluid intelligence can decline at the age of about 35 and 40

(Merriam and Caffarella 1999:175). Although fluid intelligence has been shown to decline with age, this does not mean to say that it ceases to function. In order to progress successfully in language acquisition learners need to develop the ability to engage in short-term memory, concept formation, reasoning and abstraction. They need to develop their ability in vocabulary and verbal comprehension and to extract information from the environment.

There are other age factors that warrant attention. There are tests that indicate that older people have a better understanding of world knowledge, formal reasoning, vocabulary, and the use of language generally (Knox 1978). In concurrence with Biggs and Moore, this study supports the belief that "*experience supports better discrimination, better forward planning and better monitoring i.e. experience supports the incorporation of more effective metacognitive activity*" (Biggs and Moore 1993:56). Other important phenomena include intelligence, memory, conversational abilities and the nature of adult conversation.

As discussed above, intelligence is an important contributory phenomenon. There are indications that intelligence reaches a peak in the early twenties after which it declines gradually and with increasing rapidity

from the age of 60 (Biggs and Moore 1993:55). The problem

with a discussion of 'intelligence' is that there is much

dispute about what constitutes 'intelligence' and how

'intelligence' should be measured. For the purpose of this

study, 'intelligence' is interpreted as the learner's

ability to think, to understand and to learn a new language.

The notion of intelligence is viewed from the perspective of

the individual's capabilities. Memory is a fundamental

consideration in discussion of mature language learning

theory. Age is considered to affect the working memory. Some

authors maintain that working memory capacity is constant

throughout childhood and adolescence and that what varies

with adults is that adults pack more into the same given

space (Biggs and Moore 1993:213). More, detailed discussion

of the effects of memory on language learning success is

discussed below in Chapter 4.

    One difference between adults and younger learners is

the nature of the conversational ambitions of adult

learners. Adult second language learners feel the need to

respond in conversation intelligently, to say something

coherent and reasonably interesting in order to save face

and to minimise conversational difficulties. Such

characteristics include confirmation checks (in which

speakers repeat part of their interlocutor's speech with

question intonation), comprehension checks (when attempts are made by speakers to establish that the interlocutor is following what they are saying e.g. "right!" or "Do you understand?"), clarification requests (in which speakers attempt to clarify what the previous speaker meant to say or ask) and requests for help (when speakers request language assistance, by pronouncing a word or part of a word with question intonation, or by asking directly, "How do you say..?") (Hattersley 1995). These characteristics are by no means restricted to adult conversation, but they are techniques adults use during episodes of complex language communication that are usually more common in adult conversation than in the conversation of younger learners.

A discussion of the age of a learner by implication incorporates discussion about the differences between mother tongue (or 'first language') and second language learning (Lightbown and Spada 1993, Biggs & Moore 1993). There is no doubt that learning a mother tongue and second language learning have much in common. Indeed, there is some support for the notion that first and second language learning involve a very similar process (Knox 1978). In addition, there is evidence that there is a relationship between the mother tongue of the learner and the second language of the learner. The level of competency learners have acquired in

their first language affects the level of competency they can reach in their second language (Jenkins 1995). Further evidence is provided by Biggs and Moore (1993) who describe situations in which immersion was the more successful method depending on the language known by the learner and the language the learner was learning. What mattered in the situation described by Biggs and Moore particularly was the effectiveness of the learner in their first language for this had a direct relationship with the effectiveness of their second language learning (Biggs and Moore 1993).

From a different perspective, there is much support for making a clear distinction between first and second language learning there being only a limited relationship between the two experiences. In fact, there is some support for believing that theories of language learning should only be used in discussion of language learning of a language other than the mother tongue (Ellis 1997). There is no doubt that learning a first language is by way of comparison more of an unconscious process than learning a second language, especially if this second language learning is that of a mature student. In conjunction with age phenomena, the approach to learning the language by a mature student is very likely to be different. The mature language learner who has experience of language use and whose life experiences

have led to much additional acquired knowledge is likely to incorporate cognitive practices and learning strategies that have already brought this learner some success in language acquisition.

As soon as a child is born they begin learning their first language or mother tongue. An important contribution to the theory of this language acquisition is Chomsky's notion of a 'Language Acquisition Device' inherent in children (Chomsky 1969 and 1980). This device makes unconscious language learning possible for the child absorbs the language easily and gradually as they become exposed to the language in their home environment. This view supports the notion of learning a language by immersion and has many similarities with the communicative approach although the child communicates spontaneously without reflection. Chomsky's theory of language acquisition accommodates the notion that the child also naturally acquires an understanding of universal principles of language that is separate from the language they are learning. There is no doubt that there are adults who can learn a second language by immersion i.e. in a similar way to how children learn their first language (Biggs 1993, Pickett 1978). Joiner (1981:36) describes the success of this method in terms of increasing the time of exposure to the target language and

points out how the concept was used successfully in World War 11 with five military personnel who became fluent in a second language within a short time. The programme was designed for adult learners, but, of course, there is little to compare nowadays with the context of World War 11 in which this programme took place, so the success of the programme may have come from the real need for the learners to acquire a language quickly. There is some contention that adults' learning experiences are different to those of children for adults are more self-directing and more experienced than children (Knowles 1978). Adults are advantaged for they have the ability to learn automatically, similar to the way children learn their first language and, according to Krashen's monitor theory, adults can use conscious strategies and monitoring to learn in a way less well known to children (Krashen 1982).

However, it should be noted that there are others who place less significance on age differences and consider evidence of adults learning less successfully than children may be suspect, for adults tend to underestimate their own abilities (Knox 1978). Sidwell (1987), for example, contends that establishing a sense of security may be more important for adults than achieving success in language learning.

Further differentiation is made between various ages in

adulthood and evidence of any decline of learning ability in late adulthood by Biggs and Moore (1993). In York (2004) older students' learning is shown to be affected by their greater ability to find appropriate coping strategies when compared with younger students (York 2004:25). These examples provide additional evidence to McGivney's statement that: "*The diversity of adults … results in patterns of educational engagements that are often considerably different from those of younger students*" (McGivney 2004: 33). However, in much of the literature that supports the differences between adult and young students' learning experiences, discussion about age refers specifically to the age of students in a specific environment: the school environment (Lightbown and Spada 1993: 41 and 112).

    There is very little information about language learning and age in relation to contexts outside the formal educational arena, although there are some references to isolated details of language learning: Krashen, Scarcella and Long (1982) address the issue of child-adult differences in second language learning and report that adult learners are much less likely to be successful in certain aspects, for example, in acquiring near-native pronunciation than child learners. However, this reference is indicative of the problem that observation of an individual mature learner

creates and that is, the absence of information that is directly and holistically relevant to a learner's specific learning experiences in terms of the learner's perception. Hence there is a need for a study such as this.

Krashen, Scarcella and Long (1982), as mentioned above, offer a strong case for a clear distinction between young and mature learners in terms of how they acquire language. They provide credible support for the natural acquisition of language in children by means of Chomsky's 'Language Acquisition Device'. Strict behavioural approaches, social learning approaches and cognitive approaches are considered less significant than theoretical approaches that suggest that children's learning is supported at a critical period in their lives by means of a genetically determined language acquisition system. "*Appeal to innate mechanisms is widely regarded with great suspicion; yet the results of studies on the sensitive period run counter to competing theories of language acquisition. A strict behavioral approach … would lead to the prediction that, all other things being equal, a longer period of exposure (i.e. a longer conditioning process) would result in superior linguistic performance. This clearly does not appear to occur. The high strength of the age factor also seems to [militate] against a "social learning" approach … which holds that the cultural and*

sociolinguistic milieu in which individuals find themselves affects the attitudinal and motivational factors which determine success or failure, irrespective of age factors. Lastly, those who posit that cognitive structures provide the sole basis for language acquisition … are left with the task of explaining why, upon the onset of formal operations (the highest level of cognitive development) at about puberty, the capacity to master a second language appears to greatly subside. Indeed, it seems that a "rationalist position" … holding that mind possesses a genetically determined language acquisition system which functions during a critical period … is the most compatible with the evidence uncovered in this and similar research" (Krashen, Scarcella, and Long 1982:60).   However, the 'innate mechanism' that learners possess explains how it is possible to learn language 'naturally' but its presence may also be explained in terms of learners' combined use of a number of different approaches. The problem lies with the difficulty of defining the approaches adopted more than with providing evidence of the existence of a 'Language Acquisition Device'. It should be noted, for example, that the theories considered above were only considered in isolation and in their more narrowly defined expression.

2.13 Conclusion

Clearly, there is no definitive solution to the problem of shifting theoretical perspectives concerning the successful development of language acquisition in a mature learner. No study can claim to incorporate all that is known about every aspect of the focus of an enquiry into the nature of language acquisition. Interdependent phenomena fluctuate and interact within the language learners' cumulative experiences. Providing a complete and definitive description of such experiences is not possible while there are so many different contributory phenomena that interact and integrate at different times, in different ways and to different degrees within the language learning experiences. Contributory phenomena include interpretation and the effects of the nature of the target language, different perspectives of language learning, language acquisition, the language acquisition process, developmental trends and stages within the language acquisition process, language learning strategies, the characteristics and needs of the individual learner, the effects of different principles of teaching methodology, naturalistic and instructed learning environments, age, and salient phenomena in specific adult second language acquisition experiences.

Although many authors (e.g. Lightbown and Spada 1993)

believe that knowledge of similar languages to the target language instigates interference, others take the view that knowledge of a similar language can assist language learning (e.g. Biggs and Moore 1993).

While authors propose opposing solutions to a description of the nature of language acquisition according to whether language is acquired consciously (e.g. Ellis 1997; Krashen 1982; Poon et al 1989; Gruneberg 1987) or subconsciously (e.g. Vygotsky 1962; Mezirow 1997; Williams and Burden 1997; Stevick 1989), both appear to be important integral components of this complex process and are more effectively discussed as interdependent interacting issues.

There is common agreement that there are different stages within developmental trends of the language acquisition process. Fitts and Anderson recognize three stages of skill acquisition: the cognitive stage, the associative stage and the autonomous stage (Anderson 1995:310). While Krashen's natural order of acquisition seems a reasonably acceptable hypothesis, this is influenced by evidence that individual difference can alter the order of language acquisition considerably (2.5.)

The learner's unique background knowledge has a significant influence (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986). For instance, Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes demonstrated that a

learner's background knowledge in relation to specific
contexts is particularly influential on the structures
acquired and in the way in which they are used (Geeslin and
Guijarro-Fuentes 2006:66).

Krashen's concept of competence expressed as *i* + 1
(Krashen 1982:20-21), Staube's three stages of target
language acquisition: Basilang, Mesolang and Acrolang(Staube
1980:46) Ellis's discussion of fluctuations within
developmental sequences within the process of language
acquisition (Ellis 1994:111-112) and Tetzchner and Grove's
more general description of the natural acquisitional
process in terms of gradually increasing complexity of
output (Cotterall 2004:113) contribute to our understanding
that language acquisition is indeed a gradual and
accumulative process. However, there is much to be gained
from a more extensive investigation into this accumulative
process within a specific individual. Such investigation is
more clearly focussed and more importantly, more detailed in
its description. Other issues, such as the depth of
knowledge of lexicon on an individual basis (discussed by
Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:139) warrant more
extensive study.

Language learning strategies have a major role in adult
second language learning. Many authors believe that

concisely defined categorization is needed to provide a more complete understanding of the nature of language acquisition strategies (e.g. Ellis 1994:529-60). However, different researchers categorize similar data differently depending on their different objectives and perspectives. In order to alleviate some of the problems of this lack of clarity a more detailed description that is based more realistically on the concurrent and interdependent interaction of strategies in the process of the language acquisition of an individual is warranted. Direct strategies (e.g. cognitive, memory and compensation strategies) and indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective and social strategies) described by Oxford (Oxford 1990:16), form a significant part of the strategic approach of an adult, but they do not form the whole picture. The difficulties in reporting internally evolved strategies are acknowledged by many authors (e.g. Naiman, Frühlich and Stern 1978) and these difficulties can only be resolved by studies drawing on personal reflection.

Regarding cognitive and memory strategies, the insight provided by Pickett (1978) Stevick (1989), Schmidt and Frota (1986), for example, form a useful foundation from which to extend the descriptions to include detailed internally-expressed perceptions of these strategies in use by the individual. Specific elements of these strategies may assume

greater significance in individuals e.g. adapting the language resource material to the individual's needs, using specific methods of learning that apply to the specific needs of the individual at the time of the learning, adapting the strategies to match the specific attitudes inherent in the resource material, the context and in the learner (especially the need for the learner to constantly make a determined effort) and using methods that make the language within the learning event memorable for the learner (such as associating the target language with other known language(s)) and constantly endeavouring to improve memorization techniques in use.

While using output has become an important issue in the literature recently (e.g. Swain 1993), output in the form of writing also has a significant contribution to make. Other important elements of strategies that warrant more detailed consideration include using feedback positively during the learning process, developing familiarity with the language by means of reading or 'immersion' in continuous text and developing a critical awareness of the effect of teachers and teaching methods. In addition, adjusting to the difficulties experienced in learning from oral input, consciously and regularly repeating the target language in many different forms and consciously and regularly changing

strategies in use are major considerations.

Aspects of specific compensation strategies feature strongly in adult learning e.g. those listed by Bull and Yingxin (2001:8): selecting topics, avoiding communication, adjusting the message, getting help, using alternative synonyms, coining (making up) words and mime. Added to these compensation strategies are those more directly related to language resource material, method, attitude and memory. Such strategies include: using more written language input to compensate for difficulties experienced in learning from oral input, regularly changing the manner in which the target language is repeated to compensate for the learner's difficulties in speed of memorizing the language, changing strategies in use to suit the particular needs of the learner at each specific time, compensating for shortcomings in the learner by the learner consciously adopting an attitude of persistent determination and adapting approaches to compensate for inappropriate or apparent ineffective learning and teaching methods within the current learning experiences.

Metacognitive strategies include conscious preparation, decision-making, selection, monitoring and appraisal of the learning material, the learning event and of the 'finished' linguistic product during use (Richards, Platt and Platt

1985:227). However, taking these and Ellis's more external appreciation of nature of metacognitive strategies into account little is known of the nature of metacognitive strategies perceived from a different, internally-driven perspective. Current literature only reports observation that is 'external' to learning events. Much can be determined from studying metacognitive strategies that remain integral, functional elements of the process, much of which are applied subconsciously and are usually beyond the realms of reportable evidence.

Affective strategies are important. Anderson, for example, states that people retain encoded language better when they are 'in a high arousal state' (Anderson 1995:262). The attitude of the learner has a significant role as described by Schumann and Schumann (1977), Ellis and Rathbone (1987), Bailey (1980) and Schmidt and Frota (1986). However, most of these references refer to the negative effect of these factors. More investigation is needed into how such affective factors can be incorporated into learning strategies more positively. Individuals, for example, knowing that they are not feeling motivated to learn at specific times can adjust their goals and readjust the learning so that any learning that takes place can be more positive and effective within the whole scheme of the

language acquisition process.

Social strategies also have significant influence (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986,). Although no learner learns in isolation, the central focus of language acquisition on an individual necessarily moves the attention to the language acquisition observed in the individual over and above any apparent social influences.

Some authors have reported on the importance of the effectiveness of the relationship between learning strategies and language learning. Jones (1996), in particular, extends the discussion to include consideration of a number of different correlated contributory factors within individual learners. He reports, for example, on the links between certain aspects of good language learners' approaches and their differing levels of language learning success: for example, on the link between expertise, effort, planning, self-discipline and time management (Jones 1996:216). Stevick's insight into the value of imagery in memorization and in the need for different learners to use strategies differently is also significant (Stevick 1989).

In Pickett's study (1978) many of the comments of the participants gave insight into the possible causal effect of some of their successful strategies.

Jones (1996) lists other variables known to affect

learning strategy use e.g. a correlation between increased use of strategies with second languages that are believed to be inherently difficult, the notion that females seem better strategy-users and the all-important effect of learners' positive attitudes. Jones further comments on the indications that correlations exist between increasing proficiency in the second language and the range of strategies used, and between the strength of motivation with the amount of strategy use (Jones 1996:64).

More detailed research into motivational factors is offered by Noels (2003). Noels views motivational factors in terms of three inter-related types of orientation: one that is 'inherent in the language learning process', a second that lies on 'a continuum of self-determination' and a third 'relating to positive contact with the language group' (Noels 2003:98). The first two of these are particularly relevant in this study.

Jones comments on the fluidity of the nature of the learning strategies and how these develop in an interactive, interdependent manner that has particular bearing on a description of their role in language acquisition (Jones 1996:138). Attitude, method and an integrated approach in strategy use are particularly importance in Macleod's observations (Macleod 2002:1). Biggs and Moore emphasise the

need for learner control of themselves and the situation (e.g. Biggs and Moore 1993).

Much of the previous discussion confirms that individual differences are commonly acknowledged to have significant effects on a description of language acquisition. Different students have different aptitudes and abilities which can not be universally applied (Obler 1989; Skehan 1989:137). Learners are unique in the sense they make of learning tasks and learning situations (Schumann 1980:52; Williams and Burden 1997:205) and they know their own strengths and weaknesses and will take account of these during the learning process (Hay 1973; Campione and Armbruster 1985; Brookfield 1986; Sidwell 1987; Stevick 1989; Biggs & Moore 1993; Esch 1994; Van Halen-Faber 1997; Williams and Burden 1997; VanPatten 1998). However, much of this discussion is narrowly focussed on specific isolated aspects of the problem. More comprehensive and more detailed descriptions would be provided by closer analysis of individual students during their gradual acquisition of a specific language in specific learning periods over time.

Students also differ according to their maturity and chronological age and age differences have discernable effects (e.g. Klatzky 1988:14). Detrimental brain changes occur after the early twenties (Biggs and Moore 1993:56;

Fisher, Duffy and Katsikopoulos 2000:87-125; Parking and
Java 2000:188-204).

However, in spite of physical changes, authors'
opinions regarding language acquisition vary and range from
those who believe that age makes no difference at all (e.g.
Rieber and Carton 1987) to those who believe that even a few
years' difference in the age of a learner makes an important
difference in successful language learning (Harley 1986;
Krashen 1982; Singleton 1989). Some authors narrow the
discussion further and MacKay and Adams (1996), for example,
believe that ageing begins at about 37 years. Sutherland
comments that peak performance occurs when people are in
their thirties although he adds that competent performance
can be maintained into the forties and fifties and that
increased carefulness and persistence with age can
compensate for the decline (Sutherland 1997). There are
indications that older people have a better understanding of
world knowledge, formal reasoning, vocabulary, and the use
of language generally (Knox 1978) as well as better powers
of discrimination, forward planning and monitoring (Biggs
and Moore 1993:56). In addition, adults tend to
underestimate their own abilities (Knox 1978), have a
greater ability to find appropriate coping strategies when
compared with younger students (York 2004:25) and, with the

right attitude, have the ability to learn languages
successfully (Benson and Nunan 2004:153).

First and second language learning (which commonly
occur at different ages) can involve a very similar process
(e.g. Knox 1978) and there is little doubt that level of
competency learners have acquired in their first language
affects the level of competency they can reach in their
second language (Jenkins 1995). Most crucial to this study,
Benson and Nunan support the view that as yet "*little
attention is paid to the ways in which [individual] factors*
develop *over time or as a consequence of individual
experiences of language learning*" (Benson and Nunan 2004:11-
12). Further investigation into developmental changes and
the positive effects of adult experience within individuals
over time (similar to the content of this study) would
certainly enhance current understanding of the nature of the
language acquisition process.

Many adult language learners have experience as
teachers and as learners of other languages. These adults
bring to the learning situation a background of knowledge
founded on teaching and learning methodology. Nevertheless,
individual preferences affect the language learning
experience and are often related to the attitude and
approaches of the learner and of the teachers. Different

learners, for example, when faced with problems created by particular forms of classroom instruction, will give up learning, others "*will attempt to augment the classroom instruction by seeking outside resources such as tutors*" (Schumann 1980:52). Different teaching methods described by Richards and Rodgers (1986) and Larsen-Freeman (1986) contain principles of teaching and learning readily adapted by individuals to suit their particular learning needs and preferences.

Differences in naturalistic and instructed second language learning are often isolated by the literature into two separate contrasting concepts in the discussion of language acquisition. However, in a qualitative approach (rather than the quantitative error analysis in Schmidt and Frota's study) these terms can be less starkly defined. The terms 'interaction' and 'instruction' are not so clearly bounded. In some one-to-one classes a student attends the 'instruction' becomes part of the 'interaction' of the student with the teacher in a student-led learning conversation.

Salient phenomena feature similarly in adults' common experiences, but the nature and effect of these phenomena become different as the focus is directed more closely onto particular individuals. While individual learners may be

affected by age, for example, different individuals may be affected to a more or less degree by the age phenomenon and consequently their language acquisition experience is affected differently. Salient phenomena under investigation should be extended to include: age, attitude, adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas to be more appropriate for the learner during the learning process, approach, attitude towards risk-taking and criticism, cognitive style, the content of the language resource material, the relative newness of the input language, control of anxiety, empathy for the language and its embedded culture, the nature of the input, an interest in culture and language, the specific language content of the input, the individual's particular language learning difficulties, motivation, personality, context, previous learning history, feelings of success or failure and external evidence of achievement.

Our understanding of the language acquisition process is extensive, but further, deeper investigations would increase this understanding especially if these are focussed more specifically on this process in terms of individuals and how the process is affected by interdependent phenomena that fluctuate and interact within individual language learners' cumulative experiences over time.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Contents   Page

3.1 Introduction

Study outline:
- *Aim: to provide insight into the advancement of my knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of the process of language acquisition in a mature learner.*
- *While learning Spanish as a beginner, I kept a diary for two-and-a-half-years in which I recorded detailed, reflective responses to my language acquisition experiences. The diary data was recorded under prompt headings.*

At the end of the learning period:
- *I summarised the content of the diary in the form of four different charts.*

Then I analysed the contents of the whole diary and the charts so that salient themes emerged:
- *Analysis 1: a preliminary study of the chart entries under the prompt headings indicated most frequently mentioned phenomena.*
- *Analysis 2 of the chart entries under the prompt headings revealed specific aspects of these phenomena*
- *Analysis 3: A third interpretive analysis ignored the prompt headings and looked at the entries individually, in terms of implicit and explicit phenomena indicated: Four main phenomena were revealed:*
  1. *language source material*
  2. *method of learning*
  3. *my attitude as the learner*
  4. *memory*
- *Analysis 4: entries were looked at individually in terms of the insight they gave to a detailed description of*
  1. the nature of the advancement of my knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of
  2. my knowledge and understanding of the process of my language acquisition.

The study revealed the significance of the language acquisition process itself in contrast to the products of language acquisition which currently form a major part of language acquisition theory.

As indicated in the study outline above, the research

methodology of this study is primarily reflective. The

research is an empirical case study of the development of language acquisition in a mature learner. The learner and the researcher are one and the same person. As this learner and researcher, I observed the process of my language acquisition as I learnt Spanish as a beginner by recording reflective entries into a regular language learning diary. Entries in the diary were recorded under a gradually developed list of prompt headings. As the learning progressed the headings were amended so the learning and the study developed together. At the completion of the diary, the content of the entries was analysed, re-interpreted and salient phenomena described as fully as possible in order to provide insight into the gradual development of my language acquisition.

Much of the literature (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986) focuses on the narrow aspect of the acquisition of specific grammatical forms. Error analysis with precise comparisons of quantitative data such as that of Schmidt and Frota's study (Schmidt and Frota 1986) is an example of this approach. However, in a qualitative study such as the one reported here, a more holistic approach provides insight into the gradual development of this acquisitional process within an individual. Salient phenomena can be examined more thoroughly from a single learner's perspective and the

variability of experiences between multiple learners no longer applies.

Recent literature emphasises the importance of the contribution of the individual to the learning process. As reported by Breen in the introduction to his work 'Learner contributions to language learning', "*learners work selectively within their environment of learning and upon the linguistic and communicable data made available to them in that environment. This selectivity derives from the learners' conceptualization of the condition that they see as facilitating or hindering their learning and their conceptualization of the language to be learned. Such conceptualizations are imbued with the learners' feeling and attitudes. We may explore how the learning is done with regard to internal psycholinguistic and cognitive processes, including discrimination attention and memory. Even these, however, are selective because of both the relative salience or accessibility of the language data made available and the potentials and constraints of the learners' internal processing. Again, it is likely that the learners' affective attributes will influence such selectivity. We may therefore regard what the learners actually learn – the outcomes from language learning – as significantly shaped by what they bring and contribute to the whole process*" (Breen 2001:1).

3.2 Self-reporting as a methodological technique

Since the era of the early Greek philosophers, self-reporting has been a major technique for observing, interpreting, and understanding experience. In the field of language and language learning, studies based on self-reporting have formed part of the world of research continuously, ranging from studies that have focused on singular aspects of language learning (such as Ebbinghaus (1913) who studied how he remembered language syllables) to studies that have collected self-reports from a number of language learners such as the work of Pickett (1978) and Stevick (1989).

There are other accounts of individual learner's experience of learning and some of these have been written in the first person. In addition to the study by Schmidt and Frota (1986) and to Pickett's contributors there are first-hand accounts offered by Bailey (1983), Jones (1994) and Belcher and Connor (2001). Shoaib and Dörnyei (2004) incorporated learners' stories in their study of motivation within the context of their everyday lives. None of these studies match the study reported here exactly. However, the justification for the methodology used in Shoaib and Dörnyei's is similar to the justification of the methodology of this study. *"Methodologically, they [e.g. Shoaib and*

Dörnyei] affirm the value of learners' stories because they enable phenomena that are usually studied in isolation to be investigated in context." (Benson and Nunan 2004:152) The study reported here goes even further than this for the context is not as variable. It concerns an individual living one life or 'context' rather than a group of language learners in different lives or 'contexts'.

Overall, self-reporting studies have been few in comparison with a much larger field of language learning studies that have been based on more 'scientific' methods. Self-reporting necessarily incorporates subjectivity which until recently, has been considered by many researchers to oppose the very principles on which valid research is based. Individual, subjective observations have been dismissed by scientists who depend on 'objective' experimental investigations. The major problem with subjectivity, these scientists state, is that subjective reports can never be validated by external scrutiny. What an individual reports is considered to be no more than informal observations that are permeated with self-opinion, prejudice and presuppositions that would not be shared by the scientific community at large. The difficulties of researching the constantly changing variables of affective factors within an individual as reviewed by Bailey (1983:67) provide a

suitable example. She rightly points out that affective variables are not directly observable so data needs to be taken from observing how the subject really feels, what the subject is really thinking or how the subject would probably behave in certain circumstances (Bailey 1983:70). This provides strong support for the value of the internally observed, subjective approach. Indeed, as demonstrated by Shoaib and Dörnyei (2004), it can be argued that all research concerns events in which human nature and behaviour are contributors and thus can never be anything but subjective. Scientists, who set up 'objective' experiments, make subjective selections from the start. The choice of subject depends on the scientists' interpretations of the subject of the inquiry, of the nature of the participants, and of the relative importance of the different criteria selected and incorporated in the design of the research.

In addition to this, it is already accepted that in the field of learning and education, it is not possible to establish a real 'control' group that would be necessary if the objective scientific approach was to be used. It is unethical and impossible to form a group of students or teachers who are prevented from being affected by any external influence that may affect the experiments. Another "*distinguishing [feature] of (auto) biographical research is*

that it offers a longitudinal portrait of the phenomena under investigation. This enables us to generate insights that are beyond the reach of 'snapshot research' which captures a single reality or a limited number of realities, at a single point in time." (Benson and Nunan 2004:155) This relatively recent approach is adopted in the study reported here.

The methodology recommended by Rodriguez and Rave (2002) incorporates a system for recording the learner's learning experience. Their approach has been adopted in this study. Early decisions were made about the type of approach to be used in the diary. It was decided at the start that my entries would be as spontaneous as possible and that the prompt headings would be as holistic and as widely interpreted as possible so that the information provided was comprehensive. In order for the observations to be validated, internal mechanisms were put in place. By recording my observations in terms of specific phenomena, the content was verifiable by comparing the other entries for the same learning event. For example, when I recorded under the prompt heading 'success' (which included my perception of 'success') if I recorded that I had been successful, the percentage achieved in a test taken at the time would be expected to be relatively high. It is commonly

accepted that what a learner experiences may not be what actually occurs (Ellis 2004). Apparent discrepancies in this study were interpreted as indicators for further investigation for these were the points at which the subjective interpretation of the observer did not match the experience as it occurred. These 'discrepancies' provided evidence, beyond the individual's observation, of the nature of the phenomena that contributed to the learner's language acquisition. More pertinent to the aims of the research was the substance of the entries in the diary (whether they created discrepancies or not). These entries provided vital data for a final description of the nature of phenomena contributing to language acquisition and much of their value relied on treating the entries on an individual basis before assessing their worth in the whole scheme of the developmental process.

Discrepancies may appear to exist in the different stages of an analysis of contributing phenomena, but these discrepancies are often resolved when incorporated into a more complete understanding of the whole process. The discrepancies are not in conflict with the data, they give additional information that is included in a description of the whole process. In any diary study, if an entry indicates, for example, that the learner believes that

he/she has been unsuccessful in a particular learning event, the test result after such an event would be expected to record a low score. Should the score be high, further investigation of such a discrepancy is likely to reveal that the learner either misjudged the success achieved or that the test was too easy for effective evaluation of the learner's achievement at the time. It is acknowledged that only one incident such as this is not enough to satisfy an enquiry into what actually occurred, but numerous entries over a period of years provide numerous examples that give weight to an evaluation of the nature of the language acquisition of the learner that is not wholly based on the learner's individual subjective entries in the diary per se.

While it is necessary to categorize each phenomenon as a separate aspect for consideration, the whole study incorporates an understanding that phenomena cannot be considered entirely in isolation. While a clear description of the phenomena may develop, each description needs to take into consideration the effect of accompanying phenomena at the time of the learning events. In the learning diary, as described above, the learner may comment that progress is particularly slow but test results may indicate greater success than expected. This information shows that comments are probably more negative than they need to be and that the

tests serve only as a superficial indication of progress. The findings within the entries are not definitive statements; they are only *indications* of how acquisition may have been developing. A clear example of discrepancy may occur in diary entries that record a positive, successful learning event but with minor problems. These problematic discrepancies may be as narrow as the expression of a desire to see the words, to see the speakers' mouths to determine exactly how they are pronouncing certain phonemes, or the diary entries may comment that some of the words are not being remembered in their whole form. The relative importance of these problems is little compared to the overall picture of the way in which language acquisition developed but is great in terms of seeking insight into the separate language learning experiences. Although these comments are essential to the discussion, their contribution must be considered as only one part of a plethora of contributing factors.

As mentioned previously, self-reporting has been a technique for data collection for many years (e.g. Wozniak 2003). In his diary of a course designer, Watson Todd (1997) outlines what a diary study should entail. He describes three stages: recording events, reflecting on entries and extracting key themes. He also states that if independent

theory and research is brought into the interpretation in the third stage, diary studies provide much of the data required for valid research. In a diary study of an individual mature learner, a diary-keeper is likely to be constantly reflecting during the experience and during the diary keeping. Further reflection occurs during the analysis process so that the final analysis does not become the findings of an individual on an individual's experience, but more the gradual development of combined reflections on experience in terms of language acquisition hypotheses and theories that the learner engages with during reflection. Of course, an initial decision about such a study needs to be made and that is that the diary will be a reflective diary. As the diary from the outset is expected to be part of the research process, such reflection is inevitable (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986). The information gathered about the internal thought processes of a learner can be reported by the learner very close to, if not during, the learning process. A description of strategies that are created and applied consciously by the learner during learning events can explore issues that extend beyond narrower concepts of strategy definition and application.

A study such as the one reported here focuses not only on the nature of the strategies and the nature of the manner

in which they are applied but also on the manner in which they may be developed and applied in terms of the particular characteristics of an individual learner in particular situations. This approach is supported by Benson and Nunan (Benson and Nunan 2004:12-13). The central issue of a study focusing on language development in an individual goes further than the above preliminary observations. The strategies used become integral components of a cohesive learning situation in the individual learner. The description of such strategies can be more detailed than in more generalised studies. In a single case-study incorporating observations made by the learner, learning can be more closely monitored at the time of use. A reflective diary can provide constant references to learning events in which attention is focused on a number of explicitly described aspects during the learning process. In a single case-study, strategies can be constantly adapted to suit the learning needs at the time of learning and the changes can be taken into account at the time of the event and at the time of the observations. As the subject becomes more aware of the learning preferences that appear to lead to success, a gradual process of selection directly suited to the individual's needs becomes an integral part of the learning process.

Earlier research suggests that the strategies used include complex combinations of a number of different foci of attention, a number of memorizing techniques and a number of contributory phenomena from past knowledge and experience. These different aspects are applied at different times and at different intervals. The kind of information included in discussion of strategies in a single case-study is more comprehensive and inclusive of the vicissitudes of other affective elements than in most more generalised studies. The learner is able to "*tap into affective factors, language learning strategies and the learner's perception*" (Bailey and Nunan 1996:197). As a consequence, an analysis of the reflective comments is likely to provide a new, deeper understanding of how a mature learner develops knowledge and competence in a second language.

An understanding of metacognitive strategies applied during the learning process is another important aspect that the self-observed learner offers. An individual learner may be able to describe what thinking takes place about the mental processes involved in language learning. The learner may be able to explain how he or she is monitoring the learning while it is taking place and what evaluative methods he or she is using during the learning process. The learner may indeed be able to describe these events in

detail. More importantly, such a description may incorporate subconscious aspects that are unconsciously incorporated in this description. This is especially the case in the earlier stages of the developmental process on which this study is based for in the later, more autonomous stages of the language acquisition process, the process "*requires less attention but is harder to interrupt*" (Anderson 1995:326).

Added to this, interpretation has an important influence on the outcomes discovered. It is generally acknowledged that mental processing is part of the learning experience and a number of studies have come close to describing these mental processes (such as those described in Ellis 1994), but crucial to the effectiveness of a study such as this is the fact that the individual learner is potentially cognizant of the mental processes occurring because the learner has a key role in the mental processes themselves. This internal access to events the individual learner possesses creates a unique situation in which we have the opportunity of gaining insight into the true nature of the language learning experiences that occur. A study such as this, like all studies, may not provide unequivocal descriptions of events, but when the language learner is also the researcher, above all other studies, this kind of study can claim to be closer to real events in its

application. In a mature language learner's experience, as

mentioned above, it is acknowledged that there are likely to

be occasions when the learner may not be entirely cognizant

of all events.

In Schmidt and Frota's study, for example, "*there were*

clear instances in which what R thought was true (about what

people said, about how he spoke Portuguese, etc) was not

correct and does not correspond to the harder evidence from

the tape conversations" (Schmidt and Frota 1986:307). A

clear example of this was provided by Schmidt when he was

completely unaware that he was using the word 'marida' that

he had erroneously created (Schmidt and Frota 1986:303-304).

However, not until the full nature of the whole learning

experience as a continuously changing process is known and

the relative importance of this 'incorrect' perception is

fully understood, will the significance of this incorrect

perception be fully appreciated. In addition, a

comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the

observer and the subject are essential. In Schmidt's

situation he had apparently over-generalized a single word.

He had over-generalized the word for husband (marido) into a

non-existent word (marida) which he used to mean 'wife'.

These two words are so close in sound and meaning that the

incorrect word and the meaning Schmidt intended was quickly

understood by the interlocutor. The error affected the communication little and is less significant in terms of the focus of the current study than the interrelationship of the different interacting factors that influenced the whole experience reported by Schmidt in his diary entry (Schmidt and Frota 1986:304).

Another clear example of this difficulty is the way in which the learner may not be fully aware that they may be pronouncing certain sounds incorrectly. However, in matters concerning what the learner is thinking at or near the time of an event, the learner is likely to be closer to this information than other external observers, whether or not the learner's experience can be consciously recalled and expressed. In language use, too, the learner may not be aware of making certain errors, for example, but an external observer although aware of these errors, will not have access to the inter-relationships and priorities that compete as the learner makes choices during the language production process. Account needs to be taken of the way in which a learner, during some language use events, may be fully aware of making errors and could correct these errors but the learner decides not to make any corrections, nor to make a special effort to avoid errors for the purpose of creating a sympathetic bond between themselves and the

listener. The listener, realizing that the learner is not a fluent speaker, may immediately make considerable effort to assist the learner in a supportive role. This is one of the many strategies learners may use during language production. No matter how many studies investigate every possible aspect of a language production event (such as those described above) research will never be able to provide information that is completely comprehensive. However, the study reported here is intended to make a significant contribution to this difficult area by increasing what is known about the process of language acquisition within an individual.

Much of the previous discussion concerns reflexivity. Reflexivity "*refers to the process of critical self-reflection on one's biases, theoretical predispositions, preferences …*" (Schwandt 2001:224) and as such has a significant effect on validating a study of the development of language acquisition in an individual. Reflexivity also points "*to the fact [that] the inquirer is part of the settings context … he … seeks to understand. Hence, reflexivity can be a means for critically inspecting the entire research process, including reflecting on the ways in which a fieldworker … examines one's personal and theoretic commitments to determine how they serve as resources for generating particular data, for behaving in particular ways*

vis-à-vis respondents and participants and for developing

particular interpretations. Reflexivity understood in this

way is held to be a very important procedure for

establishing the validity *of accounts*" (Schwandt 2001:224).

In a study such as the one reported here, it is important

for the diarist to record responses and feelings as

accurately and as candidly as possible (Bailey 1983:72).

However, such entries will also incorporate self-reflection,

although self-reflection is only part of the descriptive

process.

As described previously, reflections during events

often form part of the events themselves and thereby become

essential data. In terms of the methodology of this study,

reflexivity forms a major part of the discussion that

validates the method of analysis. Systematic interpretation

of the diary data and the gradual development of themes that

underpinned the most salient phenomena formed an essential

part of validating the conclusions drawn.

3.3 The validity of the use of a diary

Validity is crucial to the methodological design of a study such as the one reported here. There are numerous perspectives on validity. Studies into language acquisition, for example, rely on aspects of memory. Anderson reports that "*People's memory performance depends on the type of memory text and its relationship to the conditions at study*" (Anderson 1995:266) i.e. each study has inherent problems relating to validity due to the nature of the study itself and of the subjects. The varying ways in which external factors influence language acquisition in different studies are evident in a comparison of Schmidt and Frota's study with the nature of the study reported here. For example, Schmidt spent 5 months in the country in which his target language was spoken. The learner in this study spent only a few weeks at a time in the country where the target language is spoken. Schmidt frequently reports the importance of interaction with native speakers in his gradual acquisition of the language, whereas this study relies more on the initiatives of the learner exerting control over events and language acquisition is thus influenced differently by external factors.

Four of the most outstanding perspectives of validity in a general sense are represented by the notions of

fallibilism, contextualism, radical relativism and replacement or displacement of validity. These in turn represent different views.

Fallibilism supports the view that no matter how accurately a claim represents the phenomena it refers to, in every inquiry there is always an element of fallibility – no claims are ever absolutely certain. From the perspective of contextualism validity is conceived in terms of a given community and the community's consensus of opinion regarding concepts and standards. Another view suggests that validity cannot be said to exist – "*there are only different linguistically mediated social constructions*" (Schwandt 2001:267). Validity is represented by an infinite number of interactions between different interpretations. This perspective is termed 'radical relativism'. A concern with the replacement or displacement of validity supports a belief that validity cannot be separated from aesthetics, rhetoric or political agendas (Schwandt 2001:267). The study reported here takes account of all of the above interpretations of validity to a degree. In all studies there is some element of fallibility and there will always be elements of disagreement according to different perspectives of interpretations. Equally, no study can be irrefutably declared wholly 'valid' as all studies are

undertaken by human beings studying other human beings. Some of the tenets of radical relativism may apply to self-report by individual learners, but the study is only in a weak form for much of the evidence is based on the interpretation of the learner who is also the researcher.

Thus difficulties that inevitably occur in integrating interpretations made by different researchers and subjects are alleviated. What the subject communicates can never be exactly the same as what the researcher understands when the subject and researcher are two different people. While, the individual learner-researcher may interpret data uniquely and 'inaccurately' in terms of others' views, the findings of a self-observed study reveal more exactly what the individual thinks and how the individual interprets the process and outcomes of their specific learning developmental process e.g. "*As students become more practised in a skill, they come to recognize directly what they formerly had to think through*" (Anderson 1995:320). The medium of the internal thoughts of the individual becomes fundamental to the insights provided. As Anton, Dicamilla and Lantolf report: "*private speech … provides insight into the mental operations of learners …*" (Anton, Dicamilla and Lantolf 2003:265). Much of these mental operations would

otherwise remain outside the reach of other less personal
studies.

Finally, although observations may reduce the
considerable influence of 'rhetoric' or 'political agendas',
the concept of aesthetics remains an integral part of the
study, but in positive terms. Lee (2002) gives and account
of Sudnow's description of how Sudnow reached higher levels
of understanding in learning to play jazz. This observation
of Lee's has an affinity with learners reaching higher
levels of understanding in language and this, in turn, is
relevant to studies of individuals' developmental
experience. This is to say, not in terms of the
comprehension of advanced language usage, but in terms of
evidence of a greater connectedness between communicators
that is above and beyond the level of the mere words of the
language.

Much research evidence is provided by both quantitative
and qualitative analysis. However, in a study that focuses
on developing a comprehensive description of the nature of
the development of language acquisition, it is qualitative
evidence that is paramount. In a study of the development of
language acquisition in a mature student, such qualitative
inquiry is largely instrumental in "*enlightening, helping
practitioners of various kinds better understand or*

appreciate the scope and complexity of a problem and its various solutions" (Schwandt 2001:265).

In the qualitative enquiry of this study, what the researcher understands and the methods used for reaching this understanding remain inseparable i.e. the enquiry is "*a kind of action-oriented self-understanding*" (Schwandt 2001:265-266). In addition, the nature of the diary method, with the 'control' of having a single individual making the diary entries, it is most likely that any 'untruths' reported will be consistent 'untruths' that can be discovered by means of internal comparisons or by means of external scrutiny. These 'untruths', rather than clouding the issue of what occurs during the development of language acquisition, on the contrary, are likely to be those that contribute most significantly to the insights that they reveal. Schmidt and Frota's study provides a clear example of this. Schmidt kept a journal of his acquisition of Portuguese and his acquisition was analysed by an external observer (Frota) who analysed taped conversations by Schmidt at different stages in his acquisition. In the introduction to this study the joint authors clearly state: "*subjective reports in the journal have suggested things to look for in the recorded data, and phenomena initially identified from the conversation transcripts have often been illuminated by*

comments in the journal" (Schmidt and Frota 1986:238). The study reported here seeks, above all, illumination of such phenomena and their development in the acquisition of Spanish by this learner-researcher.

Bailey and Schumann are among a growing list of authors who support the validity of the use of diaries in research. Bailey, for example, comments that "*keeping a journal … seems to hold considerable promise both as a research tool and as an aid to self-awareness*" (Bailey 1980:65). Schumann suggests that subjective bias may affect the validity of diary data but indicates that diaries of language learning experiences are undoubtedly beneficial research tools (e.g. Schumann 1980). The Schumanns kept diaries (or 'journals') in 1976 and 1977 and used them as research tools for self-investigation in second language learning. The six variables emerging were termed *personal* variables and included nesting patterns, transition anxiety, reactions to pedagogical techniques, motivation for choice of language learning materials, desire to maintain one's own language learning agenda, and eavesdropping vs. speaking as a language learning strategy (Schumann 1980:51).

Further insight into the validity of these variables within another individual is likely to be of considerable benefit to our developing understanding of the process of

language acquisition.

Criterion validity concerns the need to establish that the salient phenomena incorporated in a discussion of the development of language acquisition are most likely to be phenomena relevant to the language acquisition of the learner. Comparison with other studies of self-observed learners adds weight to the inclusion of the importance of the saliency of phenomena in diary studies similar to the study reported here. For example, the fact that in the first pages of Schmidt and Frota's study, the personal language learning history of the learner ('R') is listed providing evidence that previously learnt languages are generally accepted as having a significant part to play in research on language acquisition development in a more general application (Schmidt and Frota 1986:239-240).

The significance of other key phenomena is also confirmed by inclusion of these phenomena in other studies of language learners and of other theories of language acquisition. Such phenomena may include age (Birren and Schaie 1996), adaptability (Byrnes 1998), approach (Fairclough 1989), attitude (Field, Cohler and Wool 1989), cognitive style (Landsberger 2003), the nature of the input (Utley 1993), learner control (Brookfield 1986), culture (Knowles 1978), interest in language (Biggs and Moore 1993),

learning difficulties (Birren and Schaie 1996), motivation (Knox 1978), personality (Schmidt and Frota 1986), context (Halliday 1978), previous learning history (Esch 1994) and perception (Knowles 1978). This list is not exhaustive and others refer to these phenomena in their hypotheses and theories rarely share exactly the same interpretation of them. Such discussion can only claim to offer insight into these phenomena and the nature of language development. What matters most it the interpretation of these phenomena in terms of the specific learner or learners that are the subjects of the study or studies. Interpretations will differ according to the nature of the different learners, the nature of the studies and the situations surrounding the studies themselves. While it may be argued that the list of phenomena offered in this study of an individual learner may not be complete, it may also be argued that in terms of this particular learner and in terms of the specific aims of the study, the list is valid because it develops as the study progresses. Phenomena may be listed and explored further according to their occurrence in the gradual development of this individual's language acquisition.

A different student in a similar study may exhibit different phenomena to explore, although it could be argued that these different phenomena are no more than different

interpretations of those emerging from the current study. For example, Field, Cohler and Wool (1989) discuss the attitude of the learner. Attitude is an important phenomenon in language learning. However, attitude in terms of the information offered by Field, Cohler and Wool largely concerns the effects of childhood experiences on the learner's attitude to the learning experience. While a mature learner may well have an attitude that developed from the result of childhood experiences, such an interpretation of the learner's attitude in adulthood is very limited: too limited for a comprehensive understanding of the concept of attitude in a discussion of language learning in adulthood.

Attitude in adulthood will be coloured by numerous other different experiences that occur beyond childhood, experiences that are unlikely to occur in childhood such as the increased power relationship the adult may enjoy in adulthood. An adult may be in a position to have more autonomy and to make more decisions about their language learning experience than a child. The list of salient phenomena and associated issues included in this study are as follows: age, adaptability, approach, attitude (including attitude to risk, empathy and motivation), cognitive style, language source material (content, input, language content), control, interest in culture, interest in language, language

learning difficulties, personality, place, previous learning
history, success and assessment of language acquisition.

3.4 Reliability

The reliability of this study rests on the
methodological design. One problem of methodological design
in second language acquisition is created by the variability
of the different participants in different studies, even
diary studies by different students. In order to address
this issue, some studies have adopted multivariate
statistical techniques (Skehan 1989:16-24). There are often
discrepancies between the findings of different studies.
These may be due to "*additional, uncontrolled variables …
[that] underlie the apparent contradictions*" (Skehan
1989:128). Studies of second language learning cannot be
controlled experiments. "*Where strategies involve self-
report, it is logically possible that the success associated
with learning strategies* as well as the strategies
*themselves are both due to a further underlying cause – that
ability to analyse, to reflect, to be more precise in one's
thoughts as well as to be articulate about them. Further all
studies [discussed in Skehan's text] differ from one another
methodologically.*" (Skehan 1989:83) Skehan calls for a
longitudinal approach, "*combining observational and*

introspective data, which allows the investigator some access to the fluctuating states of learner motivation that must surely operate" (Skehan 1989:148).

This study reported here alleviates some of the difficulties highlighted by Skehan and takes into account the progress made in our understanding of the complexity of the nature of language acquisition. Skehan's statement that the results of training learners in the use of strategies is not 'encouraging', takes little account of the effectiveness of self-motivated students adopting cognitive strategies like those researched by Gruneberg which have since been shown to be effective memory enhancers (albeit for a small number of people using a limited number of words) (Gruneberg and Morris 1978). In addition, the study reported here attempts to alleviate the inherent problems of large-scale statistical analyses by focusing on only one individual. However, this creates problems relating to validity and reliability. In order to address this, central to the methodological design of the study is a close analysis of the diary entries in terms of a gradual understanding of how these entries are interpreted according to the individual and the gradual development of language acquisition. The difficulties of the reliability of a methodology based on data provided by an individual who is also responsible for

analysing the data are met by comparing the findings with those from other similar studies, for example, the work of Schmidt and Frota who studied Schmidt's adult learner's development of language acquisition while learning a new language (Schmidt and Frota 1986).

This study and that of Schmidt and Frota's are based on data provided by a diary kept by a participant learner. The learner had some experience of linguistics and of teaching and previous knowledge of other languages. In addition the target languages of the English-speaking subjects were similar. (There are many similarities between Portuguese and Spanish e.g. lexicon). Each learner needed to learn the language and desired to integrate with native speakers. The diaries were begun at the very beginning of the learning experience and were kept for sufficient time to allow some language acquisition to develop. Evidence was provided by external observers to demonstrate and record the development of language acquisition. Similar to Schmidt and Frota's study, the development of language acquisition in the current study was also evaluated by informally administered tests.

However, the nature of the major contributory external observations is different. In Schmidt's study, the external observer (Frota, a native speaker of Brazilian Portuguese

and a linguist) recorded a series of four conversations in Portuguese that Frota had with Schmidt at approximately one-month intervals. The tape recordings were transcribed and Frota analysed the errors in the conversations Schmidt had made. These formed the basis of the evidence for the way in which Schmidt's acquisition developed. In this study, external observation occurred throughout the period in different forms. External scrutiny was in the form of externally sourced tests, comments made by interlocutors who had no personal interest in the effect of their comments and a final more formal examination which provided more detailed evidence of the level of acquisition achieved. Tape recordings were not used in this study for interpretation of the taped conversations would have occurred well after the learning events and much of the evidence in this study was based on my interpretation of events as they occurred at or close to the time they occurred.

Schmidt and Frota divided the period of exposure into three stages defined according to distinct patterns of interaction and instruction with the majority of evidence recorded in quantitative charts (Schmidt and Frota 1986:250). This study was more intensely focused on a qualitative, interpretive study of the nature of the gradual development of language acquisition. Concepts were not

incorporated as finitely bound terms to use for contrastive purposes, but as constantly developing constructs that were likely to mature in subtle ways as their overlapping inter-relationships developed. For example, 'interaction' and 'instruction' were concepts in Schmidt and Frota's study that were clearly separated as different and distinctive phenomena. However, in the current study the issue was not so much when 'interaction' or 'instruction' occurred but more as to how to interpret and apply them according to the stage of language acquisition at the time. The analysis acknowledges the possibility that the terms 'interaction' and 'instruction' function as interrelated and integrated concepts according to the nature of the language learning at the time. One example of the difficulties in separating these terms is the way in which 'interaction' and 'instruction' may occur simultaneously in a situation in which the learner actively controls the learning situation (even in the classroom) to such an extent that 'interaction' is better defined as student-led language input. Consequently 'interaction' is transformed into a form of input which may also be redefined as 'self-instruction' or self-constructed input or 'instruction' which differs considerably from the 'instruction' Schmidt experienced in the classroom.

Similarly, 'R' (the learner in Schmidt and Frota's study) other learners in diary studies and the learner in this study recorded the most salient aspects of the learning experiences at varying intervals. Issues discussed by Schmidt and Frota apply equally to this study. The weaknesses of self-reporting are addressed by Schmidt and Frota indicate that "*the fact that we cannot observe what goes on in another person's mind should not automatically lead us to assume that we necessarily do know what goes on in our own*" (Schmidt and Frota 1986:238). However, while there are limitations to self-reporting studies only language learners themselves can be in a position to observe their experiences adequately for illuminative purposes and interpret their experiences in their diary entries with the meanings originally intended. External observers may well reveal aspects that the diarist may not have noticed but they are also bound to include unsubstantiated assumptions when interpreting comments made by those other than themselves.

This point was confirmed by personal communication with Schmidt. On reading his study, the co-authors' comments seem to indicate that Schmidt had a strong interest in the methodology and techniques of teaching and the subsequent learning (e.g. "*R was never happy with the methodology and*

techniques used in class" Page 244). Yet, when asked about his attitude to learning by email he commented "*in general, I was concerned with mastery of form in the service of communication, so my hierarchy of importance would be different from a teacher who might decide it was important for me to learn the present subjunctive (for example)*" (Schmidt 17/12/2005). This could then initiate further discussion about why he originally disliked the methodology and techniques used in the class he attended. Was it because the methodology and techniques used did not inspire adequate learning by the class members, or was it because the particular methodology and techniques used were not based on Schmidt's personal preference for "*mastery of form in the service of communication*"? Further lengthy discussion with Schmidt would be the only way to satisfy this question. However, for the purpose of this study, this preliminary enquiry serves to demonstrate the importance of the role of the original diarist (rather than other external theorists) in interpreting and analysing comments in a personal diary.

The point of departure of the current study and that of Schmidt and |Frota is in describing what was learned. In Schmidt and Frota's study, Schmidt's acquisition is evaluated according to how correctly he incorporated grammatical features within recorded conversations. This

study shares Schmidt's over-riding aim to evaluate according
to evidence of successful communication, but grammatical
correctness (i.e. language competence) is considered of less
importance than the insight the diary entries provide with
regard to developing a comprehensive description of the
nature of the development of acquisition. Grammatical
correctness is only one of the elements. The evaluation of
the developmental process is achieved by careful scrutiny of
the diary entries. Prompt headings acted as preliminary
hypotheses as to the nature of the most salient phenomena as
they emerged according to the experience of the learner at
the time of the entry. The learner acknowledged certain
preconceptions which emerged during the diary recording
process and during the analysis. The way in which these
preconceptions emerged and developed is crucial and supports
the illuminative data in the findings.

3.5 The diary

Diaries as records of everyday lives are certainly
useful tools for recording. Diaries may assume many
different forms. As Brown and Dowling (1997) state, diaries
can be self-administered, structured observation schedules
or they can be used in a more exploratory manner.

Unstructured freeform can be used to provide insight (Brown and Dowling 1997:64).

Pickett's use of prompt headings also inspired the design of the diary in this study. In Pickett's study, the example offered by contributor H that she remembered words better when she saw them written down and when she associated the target language with language that she already knew, were replicated in the observations made in this study (Pickett 1978:71).

The diary in this study was recorded in free-form within which a framework of prompt headings gradually developed. The way in which the headings were interpreted at the time of writing influenced the content of the diary entries so that the concepts incorporated were maintained within the original semantic network but the network was expanded in a developmental sense. Brown and Dowling also emphasize that awareness that one's behaviour is under scrutiny (even if the details of this are self-reported) can affect what one does. One may be tempted to present an idealised account. However, as the purpose of my diary was to observe and reflect on learning events as accurately as possible in order to distinguish more clearly the nature of the phenomena involved, there was little to gain in presenting an idealised situation. In fact, diary entries

that record difficulties offer more salient information than records of successful acquisition. However, there may have been a Hawthorn Effect where the success may have been due to the fact that the approach was *new*, rather than that the approach was particularly relevant (Brown and Dowling 1997:65-66). However, this 'newness' was an important integral component of the phenomena under scrutiny.

Bias must also be addressed. There is no doubt that some form of bias is inevitable in research. "*Tendencies to see certain patterns rather than others, to attend to certain factors rather than others, to act in accordance with certain interests rather than others – play a crucial role. We can't eliminate the biases – we shouldn't want to, for we'd have no research programs left if we did.*" (Antony and Witt 1993:216) However, as Antony and Witt advocate, biases can be addressed by means of empirical critique. Where an empirical investigation is undertaken by a learner-researcher bias is inextricably incorporated into the investigation. Clearly, the observations are based on a substantial number of the learner's presuppositions; nevertheless, it is these suppositions that provide a foundation for developing insights within the developing empirical investigation and analysis. The diary directly related to the learning of Spanish, a new language for the

learner. The diary was recorded for a period of two-and-a-half-years. Learning events took place according to the learner's language needs and situation. The purpose of the diary was to provide an accurate reflection of a real situation in which the learner was attempting to learn new language. The approach adopted had to be suitable for the learner as a mature student also engaged in other day-today activities.

A more effective approach might have been to space the learning events. However, in present day situations, a study such as this, i.e. one that takes into account the vicissitudes of an individual's life situation, is more usual in most diary studies (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986) and has greater ecological validity. Such a diary records what really happens, rather than what *should* be seen to happen. Learners alone can increase our understanding of such issues, in spite of the difficulties bias may present. Schmidt, and only Schmidt, for example, was able to comment on his usage of the non-existent Portuguese word 'marida' Schmidt seemed to have assumed that he would learn the target language 'naturally', i.e. mostly by process of immersion. He did not assume that a great number of different strategies would need to be applied if the

language was to be acquired successfully (personal

communication, 2005).

The email correspondence was as follows:

"Westwell: When you made the mistake of using 'marida' this
was assumed to be overgeneralization on your part. Could it
be possible that there was more than overgeneralization
taking place?
Schmidt: Like what?
Westwell: Can you remember, for example, anything similar
to what I believe happened when I 'learnt' the
corresponding word(s) in Spanish? I remember noticing how
strange it was that marido could only be used for husband.
I associate new words with similar English sounding and
meaning words in order to commit them to memory – so at
that stage I latched onto 'spouse' – 'esposo' and 'esposa'
and deliberately chose these instead.
Schmidt: I didn't associate esposa with spouse, and I kept
on saying marida even after being told repeatedly that it
was wrong. (I don't really understand what you are asking
here.)" (Westwell and Schmidt 23/12/2005)

This clearly shows that a greater understanding of the

processes involved in language learning is possible when

the description of events is described by the learners. In

this particular case, we now know much more about Schmidt's

attitude at the time of his creation of this new word –

i.e. that it was not based on conscious strategies that he

was applying and that he did not grasp that my strategy of

associating the Spanish terms with "true friends"

(esposo/esposa) could have been of more value than his

approach which allowed over-generalisation. Dialogue with

the learner is the only way in which such questions can be

answered and the study reported here attempts to provide this kind of insight as the 'researcher' engages in dialogue with the 'learner'. As the learner was an experienced teacher of English as a Foreign Language, had a history of previously developed and internalized understanding of learning theory as part of her teaching, learning experience and research activities, particular critical perspectives were brought into play. Such history and its effect cannot be divorced from the learner's approach and decisions made during the learning process.

3.6 Method of recording: the diary entries

In the initial stages of the design of the study I believed that the effect of age on my language acquisition would be central. The date of each entry and the entry number were recorded for identification purposes: the content of an entry could be checked against the date of the learning event to confirm that the content of the entry was accurately describing the event concerned. Aspects such as 'input', 'place' and the 'language content' relating to the learning event seemed important. Consequently, these formed a foundation from which the prompt headings were devised to assist in reporting my language learning experience fully. The 'content' of the entries, in relation to whether the

material was new or revision was also thought to be relevant. As one of the major goals of the study was to determine the nature of salient phenomena in the language acquisition process, the prompt heading 'success' was also an inevitable choice. As expressed in the literature review, other phenomena that were perceived to be relevant from research on teaching and language learning experience were 'motivation', 'personality' and 'language learning difficulties'.

More prompt headings were obtained from previous research of language learning theory. These were 'approach', 'cognitive style', 'interest in culture', 'control of anxiety' and 'interest in language'. 'Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism', 'interest in language', and 'previous learning history' were also included from an understanding of language learning theory. The final four prompt headings were added to ensure that nothing essential was omitted from the diary data.

Within the first few learning events, I became very aware that it was important to adapt the learning situations to suit my learning needs and preferences so I included the generally expressed prompt heading: 'Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate'. Although I believed interest in culture was

related to empathy, I believed at the beginning of the research that if I managed to develop a close relationship with the people in Spain as I attempted to integrate with them during my learning experiences, this would have a considerable positive effect on the development of my language acquisition. Consequently the prompt heading 'empathy' was included. It also became apparent that entries that expressed a feeling that I had been successful were important to the qualitative analysis and that more concrete evidence would be needed to verify these feelings of success or lack of it. Consequently I included the prompt heading 'test results'. Finally, aware that there needed to be a place to record extra information that was important, but that may not have appeared to be appropriate under any of the prompt headings, the heading 'Xtra comments' was added.

The final list of prompt headings presented in alphabetical order (except for 'age') was thus:

```
TABLE 3.1 LIST OF PROMPT HEADINGS
Age
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be
more appropriate
Approach
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism
Cognitive style
Content
Control of anxiety
Empathy
Input
Interest in culture
Interest in language
Language content
Language learning difficulties
Motivation
Personality
Place
Previous learning history
Success
Test results
Extra comments
```

3.7 Salient phenomena and their methodological implications

It was clear that a diary in its complete form i.e. as a running commentary on the learner's experiences would need some form of structure for the analysis to have shape and purpose. As described above, a list of prompt headings, used to assist in shaping the diary entries, gradually developed into a comprehensive list of salient phenomena to be observed as the language acquisition of the learner progressed. Before the diary began, it was clear that the interpretive analysis would reveal salient phenomena within the language acquisition process. These phenomena were not considered in terms of having any direct causal relationships with the learning process, but their existence and a detailed interpretation of their nature was considered

important in achieving the purpose of the study to provide

new insight into the learning process of this learner.

    The methodology supporting the developmental process of

the diary, salient phenomena and analyses can best be

described using page one of the whole diary as an example:

TABLE 3.2 PAGE 1 OF THE LEARNING DIARY
Entry: 1
Date: 15/09/1999 Wednesday 15 September 1999 1010 a.m. for about 45 minutes
Age: this is already 'known' to be a disadvantage
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: the only change I made was to consider abandoning the course early in the procedure if I did not fulfil my needs - e.g. the need for help with pronunciation
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to take risks but not yet - too early
Cognitive style: listen-repeat from a tape may be a bit shallow for me
Content: new
Control of anxiety: decided to continue 'regardless' of problems
Empathy: not yet enamoured with the language
Input: first 'course' Teach Yourself Spanish by Juan Kattán-Ibarra, 1998: a complete course in understanding, speaking and writing Spanish. Teach Yourself Books Hodder and Stoughton 1998 and after discovering an initial need for pronunciation assistance: Collins Spanish-English English-Spanish Dictionary Unabridged by Colin Smith fifth edition 1997 Harper Collins.
Interest in culture: not yet won over
Interest in language: I need the language rather than want the language
Language content: the first tape of the course and the pronunciation chart from the dictionary. I also needed the following: "Educated Castilian pronunciation
Rules:
Word ends with a vowel, n or s penultimate syllable stressed
          Consonant, last syllable is stressed
Acute accent = stress that vowel
a e o = strong vowels i u weak
diphthong stress on strong vowel"
Language learning difficulties: There was a problem initially for phonetic symbols, sounds or pronunciation tables/appendices were not readily available in the first course to satisfy original aim to get to grips with the phonetic sounds and symbols of Spanish
Motivation: keen to learn but not confident that it will be easy
Personality: having studied for a number of years with equal determination I should eventually be able to learn to learn the language
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: I have no previous knowledge of the language save a very few adopted words - e.g. mañana for tomorrow
Success: progress slow. After getting the dictionary I read through the list of rules - got bored about half way through read to the end, it seemed very like straight English pronunciation with a few variations ready to have a go with the tape to hear someone else speaking again.
I listened for approx. one hour. I was slow to pick up the phrases although I knew I should go over it again and again - I didn't want to. I found I had to know the meaning of the words to be able to remember them for example usted = formal you.
Test results: estimated: I probably absorbed only about one-third of the lesson in approx. 30 mins to 1 hour
'Xtra' comments:

The prompt headings were developed in the very early stages of preparation for keeping the diary. The difficulty of validating analysis of a diary by the diary keeper indicated from the start that internal checking procedures needed to be incorporated in the design. Consequently, there were two prompt heading relating to identifying individual entries. Each entry was numbered and the date of the learning event was also recorded thereby offering a comparative check on exactly which diary entry contained specific data. These two points of reference also allowed for more than one learning event to take place in one day. The date was considered essential for locating the precise time when specific learning events took place and for providing data that indicated the length of time between the learning periods. At the outset, it was expected that the study would focus mostly on the effects of age and the heading 'Age' was incorporated in the first entry. The third prompt heading 'Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate' was not included in the prompt headings until the need arose in entry 3. The need for the heading became apparent through events described in the third entry when I abandoned one course for another. At this point the heading was added to the first and second entries retrospectively. This is not to say that

the diary was altered indiscriminately. It was accepted from the start that the diary-keeping would be a developmental process concurrently operating with the developing language acquisition process.

The need for change in my approach was evident in the first entry for I had to abandon the text I was studying to seek assistance with pronunciation from another source. Consequently 'approach' became an essential prompt heading from the first entry. The heading 'attitude towards risk-taking and criticism' was adopted from the beginning from the literature I had been reading previously. This phenomenon is considered by many authors to have a significant influence on language acquisition (e.g. Lightbown 1990:39). Based on my previous knowledge as an experienced learner and teacher it seemed evident that my thought processes would have considerable bearing on a description of the acquisition process so the prompt heading 'cognitive style' was included. It was decided at the start that the prompt headings would be interpreted as widely as possible, so that many different aspects of cognition were included e.g. cognitive strategies. The heading 'content' was included initially although with uncertainty about how it would develop as the diary progressed. The heading remained as a comment on whether the language I was learning

was new to me or revision. 'Language content' was included to allow for an analysis of specific language forms. The importance of considering 'anxiety' is indicated by the sixth prompt heading 'Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism'. However, it became immediately evident that while the anxiety itself was significant its effect was influenced by the learner's ability to *control* the effects of such anxiety. Hence the heading 'control of anxiety' was included from the start. Aware that I was prejudiced against Spanish and the Spaniards before I began the diary (I preferred French), the aspect of empathy and its importance seemed essential to include from entry 1. The language resource I was using was also necessary so 'Input' was included as a prompt.

The term 'empathy' is difficult to define precisely, so to provide a wide choice of interpretations, the heading 'Interest in culture' was included so that both the terms 'empathy' and 'culture' could be differentiated in the analysis if they emerged as important. It is commonly accepted that an interest in language has some importance to the language learning process, so this heading was included from entry 1. as 'Interest in language'. Expecting the study to focus on language learning difficulties due to age, the heading 'Language learning difficulties' was included

initially, as were 'Motivation', 'Personality', 'Place' (i.e. context) and 'Previous learning history'.

Some form of assessment of learning acquisition success (if any) was essential if the findings were to have validity. Consequently, the heading 'Success' (and its effects) and 'Test results' were included at the start. A category was also needed to ensure that a complete description of the process could be included from the first entry. This heading was listed as 'Extra comments' (with 'Extra' abbreviated to 'Xtra' for data processing purposes).

The headings were listed in alphabetical order (after 'age' which was initially considered the most vital observational phenomena) to avoid incorporating any more presuppositions the learner may have had concerning the relative significance of specific phenomena. The salient phenomena incorporated in the development of language acquisition in this learner were scrutinised at the completion of the language learning period to support a final description of the nature of the development of the language acquisition of this learner. Each heading was interpreted as widely as possible and many entries contained the same content ensuring that there were sufficient data to allow for reconstruction of the meaning of terms during the analysis according to the learner's understanding of what

she had *intended* to mean at the time rather than how the entries could be interpreted by a different external observer. The contention that the learner may not have been entirely aware of the nature of the salient phenomena in terms of other observers' understanding is a valid one. However, the observations were specifically concerned with what occurred during this learner's language learning and it was this learner's interpretations that enhanced the descriptive effectiveness of the findings in terms of this learner's experience.

More methodological issues regarding interpretation were incorporated in the analysis. The most significant analysis was an extended qualitative analysis of the entry contents of the whole diary. Initially, the diary was transcribed into diary charts that contained abbreviated summaries of the comments in the whole diary. The summarised diary was then used for an initial preparatory approach. A more thorough analysis of the whole diary itself was used in the final analysis. This allowed for the treatment of the essential contents of the entries to be equally weighted. A lengthy entry in the diary may have contained several salient comments all of which made significant contributions to the description of the language acquisition developmental process. Such a qualitative approach ensured that all these

salient points were included; the most 'salient' point did not need to be selected for the sake of statistical requirements. For example, if a diary entry contained three different phenomena, these were reported as three different phenomena. If a phenomenon had been mentioned previously, it did not need to be mentioned again. Thus the number of entries from the qualitative list did not (and need not) tally with the number of comments listed under the group headings in the preliminary tables.

Only in the final in-depth analysis was it possible to take account of the subtle differences in meaning represented by the different wordings of the entries. Only in this final qualitative, interpretive analysis could a satisfactory description of the nature of this learner-researcher's language acquisition development be determined. The final qualitative approach also made it possible to determine that what appeared to be said and what was *meant* by what was said were in agreement.

In the preliminary studies of the diary charts, if a phenomenon was referred to in a large number of the entries, the phenomenon was considered important at the time of the recording. However, the real significance of these entries only became apparent when the implied meaning of the entries was discussed in terms of other important influential data

that originated from the learner's experience during the

development of the learner's language acquisition and during

the development of the researcher's increased understanding

of the nature of this process as it developed. Prime

examples of the importance interpretation in terms of what

was *meant* by what was said are in entry 126. Entry 126 was

recorded very briefly in the diary charts (Appendix: 406).

However, the short summaries selected to enter into the

charts did not fully explain the observations.

TABLE 3.3 WHOLE DIARY ENTRY: 126
Entry: 126
Date: 31/12/2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: I had two one to one lessons at the school in the Maria Parodi Street and was relieved that the teacher Pilar was all right. She acted just as I do when a new student arrives. I was delighted that she decided the first book of their course was going to be too easy for me and changed it to the pre intermediate. However, one hour a day is not really enough but hopefully it will help in the general scheme of things. She can at least check the pronunciation of the alphabet etc.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to try
Cognitive style: I had two one to one lessons at the school in the Maria Parodi Street mainly speaking and listening with some vocabulary written on the board. Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy: I was relieved that the teacher Pilar was all right.
Input: I had two one to one lessons at the school in the Maria Parodi Street and was relieved that the teacher Pilar was all right. The first book of their course was going to be too easy for me so it was changed it to the pre intermediate version. Tuition for one hour a day.
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: I had two one to one lessons at the school in the Maria Parodi street - speaking and listening with some vocabulary written on the board as well as some use of the school's pre-intermediate textbook.
Language learning difficulties: one hour a day is not really enough but hopefully it will help in the general scheme of things. She can at least check the pronunciation of the alphabet etc.
Motivation:
Personality:
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: I must have learnt something the teacher decided the first book of their course was going to be too easy for me and changed it to the pre intermediate.
Success: I was delighted when the teacher decided the first book of their course was going to be too easy for me and changed it to the pre intermediate. However, one hour a day is not really enough.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Under the heading 'Approach' chart entry 126 listed the simple statement: 'one-to-one lesson good, changed book'. The comments in the full diary did not include these exact words, for they merely implied the meaning intended by the summarised words in a fuller and more complete manner. In entry 126 the comments listed under 'Approach' were: 'I had two one-to-one lessons at the school in the Maria Parodi Street and was relieved that the teacher P. was all right. She acted just as I do when a new student arrives. I was delighted that she decided the first book of their course was going to be too easy for me and changed it to the pre-intermediate. However, one hour a day is not really enough but hopefully it will help in the general scheme of things. She can at least check the pronunciation of the alphabet etc.'

     The comment in the chart raises questions of interpretation for the reader, such as: What was meant by 'one-to-one lessons'? In what way were one-to-one lessons good? Were they good for practising speaking fluently, for grammar correction and learning, for extending vocabulary or for developing and understanding of the cultural aspects that accompany the Spanish language? The whole diary comments also need further explanation: What did I mean by 'all right'? What did I mean by 'she acted as I do' – in

what way? Is one hour a day not enough because I could have managed more, or because I would not be able to learn enough in such a short time? What did I mean by the general scheme of things? Why did I think the pronunciation of the alphabet important and what did I mean by 'etc.'? These were only a few of a plethora of questions that such comments instigate. Similar problems of interpretation are evidenced in Schmidt's diary. For example, in his entry for week 3 he states "*[…] I actually got the gist of the first topic […] about university personnel policies and changes […] No doubt I understood that much because it's all too familiar in my own work […]*". How much of a 'gist' he understood and whether the language used was familiar because of his job or whether he understood the language because the language was more formal and academic than the language of ordinary conversation is not absolutely clear (Schmidt and Frota 1986:242). However, with Schmidt adding his own interpretation of events, the former explanation is more likely than the latter. Schmidt rather than any other interpreter is likely to have the most appreciation of what occurred during the event in terms of his understanding.

Thus it may be argued that the learner as researcher can answer these questions in a way that is rarely possible in other studies. I was obviously the one and only student

in the one-to-one lesson mentioned above but the word 'good' has numerous associated and important concepts accompanying its interpretation. These concepts are described by incorporating additional input from my understanding of what I meant at the time of writing. 'Good' became defined as 'effective for me as a learner'. I believed that I learnt a great deal more within these one-to-one lessons than I had learnt with the other methods I had tried. This success contributed to my gradual development of language acquisition which I was able to describe in a way that uniquely includes aspects not always available to other observers.

'Lesson' also took on a different meaning from its usual denotation. In common practice, the teacher usually prepares the lesson content and helps the learner to engage with the material the teacher has chosen. In my case, as a learner who was also an experienced teacher, I provided the material for the lesson content. I asked the teacher to allow me to spend the lesson trying to hold a conversation with her, but in a conversational style that was regularly interrupted so that my mistakes or lack of vocabulary could be rectified by the teacher immediately during my language use.

The entry in my full diary described the activity that

took place in my lesson further. I was endeavouring to learn the names of the letters of the alphabet so that I could spell the words in use. I was obviously completing exercises we had jointly agreed contained language that I needed to acquire. My need to be able to use the language as an instrument for expressing myself quickly and verbally was also part of the lesson activity.

3.8 Method of analysing the diary entries

The preceding sections indicate the importance of accurately interpreting the data to support an effective and comprehensive description of salient contributing phenomena. In order to avoid misinterpretation of terms, laborious methods of analysis were chosen. It was imperative that every comment was carefully and personally interpreted by the individual learner/researcher to avoid diluting the data. Consequently the analysis of the diary was completed with pen and paper. There are numerous software packages that can sort data quickly and effectively, providing detailed comparative analyses of the data. However, software packages are fallible. In addition, data from this study was entered in London University's software package SPSS but this method of recording was soon found to be inadequate for a qualitative study such as this. The process of entering

the information restricted the meanings attributed to the terms far too severely for the purpose of this study.

Consequently, it was decided at the outset that an important part of the data collection and of its analysis was *my* input, for I was both the learner and the analyst and as such, I had access to information that a software package could never be party to – and that was my internal thoughts and feelings at the time of the event recorded and at the time of the analysis. Above all, these thoughts and feelings needed to be understood entirely in terms of my understanding and usage at the time of the learning event and in terms of my general understanding of the terms in my more general usage. My involvement in the data as learner and as researcher made it possible to reflect on the more developmental aspects of the analysis and this personal reflection was necessary for a full, comprehensive, in-depth understanding of the nature of data that was used to record the processes inherent in my language learning experience. In preliminary study 1, each diary prompt heading was taken in turn and the entries under these headings were counted.

A checking mechanism for counting procedures was used throughout the quantitative analyses so that human error was minimised. Each item listed was counted from those in entry 1 to those in entry 267. The procedure was reversed and only

when the totals for each count agreed were the results

considered valid. The prompt headings that contained the

largest number of items were considered significant and

worthy of special attention in the following analyses. The

method is best exemplified in this simplified form using the

entries under 'Age' in the first two Pages of chart 1

i.e. pages 1 and 2 (Appendix p395-396).

The chart entries under the first prompt heading were as

follows:

TABLE 3.4 CHART ENTRIES UNDER THE FIRST PROMPT HEADING:

Entry number	'Age
1	'known' to be a disadvantage
2	-
3	tired more quickly than when younger
4	-
5	I didn't feel 'old'. I felt refreshed
6	Need for spelling = age difference?
7	memory problem not just age?
8	age = more worried about difficulties
9	language slow stilted limited = age
10	Difficulty with retention and speed =age?
11	Difficulties with memory =age?
12	language too fast= inflexibility with age?
13	-
14	-
15	-
16	-
17	-
18	-
19	-
20	-
21	-

3.8.1 Method of quantitative analysis of the preliminary study: Analysis 1 (phenomena)

My counting procedure was checked to ensure there were no errors. At this stage I acknowledged that this first stage of the analysis was superficial, for the prompt headings were not likely to produce equally weighted responses. For example, a comment that stated the content of the learning event was 'new' was unlikely to provide the same depth of understanding as a comment under the heading 'Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate'. However, this preliminary analysis indicated (in a very superficial manner) which prompt headings concerned me most during my language acquisition and consequently indicated the areas in which further exploration would be most beneficial. A closer investigation of the content under the prompt headings led to preliminary study 2 of the diary chart entries:

3.8.2 Method of quantitative and qualitative analysis 2

In this second analysis, the diary entries were categorized according to types of comment under the different prompt headings. These indicated (in a little more detail) which aspects of the prompt headings would be most

beneficial for further investigation. The checking mechanism

for the counting in this second study is similar to the

method used for preliminary study 1. The method used for

analysis 1 is described by referring to the entries under

'Age' on the first two pages of the first diary chart as an

example:

TABLE 3.5 THE FIRST PAGE OF THE FIRST HEADING IN CHART 1

Entry number	'Age
1	'known' to be a disadvantage
2	-
3	tried more quickly than when younger
4	-
5	I didn't feel 'old' […] I felt refreshed
6	Need for spelling = age difference?
7	memory problem not just age?
8	age = more worried about difficulties
9	language slow stilted limited = age
10	Difficulty with retention and speed =age?

Each entry in the chart was categorized according to

the content of the entry. In the case of age, the entries

were categorized accordingly:

TABLE 3.6 ENTRIES UNDER 'AGE'
Entries that considered age had a negative influence (N)
Entries that considered age had no influence (NO)
Entries that considered age caused tiredness (T)
Entries that considered age caused slowness (S)
Entries that considered age created problems with memory (M)
Entries that considered age influenced the amount of language
retained (Am)
Entries that considered age prevented remembering language long
term (ML)
Entries that considered age had a positive influence (P)
Entries that considered age caused lack of stamina (St)

Each categorization was numbered, the first entry of

the category as '1', the second entry for that category was numbered as '2' continuing. Thus the total number of entries for that category was clearly recorded at the end of the analysis of the whole chart. The checking mechanism to eradicate human error was also used in the analysis and is demonstrated below in a representation of the contents under 'Age' of Page 1 and Page 2 of the first diary chart. The total number of entries for each category for the page was listed at the base of the page with the running totals of the categories listed alongside. So, for example, the score of NO9 on Page 2 added to the previous total for NO on Page 1 (4) confirms the total score of 13 already recorded on Page 2. The total number of entries in the page is compared with the addition of the categories listed. This confirms that the correct number of entries have been included in the totals.

TABLE 3.7 COUNTING PROCEDURE

PAGE 1


```
Entry number              'Age                          categorization
1         'known' to be a disadvantage      N1 (the first negative
comment)
2         -                                 NO1 (the first 'no influence'
comment)
3         tired more quickly than when younger     T1 (the first
tiredness comment)
4         -                                 NO2
5         I didn't feel 'old'. I felt refreshed        NO3
6         need for spelling = age difference?      N2
7         memory problem not just age?          NO4
8         age = more worried about difficulties     N3
9         language slow stilted limited = age      S1 (slowness) +
Am1 (amount of language)
10        difficulty with retention and speed =age? M1 (memory
problem) + S2
```

Page totals: categories: continuous total for the chart

```
                   N3   =    3
                   NO4  =    4
                   T1   =    1
                   S2   =    2
                   M1   =    1
                   Am1  =    1
                   ML0  =    - (no comments on long term
                                 memory yet)
                   P0   =    - (no positive influence of
age yet)           St0  =    - (no comments on stamina yet)
```

Total number of entries on the Page: entries 1-10 = 10
Total entries recorded for the Page: 3+4+1+2+1+1=12 = 12 minus the two
extra entries in entries 9 and 10 = 10

```
PAGE  2


Entry number              'Age              categorization
11        Difficulties with memory =age?            M2
12        language too fast= inflexibility with age?      S3

13        –                              NO4
14        –                              NO5
15        –                              NO6
16        –                              NO7
17        –                              NO8
18        –                              NO9
19        –                              NO10
20        –                              NO11
21        –                              NO12
      Page totals:      categories on the Page:          continuous
total for the chart
                    N0                = 4 (0 added to the total for
N on Page 1)
                    NO9               = 12 (9 added to the total for
NO on Page 1)
                    T0                = 1 (0 added to the total for
T on Page 1)
                    S1                = 3 (1 added to the total for
S on Page 1)
                    M1                = 2 (1 added to the total for
Mon Page 1)
                    Am0               = 1 (0 added to the total for
              Am on Page 1)
                    ML0               = 0 (0 added to the total for
              MLon Page 1)
                    P0                = 0 (0 added to the total for
              Pon Page 1)
                    St0               = 0 (0 added to the total for
              St on Page 1)
Total number of entries on the Page:  entries 11-21 = 11
Total entries recorded for the Page:        9+ 1 + 1 = 11
```

As indicated in the chart for Page 2, the total entries for a category on Page 2 (e.g. 9 entries that express no particular influence of age (NO) are added to the 'running' total for that category on Page 1 (4) making a total of 13. This total should be the same as the number associated with the final comment expressing no particular influence of age on Page 2 (NO13). This provided an additional method for checking the accuracy of the lists and the associated calculations.

The above categories were not arbitrarily decided at the beginning of the analysis; they developed as the analysis proceeded. For example, negative and positive comments were expected, but the effect of having a nil response did not seem important initially but this changed as the analysis continued. It was evident that comments like 'not relevant' (Page 4 of chart 1, entry 40), 'not significant' (Page 8 of chart 1, entry 82) and 'no significant influence' (Page 9 of chart 1, entry 85) had much in common and so were categorized as a group indicating that age had no significant influence. However, such grouping of similar comments diluted the data. For instance, the three comments on the lack of influence of age were incorporated with the entries in which no comment had been made. However, there must have been some difference in my

responses to the situation at the time, a comment indicating 'no influence' could easily have meant that the lack of influence was particularly noticeable, whereas a nil response could have meant that the influence of age may have been part of the experience, but the influence was so minimal or irrelevant to that experience that I felt it was not worth including any comment at all. This demonstrates that a quantitative approach to an analysis of diary entries such as those of this study would not necessarily represent the depth of meaning intended. The data could be easily altered according to the manner in which the first intended meaning is adjusted to fit a designated category. At times, I registered that the age phenomenon had nothing at all to do with the learning event, at other times the same words ('not relevant') meant it may have been 'relevant' but I had focused on so many other competing phenomena that the age phenomenon had not been relevant to my thinking at the time. The similar entry, 'no significant influence' indicated that age had limited influence, but was not considered significant enough to describe.

This is exemplified by the following example: Under the prompt heading 'age, for example, as a mature student (aged 52 at the beginning of the data collection) I not only knew that I was 52 but knew how 'old' I felt. In

addition to this I knew I was no longer as energetic as I had been in my twenties and underlying my feelings about 'age' was the uncertainty that serious operations I had had at the age of 49 may have affected my language learning capacity. This background knowledge adds considerably to the concept of 'age' incorporated in this study. Such information is rarely incorporated in other less personal studies. In addition, personal bias is outweighed by a comparison of different entries. For example there is a marked difference in the comments regarding the negative effects of age between the different stages.

TABLE 3.8 DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Stage	number of comments on the negative effects of age
Stage one (entries 1 – 89)	44
Stage two (entries 90 – 179)	5
Stage three (entries 180-267)	13

Of the 267 entries, the majority of comments associated with a problem due to deficiency created by ageing were made in the first stage of the process. Only a small proportion (62) of the total number of entries under the prompt heading 'age' suggested that age had a negative influence on the

language learning. This indicated that my assumption about the negative effect of age may have been tempered as the language learning progressed. Perhaps age was not as strong an influence as I had assumed. In addition to this, the much larger proportion of entries (120) that included no comment at all or comments that age had little or no influence indicated there were no significant effects of age during these language learning events. This provides strong support for the fact that age was not perceived by me to be a salient phenomenon at all. Merely counting the number of entries that suggest the negative influence of age mentioned above was not enough to wholly substantiate an enquiry such as this. What really needed to be determined was: Did age *really* influence the language learning at any stage and if so, how and by how much?

   It should also be noted that the comments in the diary under the heading 'age' were not all entered as entirely negative or entirely positive comments – some were no more than hesitant suggestions that it could have been increased age that created a difficulty, but equally, it could have been something else. Examples of these varying entries are to be found in Entry 9 Chart 1 (Appendix A) which commented on the negative influence of age, attributing age as a direct cause of my slow and stilted language use. Entry 258

Chart 1 (Appendix A) commented on the positive effect of age, indicating that age had been instrumental in helping my efforts to hold a conversation with local people (because they were more willing to speak to a lady of my age than I remembered when I tried to communicate with local people in France when I was much younger). Entry 7 chart 1 (Appendix A), expressed an uncertainty – no more than a suggestion that my inability to remember may not have been entirely due to age.

Some uncertain entries reflected what should have happened, rather than what was perceived to have happened. An example of this kind of entry was entry 157 chart 1 (Appendix A), when I felt I should have been able to cope with reflexive verbs but I could not. Finally there were a large number of entries that contained no comments at all (for example entry 2 chart 1 Appendix A), that stated age was not relevant (entry 95 chart 1 Appendix A) or that age had no significant influence (entry 93, chart 1 Appendix A). Age in these entries was perceived to have little importance in my final description of the most salient phenomena in my language learning.

The comments that offered suggestions rather than detailed descriptions of actual events were illuminative and formed the basis upon which different hypotheses were

developed during the learning and observational experiences. Hypotheses that developed during the recording experience made it possible for me to consider a number of different aspects, to accept evidence for or against certain principles and to apply and or modify these hypotheses promptly during the developing language learning process. In this way, the analysis incorporated a developing understanding of the principles that underpinned the process in a way that is rarely possible in other studies. Much of this element of the analysis was implicit but nevertheless vital to the findings and was an integral part of the final more refined description of the effect of phenomena including age.

As stated above in the discussion of the methodology of the analysis of the preliminary studies, it was evident that entries under each heading referred to different but specific aspects of the phenomena represented by the prompt headings. These common references were isolated and grouped to form a new list of salient phenomena in the development of my language acquisition. These phenomena were listed in rank order and those that were referred to most were considered important phenomena to include in the final analysis.

Although Analysis 2 provided more indications of the

nature of the diary entries, the information was not
interpreted sufficiently to provide significantly new
insight into the process of language acquisition. For
example, entries found to record 'some success achieved' did
not yet explain the kind or degree of success. In order to
ensure that my interpretation of the phenomena and the
associated aspects of these phenomena listed under the
prompt headings matched the meanings intended in my diary
entries and in my analysis, a fresh approach was made to the
data in the following analysis of the charts and the whole
diary.

3.8.3 Method of interpretive Analysis 3 (and Analysis 4)

In the third and fourth analyses, the prompt headings
were ignored and the diary entries were interpreted again
according to the content of the entries, no matter which
prompt heading they were listed under. The purpose of
analysis 3 was to ensure that the entries themselves formed
the focus of the enquiry and to provide evidence of
reliability and validity. The purpose of analysis 4 was to
use re-interpreted entries to determine the nature of the
advancement of my knowledge and understanding of the
acquisitional process. Each diary entry was taken in turn
and interpreted carefully to ensure that what I had recorded

matched exactly what I had meant to record and that the concepts contained within my meanings intended matched concepts that were related specifically to the field of discussion. Thus with the first entry "*Age is known to be a disadvantage*" there was no doubt that the main focus of the entry was the effects of age and that this entry was indeed fitting for the prompt heading 'Age'. However, the comment under 'Control of anxiety': describing the same experience: "*decided to continue 'regardless' of problems"* was not as appropriate for a heading 'control of anxiety' as perhaps a heading listed as 'My attitude during learning'. Another example, entry 164 (Appendix A), confirmed how essential it was to interpret the entries according to what I intended to mean. I stated that I "*should be able to use verb forms eventually*". The word 'should' was not used in its most common form meaning 'ought to' in the sense of obligation but rather as an expression of desire. I believed that I would be successful if I continued to make an effort to learn. It was more an expression of trying to develop confidence in my ability to achieve my goals.

Consequently, in Analyses 3 and 4, the diary entries were re-interpreted. In Analysis 3 the following phenomena were found to reflect the content of the entries viewed individually (listed alphabetically):

TABLE 3.9 EMERGING PHENOMENA FROM DIARY INTERPRETATION

i.   Expectations
ii.   Health
iii.   Influence of context in language use situation
iv.   Language source or materials
v.   Level of the language
vi.   Memory
vii.   Method of teaching and/or learning
viii. My attitude during learning
ix.   My language delivery
x.   My state of mind at the time of the approach (including determination)
xi.   Preparation
xii.   Time/speed

As the methodology for these analyses (3 and 4) was inextricably tied with the analyses themselves, a fuller description of the method and of the method applied in analyses 3 and 4 is included in Chapter 4.4. As Analysis 4 is central to the findings of the thesis, the full description of the interpretation of the diary entries for analyses 3 and 4 is given in the description of analyses 4.

3.8.4 Method and methodology of Analysis 4 : the stages of development

In the final analysis, the diaries were studied in order to determine developmental trends that the diary entries indicated. Three developmental stages were recognized and described in terms of the first, second and

third sections of the diary charts in conjunction with the whole diary.

TABLE 3.10 DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES: ENTRY NUMBERS

Stage one: entries 1 to 89

Stage two: entries 90 to 179

Stage three: entries 180 to 267

In Analysis 4 (as in Analysis 3) entries from the whole diary were used for interpretation. The central focus was the content of the entries themselves no matter where they had been recorded. Each of the four main phenomena identified in analysis 3 of the diary entries (language source material, method, attitude and memory) was given special consideration but this was integrated within the discussion of the diary entries. The central focus was my interpretation of the diary entries themselves and the insights they provided.

It is argued in this thesis, that superficial interpretation of data can have misleading results. Therefore, in this study, the data from the diaries was treated from four different perspectives, and in this fourth and final analysis the pitfalls inherent in relying solely on an analysis of the summarised diary represented in the

charts have been highlighted and addressed accordingly. The following description from analysis of stage one for Analysis 4 provides explanatory examples: In the very early stages of the language acquisition process it was difficult to give comprehensive and complete diary entries as it was "*too soon to comment*" effectively as reported in entry 12 under the heading 'empathy'

In addition, I expressed a need to have the words isolated e.g. in entry 9 (Appendix A) when I reported that the Reader's Digest course was 'good' because it 'isolated and repeated words'. However, there were entries that appeared to support listening 'for longer periods' (e.g. entry 5 Appendix A). The significance of this changes when, in the whole diary it is made apparent that this seemed to be more a reflection of my over-ambitious attitude for I reported (in full): "*I thought I would need to listen for longer than 15 minutes for there were only a few new words I was learning at a time*" (Appendix E).

In Stage one I also commented that the reinforcement of words was 'not consistent' and suggested that this affected success (entry 29 Appendix E). However, it should be noted that the whole diary confirms that this attitude towards the type of reinforcement in the latter entry was more a reflection of the language source material (Reader's Digest

Tape 13A) than of my attitude: "I suspect the reinforcement of words in the tape is not consistent so this affects success rates". I reported in entry 27 in the whole diary "Reading beforehand paid off a few times" and it was "a real reward when you can structure the Spanish first e.g. lejos remembered because I read it first" (Appendix E) (Note: I corrected legos to 'lejos' during my interpretation of the data during research on 26/02/2002). From the early stages of my language acquisition, I seemed to need to associate the target language with previous knowledge of other languages. In entry 22 I reported that "many words learnt on the Reader's Digest tape proved useful - e.g. 'su' and those that a similar to English." (Appendix E). In entry 29, I reported that I was "associating words with French e.g. palabra + parler (Fr)" (Appendix E). In this case, my general belief that I would not be able to recall the French language I learnt at school easily proved to be unfounded. In this entry, not only did I recall vocabulary from my previously learnt French, but it proved a useful aid to my learning.

Effort featured as an important factor in entry 59 (Appendix E) when I also reported that "I made an effort to understand and to try to speak". The inclusion of the word 'effort' in this entry, in terms of my personal

interpretation, implied a conscious concentration *over and above my usual attempts* to acquire the language. These entries were written as an ongoing report of my activities and reflection during the development of my language acquisition. However, the fact that I thought it important to include these reports is an indication that I believed the activities I reported had an important role to play in my acquisition. I would have been doing a lot of other activities at the same time – activities that I did not report because they did not appear to be important to my learning at the time.

Near the end of the first stage of language acquisition some instinctive awareness of word order was indicated in entry 81 (Appendix A) when I reported "writing down memorize word order instinctive?" This brief statement needs clarification for it is important to know if I meant that the act of writing assisted in my development of a sense of word order or if the nature of the language resource was influencing the development of a sense of word order. Considering the whole diary, it became clear that my original aim was to write down what I needed to learn (Appendix E): *"I've decided to write down what I need to learn to help memory"* i.e. my aim was more to assist with memorizing vocabulary than with developing a sense of word

order. It was when I reported that "The order of words was easier to copy for this I seem to have remembered from the previous production" although I added to this comment "my reproduction was not perfect".

3.9. Conclusion

Clearly the research methodology of an empirical, observational study such as this is a complex problematic matter not least of all because the subject of the study is also the researcher. In addition, a decision to analyse the diary data in terms of the nature of salient phenomena and of developmental trends suggests that the outcomes are not easily validated and that their reliability may be questioned. Most studies of language acquisition tend to focus on the more readily accountable acquisition of specific grammatical forms or rely on error analysis with precise comparisons of quantitative data such as that of Schmidt and Frota's study (Schmidt and Frota 1986).

However, in a qualitative diary study, a more cohesive and inclusive analysis can be adopted to include the most subtle nuances of meanings intended by the subject, and a greater understanding of the vicissitudes of an individual's attitudes and reflections and their effects on the language acquisition process that can become integral components of

the analyses. In addition, salient phenomena can be examined more thoroughly from a single learner's perspective. The outcomes in a qualitative study such as this are more capable of providing new, effective insights into the process of the development of language acquisition in terms of an individual mature learner. These insights provide a foundation for the identification of developmental trends from which additional qualitative empirical research may unravel more fully the complex interdependent phenomena involved.

4. Chapter Four: Analysis

Contents   Page

4.1. Introduction

This empirical case study of the development of knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of the process of the language acquisition relies on evidence from reflective observations on my diary entries. These diary entries were analysed closely. A system of cross-referencing and a comparison of the raw data ensured that the final conclusions were based on valid and reliable outcomes (see chapter three).

At the completion of the diary, the content of the entries was re-interpreted and salient phenomena and developmental trends that emerged provide insight into my gradual development of language acquisition of Spanish. The conclusion represents a cohesive investigation of what developed during the gradual process of language acquisition that I experienced as a mature learner and as such, provides insight into the process of language acquisition for other mature students and language learners of any age. It also provides a resource for a wealth of new research opportunities in this field. The focus of this analysis is on an interpretive analysis of the content of diary entries leading to a final determination of developmental trends within my acquisition of Spanish as a mature learner.

In the first two analyses the different phenomena

recorded in the entries in the diary charts were analysed quantitatively to determine which phenomena were mentioned most and which were the salient aspects of these phenomena. The third and fourth analyses focused directly on interpreting the individual diary entries and illuminated the learner's responses to the language acquisition experiences more fully. A final qualitative understanding of the developmental stages of the process formed the fourth and final analysis.

Entries in the diary were made according to the dates when learning took place. These dates did not occur on a regular, predetermined basis. The diary was presented as a true representation of my activities as a representative 'average' human being during a long-term language learning situation. Day to day activities, matters of health and life events that naturally interrupt our everyday activities were accepted as part of the norm in this study. This was considered more advantageous than the formation of a diary that matched an artificially created, unnatural code of recording. No matter what was happening to me during my learning period, my diary entry was not recorded for the sake of its suitability for use as assessable data, but as a more realistic record of what really happened. The fact that my teacher was ill at the time, for example, was recorded if

any learning was attempted and if the language learning itself was affected (entry 130, Appendix E). The main focus of the recording was on any language learning that was attempted, no matter when and how this occurred.

However, I was aware at the beginning of my diary-keeping that the diary would be used for analytic purposes, but I determined that, to the best of my ability, I should not allow this knowledge to bias my comments. In entry 64 (Appendix E), for example, I indicated this awareness for I stated:

"Even as I write this diary I am conscious that the more detail and information I provide, the more useful this exercise will be for the final dissertation. Also having written down the words that have influenced me this way, – ones that I am using as examples, I am hoping that this will help me remember them better for the future. Time will tell". The act of keeping a diary was accepted as one method of assisting memory.

The lapse of time between language learning periods was not consistent. 113 entries (of the total 267) were recorded on consecutive days. There were also days when more than one language learning event took place (e.g. entries 28, 29 and 30 in all charts). In all, there were 142 entries that were directly consecutive.

However, a closer look at the data reveals that the language learning taking place did not correspond directly - quite often the learning in one entry was from a different source to the previous or following entries. For example entry in 30 the source was a video, in entry 31, a Spanish course and in entry 32, a newspaper (Appendix E). Few educationalists would argue that the learning that took place was identical. Thus my investigation was mostly based on a qualitative interpretive analysis - it was the quality of the learning that took place rather than the number of times or when the learning took place that was central to discovering greater understanding of the process with regard to the gradual development of language acquisition.

The first two analyses revealed salient phenomena and particular aspects of these phenomena. The third analysis provided a comprehensive description of the learner's learning experiences in terms of the learner's understanding and the fourth analysis gave insight into the developmental process of the learner's language acquisition. The significance of the findings was affected by how widely the prompt headings were interpreted, how important I considered the influence these prompt headings were on my language learning process at the time of the learning event and how observant I was at the time of recording. If no significance

was associated with the phenomena indicated by the prompt
headings, no response was made, even though learning events
had taken place. Thus, by way of example, there were only 80
entries under the heading Adaptation and/or incorporation of
new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate that
recorded no response. The remaining 187 entries under this
heading that *did* include a response indicated that the
phenomena associated with this prompt heading probably had a
significant influence on my understanding of my learning
process at the time.

A more focused look at the diary indicated the breadth
of interpretation of these entries and that there were
common aspects of these phenomena that appeared to influence
my understanding of the process of my learning. In Analysis
3 I discussed what I believed was what was really meant by
the words I had entered in the diary. Merely counting the
number of times I used a certain word or words would not
discover this. What was at issue was what I meant by the
words I used at that specific time. The same word could be
used on a number of different occasions and mean something
different according to the context and the experience
itself.

A simple example of this is the addition of a negative,
which is an obvious modifier of meaning and creates the

opposite effect. An example of this can be found in entry 5 chart 1 (Appendix A) under 'Attitude to risk' –'no risk taken settled for revision' means something quite different to 'risk'. More than this, I understand the words, 'no risk' to mean that I felt I was taking no risks while I was using the Reader's Digest tape for revision, working at a slow pace and trying to remember only a few words at a time. On this occasion I had a problem with remembering the words quickly and accurately, yet I felt there was little risk of losing face when I could not remember. I accepted that I would not be able to remember everything and the learning pace and content suited me very well so I felt more secure in the learning situation.

In other learning events, my lack of ability to remember did cause me anxiety e.g. entry 40 (Appendix E) when I recorded I was a 'little anxious and frustrated' under the prompt heading 'Control of anxiety' when I could not remember vocabulary. However, a more significant aspect of this analysis was provided by the different uses of the word 'known'. The word 'known', for example, was used in the very first entry with regard to age being assumed to be a disadvantage (entry 1 chart 1 under 'age' Appendix A). The word 'known' was placed inside inverted commas for I used the term to mean 'known' in the deepest sense of the word.

Not only was I certain that this fact was very likely to be true, I also considered that the world at large thought this fact to be true. However, when the word 'know' was used in conjunction with language learning difficulties in entry 32 (Appendix E), it did not indicate its deepest meaning. The word 'know' on this occasion took on extra significance because 'know' for me in this context really meant 'should have been remembered because I felt strongly I had learnt the word sometime previously but I couldn't seem to remember it as well as I expected'. It was remembered or 'known' only to a certain extent. The use of the same word in these different entries assumed entirely different meanings and this made the analysis complex.

However, this complexity and an understanding of these problems of interpretation were useful in forming the foundation from which the third and fourth comprehensive descriptions of the most salient phenomena and of developmental trends were developed. As described more fully in the Methodology Chapter, these different interpretations of the same word also determined the nature of the analysis – word search software packages would *not* have differentiated between the different meanings as closely as the core analysis of this diary needed.

While issues of interpretation create difficulties in

the study reported here, in certain specific areas of this study, 'certainty' is much stronger. For example, in the entries relating to my use of the materials listed under the 'input' prompt heading e.g. chart 2, entry 3 (Appendix A) *'Readers' Digest' course.* However, many of the entries were dependent on my interpretation of what I had really meant by the words recorded (as mentioned previously in the Methodology Chapter). This is illustrated by a description of one particular example: chart 1 entry 1. In the first entry under the prompt heading 'age', the word 'disadvantage' needed further interpretation and as the learner and the writer of this comment, I knew that the word 'disadvantage' meant a handicap specifically in terms of memory of language. Thus 'memory' became a new aspect to consider in further analysis of the diary.

In the third analysis different aspects were elicited from the data by looking at the entries on an individual basis, ignoring the effect of the prompt headings. In this way, the significance of aspects such as 'memory' were observed from a completely different viewpoint and this provided supportive evidence for the fact that these aspects were (or were not) important in a discussion of the development of language acquisition. A fourth approach offered a more complete understanding of the developmental

aspects of four salient phenomena within the process of language acquisition.

4.2 Preliminary study Analysis 1: quantitative approach to the diary chart entries

Each prompt heading was taken in turn and the entries under these headings were counted. Entries that referred to more than one phenomenon were counted according to the number of phenomena mentioned. For example, in entry 10 (Appendix A) under the prompt heading 'age' problems with retention and with the speed of the language were reported. These two comments were counted as 'two' items rather than part of a single entry. The headings that contained the largest number of items were considered significant and worthy of special attention for further consideration. (The Methodology Chapter provides more detailed explanation of these methods.)

TABLE 4.1 ITEMS LISTED UNDER PROMPT HEADINGS

The number of items under each prompt heading in rank order:

```
Input:                                          280
Content:                                        267
Place:                                          260
Language content:                               254
Language learning difficulties:                 236
Approach:                                  225
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:     219
Age:                                            216
Cognitive style:                                207
Success:                                        200
Motivation:                                     197
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas […] 194
Control of anxiety:                             186
Previous learning history:                      182
Interest in language:                           175
Personality:                                    164
Empathy:                                        112
Interest in culture:                             91
Test results:                                    87
Extra comments:                                  13
```

Crude analysis indicated that the most significant prompt headings were the first seventeen headings (input, content, place, language content, language learning difficulties, approach, attitude towards risk-taking and criticism, age, cognitive style, success, motivation, adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas, control of anxiety, previous learning history, interest in language, personality and empathy).

However, the nature of the phenomena clearly affected the number of items included. The headings listing the input, the content, the place and the language content were

headings under which every entry could have provided information, for example, no matter what was happening, there must have been some form of input if any language learning was taking place.

Taking into account my interpretation of the kind of information the prompt headings sought, the most significant prompt headings that initiated meaningful comments regarding my language acquisition were those pertaining to language learning difficulties, approach, attitude towards risk-taking and criticism, age, cognitive style, success, motivation, adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate and control of anxiety. The remaining headings (previous learning history, interest in language, personality, empathy, interest in culture, test results and extra comments) were also included in this developing analysis in order to ensure that the final description was as comprehensive as possible.

4.3 Analysis 2 : quantitative and qualitative analysis: a closer interpretation of the entries under the prompt headings

The Methodology Chapter contains a more detailed description of the techniques employed in analysing the data in this preliminary study. It was evident that entries under

each heading referred to specific aspects of the phenomena represented by the prompt heading. These common references were grouped to form a new list of aspects for closer inspection. Taking each prompt heading in turn, the results of this stage of the analysis were as follows (Note, as mentioned in the Methodology section, the method of analysis made it possible for the total number of entries listed to be more than the total number of diary entries). Aspects of the phenomena under each heading covered were listed in rank order of frequency and discussed further under the relevant subsections. An analysis of the entries of the first prompt heading ('Age') and the final prompt heading (Xtra comments) form examples of the interpretive analysis undertaken:

TABLE 4.2 ENTRIES UNDER'AGE'

Age:

a) Entries that considered age had no influence (181)
b) Entries that considered age created problems with memory (41)
c) Entries that considered age caused slowness (14)
d) Entries that considered age had a negative influence (9)
e) Entries that considered age influenced the amount of language
   retained (9)
f) Entries that considered age prevented remembering language
   long term (8)
g) Entries that considered age caused tiredness (7)
h) Entries that considered age had a positive influence (3)
i) Entries that considered age caused lack of stamina (1)

a) Entries that considered age had no influence:

    In spite of my early conviction that age was a key phenomenon in language learning, my diary entries did not confirm this presupposition. In fact, the majority of entries under this prompt heading indicated that age had very little or no influence on my language learning. Some of these entries commented that age had no significant influence on my ability to acquire language (e.g. entry 86 chart 1 Appendix A), that age was not even relevant (e.g. entry 40 chart 1 Appendix A) or that the phenomenon of age had so little influence that no comment was warranted (e.g. entry 2 chart 1 Appendix A).

b) Entries that considered age created problems with memory:

    I often reported that my age was a phenomenon that caused my apparent lack of ability to remember (e.g. entries in Appendix A: 10, 11, 38, 39, 42-60 and 64-75). However, very early in the language learning experience I suggested that age was not the cause of my inability to remember. I suggested my inability to remember was due to other factors, for example, the fact that a course was not suitable because the written words were not easily available (e.g. entry 7 in the whole diary under the heading 'Age' Appendix E) or that all forms of new learning were difficult because of their

inherent difficulty rather than because of my age (e.g.

Appendix E entry 114 in the whole diary under 'Language

learning difficulties').

c) Entries that considered age caused slowness:

      Many of the entries that commented on slowness were

concerned more specifically with my slow reactions so that

the language I produced was slow, stilted and had a limited

length (e.g. entries in Appendix A chart 1 under 'Age': 10,

12 and 199).

d) Entries that considered age had a negative influence:

      I questioned whether increased difficulty was caused by

my age. The cause may have been an attitude I may have

developed over the years that was different but not

necessarily detrimental to my language acquisition. I may

have had much higher expectations than I did when I was

younger. Many entries suggested that my increased age

resulted in a poor memory as reported in b) in this section

of the study (e.g. Appendix A chart 1: entries 10, 11, 38,

39, 40, 42-60, 64-75). However, there is no indication that

my memorising abilities were any different from those of my

youth. On the contrary, there was much evidence for my age

creating a much larger resource of background knowledge for

me to access and assimilate during my language storage and
retrieval procedures. My memory for language may have been
slower but not necessarily of a poorer quality (Sutherland
1997). A preferred, different approach with increased age
(rather than a difficulty with memory) was reported in
Appendix E entry 6. During this language learning experience
I was impelled to look up the spelling of the word for
'left' before I felt confident enough to learn it. I
commented at the beginning of this entry that I had had no
similar wish to learn the spelling when I learnt French as a
young student so I suggested in the diary that this was
probably a sign of different learning approaches being
applied with increased age.

e) Entries that considered age influenced the amount of
language retained:

In entry 206 in the whole diary (Appendix E), although
I commented that age 'did not seem to make a difference' at
the time, I also reported that I was determined to show that
I could do as well as my daughter who was a much younger
learner. She learnt Spanish and spent some time in Spain
using the language successfully. This determination
motivated me to persist in trying to learn the language by
immersing myself in the novel I was attempting to read at

the time. (This novel was a novel by Gerald Durrell that I
was reading in Spanish and in English). This entry, by
implication, indicated my underlying concern that I would
not be able to reach as high a standard as my daughter and
that I would not be able to acquire the same 'amount' of
Spanish as my daughter because of my age.

f) Entries that considered age prevented remembering
language long term

   In entry 171 chart 1 (Appendix A) I reported that I had
learnt some of the language but was concerned that my
retention of this language was likely to be short-term.
Although not listed under the heading 'Age', under the
heading 'Adaptation of new ideas …' in entries 103 to 110,
for example, I fully described the method I used at the
time to remember certain words and I believed that this
method was particularly helpful except for the concern I had
that I would not remember the words permanently. As my
analysis continued, my concern that I would not remember the
words permanently was confirmed. While reading through my
full diary again during this analysis (on 29 December 2004),
I found that there were words I may have remembered for a
short time during the learning period, but on 29th December
2004 they appeared to be no more than words that were

vaguely familiar i.e. not fully acquired so that I would not have been able to use these words during communication e.g. amario (cupboard) in entry 102 in the whole diary (Appendix E).

g) Entries that considered age caused tiredness:

One of the most noticeable phenomena that detracted from successful language acquisition was my tiredness which I believed was due to my increased age (e.g. entries in chart 1: 3, 158 and 231 Appendix A). However, I did not always feel tired and in fact, on some occasions I felt refreshed (e.g. entry 5 chart 1 Appendix A)

h) Entries that considered age had a positive influence:

There were a very limited number of entries listed that explicitly reported a positive effect of age on the language learning process. Although there were constant implicit signs that there were a number of positive phenomena functioning because of my maturity. Explicit examples were in entries 222 and 258 in the whole diary (Appendix E) in which I commented that because I was of a similar age to the local people I was talking to, it was easier for me to talk to them for they were more willing to try to understand me (entry 222) and they did not see me as a threat (entry 258).

In entry numbered 116 in the whole diary (Appendix E), I reported that age was not relevant and that 'like a recycled youth' I was revelling in Gerald Durrell's "The Garden of the Gods" which I was reading in Spanish and English using both books, side by side. My previous experience as an avid reader of Gerald Durrell's books when younger provided a motivating way for me to experience the new language later in my life.

i) Entries that considered age caused lack of stamina:

Entry 259 chart (Appendix A) 1 stated that age was not relevant other than if I was younger I would probably have had more stamina. That is, the only way age seemed to have any influence at all was in my physical capability rather than my cognitive capacity. I was probably capable of learning but not for as long as I could when I was younger. This entry, although very minor in terms of the whole diary, nevertheless provided some insight into my attitude and difficulties as a mature student.

The final heading, serving as a second example of the nature of the interpretive analysis of this study, provided a place for extra, previously not included data to be recorded. This was vital for a fully comprehensive coverage of the language learning process and allowed new, relevant

factors to be brought into the discussion. This heading was listed as 'Xtra' comments'. The large number of entries in which no comment was recorded indicates that this study was as comprehensive as intended. There were few phenomena that had not been suggested by the list of prompt headings selected.

The final list was as follows:

TABLE 4.3 ENTRIES UNDER 'EXTRA COMMENTS'

Extra comments:
a) No comments made (242)
b) Comments (13)

b) Comments

     The extra comments that were made were some of the most enlightening comments of the diary for they were not restricted to the preconceived prompt headings. Under this heading in many of the entries I entered full comments when it seemed likely that in trying to categorize my entries under the prompt headings, valuable information could have been lost (e.g. entry 65 Appendix E). In entry 40 (Appendix E) in the whole diary in addition to the comment that I felt as if I'd reached the very first tiny rung in a long uphill struggle to learn the language, I provided a more complete description of what this entailed: *"Now I could listen to everyday speech and I could recognise single general words*

*such as 'because', 'what', 'why', 'and', 'the', 'same',
'good' etc. but I still had no idea of the content of the
conversation.*

*I also found that sometimes I could actually ask for
something without going through the long slow process of
conscious construction of the phrase before applying 'I want
something to eat'".* Some of the entries under this prompt
heading were included simply as a place to store valuable
complete information which could be useful in this analysis.
Entry 84 in the whole diary (Appendix E), for example,
included all my answers to a particular test.

Further insight into what I believed success to mean
was included in entry 89 (Appendix E). In this entry I
entered "*success at last. I may be at the pre intermediate
stage i.e. I managed to strike up half a conversation with
some locals who actually understood the few words of Spanish
I muttered. I asked where they came from and they said
Bilbao. I recommended the lenguado (sole) at Pepe's
restaurant so they had lamb chops. I think Pepe teased them
about it. I managed to say I was pleased (couldn't remember
to meet just said encandarda and they said tambien – the
same for them (I think).*

*I also find myself forgetting to take the dictionary
when I go out and I can now hear a few more words than the*

simple ands and buts some nouns are starting to be recognisable when I eavesdrop." Insight into how I used particular methods and how successful I thought they were was also included in some of the entries in this section. In entry 97 in the whole diary (Appendix E), I included a description of advice given by the course on how strong images associated with the target words assisted memory. The course also suggested using each letter of the Spanish word to construct a Spanish sentence as a mnemonic device. However, I couldn't bring myself to use the Spanish sentence as a mnemonic device for I was not sure my Spanish construction was correct and my other teaching experience led me to believe that it is more difficult to correct an error than it is to learn something correctly the first time.

More insight into my observations, the material I was using and the way I was using it was offered in entry 134 in the whole diary (Appendix E). In this entry, I stated: *"I used the studyspanish website again this time learning vocabulary (specifically animals 1). There were many more … items this time which was better and with this programme I had the opportunity to see and hear the words one at a time with the pronunciation. I noticed already that many of the 'c's were pronounced as 'c' and not as 'th' as in the area*

of Spain where I lived. There was also a problem with the 'b' sounding like a 'p' and the 'v' sounding like a 'b' which I believe is a constant problem.

The practice exercises were ideal: I had to fill in missing letters to the words presented and couldn't always do this then in a second exercise the words were offered I had to choose the correct one – this was easier than filling in missing letters and if it had been presented first it would have helped me more I think. I would have seen the correct version first and then I could have more easily remembered or referred back to this in order to fill in the correct letters. I tried looking back for information when I couldn't remember the word correctly thinking that if I have made some effort in this way when I finally get the words I would remember them better. However, I don't think this worked … so I allowed myself to get a number wrong and as the programme lists the question you get wrong it was easy and beneficial to return to my test answers and try again until I got it right. If I were wise I would probably go through the words once more but I am not doing this at the moment."

Another example providing additional insight is entry 141 in the whole diary (Appendix E) in which I state: "*I read through the list of grammar rules in the Berlitz*

Spanish Learner's Guide. The rules of Spanish were explained clearly with useful examples. I felt I understood 80 per cent of the words and much of the grammar was familiar but not known. Some of it I remember trying when speaking to C. on our Friday lunch speaking Spanish times particularly yo no le se I think. (I didn't know that [[...]]?) Just reading it through I know is not a sensible way to learn but it helps to reinforce the occasional vaguely remembered features and on occasions explains something that has been a little confusing more clearly giving me a little more confidence to try it out."

Occasionally, this prompt heading was used to include information I felt was not relevant elsewhere. In entry 152 in the whole diary (Appendix E), for example, I included much additional information that I would not have expected to include. This entry provided insight into how my beliefs about the degree of success I achieved within each minor part of the learning event affected my next learning activity. The diary entry was as follows: "*As it is after 5 p.m., my plan to try to go through the whole Chapter ended when I realized I had absorbed enough even though most of the content was revision. Because I have already come across the cardinal and ordinal numbers before as well as mine yours etc. it was all familiar but still not known. I did*

*attempt to try to remember the cardinal numbers and I
believe I remain shaky on about four of the numbers still
coming from when I first tried to learn them and found
particular ones confusing. One of the problematic numbers is
five cinco fifteen quinze, fifty cinquenta and 500
quinientos. I have written them from memory so will be able
to see if I have remembered them correctly. As I am going
through the book although I am taking note of the spelling I
am not writing anything down. I am merely reading the
information given as advised, then trying the exercises once
or twice depending on how well I think I have coped checking
the answers to the exercises at the back after a first
attempt to go through the list entirely to stop me cheating
which is what I seem to do be doing as I'm so anxious. Again
the way the book is set out is really helpful. No knowledge
is assumed and every item from your, yours plurals etc. is
set out clearly so that I am reassuringly reminded of the
whole structure. Also the way in which I am made to try to
remember previous vocabulary is reassuring for I do seem to
remember most of the vocabulary and knowing that I need to
remember the words more than once and over a time span in
order to retain them is effective. I am reassured that the
exercises in this book seem to be taking this into account
e.g. the word for daughters (hijas).*

Chapter 4 sections 22 to 25 completed i.e. four sections seemed to be a reasonable amount of work to do before I reached what I felt was saturation point or it indicated I was tired at the end of the day and not as capable of the amount of work I might be capable of in the mornings. I also did a test today – online address: HYPERLINK http://www.nll.co.uk and was delighted to learn that, according to this test, I have at least risen above the beginner level to the elementary level. I was only one mark below the pre-intermediate level too. Some of the questions included some of the material I had learnt through the book Spanish in Three Months which was interesting."

Entry 222 in the whole diary (Appendix E) was used for including my attempts at writing in Spanish. Entry 196 (Appendix E) gave a comprehensive description of the positive effect of having an English translation of the novel I was reading in Spanish. Evidence of some success with memory was recorded fully in 242(Appendix E) in the whole diary when I stated: "*even though I was using the site constantly I was 'timed out' during this session so had to do the test some 12 hours later. This did not seem to affect my score so I could remember the words for 12 hours at least!*"

Entry 243 in the whole diary (Appendix E) highlighted

an area that I had not included in my original research intentions and that is the comparative effect of listening to language, reading out loud or sounding the word internally. This entry contained the following observation: "*… a breakthrough? I found I seemed to score higher in the concentration exercise when I actually spoke the Spanish and English words out loud*". Entry 266 in the whole diary commented specifically on the validity of the tests I was using: "*this testing is not accurate – I may have used acceptable alternatives – but realizing this I am not too despondent when I have low scores*".

    The final list for the remaining entries under the prompt headings is as follows.

TABLE 4.4 REMAINING ENTRIES UNDER PROMPT HEADINGS

4.3.2. Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
a) Entries that recorded action consciously taken (119)
b) Entries that were left blank or indicated irrelevance (72)
c) Entries that contained suggestions for improvement (53)
d) Entries that criticised the language learning programme at the time (15)
e) Entries that expressed preferences and desires for the future (10)
f) Entries that recorded unplanned changes that needed to be made (1)

4.3.3. Approach
a) Entries about a phenomenon that enhanced the approach (176)
b) Entries that gave no response (45)
c) Entries that expressed a problem with the current approach (34)
d) Entries that suggested a successful phenomenon or phenomena (16)
e) Entries that suggested a reason for a problem/problems (4)

4.3.4. Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism
a) Situations in which the risk was not significant enough to be
   mentioned (100)
b) Situations in which there was a willingness to take risks (86)
c) Situations in which there was some avoidance of taking risks
   (36)
d) Situations in which no risk was involved (32)
e) Situations in which criticism was involved (positively or
   negatively) (13)
f) Situations in which there was an unwillingness to take risks
   (3)

4.3.5. Cognitive style
a) Listening-speaking (78)
b) Written word or words (67)
c) No significant focus to warrant including an entry (38)
d) Overall impression (34)
e) Stages, organized chunks (33)
f) Retrieval of known language (25)
g) Varying learning style (22)
h) Associations with other knowledge (18)
i) Grammar (5)
j) Meaning (2)
k) Preparing for language use (1)

4.3.6. Content
a) A mixture of new and revised material (135)
b) New material (112)
c) Revision material (21)
d) No comment (2)

4.3.7. Control of anxiety
a) Entries in which anxiety did not feature strongly enough for
   an entry (85)
b) Entries in which I was not anxious (82)
c) Entries in which anxiety inhibited learning (52)
d) Entries in which I was anxious but overcame the anxiety (40)
e) Entries in which I avoided anxiety (3)
f) Entries in which I was anxious but ignored the anxiety (2)
g) Entries in which anxiety was found to benefit learning (1)

4.3.8. Empathy
a) Entries in which empathy was not considered relevant enough
for any comment (148)
b) Entries in which there were signs of some kind of empathy
expressed (57)
c) Entries in which there was a noticeable lack of empathy (49)

4.3.9. Input
a) Entries which used a specially designed textbook, course or

written words designed for teaching/learning Spanish (96)
b) Entries which used an Internet site designed for
   teaching/learning/testing students of Spanish (47)
c) Native speakers or written language not altered for students
   of Spanish (45)
d) Entries which used audiotapes or listening material designed
   for learning Spanish (35)
e) Entries which used a book (i.e. a novel) in Spanish not
   designed for learning purposes (19)
f) Entries which used a teacher of Spanish in a one-to-one lesson
   (13)
g) Entries which used other sources (10)
h) Entries which used a video or a television programme (8)
i) Entries in which no entry made or when the material was
   irrelevant (2)

4.3.10. Interest in culture
a) Entries in which no comment was made at all (180)
b) Entries which expressed interest in the culture (70)
c) Entries which showed no interest in the culture (17)
d) Entries which expressed a neutral comment (2)

4.3.11. Interest in language
a) Entries which showed some interest in language. (174)
b) Entries which indicated irrelevance or in which no entry was
made (87)
c) Entries which showed no interest in language (6)
d) Entries which showed interest only in the sense of obligation
(2)

4.3.12. Language content
a) Entries for which words were the main focus (180)
b) Entries for which listening and speaking were the main focus
for learning (94)
c) Entries for which no entry was made (7)

4.3.13. Language learning difficulties
a) Entries which indicated problems relating to memory (80)
b) Entries which were deliberately left blank (41)
c) Entries which indicated difficulties in comprehension
   (reading) (28)
d) Entries which indicated difficulties in comprehension
   (listening) (27)
e) Entries which indicated difficulties that arose from grammar
   (26)
f) Entries in which difficulties arose from the material or the
   learning method (25)
g) Entries which indicated there were very few or no difficulties
   experienced (22)
h) Entries which indicated difficulties that arose from language
   use (21)

i) Entries which indicated difficulties with speed of
   comprehension and use (16)
j) Entries which indicated difficulties that arose from
   interference (6)
k) Entries which indicated I needed to see the words (2)

4.3.14. Motivation
a) Entries in which I was motivated (168)
b) Entries which made no comments (61)
c) Entries in which I was not motivated (29)

4.3.15. Personality
a) Entries which expressed determination (134)
b) Entries which expressed no special influence of personality
   (91)
c) Entries which expressed other personality phenomena (21)
d) Entries which expressed impatience or intolerance (3.15)
e) Entries which expressed curiosity (9)
f) Entries which expressed a willingness to adapt or make
   allowances (6)

4.3.16. Place
a) UK 187
b) Spain 83

4.3.17. Previous learning history
a) Entries in which no entries were made (89)
b) Entries in which previous learning had a positive effect (80)
c) Entries in which known vocabulary influenced the learning (70)
d) Entries in which previous experience supported learning (31)
e) Entries in which previous learning had a negative effect (27)
f) Entries which featured other aspects of previous learning
   history (3)

4.3.18. Success
a) Entries in which there was some success achieved (above 50%)
   (157)
b) Entries for which there was no entry (62)
c) Entries in which there was little or no success achieved
   (below 50%) (46)
d) Entries in which success was expected but not achieved (7)
e) Entries in which success was expected and achieved (3)

4.3.19. Test results
a) Entries in which no entries were made (183)
b) Entries in which 25% - 50% was achieved (48)
c) Entries in which 76% -100% was achieved (22)
d) Entries in which 51% -75% was achieved (12)
e) Entries in which 0% – 25% was achieved (6)

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4.3.20 Extra comments: (details on p.233)
a) No comments made (242)
b) Comments (13)
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This analysis was both quantitative and qualitative. The qualitative nature of the study, determined the nature of the interpretive analysis in analyses 3 and 4.

4.4 Analysis 3 qualitative analysis of diary entries on an individual basis

In this stage of the analysis, the prompt headings were ignored and the diary entries were interpreted again solely according to the content of the entries. This analysis ensured that the entries themselves formed the focus of the enquiry and established the reliability and validity of this study. The methodology underpinning this analysis is a vital part of the analysis itself so is described in this Chapter.

An illustration of the method applied in this analysis is exemplified by the way in which I analysed the diary entry contents under 'Age' in the first page of the first chart (Appendix A). If the meaning of the entry in the chart was clear, the entry was interpreted from the chart directly. If the meaning was not clear, I referred to the whole diary for clarification and the entry was interpreted taking the information in the whole diary into account.

TABLE 4.5 INTERPRETATIONS OF ENTRIES UNDER 'AGE'

Entry number   'Age

1   'known' to be a disadvantage (*was listed under the phenomenon 'memory' i.e. interpreted as the memory problem associated with age*)

2   -
3   tired more quickly than when younger (*listed under the phenomenon health. My tiredness could have been from underlying health problems, and considering there were times when I felt refreshed (see entry 5), it was more than likely that this was the case*).
4   -
5   I didn't feel 'old'. I felt refreshed. (*listed under the phenomenon health. Although this entry could have been listed under 'attitude' the additional comments in the whole diary support the view that my refreshed approach was due to the relaxing day I had had previously*).

6   Need for spelling = age difference? (*listed under the phenomenon 'method of teaching and/or learning'. I remembered not having the same need to see the words written down when I learnt languages as a teenager so this was counted as one time when age might have been the influential factor.*)
7   memory problem not just age? (*listed under the phenomenon language source material. This categorization stemmed from the comments in the whole diary – i.e. that the lack of written material in the source material seemed to be the main cause of my memory deficiency.*)

8   age = more worried about difficulties (*listed under the phenomenon attitude. I reported in the whole diary that 'The concern with increased difficulty may be through being older and less willing to cast all care to the winds and 'go for it' no matter how difficult. This seemed to indicate that the main problem was my attitude.*)

9   language slow stilted limited = age (*listed under the phenomenon time/speed. As reported in the whole diary entry: I felt that age was slowing up my reactions so the language I produced was slow, stilted and had a limited length.*)

10   Difficulty with retention and speed =age? (*listed under the phenomena memory AND time/speed. Note: this entry was counted as TWO different 'entries' for the comment in the whole diary referred to two different aspects: "I was still having problems with retention and with speeding up to match the speed of the tape"*)

    In the quantitative data in this analysis as shown in

the illustration above, each entry was interpreted carefully

according to what I intended to say. If more than one

significant aspect was recorded within a single entry (e.g.

in entry 10), the entry was allocated two (or more)

'counts'. Consequently, the final total of phenomena

recorded does not match the total number of entries in the

diaries. This analytical approach developed directly from my

scrutiny of the data. The phenomena were gradually revealed

as I interpreted each entry. As indicated above, the first

phenomenon revealed was 'memory', the second 'health', the

third 'method of teaching and/or learning'. This approach

continued through the whole diary; the following phenomena

were found to be the true content of the entries (listed in

rank order):

Table 4.6 SALIENT PHENOMENA REVEALED

Language source or materials	545
Method of teaching and/or learning	519
My attitude	503
Memory	458
Level of the language	51
My language delivery	45
Time/speed	36
Influence of context in language use situation	27
Expectations	21
Health	19
Preparation	8

    Clearly, there were four major phenomena that I

considered to have had a significant influence as I was

writing my diary entries. These phenomena were (in order of

influence): Language source or materials, method of teaching

and/or learning, my attitude, and memory.

These phenomena were then used as the basis for a
fourth stage of the analysis which was concerned with the
different developmental trends within the language
acquisition process. The interpretive analytical nature of
this third analysis was an integrative part of the fourth
and final investigation of the data in terms of
developmental trends. Accordingly, the interpretation of
salient individual diary entries in analysis 3 is included
within the discussion of analysis 4 in the light of the four
main phenomena revealed and in the light of current theory.

4.5 Analysis 4 : qualitative evaluation of the development trends

In this analysis, the diary entries that were re-
interpreted in Analysis 3 are expressed in terms of the
insights that they reveal regarding observable advancement
in my understanding and knowledge of Spanish and of the
process of language acquisition with particular reference to
the most salient phenomena revealed in analysis 3 (language
source materials, method, attitude and memory). Discussion
of these four phenomena is in the form of an integrated
approach. While reflecting on the language source material,
I also reflected on my attitude towards this material the
method incorporated within the language source material and

the method(s) I applied at the time which frequently

included reference to my need to remember language that I

was in the process of acquiring. This close interdependence

of the phenomena is exemplified in entry 64 (see below and

Appendix E).

In Analysis 4, the diary entries were divided into

three separate sections to represent three stages of

development within the whole learning experience. Each

section represented an equally weighted number of entries,

and also represented different stages in terms of different

time spans.

TABLE 4.6 DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Stage one represents entries from 1 – 89, from 15/09/1999 to
18/09/2000 (approx. one year)

Stage two represents entries 90 – 179, from 19/09/2000 to
20/09/2001 (approx one year)

Stage three represents entries 180 – 267, from 21/09/2001 to
18/06/2002 (approx. half a year)

As I progressed, it seems apparent that my knowledge

and understanding as a learner and of the language itself

accelerated in the final stage. I also developed as a

diarist, but such development was seen to indicate my

increased understanding rather than my ability to record

this understanding as a diarist. Consequently, my

development as a learner of the language itself and of the

process of language acquisition forms the main focal point

of the discussion. Although these two aspects of my

development may be separated in some of the discussion, this

separation is only indicative of a change of emphasis of

attention, rather than addressing separate concerns. As a

learner of the language, as a learner of the nature of the

developmental process and as a diarist I remained a single

integrated individual. My development as a learner of the

language was inextricably connected to my learning of the

acquisition process and to my development as a diarist.

Consequently, the trifold nature of development was treated

as a single theme with occasional emphasis on one particular

aspect. Development of my increased understanding of the

learning process, for example, was apparent when example

entries from each stage were compared. This focus on the

learning process also incorporated my development as a

diarist and as a teacher, but to a lesser extent than my

development as a learner.

TABLE 4.7 STAGE 1 ENTRY EXAMPLE

Entry: 64
Date: 06/05/2000 6 May 2000
Age: still seems to make vocabulary learning difficult to retain.
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be
more appropriate: I did find the exercises useful, although I am still
unwilling to knuckle down to actually writing down the answers etc. Part
of this is because I know there will be no immediate check on whether I
have written correctly. That is why I find trying to answer the
questions in my head and looking up the answers directly is more
interesting for me to do. Whether it is more effective in the learning
process is another question.
Approach: With exercise 2 in which you matched the person with the job
what the person did and where the person worked, I found it saved time
in just reading the answers directly. Conscious that the process of
reading and re-reading given words to search for a set question may have
helped me remember the words better, I still felt that it was important
to come across the correct answers immediately - so that I didn't 'teach
myself' something wrong.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new - introducing vocabulary of work
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input (e.g. tape, people): Pasos 2 unit 2 Pages 22 to 39 tape, book,
dictionary and support book,
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: My interest in the language led me to abandon
following the book and listening material in the way suggested - i.e.
listening to the recording without having the script in front of me and
completing the exercises including written exercises that 'teach' you
the grammar.
Language Content: Work (trabajo) Content: Pasos 2 Unit 2 theme: work new
vocabulary through listening,
Language learning difficulties: I found that even when I looked at the
vocabulary at the back of unit 2, I still needed to use a dictionary to
find more words that I did not know or had forgotten.
Motivation Keen to use the course to the best advantage and aware that I
needed to return it to the library soon, I felt 'obliged' to do some
work daily when possible and this is the motivation for starting this
unit.
Personality:
Place: Ely
Previous learning history: I still use English as a foundation from
which I can guess the meanings because the words are so similar - e.g.
mechanic to mecánica. I even managed to associate a word learnt
previously to work out what a phrase meant in a new context. 'cambio' I
have always associated with changing money but in this case the phrase
was 'cambiar ruedas' Once I had looked up ruedas (wheels) then at last
my memory was jogged when I realized that cambiar was 'to change'.
Success: can adapt words to grammatical needs. Using the tape script
while listening was a great help and having looked up an average of
every second or so unknown word I found I could make an intelligent
guess at the meaning of some of the other unknown words.
Test results:

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'Xtra' comments:
Even as I write this diary I am conscious that the more detail and
information I provide, the more useful this exercise will be for the
final dissertation. Also having written down the words that have
influenced me this way, - ones that I am using as examples, I am hoping
that this will help me remember them better for the future. Time will
tell.
```

My comments under the final prompt heading demonstrate how quite early in the learning period, I tried to report as fully as possible. Comparing the early entries with the later entries, it is clear that my understanding increased for I was able to report in more detail as the learning progressed.

In entry 64 I describe the language source material in terms of the exercises I was completing. They are described as 'useful'. I describe the contents of exercise 2: "*in which you matched the person with the job the person did and where the person worked*" and the subject Work (trabajo). The content was described as "*Pasos 2 Unit 2 theme: work new vocabulary through listening*"

The method employed incorporated much information about memory issues and is described as follows: "*I am still unwilling to knuckle down to actually writing down the answers etc. Part of this is because I know there will be no immediate check on whether I have written correctly. That is why I find trying to answer the questions in my head and looking up the answers directly is more interesting for me*

to do. Whether it is more effective in the learning process is another question." In other words, in stage one I tried to describe as fully as possible what happened, but my understanding of the effects of my methods was uncertain.

However, I was, at this early stage, willing to hypothesise about learning theory in general e.g. in entry 64 *"Conscious that the process of reading and re-reading given words to search for a set question may have helped me remember the words better, I still felt that it was important to come across the correct answers immediately – so that I didn't 'teach myself' something wrong".* I hint already at a method I preferred in the later stages i.e. associating the target language with known language e.g. in entry 64 I state: *"I still use English as a foundation from which I can guess the meanings because the words are so similar – e.g. mechanic to mecánica. I even managed to associate a word learnt previously to work out what a phrase meant in a new context. 'cambio' I have always associated with changing money but in this case the phrase was 'cambiar ruedas' Once I had looked up ruedas (wheels) then at last my memory was jogged when I realized that cambiar was 'to change'".* My preference for learning from the written form of the language was confirmed: *"Using the tape script while listening was a great help".* In spite of this entry

appearing to be a an earlier 'less detailed entry' the detail it offers is lengthy but indicates a low level of language knowledge for I report "*having looked up an average of every second or so unknown word I found I could make an intelligent guess at the meaning of some of the other unknown words. I found it saved time in just reading the answers directly*". (In stage two onwards, I rarely needed to resort to looking up 'every second or so unknown word'.) With regard to memory, I indicated my original intentions and belief that keeping a diary would be a method that would assist me in learning Spanish: "*having written down the words that have influenced me …, – ones that I am using as examples, I am hoping that this will help me remember them better for the future. Time will tell.*"

In entry 64, my attitude is apparent. I indicate that I believed that in order to learn well, I should write down my answers for I use the words 'unwilling to knuckle down' suggesting my actions were from laziness rather than measured reflection on the effect on my learning.

TABLE 4.8 STAGE 2 ENTRY EXAMPLE

Entry: 153
Date: 02a/06/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be
more appropriate:
Approach: revision - which was needed -It was useful having the 'rule'
explained and having regular examples given -
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: much of the work was revision
Content: revision
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: p 58/68 Of Spanish in three months.
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: up to p 58/68? Of Spanish in three months - the
beginning of Page 5.
It was useful having the 'rule' explained and having regular examples
given
Language content: up to p 58/68? Of Spanish in three months - the
beginning of Page 5. Again much of the work was revision - which was
needed - telling the time days of the week season of the year using a
before a person or animal.
It was useful having the 'rule' explained and having regular examples
given - I now remember when Pedro was trying to explain the difference
between two expressions that have the same meaning e.g. 'in the
morning': de la mañana a or por la mañana - the latter is when the
specific time has not been given.
Language learning difficulties: There were a number of exercises I
didn't get entirely correct
Motivation:
Personality:
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: much of the work was revision - which was
needed - I now remember when Pedro was trying to explain the difference
between two expressions that have the same meaning e.g. 'in the
morning': de la mañana a or por la mañana - the latter is when the
specific time has not been given.
Success: There were a number of exercises I didn't get entirely correct
but it felt that I had managed to translate or fill in the missing words
correctly with at least above 50% accurate.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

     Entry 153 as an example of stage two in the development

of language acquisition shows that already there is an

indication of the need for the salient phenomena to be

discussed in a more inclusive and integrated manner, for the

language source material, its inherent methods, my attitude

to its content and its relevance to my memory of the
language and of the process are interdependent. At first
sight, the language source material is described briefly
(Spanish in three months) and the contents are also
described briefly (revision), however, the comments in this
entry qualify the information with more detail in terms of
my attitude to their relevance for the development of my
language acquisition. My reflective comments are less
uncertain and are more inclined to hypothesise about what is
happening in the process. The contents of the language
source material is described, for example, in terms of its
'usefulness' which is further qualified: "*[its usefulness]
was needed – It was useful having the 'rule' explained and
having regular examples given*". I comment that "*it felt that
I had managed to translate or fill in the missing words
correctly with at least above 50% accurate*" and "*I now
remember when Pedro was trying to explain the difference
between two expressions that have the same meaning e.g. 'in
the morning': de la mañana or por la mañana – the latter is
when the specific time has not been given*". My reference to
the content includes more detail and more effective
reflection: I report specific phrases (rather than single
words) and I appear to have acquired these phrases
sufficiently well to make informed comments about them.

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TABLE 4.9 STAGE 3 ENTRY EXAMPLE
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Entry: 242
Date: 19c/03/2002
Age: difficulty remembering more than a few words at a time may be a
problem
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be
more appropriate: allowing for some of the vocabulary already being
familiar or 'known' I do less of the original exercises accordingly
Approach: approaching the same vocabulary with different interesting
practice exercises seems most beneficial
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: when working on your own
competing against yourself you are willing to take risks and 'cheat' to
get to your goal - i.e. to learn new Spanish words. Your cheating does
not make you feel guilty as it would in a class room situation
Cognitive style:
I read the Spanish words with the associated English translation,
then used flashcards trying to remember the English meaning of the
Spanish words and vice versa,
matched the translation with the Spanish word,
tried to find the Spanish words in a Word search,
In Concentration I tried to remember where the words were and match them
with their associated English meanings under cards 'face down'
I did Practice Exercise A filling in missing letters in the Spanish
words
Practice Exercise B chose the Spanish words that matched given English
words - this time going using the exercises to help correct mistakes I
had made before submitting my answers (i.e. 'cheating')
Content: mostly new but with some words familiar and a few 'known'
Control of anxiety: Not very anxious
Empathy: not relevant - more like a classroom test in any country
Input:      studyspanish.com – a computer software programme on the
Worldwide Web
Interest in culture: not related to culture in any significant way
Interest in language: words that can be easily associated with a similar
English word or with a vivid mind picture are easier to remember
Language content: Unit 3 (which does not seem to indicate any increased
difficulty from Unit 2) vocabulary Sports 15 words
Language learning difficulties: the Concentration exercise seems the
most difficult I can't easily remember where the words are - not as well
as I remember what the translations are. I also seem to get worse the
more I do it.
Motivation: not as motivated as with the other topics - I am not that
interested in sport but I remain motivated still because I am in control
of the learning activities that work quickly and effectively
Personality: having control over the learning process and respect for
the site suits my personality very well
Place:      Witch ford UK
Previous learning history: knowing some of the words from previous
learning experiences gives me confidence to learn the others
Success: in the practice exercises - 2 real mistakes (a few words
familiar or known)
In Concentration (which I find the most difficult learning exercise) my
scores in order were 19 then 16 and finally 18 (the lowest number
reflects the most success in remembering) - I find saying the words out
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loud seems to help although the scores depend a lot on 'luck'.
Test results: In Concentration 19/ 16/ 18 (lowest score = best)
'Xtra' comments:
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The entries can be seen to develop in terms of detail and reflective comments. Entry 242 as an example of stage three in the development of language acquisition is that stage in which I provide evidence that I have acquired more Spanish – in entry 242, for example. I state: "*knowing some of the words from previous learning experiences gives me confidence to learn the others*". My acquired knowledge of the language is assumed and the significance of this knowledge provides supportive evidence for the effect this knowledge has on the learning process. The input is "*studyspanish.com – a computer software programme on the Worldwide Web*". In common with my previous practice, I freely adapt the programme to suit my own needs and preferences. However, by this third stage, the type of adaptation made and my reasons for such adaptation is more significant than previously. My adaptation is assumed to be a necessary part of the process and the adaptation occurs for more than a need to satisfy my preferences and needs. In this example, my preferences are not the guiding factor for it is clear that the subject matter did not suit my preferences. I state: "*not as motivated as with the other topics – I am not that interested in sport but I remain*

motivated still because I am in control of the learning activities that work quickly and effectively". My reason for adapting the programme is based on my knowledge of the language and of the process of language learning already acquired. I believe that my need to be in control of the learning activities and that these learning activities should be quick and effective were paramount – more important than suiting my individual preferences. I also state in this entry: "*allowing for some of the vocabulary already being familiar or 'known', I do less of the original exercises accordingly*". I know I 'know' much of the vocabulary, and consequently decide in a more confident manner that some of the exercises are unnecessary for me to complete in order to develop my knowledge of the language. My comment also states: "*when working on your own competing against yourself you are willing to take risks and 'cheat' to get to your goal – i.e. to learn new Spanish words. Your cheating does not make you feel guilty as it would in a classroom situation*".

Whereas I previously may have felt I was not learning 'properly' by being less stringent in my approach, at stage three of the learning process I do not hypothesize, I boldly make statements that are statements of fact (as I interpret the situation). I no longer believe, for example, that

looking up the answers before completing an exercise is 'cheating'; I believe that this is a necessary and effective part of the learning process. In describing the methods I am employing I provide detail (as before) but also comment on the benefits of the methods e.g. "*approaching the same vocabulary with different interesting practice exercises seems most beneficial*". I interpret my use of the word 'seems' as 'it is evident that' not as 'it appears'. What I could easily have written "*approaching the same vocabulary with practice exercises that are different and interesting is ideal*" but respecting the need for reservation in making my statements I did not. (My belief that it is ideal to have language source material that presents the same language in different, interesting ways is confirmed in other entries in my diary e.g. entry 25 and 162 Appendix E).

My previous preference for a method that associated the target language with known language in stage three is an assumed principle of effective learning: "*words that can be easily associated with similar English words or with a vivid mind picture are easier to remember*".

The fact that I was only prepared to express myself in the language in writing stage 3 indicated that my production of Spanish had developed into a new improved stage.

4.5.1 Evidence of language acquisition:

The previous section provides some evidence of the development of my knowledge of Spanish and of my understanding of the process of language acquisition. A description of the advancement of knowledge of a language is difficult for it is very much affected by the fluctuating nature of the language acquisition process itself. With regard to error analysis, for example, Hatch reports "*While [errors] may be systematically described, the correct/incorrect forms may shift back and forth several times …*" (Hatch 1983:105). Ellis supports the view that language acquisition is not a linear process. "*There is plenty of evidence that acquisitional sequences are not completely rigid. For example, in the case of pronouns all learners seem to go through a stage when they overgeneralize.*

A sequence can also be influenced by the learner's L1 [(first language)]." (Ellis 1994:111-112) Ellis continues: "*There is the question of individual learner differences and what causes them. Learners set about the task of acquiring an L2 in different ways. They differ with regard to such general factors as motivation and aptitude, and also in the use of various strategies such as inferencing, and self-monitoring for obtaining input and for learning from it*".

(Ellis 1994:18) There is general agreement that "*Learners need optimal neurological networks… achieved through the creation of "intentional links" and "sense relations" between lexemes*" (Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:139). In other words, the way in which an individual builds up their knowledge of a language relates to the unique way in which connections are made according to the learner's unique experience and their unique previously acquired language knowledge (e.g.Lafford, Collentine and Karp 2003:141).

There is evidence of the fluctuating nature of my development of language acquisition in this study. In stage one, for example, there were times in this early stage when my strategies did not seem to be consistently effective. In entry 25 (Appendix E), I reported that "*I have some blockages over repeated phrases - e.g. me too - I can't remember*". Yet, in entry 5, (Appendix E) I report that "*I could remember 80% of the words*".

In stage two of the development of my knowledge of Spanish there were similar contrasting reports of successes and failure. Examples of failures include e.g. "*forgot … easily*" (entry 139 Appendix E) and "*I feel I should [cope with] reflexive verbs but [can't]*" (entry 157 Appendix E). However, the significance of this contrast is diminished when the whole context is understood. For example, the whole

entry for 139 reports "*I now marshal together the Spanish corner of my mind before speaking and this proved to be difficult when I met the next door neighbours who I thought were Spanish. When they proved to be German – recalling the little German I know to converse with them became an impossible task – I was too geared up for producing some Spanish*". In other words, the 'failure' was really my slowness in changing quickly from my recently acquired knowledge of Spanish to a language other than my mother tongue and for which I had had little need during my Spanish learning experience previously. In entry 157 also, knowledge of the whole context alters the effect of the diary entry.

In the whole diary in entry 157 (Appendix E) I also reported: "*I am willing to accept that the material itself may be producing too much to learn at the one time*". In other words, my inability to learn may have been influenced by the way in which the material had been presented in the textbook I was using at the time. Similarly, there are contrasting comments in entry 124. In entry 124 (Appendix A), I reported that I "*confidently start conversations but [that my] language [was] limited*". And in the whole diary for the same entry I reported "*What I found I could do, was to try to use the future tense with va and the infinitive taught to me by Spanish at the wheel. I've also managed it*

was estaba in conversation when ordering a meal".

However, in the same entry I report: "*I am still reduced to understanding only the occasional word. If I had time to press a pause button and to think at great length about the last few words that were spoken I might be able to guess what was the gist of what was being said. However, as this is not possible I don't understand*". My acquisition was limited to knowledge of single elements of the language at the time. In entry 149, however, I discussed the production of whole phrases e.g. the idiomatic use of 'tener' (e.g. 'tener que cambriarlo' (I must buy it)). The fluctuating nature of the discussion depended on the specific language items and the context.

A more general perception of language acquisition development is represented by principles of production (based on Krashen and Terrell's ideas) in which there are three stages: Stage one is represented by a silent/pre-speech period, Stage two is represented by a period in which single word responses emerge and Stage three is represented by a period in which phrases, sentences and finally more complex discourse emerges in the output of the learner (Grove 2003). However, this study observed the acquisition of Spanish by an individual and the stages of development for this individual were represented differently. Stage one

indicated a silent/pre-speech period, as expected, but this period was very brief. It covered entries 1 to 42 for in entry 43 I reported that "I made an effort to …try to speak". I obviously produced spoken language in this stage.

In stage two, words and phrases were produced over and above the suggested single words and writing assumed a more important role while in stage three I was not as fluent as suggested by Tetzchner and Grove's definition, but stage three in this thesis represented a period when I could demonstrate that I had acquired sufficient knowledge of the language to be able to reach a standard the equivalent of a 'C' in GCSE Spanish. More significantly in this thesis, 'production' assumed a more subservient role in the final description of the developmental language acquisition process. It is the process itself (which includes production) and the nature of my engagement with this process that provides insight and evidence of my developmental advancement in this thesis.

In spite of the fluctuating nature of the developmental process, there were examples within the diary that provide evidence of my acquisition of the Spanish language throughout the different stages of my learning period. There were general indications of a gradual increase in my general knowledge of Spanish and in my ability to produce Spanish:

In stage two, in entry 126 I stated: "*I was delighted that [the teacher] decided that the first book of their course was going to be too easy for me and changed it to the pre-intermediate*". I had obviously progressed from the absolute beginner stage. In entry 140 I planned '*to write some Spanish from now*' which indicated that I had not felt that I had acquired enough Spanish to attempt to do this previously. In this entry which was near the middle of the second stage of my learning period I seemed to have acquired sufficient Spanish to develop enough confidence to try to express myself in the language in writing. In stage two, entry 152 the results of an unrelated test indicated that some progress had been made. "*I was delighted to learn that, according to this test, I have at least risen above the beginner level to the elementary level. I was only one mark below the pre-intermediate level too.*"

In entry 158, I reported that "*I thought GCSE Spanish would be way beyond my level when it was first suggested I should do it – but this exercise gave me a feeling of success and confidence that sitting a GCSE exam may well be possible*". In the final entry for my stage two, entry 179, I reported that I was "*learning to accept words given to me by native speakers are now more easily part of my learning process without my feeling too anxious about not getting*

everything exactly right".

In stage three of the development of my language acquisition there was a change in emphasis. Although tests and the examination were key features of this stage, evidence of my developing understanding of the language was not in how well I could produce the language but an indication that my general understanding and appreciation of the Spanish language had advanced. In the third stage, for example, in entry 180, I indicated that my acquisition included advancement in my appreciation of the cultural aspects within the language. In entry 180 I reported: "*I felt I had more empathy with the Spanish culture than my English friends for I found it a little disheartening to be surrounded by other English speakers while in Spain. I even felt I would have preferred hearing Spanish even though I do not know the language very well*". After reading the lengthy text of the novel that was too advanced for complete comprehension, I later discovered that I could indeed remember some of the language I had read in this way.

In entry 196 I stated that the shape of the Spanish and English versions of the parallel texts I was reading were similar, but that the Spanish text took up more pages to express the same messages as the English version. I asked: "*Does this mean that the Spanish language is much more*

'flowery' – much more laboured, flamboyant and emotionally descriptive than the English?" This is another example of the advantage of the learner and the researcher being the same person. This question was not a direct question expecting a direct answer, it was a reflection of the stage of understanding that I had reached by this stage.

I had acquired more than single word recognition; I had developed an appreciation of the Spanish 'style' and its embedded cultural differences. In entry 199 I reported that the 'Letts Revise for GCSE Spanish' CD I was using did not feel that it was 'really' 'Spanish'. It felt like an English exam because the first text to match with Spanish translations in random multiple choice exercises was in English. I also commented *"I don't think it really shows the language in a realistic light and some of the matches didn't really seem to match properly"*. This is clear evidence of the advancement of my confidence. By this stage I believed that I had acquired sufficient Spanish to make informed evaluations of the resource material. In entry 222, I stated *"When the lady in the local newspaper shop said I had improved my Spanish it gave me real incentive"*. In entry 266, I state: *"My attempts at writing Spanish compared with an internet translation may indicate a certain level of my success"*. It seemed apparent that I had acquired sufficient

language to develop the confidence not only to write (as in stage two) but to improve the accuracy of my writing by checking my writing with an alternative translation from a website. In addition, my acquisition had reached a level sufficient to be able to evaluate the website and to realize that the website translation was specifically literal and therefore not entirely accurate.

More direct evidence of advancement of my knowledge and use of the language within the different stages concerned my acquisition of specific words and phrases, my development of automaticity, my knowledge of grammar, my understanding and knowledge of pronunciation and my development of an appreciation of variability in the Spanish language and of embedded messages in continuous Spanish text (in addition to the cultural aspects described above).

Evidence of the acquisition of specific words and phrases

In stage one I reported learning single words, e.g. entry 29 'palabra' (words) and entry 34 'todavia' (yet).In stage two more words and some phrases were reported, many of which indicated that I was applying different principles of use rather than producing single words and phrases e.g. in entry 127 I reported learning the usage of 'ser' and 'estar' (the different forms of the verb 'to be' and 'voy +

infinitive' (the future tense using 'going to'), entry 151 which reports my learning the use of the present continuous (e.g. I am doing) and entry 156 in which I report learning the 'use of pronouns'.

In stages two and three, evidence of the acquisition of single words was also reported, especially when learning from the studyspanish.com site. However, in stage three especially, some of the words had been acquired as the result of reading the language at length, rather than focusing directly on specific words to remember. In entry 190 (Appendix E), for example, I reported remembering 'alrededor' (around) from my previous reading of parallel texts to Gerald Durrell's novel. "Islands of the Gods". In entry 196 I reported "I can guess many of the words because of their similar root or because they seem familiar from my previous learning".

In entry 213 I stated: "*The man from Telefonica just came – he didn't speak a word of English but I think I managed to make myself understood*" and in entry 222 I reported: "*There were two children yesterday who wanted to come into the building. I am cautious about who to let in so I managed to say something like "Where are your parents?" by saying "los padres?" and the children responded by pressing the button for their flat. When their mother answered I*

managed to say that I had a key when the door didn't open

for them even though their mother had obviously tried to

open it from above."

In entry 206 I reported using 'very simple words'

"*which were some of the first elementary phrases taught e.g.*

How are you? Que tal?" I believed this did "*not really*

constitute tremendous progress but being able to use words

my friends (who do not speak Spanish at all but who have

been to Spain) did not understand gave me confidence that I

might just be able to learn some of the Spanish language. I

was speaking to my daughter and her friends at the time. My

daughter had studied Spanish as part of her university

degree and had spent some time in Spain so I expected her to

be more fluent than I was but it seems she too had forgotten

some of the language even though it was only about a year

since her most recent visit to Spain". This not only

provides evidence that I had acquired some Spanish but that

age does not seem to have the overpowering influence I

believed it had when I first started learning Spanish.

In entry 211 I reported "*Most of the time I understand*

as little as I feel I have always understood but every now

and then I can understand a phrase rather than a single

word." However, evidence of language acquisition in terms of

the acquisition of specific words or principles of usage of

particular forms is insufficient for a complete understanding of the process. This is exemplified in entry 208.

In entry 208, I stated that my difficulties were 'just' "*lack of specific vocabulary*". My comment continued: "*As I suspected, the scores were so inexact – I scored very highly on one and then just the same as before on the next one*". "*As I suspected, I do not think these tests really do test real language ability/proficiency – they only test whether I can guess certain narrowly defined vocabulary – success may depend only on luck according to whichever vocabulary I have come across.*" This confirmed my belief that an assessment of language acquisition cannot reliably be based solely on vocabulary tests.

Automaticity

Evidence of automaticity is apparent in stage one of my learning period e.g. in entry 34, when I reported that "*some endings [were] produced naturally*". The term 'naturally' meant 'automatically' rather than 'with ease'. In entry 40, I commented that "*now a few words are automatic*". I recognized that the word 'quiero' (I want) was recalled automatically. There were also reports that indicated that I was conscious of some developments in my language

acquisition. In entry 34 I stated: "*I can combine words*". In entry 43, although I commented that I was "*at a very low level*" I also reported that there was a "*glimmer of hope*" meaning that it seemed possible that I would be able to acquire new language even though I had originally believed this would be a very difficult if not impossible task in view of my age. In the same entry I reported focusing on "*local Spanish conversations*" already. Even though the language was obviously too fast for me to comprehend, I could at least discern enough elements of the language to make me feel it was worthwhile listening to such advanced language input. I reported further that "*I felt as if I'd reached the very first tiny rung on a long uphill struggle to learn the language. Now I could listen to everyday speech and I could recognise single general words such as 'because', 'what', 'and', 'the', 'same', 'good' etc but I still had no idea of the content of the conversation. I also found that sometimes I could actually ask for something without going through the long slow process of conscious construction of the phrase before applying e.g. 'I want something to eat'*".

In the second stage, spontaneous recall (i.e. evidence of automaticity) was also reported. In entry 139, for example, I reported "*Very recently I noticed that at last*

some words are coming to mind spontaneously. When the water on the shore flowed rather quickly suddenly instead of thinking 'why' I noticed I thought por que – however this was the only Spanish word that 'appeared' at the time – the remainder of the phrase was in English if such thoughts are in a language at all". In spite of this, in the entry that followed immediately, I reported that it was "obvious I don't know enough verbs and tenses" (entry 140). This apparent inconsistency is not so much 'inconsistency' as the result of different expectations, of factors relating to the specific learning event or of different foci of attention. The level of language that was automatically recalled was limited to only one or two words (as in stage one), when I was consciously aware of spontaneous or 'automatic' recall, it was when I was thinking to myself rather than trying to communicate to a Spanish speaker and at the time I was not deliberately intending to think in Spanish for there was no need. However, the fact that I reported that I no longer felt the need to take a dictionary with me for situations in which I knew I was very likely to be trying to communicate in Spanish indicates that I had indeed acquired sufficient Spanish for (limited) use. In entry 144 I reported *"Occasionally, the Spanish will flash into mind when I am in a new situation. I associate new situations with the need*

for Spanish. This automatic device was no good when I was talking to a group of Australian business people!"

In stage three, automaticity was assumed as part of my language production e.g. entry 181 (Appendix E) in which I express a particular interest in trying to speak *"more than I did in the earlier stages"*. I became more intimately involved in the language: in entry 182 (Appendix E), for example, I state *"I found after my fortnight in Spain I have been so geared up to trying to speak the language that I found myself tripping over English words as though I was having the same difficulty in getting my mouth round the words as I did when I first started trying to speak Spanish. Even some of the English vocabulary I was trying to find did not come easily just for a few seconds more than usual. I felt it was because of my concentration on Spanish"* and in entry 188 (Appendix E) I also reported that *"Spanish interfered with my speaking English!"*

However, I believed that one area of my acquisition remained problematic throughout the learning period and that was my apparent slowness of retrieval which was reported in all stages. In entry 9 (Appendix E), I reported that *"I felt that age was slowing up my reactions so the language I produced was slow, stilted and had a limited length"*. In entry 15 I reported: *"I still found [I was] too slow at*

times, especially in recalling 'known' vocabulary". In entry 119 *"I was still very slow in recalling words I knew I knew".* In entry 122 I reported I was *"still slow in translating".* Entry 138 offers special insight into my slowness and suggests it may be something to do with my attitude (rather than age) for I report: *"although I seem to have some vocabulary implanted enough to recall on occasions for elementary understanding I still have an attitude problem in which I first assume I won't understand a word. After a long gap and I cease to listen to the remaining words I then slowly recognize a number of the words – not all. In the conversation about the neighbours the president said something I was sure I didn't understand and yet after a few seconds the light dawned the words he was using included aquilar or similar – one that I knew meant to rent which fitted well with this context but it took me sometime to realize".*

In entry 139 I suggest that the effort I needed to make in preparing my speech may have had an effect for I state: *"I seemed to forget what [the teacher] told me quite easily and even when I tried to make myself use the vocabulary or the phrase again I forgot. Part of the reason for this was the effort in forming a new phrase about a new idea – this was one reason for the slow recall".* In entry 198 I report

"vocabulary is still not known much and I can recognize the verb endings in the past that I have been trying unsuccessfully to incorporate in my own 'use' of the language but the recognition is slow and I have not yet reached spontaneity of recognition and expectation of [retrieving] the verb forms".

However, entry 163 offers further insight for it states: *"I felt very slow in my learning"*. This entry admits that my slowness was something I *believed* was happening with very little concrete evidence to support this belief. As I reached the final stage of my learning period, I became more aware that I was probably expecting too much of myself (e.g. entries 162 (*"I think I have been trying to master too much too soon"*), 164 (*"I am expecting to learn too much – my goal is too high"*) and 223 (*"I would have expected to have made much greater progress than I a making at present but maybe I am expecting too much.)"*

Grammar

In some research, competence in using the correct grammar in language production would have been the central focus as in Schmidt and Frota's study (1986). However, this study was focused on the language acquisition process and my need to acquire minimum language for effective

communication. This is exemplified by entry 166 in which I report that I was *"more interested [in the Spanish language] than before but more with acquiring new vocabulary than producing correct grammar"*.

However, there were indications of the development of my awareness of grammatical forms. Examples in stage one include entry 9 (when I commented:" *To decline a verb I needed to think in grammatical structures occasionally e.g. 'tengo'"*), entry 32 (when I reported recognizing –amus endings), entry 34 (when word endings were produced 'naturally') and entry 35 (when I reported "*grammar [was] absorbed 'automatically' to a certain extent e.g. the adjective coming after the noun"*).

In stage two, there was evidence of my acquisition of principles of grammar, for example (as mentioned previously), in entry 124 (Appendix E) when I stated: "*What I found I could do, was to try to use the future tense with va and the infinitive taught to me by Spanish at the wheel. I've also managed 'it was' (estaba) in conversation when ordering a meal"*.

In entry 136 I reported that I was "*being reminded of the grammar I have already come across … e.g. use of lo and le at the end of words"* in entry 141 I stated "*I felt I understood 80 per cent of the words and much of the grammar*

was familiar". There is evidence that I felt I had acquired some grammar in entry 157, for I believed 'I should [be able to] cope with reflexive verbs'. However, in the same entry I stated that I believed I could not cope with reflexive verbs satisfactorily yet. Taking into consideration my tendency to expect too much of myself, I may have acquired some of the reflexive verbs, but to a limited degree. Indeed, I commented that *"I know I have covered some of these terms several times already, but I remain confused"* i.e. some of the terms were familiar or partially known but my understanding was not yet complete. I also offered a reason for my apparent lack of acquisition and this was that *"the work in these pages seems just a little beyond my full understanding and I do not expect to remember or cope with what I am being taught at present".*

In stage three, my acquisition of grammar became less of a topic for observation for much of my acquisition was now assumed. In entry 188 I had been in conversation with Portuguese people. Evidence that believed I had acquired understanding of the usage of Spanish was revealed when I disagreed with one of the Portuguese speakers about the use of the present perfect (e.g. I have done) in Spanish. In the same entry I also commented that my knowledge of *Spanish* interfered with my speaking of English. I had obviously

acquired some Spanish by this time. In stage three, in entry 194 *"I found I could recognize the different verb forms quite easily"*. In entry 208 while completing two tests from the Goethe Institute I reported: *"At last I felt I could recognize some of the word endings and how they affected the word. I managed to use this in judging which word to place in some of the gaps – e.g. the –ing (–ando) form"*.

Pronunciation and local variability

In stage one, it was apparent from the beginning that I believed it important to understand and use the correct pronunciation. In the first entry I used a separate source than the set text so that I could focus on the correct pronunciation of the language I was listening to on the first tape of the course. I used the *"pronunciation chart from the dictionary"*. I believed that pronunciation was so important that I wrote down the rules of pronunciation in my diary. The entry states:

"I also needed the following:

"Educated Castilian pronunciation
Rules:
Word ends with a vowel, 'n' or 's' penultimate syllable stressed
consonant, last syllable is stressed
Acute accent = stress that vowel
a e o = strong vowels i u weak
diphthong stress on strong vowel"

… There was a problem initially for phonetic symbols, sounds or pronunciation tables/appendices were not readily available in the first course to satisfy my original aim to get to grips with the phonetic sounds and symbols of Spanish".

In stage two, entry 95 (Appendix A) implies that I was at a stage when it seemed important for me to speak the language at some speed for I commented that the resource offered help *"in getting my tongue around unfamiliar sounds".* As I had been speaking at a very slow speed before, this 'difficulty' had not arisen. My interest in my need to learn to speak with correct pronunciation was evident in entry 126 in which I stated: "*[the teacher] can at least check the pronunciation of the alphabet etc*". In entry 134 the importance I gave pronunciation was confirmed for I stated: "*I used a suitable learning tool that was quick –the studyspanish website. With this programme I had the opportunity to see and hear the words one at a time with the pronunciation*". In this entry (134) "*I noticed differences in pronunciation. I noticed already that many of the 'c's were pronounced as c and not as th as in the area of Spain where I lived. There was also a problem with the 'b' sounding like a 'p' and the 'v' sounding like a 'b' which I believe is a constant problem".* In entry 143

(Appendix A) I stated "*I needed to understand a different accent which is important*". I was listening at the time to a speaker from Madrid. In entry 160 while listening to "*spoken language by people in Torrevieja Spanish on TV*", I stated: "*Although I think I need to use Catalan I think the accent here can be so strong that it is making it difficult for me to understand what is being said*". Clearly pronunciation was an issue.

However, my inability to adapt may not necessarily have been the only issue. In stage three I listened to speech at the normal rapid speed and difficulties of pronunciation were more related to my need for the local people to enunciate clearly e.g. in entry 225 I stated; "*I realized that my lack of understanding is not always my fault – when speaking to the waiter Fulgencio, I did not understand what he had said and when he repeated it, I realized he had said something like "mucho años" which even in moments of anxiety I felt sure I would have understood immediately if he had pronounced the words more clearly*".

The nature of my language acquisition

In stage one, much of my acquisition was discussed in terms of the acquisition of single words of vocabulary e.g. in entry 6 (Appendix E) I reported that "*Some words were not*

remembered in their whole form". In entry 8 I reported that *"I think about 80% of the words [were] remembered"*. However, there were early signs that I believed I was acquiring language in a more general sense e.g. entry 32 in which *"I understood the gist"* of the language. However, in the same entry, I stated that *"I noticed grammar"*, but the grammar consisted of merely recognizing the '-amus' endings. My acquisition at this stage was very limited and superficial.

In stage two, (e.g. in entry 114 Appendix A) I commented that *"reading may help me become immersed"*. While reading had been important in the very early stages of the learning period, reading at length had not previously been considered of significant value. In entry 179, I reported *"At this stage I was thinking in terms of a general understanding and feel for the language rather than specific items other than the specific language items I needed to make myself clear. I tended to make up Spanish sounding words from the English or words that I thought might fit but wasn't sure about like 'vista' for view"*. The belief that a more general less-specifically focused approach to the language would be beneficial to the acquisition of the language was taking hold.

In the third stage this approach continued, e.g. entry 190 (Appendix A) reports that I *"accept success of learning*

words through reading" i.e. I believed I was acquiring language through reading without focusing specifically on trying to remember the vocabulary and language structure as I had been doing previously. This is qualified further: "*I was delighted to find that when we came across 'alrededor' I already knew it from my trying to read the Gerald Durrell book Island of the Gods [in Spanish] so I feel there is some worth in trying to struggle through a novel*". In other words, by continuous reading and focusing on the meaning of the language rather than on trying to remember specific words my language knowledge seemed to be advanced subconsciously.

In entry 196 (Appendix A), I state that "*Uninterrupted text helps develop 'feel for language'*" which also supports my belief that reading lengthy texts that may have been too advanced for complete comprehension had some effect on my language acquisition. This effect is described more fully in this entry: "*Spanish version: Great to be able to understand without looking everything up – but I did need to read the English again and find it easier working in paragraphs – reading the English then the Spanish. I am sure this is going to help me much more – I can guess the meaning of the words much more quickly and easily and they seem to fit their meaning much more readily for it feels as though this*

new confidence in having the English translation immediately available is making a real difference with the speed of comprehension – words that I can understand more quickly than before because before I would have been much less confident in guessing the meanings". This comment indicates that such 'acquisition' incorporates more than specific lexicon or language structures.

Reading lengthy texts seemed to effect advancement in my understanding of the language as a cohesive, meaningful expression of the author's message within his/her particular style of writing. I seemed to advance in my understanding of the language, in a limited way, by being able to empathise with the ideas and imagery invoked by the author's specific choices of lexicon, sentence structure, collocations, and meanings i.e. by the specific phonology, semantics and syntax of the text as they were combined within the text. This is confirmed in entry 211 in the whole diary in which I state: *"I realize that no matter how long I read a book in Spanish and compare it with the English translation the learning achieved is not as much as I had hoped but as I intended also, I have a 'feeling' that I am absorbing something effective even if it is a subconscious awareness of word order".*

4.5.2 Evidence of my increased understanding and knowledge of the language learning process.

Evidence of my increased understanding and knowledge of the language learning process was expressed in accordance with the importance of the effect of the four main phenomena revealed in Analysis 3 (i.e. attitude, learning strategies (method), language source material and memory).

The five aspects of successful language learning listed by Ellis (i.e. concern for language form, functional practice, an active task approach, an awareness of the learning process and a capacity to use strategies flexibly (Ellis 1994:546-7)) were incorporated within the analysis of the diary entries as integrated aspects. As this study's prime focus was on close analysis of my diary entries, it was the diary entries rather than Ellis's aspects externally applied that structured the discussion.

In the first stage of the learning period, in the first few entries, I relied heavily on the learning strategies contained within the language resource material. Evidence of this is provided in comments such as *"course better – slower and more repetitive"* (entry 4), *"the fewer the words presented the better for me"* (entry 6 Appendix E) and *"I like the format esp. revision, music repetition"* (entry 8). However, quite soon I also reported there were times when I

altered the suggested learning strategies and used strategies that suited my own learning needs. As early as entry 1, I commented that I *"needed to use another reference"* i.e. the resource material was not sufficient for my needs. At entry 22, I reported using a learning strategy that was to prove beneficial throughout the learning period and that was associating the target language with similar elements in English.

Entry 22 (Appendix A) states: *"using 'sounds like the English word' to remember"*. This method is described in more detail below. Further evidence of the importance of language source material in relation to my strategies is contained in entry 76 in which I state: *"I am interested in trying this new approach – learning while on the Internet – not possible before because I did not have free off-peak access. Now I am noticing some of the advantages already – the site is already 'marked' for quick access by the highlighting of the address I have entered. The text gives some definitions of some of the words albeit in Spanish but I like the challenge of it being assumed I can understand enough Spanish to grasp the meaning"*. In entry 83, the importance of humour in the language source material was emphasized:*" The element of humour seems to have a beneficial effect for although I wanted to try to learn a bank of words from a normal*

dictionary some each day this I could not do through lack of enthusiasm. The amusing 'Life's like that' pictures made the exercise of reading a dictionary enjoyable. I managed to read all 2000 words some of which I already knew which gave me some confidence".

In the second stage, there were times when I continued to rely on the language source material for the strategies applied (e.g. entry 90). Other learning strategies were also evident, especially those in which the target language is associated with similar words in other known languages. Near the end of stage one, the strategies offered by the teaching language material still seemed important although I was more critical of the advice the texts offered. In entry 87 (Appendix A), for example, I stated: *"The advice given here is advice that seems to suit me: study for a short time, try to learn a maximum of 6 or 7 words, put in sentences and return later; learn by topic. This, although known to be beneficial, still doesn't seem to make any difference for me. Trying to learn 7 words to put in sentences and return later is OK but not perfect"*. My criticism of the language source material was also evident in entry 88 when I *"decided against doing [the language comprehension exercise] for it demands memory of people not necessarily language"*.

In stage three my strategies were centred on three main

types of resources.

1) the website programme studyspanish.com, for the purpose of increasing my vocabulary,

2) parallel texts, particularly Gerald Durrell's novel "The Island of the Gods" for the purpose of developing a gradual understanding and appreciation of Spanish and

3) the speech of the local people in conversation in which my language production was part of the acquisitional process.

Specific strategic elements assumed considerable importance in my observations and these were: learning from oral input, repetition of the target language to be learnt, the need to change strategies in use, associating the target language with other known language(s), making a determined effort, selection within the learning process, improving memorization techniques, writing, using feedback, developing familiarity with the language by means of 'immersion' in continuous text, using output as part of the language learning process and developing a critical awareness of the effect of teachers and teaching methods.

Learning from oral input

In stage one, I believed at the start that simply listening and repeating was not enough. In entry 1 in the

whole diary, I reported that *"listen-repeat from a tape may be a bit shallow for me"*. In order to acquire the language I believed I needed to know more about the input than to simply 'receive' and to imitate the input. I needed to see the spoken words written down. In entry 3 (Appendix E) in the whole diary I reported that *"I would have preferred to see the written word"*. Difficulties created by the limitations of listening and speaking without seeing the written form of the language were evident in stage two. In entry 93, I reported *"with the listening and repeating this gave a prime example of misconceptions – mistakes – that can easily arise. I thought the speaker asked me to say 'I like this course' not 'I like discotheques'"*.

In stage two, I still needed to see the words e.g. in entry 119 I reported that *"I needed to see the words, so having the check card was invaluable and reading this before I heard the words helped considerably"*. In stage two entry 134, I reported that *"with this programme [studyspanish website] I had the opportunity to see and hear the words one at a time with the pronunciation"*. Being able to see and hear the words at the same time obviously had a significant effect. In entry 136, I also commented on the benefit of seeing and hearing the words at the same time for I reported: *"I could hear the word and see it at the same time*

with the exact timing just right. I could then repeat the practice and try to remember the meaning of the word with the immediate opportunity of seeing what the word means directly".

However, later in stage one, there was evidence of some variability in my approach especially regarding my need to see the words and in entry 40, I reported that my strategy was *"listening and speaking trying to integrate without conscious construction"* which suggests some advancement in my understanding and use of the language. I was consciously using oral input (and my own output) as part of the process of learning. In entry 46, I reported that the input consisted of *"everyday conversations"* i.e. situations in which listening and speaking were my only resource for the language. However, this was not necessarily a definitive sign of the degree of the advancement, but an indication of a change in my strategy. My need for the written word seemed to refer more specifically to situations in which I was using specific teaching/learning resource material designed for that purpose. I seemed to treat this input differently to the input of native speakers i.e. my attitude towards the language source material and towards my associated strategies influenced my comments. When using teaching/learning texts, I expected to acquire specific

language elements, when participating in 'everyday conversations'. I did not expect to acquire an understanding of the language in a more general sense and my acquisition of specific language forms were of secondary importance to the need for communication.

In stage three, I continued to use oral input as a learning resource. However, my observations were less detailed at this stage, for I seemed more involved with learning by means of written texts (e.g. my continued reading of Gerald Durrell's novel in Spanish and studyspanish.com: a website). In entry 190, I report "*[the teacher] asks me to read … {while] listening for [my] pronunciation but I feel perhaps a little more practice would help me remember more*". I believed practising the language was more important than having my pronunciation checked. In entry 213, I reported that "*I like listening to Spanish spoken by the Spanish people in this district but I suspect when I understand everything I may not feel the same*". Oral input still had an important role to play. In entry 218, while listening to "*spoken Spanish language from the TV. programme Los desayunos de TVE*" I reported that "*This is very intensive so I don't try to [listen to all of] it all the time*".

However, oral input was important enough for me to

engage with listening to it intensely. In 221, while
listening to "*local people's spoken Spanish*" I state "*I am
listening to the overall effect but also trying to focus on
a group of words at a time – pressing an imaginary pause
button and trying to translate*". In entry 221 I also state:
"*I think I am getting used to the rapid speed a little more
– I can separate a few more words I think when I am
listening than when I could a few months ago*". These
entries support the notion that there has always been a need
to understand the meaning of words in isolation.

Entry 224 illuminates the learning process in more
detail. The resources I used varied and consisted of "*local
people, TV. and reading material*" – the reading materials
were parallel texts so that I had both the Spanish and the
English versions available. My illuminative comments read as
follows: "*Although I would probably be better if I tried to
read the Spanish first, I find that reading the English
first and thus having an understanding of what is happening
helps me much more when trying to read the Spanish. I need
to check word for word to make sure. However, it has reaped
some benefit already for some of the words I have read in
Spanish are ones I have been trying to use but have not
known how to spell them or that they may not always have an
's' on the end as in quizá (perhaps) – (I think).*

Re TV. I think I can see why it isn't much good trying to look up unknown words while watching the TV. - I can never be sure I really understand exactly what was said and how it is spelt and while stopping to look up the word I am missing so much of the rest of the text that it makes the exercise hardly worthwhile. Also I feel there is something at this stage to listening to too fast - i.e. normal speed text to get my ears ready to grasp more and more until (hopefully) I will understand almost everything. I believe I understood the topic of the morning's TV. session - something to do with moral issues in society. I casually 'noticed' that many of the philosophical terms seem to share the same (Latin?) base as the equivalent English words - was this because of the way scientific and/or philosophical terms are formed?" There is no doubt that I believed that I needed to understand the meaning of a text if I was to comprehend the contents effectively and I believed there was some value in listening to the sounds of the language even if it was too fast for me to comprehend satisfactorily. My observations incorporated my general beliefs about language acquisition and the Spanish language.

Even as late as entry 260 (Appendix A), I believed there was value in listening even if I had to concentrate particularly to do so. When listening to local people I

commented that I was *"listening intently, analysing the separate words and vocabulary to interpret"*.

Repetition of the target language to be learnt

In the early part of stage one, in order to commit the language to memory, I believed repetition of the language had an important role to play. In entry 3, I stated that the Reader's Digest course *"had a better approach … because it [was] slow enough for me and it was repetitive"*. The need for repetition seemed consistent and in entry 88 I reported this strategy in more detail: *"now I try to learn the vocabulary each time the number of words seem just right and by simply covering the Spanish and trying to say the Spanish from the English returning to the previous items every time I can't remember seems to help"*. In order to learn, I needed to use input that was presented at a slow pace.

Again, this strategy and my approach to it were not consistent for in entry 25 I reported that *"I should repeat but I don't want to. I am not sure I would achieve anything more by repeating. I have some blockages over repeated phrases – e.g. me too – I can't remember [them]. My plan is to revise these at the end of the course or better still in a different course"*. However, this inconsistency indicates different foci of attention regarding repetition and another

strategy that I was constantly applying which was to consciously make changes to provide variety, to adapt to the changes in my development and to maintain my interest.

In stage two, repetition also featured as an important strategy. In this stage, the repetition took many forms. In entry 93, repetition of the spoken language was the main focus. I stated: *"The exercise which takes out certain phrases from the given dialogue are excellent for there is a need to be able to get my tongue around unfamiliar combinations of sounds in these phrases. [I can make] an effort to repeat until I can say them quickly. [It] gives me a chance and also alerts me to the difficulties in trying to speak a new language quickly. It is not just understanding the vocabulary that matters, it is simply being able to string the new sounds together efficiently"*.

Repetition of listening material after some time is the strategy featured in entry 122: *"Having made an effort to learn earlier with little success, I plan to listen to these tapes regularly so that eventually the material will be repeated after some time. These gaps in time I hope will be more useful in helping me to remember the language for a longer period"*. Another strategy that included repetition featured in my use of the website e.g. entry 136: *"I used the studyspanish website and found the vocabulary section*

with the added sound now working well … I could hear the word and see it at the same time with the exact timing just right. I could then repeat the practice and try to remember the meaning of the word with the immediate opportunity of seeing what the word means directly".

In entry 151, while using 'Spanish in Three Months' I commented: *"I do not feel an urgency about actually remembering and because there are only a few examples and because the answers are readily available I find I quite readily repeat something I know I am not sure about and find I still enjoy the learning experience"*. In entry 156, I comment that *"[while using "Spanish in Three Months"] I repeated the exercises twice sometimes, and felt the drills were particularly helpful for sometimes I 'felt' I wanted to move pronouns because it 'felt' better without remembering the difficulty I sometimes have in combining sounds that I am unaccustomed to putting together e.g. escribirlo"*.
In entry 165, while using the GCSE revision CD, I stated: *"This CD should be useful for quick moments of revision such as this – if I work quickly, which is possible, I will not mind repeating the same material if I find a certain area difficult"* and *"I still can't remember all the declensions and I should have known some of the Spanish I tried to recall. This CD does ask you to repeat the same form several*

times which I find very helpful". Clearly there were a variety of strategies used when the target language was repeated.

In stage three, it was assumed that most of the methods that employed repetition in stage two were continued. However, my strategies developed further in stage three when I repeated a reading activity. Entry 201, for example, provides insight into the learning process. In this entry while reading the parallel novel, I reported: *"I have found that it is helpful not only to try to translate the Spanish into English and compare this with the English version of the novel, but also if I then repeat reading the Spanish again this feels as if it is going to help me learn. I also find that the second time I look at the Spanish I suddenly recognize more words that should have been familiar to me after I have had a translation in English"*.

The need to change strategies in use

The previous paragraph indicates that one of my strategies was to change, adapt or alter the current strategy so that the source material and my learning would become more interesting and motivating thereby affecting my approach. In response to my approach in entry 25, my strategies included deliberately changing my resource

material so that the input was varied and presented the same language in a different manner or context.

In stage two I also made changes. I believed the language resource material needed to be varied e.g. in entry: 96 (Appendix E) I reported *"I've reached the stage where good as a course is, I'm getting a little tired of it, so I changed course"*. I tried to adapt strategies to suit my individual needs e.g. in entry104 I reported in a test, I had *"remembered 38 out of 40 words but some of them were already known to me. My bright idea of extending the pictures to include, for example, the bullfighters doing something to indicate the specific ending of the word did not work I couldn't remember the correct ending to ambulancia"*. This apparent 'lack of success' was not reflected in my score (38 out of 40). Thus this apparent 'lack of success' may have been from expecting too much too quickly and from including too many fine details. In entry 85 my approach extended to criticising strategies within the learning material. I decided against following the strategy recommended in the text for I believed the text to be 'old fashioned' and I disregarded the advice the text gave which was to *"revise the same material again if you do not score well in the test"*. I had little faith in the effectiveness of this strategy.

Part of the principle of creating variability in my strategies was the way in which I constantly made selections. Selection was an important part of the procedure e.g. in entry 55 (Appendix A) I stated *"I didn't follow the suggested approach strictly – did only what I wanted to do or what I felt would work"* and that *"adapting the course to suit my own learning style seemed worthwhile"*. In entry 62 I was *"conscious that one ought to do exactly what the book suggests – i.e. write down answers, I still preferred to think of the answers only"*. There is no doubt that an important part of my strategy was to use the material in a manner that suited my personal needs. In entry 63, for example, I explained my strategic approach explicitly: *"I decided the tape was going to be the most beneficial part in conjunction with the vocabulary. So, I looked up some unfamiliar words in the dictionary and listened to the tape with the tape script attempting to guess how the words would be pronounced. I used the written exercises in the text book as an 'introduction' to the material of the unit and tried to do the exercises verbally. I used the answers in the support book not only as a check to see if I had guessed correctly but also as a learning tool – finding out what the answer was to an exercise knowing that I really had no idea myself"*.

Associating the target language with other known language(s)

Associating the target language to be learnt with other knowledge especially other known languages was one of my preferred strategies throughout the learning period. Association of other Spanish words previously learnt had their influence: in entry 64 (Appendix A) (as mentioned previously): I reported that "*I even managed to associate a word learnt previously to work out what a phrase meant in a new context. 'cambio' I have always associated with changing money but in this case the phrase was 'cambiar ruedas'. Once I had looked up ruedas (wheels) then at last my memory was jogged when I realized that cambiar was 'to change'*".

In entry 28 I reported: "*I find associating new words with English equivalents that have an associated meaning helpful e.g. ancho (wide) anchor = big, heavy = 'wide'*". Although I favoured this memory strategy, immediately at the end of my learning period, (on 26/02/2002), the word was not familiar or remembered but I suggested that it "*probably will be from now on*". I was not necessarily able to recall words I had 'learnt' spontaneously. I also associated words with the French: e.g. entry 29: "*I am also associating words with the French a lot – e.g. palabra + parler French 'to speak*". My interest in language led me to report that although the language was "*still very new*", I viewed Spanish

as being "*like French/Italian*" (entry 38).

In stage two, association remained a significant strategy and my reflective observations became more detailed. In entry 97, a more detailed description of the method of associating Spanish with other known language is reported in terms of the 'accelerated learning' method. The comment is as follows: "*On Page 18 after the last principle 26 ideas are given for what to do when there is no linguistic association. Create your own mnemonic dictionary (mnemonic merely means a memory aid and is described in full in the Accelerated Learning book). [[...]] Take the new Spanish word and find a strong visual image to associate with it. The image should be deliberately as odd, comic, or bizarre (even vulgar) as possible. If there is a rhyming association so much the better e.g. Gafas p spectacles = old gaffers with white sideboards wear spectacles. It also suggests constructing a simple Spanish sentence e.g. madera = wood amo el vino madiera en una mesa de madera. However, I couldn't bring myself to use the Spanish sentence for a memory purpose for I could not be sure my Spanish construction would be correct and my other teaching experience tells me to unlearn an error is more difficult than to learn something correctly the first time*". More detail of the accelerated learning method is given in entry

98: *"e.g. Principle 1 .Profesor is very recognisably professor. Is there a principle? Yes, the Spanish do not have as many double letters so it was easy to deduce intelligent from inteligente. Similarly the following Spanish words should not give you any problem! asimilar = assimilate [[...]] etc".*

In entry 101 I reported that *"it became noticeable that connections seemed to play a very important part in the language learning experience – far more than this vocabulary learning tape [indicates]. When the word for 'tyre' came up (pneumatica) I immediately knew what the meaning was from an experience I had approximately 35 years ago. I was flying back to Australia from a holiday in Noumea where I had tried to speak French for I found myself sitting with two French business men. Their job was selling tyres and as my French was not 'perfect' I was struggling to communicate in the language but when they said the word pneu I guessed it was tyres and associated the word pneu with the English pneumatic (tyres). I found the similar association given here very interesting and felt confident that the word was already known by me as a consequence".*

This statement does not provide direct evidence that is verifiable, for individual accounts have been shown sometimes to be inaccurate, but the connections between

English, French and Spanish *are* evident. As the insight this

entry provides is based on the effect of this connection,

for the purpose of this study, such an entry has some

significance. There is much literature to support the

importance of the effect of knowledge of other languages

(e.g. Littlewood 2004:505; Geeslin and Guijarro-Fuentes

2006). Schmidt and Frota comment frequently on the influence

of other languages (e.g. Schmidt and Frota 1986:239, 241,

243 and 275).

The Linkword method referred to in entry 104 was one of

the strategies I preferred which was to associate the target

language with other words and pictures that I knew had

similar phonemes or meanings. I reported that *"After having*

listened to the tape that uses this method I felt more

confident about using the pictures as memory aids more than

before when I thought that perhaps similarity to the English

would be more beneficial. The pictures again sprang to mind

very quickly sooner than I could remember the words using

the previous learning method" and I believed that: *"There is*

definitely something about the connection between the sound

of the word, pictures with interacting components and

memory". In this entry I described how I was using the

keyword method. I wrote *"You are given a picture to imagine*

for about 10 seconds. In the picture the new Spanish word

interacts with the English word. Often the English associated word sounds similar to the Spanish. If the words are almost the same – you imagine a bullfighter. Many of the words were known to me already but a few new ones really did stick e.g. merriends no idea of spelling because I haven't come across the word yet it means picnic but the picture of the merry end to a picnic stays with me. I knew about picturing but hadn't had the items interacting before. This interaction seems to make the remembering much more effective. Having done a bit of Spanish the fact that the mimicking words are not 100 per cent accurate is irritating but not interfering. I'm just also trying to remember the exact ending. This need comes from one of the courses in which the need for accuracy was highlighted by the method they used. […] On several occasions I panicked […] because I could not give the English word for the Spanish one given immediately but I noticed with interest that the associated picture I was supposed to think of (i.e. the one I didn't think I was picturing realistically and successfully enough to be of use) did come straight to mind more quickly than expected and from the picture and associated sentence I could then remember the meaning e.g. malete the sentence given was 'My letter in you suitcase'. Both the sentence and the picture helped me to bring back to the front of my

memory the fact that malete means suitcase. Of course, as usual la valise from the French was the very first connection made but this may have been because yesterday there was a group of French students on the train blocking my suitcase so I asked for La valise successfully i.e. the word (albeit the French word) had been brought forth previously recently and used with success.

With a new word 'carretara' for road, the picture of the carrots in the road was really helpful in remembering the estimated sound of the word but I still worry that I have no idea how to write the word down".

 (Note on including this comment in analysis 4, the word merriends was *not* familiar to me. This may support my comments that the keyword was very effective, but only on a temporary basis e.g. in entry 103 I state "*this method certainly helps although I am not sure I will remember the words permanently".*)

    Further evidence of my preferred strategy in associating the target language with other known languages was in entry 133 in which "*many of the words were familiar but not fully known – e.g. dolor for ache and boleto for ticket which I had imagined was spelt quite differently probably relating it to French when I had only heard it before – i.e. giving it two 'lls'".*

Making a determined effort

One noticeable effect of the strategies I used was my belief that their effectiveness depended on the degree of effort I exerted in applying the strategies. In contrast to Ellis's 'active task approach' (Ellis 1994:546-7), 'a determined effort' is interpreted with a stronger, more affective connotation incorporating concentrated engagement with the language. In entry 54 (Appendix A) I stated that *"I made an effort to understand and to try to speak"* and that I was *"willing to take a risk – otherwise how will I learn?"* Selecting a strategy was not sufficient; applying the strategy and engaging with the language source material were other interdependent issues. Analysis 2 in which aspects of the observations were recorded under the prompt hearings indicated that determination was one of the most important personality traits. Entries that expressed determination were the highest in number compared with the other 5 types of response listed 4.3.15.

In stage two my effort remained important. In entry 92 I reported: *"going over the vocabulary first and making some effort to try to remember the vocabulary is helpful"*. However, it appeared that my efforts to try to remember language were not always fruitful In entry 121, for

example, I reported that "*what I remembered mostly [was] the effort I had put into trying to learn the material [previously] and the feeling that such effort had not been as fruitful as I had hoped"*. In response to this, it was also found that I had been particularly critical of my ability to remember but this criticism may not have been warranted.

In stage three, in entry 222 I reported "*[Trying] to make myself speak no matter how limited my language has probably helped [my language acquisition] for now I launch into any conversation I think I can initiate with the locals but I often have to say "I'm sorry I don't understand Spanish much" for I don't understand them at all sometimes. I'm not sure if it is complete lack of vocabulary on my part or their thicker accents on their part"*.

Improving memorization techniques

Much of the insight my diary entries gave matched theory in the literature. Much of the literature in turn is concerned with short 'memorized language sequences' and 'lexical sentence stems' (e.g. Pawley and Hodgetts Syder (1983):205-215). The example above based on early recognition of the 'pneu' not only emphasizes the significance of single phonemes in the early stages of the

language acquisition process, but touches on Anderson's belief that memory uses patterns from past occurrences to infer what is most likely to be useful in the present. (Anderson 1995) However, the past occurrence in this case was retrieved from the memory because it *was* useful rather than it was 'most likely to be useful'. Johnson notes that "*experiments do show that people recall things more easily if the things correspond to readily available words or phrases*" (Johnson 1996:8). Further than this, we may remember far more than we can prove that we remember for Anderson reports that "*People can be aware that they know something without being able to recall what they know*" (Anderson 1995:291) and "*Access to information can be facilitated by experiences that do not result in explicit memories*" (Anderson 1995:295). The extent of the influence of knowledge of other languages in making connections with the target language has considerable impact e.g. in entry 169 I reported that I was intrigued with the way that the verb declensions in Spanish are similar to those in Latin even though I believed I had forgotten the Latin I had learned over 40 years ago.

In all stages of my learning period, memory was an issue e.g. in stage one, entries 65, 66 and 83 (Appendix A). In stage two the entries offered greater insight into what

seemed to me to be important strategies for memorization at the time. In entry 135 I revealed my approach to the effectiveness of learning and of a suitable memory aid: I stated that: *"My study consisted of simply reading through the grammar book … I know this was not an exercise that will probably develop my Spanish any further, but there were moments when it reminded me of things I had done a long time ago and as such I felt it was a good memory aid"*. My approach also had an effect on my ability to recall language I had learnt. In entry 138 I stated: *"although I seem to have some vocabulary implanted enough to recall (on occasions), for elementary understanding I still have an attitude problem in which I first assume I won't understand a word. After a long gap and I cease to listen to the remaining words I then slowly recognize a number of the words – not all. In the conversation about the neighbours the president said something I was sure I didn't understand and yet after a few seconds the light dawned the words he was using included aquilar or similar – one that I knew meant to rent which fitted well with this context but it took me sometime to realize [this]"*. Memorizing the target language was not an easy process for me.

Reading single words of the target language with the aim of becoming more familiar with them so that they can be

practised later seems to be one of my strategies. In entry 127, for example, I report *"To help my learning process now I try to look up two words at a time [in the dictionary] leaving my finger in place for the first word while I try to absorb the second. I read all the other surrounding definitions in case some of these words become a little more familiar so that when I want to learn them later the learning may be a little easier and then I return to the first word after learning the second and vice versa introducing a slight delay that seems to be necessary for me to retain any words or phrases. My learning of [the phrases] 'en vez de' and 'estoy a dieta' have now been used by me when speaking to a native speaker and this seems to have helped them be retained"*.

In entry 142 I stated: *"I accessed studyspanish for the specific purpose of looking at the ending of the past simple so that I could use this in the conversation. I [tried] to use the past with one of the teachers afterwards but noticed to my frustration that I could remember nothing of it. Spending more time with looking at the Berlitz book seemed to bring the ending to mind more readily and this was only after I had also been reminded verbally that when I wanted to say 'I had bought my flat only last year' the verb I was looking for was compré not apprendé ('I bought' not 'I*

learnt'). At least the ending to the past was now learnt because of the embarrassment from making such a silly mistake".

The learning situation needed to be memorable if the language was to be remembered. In entry 142 I also gave insight into my belief about what caused my memorization problems. I reported that *"some words [were] easily misused because they sound similar or I have learnt them in close proximity"*. This matched schema theory in the literature well. In entry 146 I commented that *"I decided to accept the fact that I have a real blockage over verb endings and the different tenses so I decided to simply read through the forms on a regular basis accepting the fact that I'll probably not remember them nor be able to use them until one day, I hope, it will 'click'. The main thing, I keep telling myself is not to panic approaching the learning with a relaxed frame of mind seems to help"*. In entry 149 it was obvious that much of the language had become familiar by this time for I stated: that in the exercise *"examples of the idiomatic usages of the verb tener [were] given. This seemed particularly useful for [I had] often [come] across them [before] but had difficulty in remembering whether it was hacer or tener that went with the rest of the phrases. Using these phrases here straight after an introduction to*

tener made real sense and will hopefully help me remember when to use tener". Providing clear examples of the target language to learn and practise seemed to be beneficial to acquiring the language.

In entry 150 the role of the design of the language source material in assisting memorization was evident for regarding 'Spanish in three Months' I reported: *"I had to go over [the learning material] twice because I hadn't remembered whether to use 'que' or 'lo que'. Now I hope I understand 'lo que' is used after a preposition".* The exercise was particularly useful because it was easy enough and incorporated exactly what I had just read about and being able to refer to the answers directly reinforced what the correct forms were.

In stage two, entry 158, further evidence is provided to support my belief that acquisition is supported by constant exposure to the language. In this entry I state: that I *"haven't tried to take note of or remember the words and phrases that were new to me – I am hoping that a little bit of 'osmosis' will occur and that after coming across the same phrases again in other contexts etc. they will eventually become part of the language for me without too much conscious application".*

Writing

While producing language in the form of speech has long been accepted as an important part of the language acquisition process, producing writing has not assumed the significance that it seemed to assume in this study. Practising the target language in any form will assist with becoming more familiar with the language and thus assist memorization to a limited degree. However, writing seemed to mark a significant turning point in the gradual development of my language acquisition.

There was evidence of the importance of writing in stage one. I referred to the importance of writing Spanish in relation to memory and testing implications in entry 85: "*The suggestion to review the language building sections when one gets a score of less than 40 out of fifty has little relevance to the needs I have. The main problem area is writing down the words correctly and odd missing words that I suspect do not need to be included. It depends how fussy you are. The mistake 'a la izquierda' I made by writing L'iszuierda happened each time which made me have four mistakes instead of one. The problem of using language at length is always a difficult one when testing and marking*". In entry 86: "*Writing words down definitely helps memory. With the test I 'cheated' in the marking for one*

letter wrong seems excessive to lose a whole mark when a whole sentence is requested".

In stage two writing was also considered important, but not always as important as other considerations, such as extending my vocabulary. In entry 93 (Appendix E), for example, I reported "*Doing the test was a good way of revising some of the grammar I had read but couldn't quite remember. I will probably need one or two more bits of tuition on the same and I may improve with writing more but I feel the priority is to extend vocabulary as much as possible while I am trying out the language for real while I am in Spain"*. I commented in entry 152: "*One of the problematic numbers is five cinco fifteen quinze, fifty cinquenta and 500 quinientos. I have written them from memory so will be able to see if I have remembered them correctly"*.

In stage three entry 207 writing took on increased significance. I wrote: "*I plan to write my diary in Spanish every week or month. I think this will be the only way for me to develop my Spanish. It is time to try to write the language"*. In entry 212 I indicated that I not only believed writing would assist my language acquisition, but that it may have a purpose for this thesis. I wrote: "*My Spanish writing could be used for assessment"*. However, I was aware

of my limitations for in entry 213 *"writing in Spanish may be an [appropriate] approach although it will be difficult for anyone else to understand what I really wanted to say. … up until now I didn't want to write Spanish at all. I found it boring and I make so many mistakes it is disheartening. However, now I feel I have reached the stage where trying to write will help me learn the Spanish"*. The role of the act of writing as part of the acquisition process is confirmed in entry 224, for in this entry I made it clear that the need was for me to practise the writing, in spite of my numerous mistakes. In entry 224 I stated: *"Already it seems apparent that I should approach reading with meticulous care, listening with little concern for detail but more for a vague understanding of the overall meaning and to the writing below – I perhaps should take considerable care, I won't because I know I would write nothing if I had to be correct"*. In entry 263 I stated that I was: *"writing naturally, trying to translate and comparing my translation with another offered from a website"* and *"my attempts at writing Spanish compared with an internet translation may indicate a certain level of my success"*.

Using feedback

From stage one the importance and effect of feedback

seemed significant. In entry 64, for example, (as mentioned previously) I stated that "*I am still unwilling to knuckle down to actually writing down the answers etc. Part of this is because I know there will be no immediate check on whether I have written correctly. That is why I find trying to answer the questions in my head and looking up the answers directly is more interesting for me to do. Whether it is more effective in the learning process is another question. With exercise 2 in which you matched the person with the job that the person did and where the person worked, I found it saved time in just reading the answers directly. Conscious that the process of reading and re-reading given words to search for a set question may have helped me remember the words better, I still felt that it was important to come across the correct answers immediately – so that I didn't 'teach myself' something wrong"*. Knowing that I would not be receiving feedback and that my use of Spanish would not be corrected, my attitude seemed to have a significant influence on my strategy. The need for feedback in terms of having the correct forms readily available for comparison is reported in entry 86: "*The summary and the review were particularly helpful for they provided revision with examples that were simple enough to get most of them right with the answers being readily available on the tape"*.

In stage two, in entry 125 I reported *"At this stage I feel it is vitally important to be given the answers to check immediately if I have been right or not otherwise I could be reinforcing wrong usage which is not the plan"*. In entry 173 I reported that *"any of my answers [in this cloze procedure exercise] could have suited the phrase or sentence and I could not discover if all of my suggestions were possible – only one answer was considered correct – but at least I could find out what this was easily by double clicking the words in the sentence. … I really like using the interactive approach WITH ANSWERS quickly available"*.

In stage three the feedback the parallel texts gave was believed to be invaluable. In entry 198 with regard to my reading parallel texts, I stated: *"I still feel I would like to understand more from the Spanish without referring to the English so I feel a little 'anxious' about my slow progress although I feel this method will help me considerably because it gives such immediate feedback"*. Finally, in stage three the importance of 'feedback' was emphasized by the design of this thesis which used a known examination as feedback on my apparent success (or lack of success) in my language acquisition at the end of the learning period. In the last entry (entry 267) I reported that I was *"very motivated to succeed and prove that all my work up to now*

has been worth it" and (as mentioned previously) that *"The teacher awarded me a "C" grade in GCSE – success at last! (I was hoping for an F at best)"*.

Developing familiarity of the language by means of reading or 'immersion' in continuous text

The development of my understanding of the language learning process altered from my belief in the early stages that the most important aspect of all was for me to acquire single words of vocabulary that I would know from a direct translation into English. In entry 5 in stage one, for example I tried to learn the language in small chunks and stated that I believed I should *"not concern myself with any 'overall need or view'"*.

However, approximately half way through the first stage in entry 40, I reported that I was trying to use language in a more cohesive, less restricted manner. My strategy was *"listening and speaking trying to integrate without conscious construction"*. In entry 64 I state: *"I found it saved time in just reading the answers directly. [I was] conscious that the process of reading and re-reading given words to search for a set question may have helped me remember the words better"*. I gradually developed a belief that increasing the familiarity of a word or words would be

beneficial, even if I could not remember the word(s) properly or if I could not translate them directly into English. In entry 65 when I *"decided to be less conscious and just practise reading and listening more without worrying about details and lack of comprehension I [questioned] … if I didn't stop to make sure I understood absolutely everything could I understand any of it later by just having more experience? [This attitude] did somehow help. I remembered some of the material [I thought I couldn't] at the time […]"*. In entry 65 I also reported: *"if I'm learning to speak later I hope my skimming will accelerate my vocabulary eventually for I have found rather than trying to remember if I forget about this need and just allow myself to be aware that I have come across a familiar word and then if I feel I really need to know that word I look it up in the dictionary this may help me extend my vocab eventually"*. In entry 88 I *"read about 'what is' (como es), adjectives and proposition 'de' with interest. [This strategy was worthwhile] because I got full marks for the next activity"*.

Clearly reading the language had some interrelationship with memorising the language. In this entry, the type of language I read may have influenced my ability to remember it. The diary entry seemed to refer to one-or-two-word

phrases that I may have thought would be useful for my own language use rather than a lengthier section on word building more related to the needs of the language source material.

I was not wholly convinced of the effectiveness of reading in stage two. In entry 128 I commented "*I continue to use the textbook I purchase for simple reading of the grammatical facts while assuming that I will retain little. {I will] just become a little more familiar with what is going on*". In entry 141 (Appendix E), there is a hint of some of my later confidence in the role of reading in the language acquisition process, I wrote: "*I read through the list of grammar rules in the Berlitz Spanish Learner's Guide. Just reading it through I know is not a 'sensible' way to learn but it helps to reinforce the occasional vaguely remembered features and on occasions explains something that has been a little confusing more clearly giving me a little more confidence to try it out*". The influence of the manner in which I read the texts seemed to have an important influence. In entry 162 (Appendix E) I reported: "*When I allowed myself to read out of interest and not try to retain what was happening I was far more motivated to go on*". My different methods of reading, e.g. for gist or with meticulous attention all seemed to have

some relevance.

In stage two, my attitude developed for I considered my interest in the material was paramount and stated in entry 99 that I was *"fed up so looked at new material"*. My reading strategies varied and so were not always consistently applied e.g. in entry 112 I decided to try different approaches to learning vocabulary, but I became so engrossed with the process, I did not keep sufficiently accurate records of the results to provide the useful information I intended. However, the method I suggested was applied and so is indicative of my attitude to which method I believed would be successful to a degree at the time. The method in this entry was described as follows: *"I will write down 3 different sets of 10 new words of vocabulary in Spanish to learn. The first group I will 'learn' by reading the whole list 3 times and then each word 3 times. I will write the English translation next to the Spanish word and immediately after learning write the Spanish words next to the covered Spanish […]"*. Reading repeatedly seemed to be one of my preferred strategies for learning. However, a complete change of approach was adopted in one of the next entries (entry 114) in which I commented that *"reading may help me become more immersed in Spanish [when I] could read [the] English [translation] without interruption and confusion"*.

In entry 169 I commented that my *"Memory [was] not working …so I'm settling on persistence"*. I also reported that my approach was to *"read, read and re-read – while [thinking about the meaning and usage]"*. I suggested it *"may help me to remember some of the material as I did for my A levels – reading a short section three times then the whole three times without worrying about whether I was going to remember it all or not"*.

Using output as part of the language learning process

There were entries in stage one that indicated my belief that practising the language in the form of speech would assist with the acquisition of the target language. Examples of such entries include entry 9, entry 43 and entry 89. In entry 9 I stated: *"Even though I attempted to speak the language as much as I could in spite of my limitations, the people I spoke to did not seem to belittle my feeble attempts as I half expected"*. In entry 43 I thought it important to report that *"I made an effort to understand and to try to speak"*.

In a number of entries around entry 65 I indicate that speaking was a skill I would probably intend to acquire 'later' for I stated: *"if I'm learning to speak later I hope my skimming will accelerate my vocabulary eventually"*.

In entry 89 there seemed to be a purpose for my speech production: *"this is what I am trying to do – communicate with Spanish people effectively"*. In entry 93 (Appendix E)it was clear to me at the time that speech production concerned more than recalling vocabulary, there was also a need to learn to be able to pronounce the unfamiliar sounds fluently. In entry 93 I stated: *"The exercise which takes out certain phrases from the given dialogue is excellent for there is a need to be able to get my tongue around unfamiliar combinations of sounds in these phrases with an effort to repeat until I can say them quickly gives me a chance and also alerts me to the difficulties in trying to speak a new language quickly it is not just understanding the vocabulary that matters it is simply being able to string the new sounds together efficiently"*.

In stage two, entry 124 (Appendix E) my need to practise speaking was in evidence. I reported: *"Tomorrow will be my first Spanish lesson one-to-one and I am hoping for a very patient teacher who will let me move very slowly and try to speak the language using many cues from written vocabulary. We shall see"*. In entry 129, I commented on the difficulty of responding and how this was affected by my attitude: *"The reading comprehension was fairly easy but when it came to me responding I didn't have any idea of what*

was wanted or what to say. Consequently, I now feel the need to at least try to express myself in the language faults and all so the plan is to practise doing so even when in the UK. I tried out a bit of Spanish in a new restaurant by the harbour but I felt I seemed to be going backwards words and phrases I should have been able to use I couldn't because I feel unable to rather than I am actually unable to because of lack of language". In entry 132 concerning my one-to-one lessons I commented that I *"felt [the lessons] were necessary to push me forwards. By practising language productions and by having a teacher correct me and offer me solutions to my language production problems, I believed I was acquiring language"*. This extends Swain's pushed output notion (Swain 1993), for the process was more than my syntactical construction, it was my need to practise recalling vocabulary, constructing the language for output, pronouncing the language fluently. I believed I needed to practise regularly in order to develop fluency (or even automaticity) so that I could communicate successfully. The need for practising in order to develop faster more fluent production was evident in entry 139. *"The teacher Emily responded well when it was clear I just wanted conversation. The way she corrected me just enough and the way she provided me with the missing vocabulary even though I knew I*

knew it helped the flow of the conversation considerably". I reported that *"I seemed to forget what [the teacher] told me quite easily and even when I tried to make myself use the vocabulary or the phrase again I forgot. Part of the reason for this was the effort in forming a new phrase about a new idea – this was one reason for the slow recall. I now marshal together the Spanish corner of my mind before speaking"*. By entry 140, there was no doubt that practice was the key: *"a decision to make myself use whatever limited vocabulary I have to achieve the end of some sensible communication still leaves a gap in the meaning but it has given me the confidence to speak and I find myself going out without a dictionary most of the time although I am sure I would benefit from it greatly"*.

In entry 144 I reinforced these ideas with: *"I think I will just have to assume that absorbing and using the past tense will take a long time and like a dripping tap I will have to continue to try using the forms asked to be corrected read the grammar associated with it for a large number of times before it will become a natural part of my Spanish"*.

In entry 148 I stated that my *"determination to use what language I had, helped"* the language acquisition process and *"I did not want to make too many mistakes in*

front of a younger person but also wanted to make progress and the only way to do this was to try to speak, mistakes and all". In entry 148 the effect of attitude was expressed: *"It became obvious that there are more than two ways of saying the same thing and I soon realized that I really needed to stick to the more simple forms and to use them a lot so that I became more confident. We spent some time translating and when he translated for me I became irritated with the knowledge that I should have been able to do it. The problem was, of course, lack of confidence and lack of knowledge and appreciation of the grammatical needs particularly the endings of the words.*

At one stage I got fed up with my inadequacy and decided with gritted teeth that I really was going to be able to translate better than I was managing. At this stage I believe I could translate more quickly and effectively but obviously with piles of mistakes. I also noticed that in this stage at last I could reuse some words I had acquired in the previous lessons such as usually normalmente". It appeared that my determination to succeed was one of the major factors within my language acquisition process. Lack of confidence was also an issue in entry 148: *"My low standard irritates me and my lack of confidence inhibits me from using the language as effectively as I may"*.

In stage three my belief that continued practice combined with a determination to succeed was endorsed further. In entry 181 (Appendix E), for example, I reported: I was *"very motivated to be able to extend the conversation so that I can become one of the society but realize I have limitations. Now that I have been visiting this restaurant frequently the waiters and owners are now treating me more as a friend than a visiting stranger who is a foreign English person. They seem to realize I am trying to communicate in their language and so speak to me without making any compensation for my poor level of understanding. When I indicate I don't understand they repeat exactly what they have just said without slowing up or changing words. I have sometimes managed to say in Spanish "other words" and some of them have managed to change the words to simpler ones for me to understand (and some haven't). This communication in general is very motivating and I want to continue to try speaking much more than I did in the earlier stages"*.

My needs in trying to communicate with native speakers is described in a little more detail in entry 206 *"speaking to people who are willing to adjust their language so that I can participate at a lower level than normal speech might be a good idea"*. In entry 222 (as reported previously) I

reported *"Having tried to make myself speak no matter how limited my language has probably helped for now I launch into any conversation I think I can initiate with the locals but I often have to say – I'm sorry I don't understand Spanish much for I don't understand them at all sometimes. I'm not sure if it is complete lack of vocabulary on my part or their thicker accents on their part"*.

Entry 225 offers more insight into my attitude: *"today I noticed that my blithe comments that I don't have any anxiety at all may be quite untrue. I might think I am not anxious but I found today that when I was involved in Spanish conversation I often panicked, didn't believe I had any Spanish words to express the simple sentences I needed and went blank and incommunicative – letting the other speakers provide the missing words. Immediately after my failed attempt to take part in the conversation I often thought – Of course, I knew that word – why didn't I use it? – panic and anxiety I would accept as reasons"*. Entry 243 offers some support for the notion that the act of speaking the language assists language acquisition: *"speaking the words out loud seemed to help"*. Other important aspects of communication by speech were highlighted, for example, in entry 258 I stated: *"my age may be helping with starting up conversations – I am not seen as a threat and people are*

willing to try to speak to me". In the final entry, in the speaking section of my GCSE examination, speaking was a significant part of my final 'C' grade score, so my determination to succeed in this area, along with the other contributory factors (such as the constant need to practise speaking, the need to learn how to pronounce the unfamiliar way in which the different sounds were combined, and the need to develop confidence) may have contributed to this apparent success.

Developing a critical awareness of the effect of teachers and teaching methods

It was clear in stage one, that I believed I would be able to teach myself Spanish by using a series of self-taught programmes and by trying to communicate with the local people in Spain for no mention was made of having one-to-one lessons.

It was only in stage two when I believed that having a teacher's input would be beneficial. In entry 123 I first indicated that part of my programme would contain one-to-one lessons with a trained teacher: *"I completed two tests in preparation for my trip to Spain when I plan to take a one-to-one course in learning Spanish"*. In entry 130, I commented on the nature of the learning experience with a trained teacher for I reported: *"It is important to have a*

good teacher who, for example, asked me to talk using the present or to talk using the past and my own experience. [The teacher] gave me a hint for example when suggested I could use the va plus verb form for the future or the [[...]] a form (the one that is more difficult and that I do not really know)".

In entry 140 I reported: *"At last I felt I was getting somewhere. The teacher chose the right moments to teach me something tolerated a number of errors and then started insisting I get certain bits right e.g. preposition and use of the past. The fact that I don't know it was obvious to me in the preparation for the lesson and I felt the need to get a bit of grammar especially in the verbs and their different tenses".* In entry 148, it was clear that I became aware of the value and difference between someone who is a trained teacher and someone who is a native speaker but who has no knowledge of relevant teaching practices. I stated *"one-to-one lessons good although a trained teacher may be better than a lay person".* Also in stage two, entry 148 I stated *"It is helpful to realize that P. is not a trained teacher so I could ask him to help me in the areas I knew needed help in still in the verbs, grammar and vocabulary – everything really".*

In stage three, in entry 202 my own teaching experience

while teaching English to two adult Spanish – speaking teachers seemed to have an effect on my attitude: *"I felt I had some 'empathy' with the teachers as a teacher myself and some shared feeling for their needs which differed from the usual 'advanced English' class"*. In entry 206 (Appendix A) attitude again seemed to affect learning from a teacher. I state: *"Conversation with friends feels as though it would be much more beneficial than conversing with a teacher in the sense I feel more willing and confident"*. Entry 217 gives insight into the invaluable input of teachers with regard to the correction of errors: *"Having the writing marked must have been some help and I did not try for I would not have known my errors without the teacher's input"*. A teacher's experience seemed to affect the learning for in entry 261 when I was *"speaking and sharing language with a native speaker of Spanish who is also a teacher and who wants to learn English as much as I want to learn Spanish"* we were *"both willing to take risks because as teachers we [knew] the need to do this. [I was] speaking and listening and asking for words or points of grammar when I [could not] remember them or [did] not know them"*. However, attitude remains an important issue for in entry 265 I was *"still afraid of taking too many risks – my 'teacher' might 'correct me'"*.

In entry 267 (as described previously) my teaching experience affected my GCSE examination: *"as a teacher myself I tried to follow my own guidelines for coping with exams and this helped – trying to be accurate and to say as much as possible in the speaking test or making wild guesses when I didn't know – something written down is better than nothing. I was very anxious but controlled enough to cope. I knew I needed to try to show I could use the past, present and future. [I was] very motivated to succeed and prove that all my work up to now has been worth it. [I was determined not to be] put off by being out of place as a pupil in a modern secondary school. It felt just like taking A level exams again (taken some 30+ years ago) I felt the same difficulty in revising for a language exam but I went on the net and made myself try to immerse myself in Spanish through the free translation sites for I felt I really needed to do this as I had not been practising my Spanish up until now. The teacher awarded me a "C" grade in GCSE – success at last! (I was hoping for an F at best)"*.

4.6. Analysis conclusion

This empirical case-study of the development of my understanding and knowledge of Spanish and of the process of the language acquisition is a study of my learning over time which also focused closely on my interpretation of the data and of my learning experience. The evidence is based directly on my reflective observations in the diary which were rigorously interpreted and a system of cross-referencing supported the belief that the findings may be considered valid and reliable.

Analysis 1 studied the content of the entries to determine the phenomena that seemed to be most important. Analysis 2 studied specific aspects that the entries reflected and the method of interpretation was the precursor to the final illuminative analyses. The final third and fourth analyses reinterpreted the individual diary entries closely and developmental trends were revealed.

The conclusion represents a cohesive investigation of what developed during the gradual process of language acquisition that I experienced as a mature learner and as such, provides insight into the process of language acquisition for other mature students, and, indeed language learners of any age and provides a resource for a wealth of new research opportunities in this field. The central focus

of this analysis is on an *interpretive* analysis of the content of diary entries leading to a final determination of the nature of the advancement of my knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of the language acquisition process.

Chapter five: Conclusion

Variable interpretations and perspectives of the nature of development in language learning theory and the uniqueness of individuals make a definitive 'final description' of the development of language acquisition in a mature learner impossible to achieve. The observations recorded in this study originate from the internal processes of the mature learner's thinking which make this study stand out from other more externally driven studies. In this study the mature individual has recorded her reflections on her language acquisition experience in her diary entries written over a period of two-and-a-half years.

The entries were analysed from four different perspectives:

- *Analysis 1: a preliminary study of the chart entries under the prompt headings to indicate most frequently mentioned phenomena.*
- *Analysis 2: (of the chart entries under the prompt headings) to reveal specific aspects of these phenomena*
- *Analysis 3: A third interpretive analysis to look at the entries more closely as individual entries (irrespective of the prompt headings) to reveal implicit and explicit phenomena indicated*
- *Analysis 4: entries also looked at individually to give insight and a detailed description of*
  1. the nature of the advancement of my knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of
  2. my knowledge and understanding of the process of my language acquisition.

The findings were verified by internally constructed
checking mechanisms:

- Counting procedures were repeated in reverse
- Diary entries were cross-referenced

The analyses revealed new insights into the nature of
the individual's advancement of knowledge and understanding
of a new second language (Spanish) and of the language
learning process in terms of her understanding.

The progress of the analysis of the diary is represented in
the table below:

TABLE 5.1 STUDY SUMMARY

Prelim Study Analysis 1	Analysis 2 (listed in rank order of support)	Analysis 3	Analysis 4: Developmental trends
Language learning difficulties	Place (UK) 187	Language source or materials	Stage one
Approach	Age (no influence) 181	Method of teaching and learning	Stage two
Attitude to risk-taking and criticism	Language content (words) 180	My attitude	Stage three
Age	Approach (enhancement) 176	Memory	
Cognitive style	Interest in language (interest shown) 174		
Success	Motivation (motivated) 168		
Motivation	Success(achieved) 157		
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate	Content (new and revised) 135		
Control of anxiety	Personality (determination) 134		
Previous learning history	Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate (positive action) 119		
Interest in language	Attitude to risk-taking and criticism (risk not significant) 100		
Personality	Input(for learning Spanish) 96		
Empathy	Previous learning history (no entry) 89		
Interest in culture	Control of anxiety (not featured) 85		
Test results	Cognitive style(listening-speaking) 78		
Extra	Language learning difficulties (memory) 71		
	Interest in culture (was interested in culture) 70		
	Empathy (expressed) 62		

Throughout the analyses four main phenomena emerged as the most salient for the learner during her language acquisition experience. These phenomena included the language source material, attitude, learning method, and memory and were interdependent elements of an integrated process. The process was described in detail in terms of the learner's developing attitude towards aspects of the learning process, especially in terms of the four main phenomena. Each of the four different perspectives of the data contains mutual elements that were gradually described in more detail as the analyses progressed. The interrelationship of the perspectives is clarified by the chart below:

TABLE 5.2 INTEGRATION OF SALIENT PHENOMENA

Prelim Study Analysis 1	Analysis 2 (listed in rank order of support)	Analysis 3	Analysis 4: Developmental trends
Language learning difficulties	place (UK) 187	Language source or materials	Stage one (entries 1-89)
Approach	age (no influence) 181	Method of teaching & learning	Stage two (entries 90 – 180)
Attitude	language content (words) 180	My attitude	Stage three (entries 180 – 267)
Age	approach (enhancement) 176	Memory	
cognitive style	interest in language (interest shown) 174		
Success	motivation (motivated) 168		
Motivation	success (achieved) 157		
Adaptation	content (new and revised) 135		
control of anxiety	personality (determination) 134		
previous learning history	adaptation (positive action) 119		
interest in language	attitude to risk (risk not significant) 100		
personality	input (for learning Spanish) 96		
empathy	previous learning history (no entry) 89		
interest in culture	control of anxiety (not featured) 85		
test results	cognitive style (listening-speaking)78		
extra	language learning difficulties (memory) 71		
	interest in culture		
	empathy (expressed) 62		

Explanation of the above chart:

In an integrated approach to the language acquisition process it shows, by way of example, in Analysis 1 and 2, that language learning differences were strongly related to my difficulties in retaining specific words in the language content. If I was not motivated, if I did not feel that I was succeeding and if I believed the source material did not include sufficient revision of specific vocabulary, the learning became difficult. My approach needed to enhance my learning, to encourage me to maintain motivation, to make me feel as though my learning was successful and I believed I needed to approach the learning with particular determination. My attitude seemed to be a consistent influence.

In Analysis 1, the notion of 'attitude' was restricted to my attitude towards risk-taking and criticism, but following the initial intentions of this study (to interpret terms in their widest possible meanings) my attitude was described later in the analysis as my attitude towards the learning process in all its elements. If I was interested in the Spanish language or in specific language items at the

time of the learning and if I generally felt motivated enough and maintained a sense of determination and persistence to succeed I believed I would be able to learn effectively.

In Analysis 3 my main focus of attention in my efforts to describe my language acquisition as fully as possible concerned the phenomena: language source material, method of teaching and learning, my attitude and memory. In analysis 3 these were found to impregnate most of my entries in different forms and from different perspectives.

The language content of the source material was important. If the level of the language matched or was at a slightly higher level than my current language knowledge, if I adapted the language source to suit my learning needs and preferences, if I was motivated by the content or the method inherent in the specific course I was following, if I believed the source material was assisting my learning, if the content was interesting and motivating and if I could maintain my sense of determination to overcome any shortcomings of the language source material I believed my language acquisition would progress.

The method of self-teaching and learning that was incorporated in my learning experiences was a consistent theme within my diary entries. The language content needed to encourage focusing on a few single words, especially in the earlier stages of the learning period. My approach needed to include conscious actions that enhanced my learning experience. My interest in language was important and a significant effect of this was my constant use of a method of memorizing the language by associating the target language with other known languages. Methods that motivated me to make an effort to learn were important as were methods that encouraged me to feel that I had been successful. The language content needed to incorporate both new and revision material so that I did not feel I had too many new words to learn at the time, and so that I could practise the language I knew as part of the learning process. Finally, the methods used needed to feed my determined attitude so that I would maintain the difficult experience of trying to acquire the language.

Much of the material in the previous paragraphs refers to the importance of my attitude throughout the learning

experience. If I made conscious decisions in response to my attitude to help make the experience effective and positive, if I acted on my apparent interest in languages, if I developed a feeling of success, if I liked the way the content of the language source contained sufficiently motivating proportions of new and revision language and if I maintained a sense of determination and persistence I believed my acquisition progressed. My interpretation of 'determination' inferred a strong emotional attitude, i.e. an expression of exerting my strong will to succeed whereas my usage of 'persistence' inferred a constant, almost dogged and continuous participation in learning Spanish, no matter what influencing phenomena affected this learning.

The phenomenon of memory featured strongly throughout my diary entries. My concern with memory was largely from the perspective of how I memorized elements of the target language. The language content of the source material affected my memorization. If there was an appropriate body of language to learn presented in an appropriate manner, I believed memorization was likely to be effective. Many of my descriptions of my different approaches included discussion

of the approaches and methods I used that aided memorization of the language. My interest in languages became an important part of the memorization process, for one of my main methods of memorizing the language was to associate the target language with other known languages. If I was motivated in the learning process, if I believed I was successful I believed I remembered the language effectively.

The findings of this study confirm much that is known about the language acquisition process, for example, the need for the language input to be appropriate for the language needs of the learner, the invaluable contribution of learning strategies and the importance of the effects of individual characteristics. Theoretical perspectives represented in the literature chapter (Chapter two) were for the most part seen to be part of my language learning experience. Knowledge and understanding of Spanish and the learner's knowledge and understanding of the process of the learner's acquisition of Spanish were central to the findings of this study. Throughout the study, my knowledge is described in terms of conscious (or explicit) knowledge as well as subconscious (or implicit) knowledge, although

conscious knowledge maintained a greater significance due to the nature of the study which explores the advancement of knowledge in an individual observed and analysed by that individual.

Difficulties of establishing validity were addressed by means of internally devised methodological techniques that checked the individual's findings and by approaching the diary entry data from four different perspectives that were shown to support the findings of the third, interpretive analysis. In this third analysis, four main phenomena (language source material, method of learning, attitude and memory) emerged as most important to me as I progressed through my language learning process. Each analysis in turn highlighted the significance of these phenomena and their effects in different, interrelated ways so that a final cohesive description of the process of developments within this learner emerged.

Theories of cognitive psychology that deal with the processes involved in thought, perception, comprehension, memory and learning had considerable bearing (Richards, Platt and Platt 1985). Both 'fluid' and 'crystallized'

intelligence as described by Merriam and Caffarella (1999)
although not discussed overtly in the analysis,
nevertheless played a significant part: most of the
strategies concerned my involvement with complex relations
within the language acquisition process and my need to
analyse, change and develop my approach to the learning
process and my selections and strategies in use. In
addition, languages that I had acquired (including my
native language English) formed important associations as
part of my cognitive strategies that sought to improve my
memorization techniques. One particular aspect of
memorization processes of my language acquisition depended
largely on repetition or *practice* of the language in
different ways. As indicated by Lafford, Collentine and
Karp (2003), lexicon was a central concern in the need to
practise and memorize the language. Other forms of
repetition included repetition of particular phrases in
drills, of practice exercises in a website programme,
repeating the reading of lengthy prose passages and
approaching the language acquisition process in ways that
reinforced a gradual development of familiarity with the

language.

    Krashen's notion of the need for input to be at a slightly higher level, the importance of input changing into the more helpful 'intake' as described by Richards, Platt and Platt (1985), and the way in which I developed the intake as comprehensible input in terms of what I understood (as expressed by Swain 1993) were all important aspects observed within the process of acquisition in this study. However, the detail offered in this study stems from a deeper understanding of the advancement of this understanding and knowledge in an individual expressed by me as the learner. This offers a greater understanding than most studies of a number of different learners observed in a more general approach. The advantage for me was the feedback I received during my practice of the language. Information received in the form of correct answers to exercises that I had completed, or in the form of informal or formal comments made by teacher or by people with whom I was communicating was an important integral part of the learning process. Moreover, I believed that the feedback needed to be acted upon by me for language acquisition to

progress.

This study supports the view that second language acquisition is a complex and fluctuating process. Grove (2003) describes the stages of acquisition in terms of Stage one as a silent/pre-speech period, Stage two as a period in which single word responses emerge and Stage three as a period in which phrases, sentences and finally more complex discourse emerges in the output of the learner (Grove 2003). This description represents a superficial description of the three stages in this study. The subtle differences developed within this study lead to a deeper description of the stages of acquisition and of the process through which I acquired Spanish. The silent period was present but particularly brief, I produced limited output very early in the learning period.

Stage three was not only a period in which phrases, sentences and (some) more complex discourse emerged in my output, but the significance of the acquisition process focused on the advancement of my understanding of the written form of the language. My increased understanding of the messages within lengthy texts assumed considerable

importance and in the third stage of my experience there was considerable support for Anderson's notion that the meaning of a text rather than its exact wording is more memorable for learners (Anderson 1995).

In common with recent theoretical developments, output was an important part of my acquisition process. However, this output was one of many different aspects that I believed helped my language acquisition progress. More significant still, only in the final stages of my acquisition, did I believe that output in the form of practising writing would aid my acquisition. It was conspicuous in this study that, although the writing of single words was considered a useful memory aid in the initial stages, it was much later in the development of my acquisition that I believed expressing myself in the language in writing would be of benefit.

As mentioned above, this study confirms the broad spectrum of contributing phenomena suggested by Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003:124). The "*spoken and written form, frequency, grammatical patterns and collocations, semantic, pragmatic, stylistic and register constraints,*

sociolinguistic aspects and connotations" as well "*as associations with other related words*" were a significant part of my observations. The written form of the language, semantic aspects, and my criticism of vocabulary tests as insufficient guides to the acquisition of language supports the views of Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003). Their comments regarding the significance of the depth of word knowledge related strongly to comments within this study regarding the significance of the familiarity of the language. Anderson's comment that interactive images help memory supported the strong dependency of many of my memory strategies on such interactive images, especially with regard to Gruneberg's 'Linkword' method. However, in this study, such memorization seemed to be short-lived and, in contrast, there *were* implications for long-term memorization. Anderson's comment that "*We may store everything we attend to, and memory failure may be due to forgetting and retrieval factors rather than to acquisition factors*" has particular relevance to this study (Anderson 1995:225).

There was evidence in this study that it is possible

that language a learner had committed to memory some time previously may remain stored in the memory. However, the fact that I could not retrieve this language for use did not necessarily mean that the language was not stored in my memory. The difficulty was a matter of retrieval rather than memorization. Some language items learnt many years previously by me could be retrieved for use, from language that I believed that I had never fully acquired and would not be able to retrieve (e.g. Latin and French lexicon and grammatical forms).

However, it was only during the *process* of my language learning that this became evident. Language acquisition tests such as the vocabulary tests did not reveal this evidence. In addition Swain's emphasis that the learner's language production assists in the acquisition process by forcing the movement from semantic to syntactic processing, (Swain 1993; Swain and Lapkin 1995), was not a major factor. While moving from semantic to syntactic processing occurred, more significantly I believed that as I advanced in my understanding of the process, the deeper meaning of the text seemed to have particular relevance, (in addition to

syntactic considerations).

As mentioned previously, recent emphasis on the role of output in language acquisition was supported to a limited extent by this study. However, although Swain's 'pushed output' was relevant, the overall theme of output in this study was the importance of *practising* acquired language. The need to find alternative language was only part of the process and syntactic processing (also highlighted by Swain) was only one of many different aspects of the language acquisition process. Connectionists' views (i.e. those who subscribe to schema theory) as described by Lafford, Collentine and Karp (2003) emerged as important. The connected nature of my memorized language was observed to affect my memorization and retrieval. Estarellas's belief in the importance of the phonological content of the language, (Estarellas 1963), was also confirmed in this study for there was much concern with the pronunciation needs.

Learning strategies were particularly important phenomena in the reflective comments in the diary. A wide range of strategies were developed and become an assumed part of my language learning method by the third stage of

acquisition. Some strategies became particularly important, especially the strategy of associating the target language with other known language. Compensation strategies described by Bull and Yingxin (2001:8) which include selecting topics, avoiding communication, adjusting the message, getting help, using alternative synonyms, coining (making up) words and mime were a few of my strategies employed by me. Metacognitive strategies described by Richards,Platt and Platt (1985:227) were also apparent in this study and included conscious preparation, decision-making, selection, monitoring and appraisal of the learning material, the learning event and of the finished linguistic product during use. Appraisal of teachers and teaching methods was also important. In addition, affective strategies were apparent and Anderson's statement that *"People may encode less of what they experience in a high arousal state, but they may better retain what they do encode"* (Anderson 1995:262) was particularly relevant. When I made an embarrassing humorous error in language use, the particular words were remembered well after the experience. The importance of the effect of the learner's positive attitude (e.g. the learner's

determination) supported the findings of Jones (Jones 1996:64). Noels' notion that the nature of motivation may be expressed in terms of 'a continuum of self-determination' and of being 'inherent in the language learning process', were significant in this study (Noels 2003).

The description by Jones that strategies *"appeared to undergo radical shake-ups as developments in underlying proficiencies fed each other and permitted new strategies to come into play"* (Jones 1996:138) was also particularly relevant. Throughout my experience, I was constantly adapting my strategies to accommodate the different language sources, level of language, language content of the texts, and contexts in accordance with my gradually advancing knowledge and understanding. My need to control the learning programme was important, in agreement with Biggs and Moore (1993) and the integrated approach of this study to the language learning process towards the end of the analysis of the data supports the representation advocated by (Macleod 2002:1).

Teaching methods were relevant to this study, for I am an experienced teacher of a language (English as a Foreign

Language) and I have had considerable practice in applying strategies to the teaching in terms of the learners' needs and preferences. The influence of the aims and strategies of the teacher is in no doubt (Sidwell 1987, Cleugh 1970, Lightbown 1990 and VanPatten 1998) and as I advanced in my understanding of the language acquisition process, developing a critical awareness of teaching and learning methods was an integral part.

The significant effect of individual variability is confirmed and the interpretation of the learner/researcher is an important factor in the insight that has been developed within this study, for, in agreement with McMahon (1999) and Fairclough (1989), as the sense of a language unit is impregnated with an indefinable but undeniable accumulation of meanings that the individual has acquired, I was able to interpret more exactly the contents of the diary entries that provide the data for the findings of this study. In agreement with the description provided by Ellis (1994:18), the learner's internal cognitive processes were important and included: the transfer of knowledge from the first and other languages, how I noticed and reconstructed

input in terms of my current second language knowledge, my use of innate knowledge of linguistic universals, and my processes for using second language knowledge in performance especially in real communicative situations.

Age was expected to be an important influential phenomenon in this study, but the effect of age was not as strong as expected. This concurs with the agreement by some authors that *"with the right attitude, learning could be successful regardless of chronological age"* (Benson and Nunan 2004:153). In common with Altmann and Kemper (2006) age did not handicap language production as much as is commonly assumed for it was found that increased carefulness and persistence with age could compensate for any decline (Sutherland 1997). Making a determined effort was an important issue revealed in the analysis. In common with Knox (1978) there were also indications that the greater experience of the learner due to age supported a generally better understanding of world knowledge, formal reasoning, vocabulary, and the use of language than the learner had in her youth. The difficulties and slowness of retrieval reported in this study may not have been influenced by the

age phenomenon but by memory capacity, for some authors
maintain that adults pack more into the same given space
(Biggs and Moore 1993:213) and as a consequence of this, I,
as an adult learner, had more knowledge with which to
interact during the formation of my output. In common with
Knox (1978), I tended to underestimate my own abilities. I
found that I was constantly expressing very high
expectations and my estimates of successful acquisition were
not matched by other's comments. I relied heavily on
applying appropriate coping strategies as supported by the
views of Yorke (2004:25).

Breen believes that the problem of accurately
describing "*the actual relationship between learner thinking
and learner action"* remains unresolved while we cannot
clearly define how much learners' background knowledge and
previously acquired strategies influence the learners'
interpretation of their learning tasks (Breen 2001:174-175).
However, while this problem is acknowledged, this study
provides some insight into this interrelationship. While a
precise determination of the degree of influence is beyond
the learner's knowledge, a considerable amount of the

conscious consideration made by me during my language acquisition, supported a much deeper description of the nature of much of the background knowledge and acquired strategies I incorporated in this process.

Benson and Nunan (2004) indicate the new ground opened by this study for they state: *"Although SLA research tells us a good deal about the factors that 'make up' learner diversity, […] little attention is paid to the ways in which these factors develop over time or as a consequence of individual experiences of language learning"* (Benson and Nunan 2004:11-12). This study offers insight into this problematic area and discusses the language learning experience of an individual and the gradual advancement of knowledge and understanding of Spanish and of the language acquisition process. My gradually developed insight into the nature of the process, of the phenomena involved and of the way in which these changed and developed was observed for a period of two-and-a-half-years.

While these findings relate specifically to an individual and are thus unique, they provide a resource for further and deeper studies of the process itself in terms of

individual development. While our world consists of a
population of variable individuals, there will always remain
the problem of the weakening of findings as they become part
of a more generalized discussion. In addition, this study
offers data that is not within the reach of external
observers. Incorporated in the observations of this
empirical study are the internal reflections and decisions
made by an individual during the language learning
experience. Impregnated within all the comments of this
individual is the effect of my attitude. However, the
development of the attitude and its effects offer rare
insight into the language learning process. A clear example
is when my attitude was observed to have an effect on my
ability to recall language, for I discovered if I *believed* I
did not understand, I *would not* understand, even if there
was evidence that the language was known to me previously
and that I could eventually recall the meaning of the
language in use. This adds significantly to our
understanding of the five aspects of successful language
learning listed by Ellis (i.e. concern for language form,
functional practice, an active task approach, an awareness

of the learning process and a capacity to use strategies flexibly (Ellis 1994:546-7)). Although these aspects were integral components of the discussion, they did not form the main structure of the analysis for, in comparison to this study, they were not as widely interpreted, they did not give the same degree of importance to affective phenomena (e.g. as described in the previous paragraph) and they were based on studies that externally observed 'good language learners', not on the report of an individual learner.

Finally, and most importantly, this study emphasizes the need for us to observe the language learning process itself and the subtle changes and developments within the process within an individual. Much of the current evidence supporting our understanding of the nature of the language acquisition process relies on a description of the products of this process and these descriptions are externally devised, observed and interpreted. This study highlights the fact that it is the process of the language learning experience observed from an internal perspective on which we should base our understanding, not the products of this process on which we currently rely.

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Appendix

Contents   Page

The Development of Language Acquisition in a Mature Learner by R. J. Westwell

Appendix A Chart 1 Entry number	Date	Age	Adaptation of new ideas	Approach	Attitude towards risk	Cognitive style
1	15/09/1999	'known' to be a disadvantage	-	Needed to use another reference early	willing to take risks but not yet - too early	Listen-repeat too shallow had to know word meanings
2	19/09/1999	-	-	Listening to tape as background	-	I put the tape on while doing other things
3	18/10/1999	tired more quickly than when younger	Changed course	Course better – slower and repetitive	Felt I was failing so I changed course – less risk better	I liked learning in steps as this course does
4	21/10/1999	-	Changed course	Course better – slower and repetitive	Felt I was failing so I changed course – less risk better	This is better – shorter chunks material organized
5	24/10/1999	I didn't feel 'old' . .I felt refreshed.	May benefit from listening for longer periods	Listening/repeating slowly with much repetition good	No risk taken settled for revision	Chunks of language at a time suit me
6	16/10/1999	Need for spelling = age difference?	Course too new to adapt	the fewer the words presented the better for me	No risk taken	Chunks of language at a time suit me
7	31/10/1999	Memory problem not just age?	-	-	-	Small number of words suits me
8	01/11/1999	Age = more worried about difficulties	No change	I like the format esp. revision, music repetition	making more mistakes = less willing to take risks	listening -speaking
9	20/11/1999	Language slow stilted limited = age	Need to practise regularly	Good isolated and repeated words (Readers' Digest)	Willing to speak – not belittled by listeners	Listening-speaking (I feel I need to see the words written)
10	22/11/1999	Difficulty with retention and speed = age?	A dictionary would have helped; repetition?	Dictionary only good for pronunciation	Self criticism could easily have crept in but didn't	Listening-speaking

		Difficulties with memory = age?				I tried hurrying without worrying about result	grammar imp. occasionally e.g. 'tengo'
11	29/11/1999	-	-	-	-	-	Listening-speaking
12	11/01/2000	language too fast = inflexibility with age?	-	-	-	Little risk	Listening-speaking
13	13/01/2000	-	-	-	examples were given at a faster pace	-	-
14	14/01/2000	-	-	-	-	-	Listening-speaking
15	01/02/2000	-	-	-	-	-	Listening-speaking
16	05/02/2000	-	Learn more if material in short chunks?	-	Need reintroduction of vocab and breaks from concentration	-	Listening-speaking
17	14/02/2000	-	Need to reintroduce previous words sooner?	-	Need to reintroduce previous words sooner?	-	Listening-speaking
18	16/02/2000	-	-	-	-	-	Listening-speaking
19	17/02/2000	-	-	-	-	-	Listening-speaking
20	20/02/2000	-	-	-	-	-	Listening-speaking
21	21/02/2000	-	-	-	faster now saying some Spanish before the English.	-	Listening-speaking

22	22/02/2000	-	Need the written word for 'to do' (hacer)	using 'sounds like the English word' to remember	-		Listening-speaking
23	26a/02/2000	-	Chunks offered at a slower pace first better	Better-phrases of conversation played separately first	-		Listening-speaking
24	26b/02/2000	-	I will use the word key list first in future	-	-		Looking at word then Listening-speaking
25	27/02/2000	-	Should revise more but think better in a new course	Should repeat but don't want to	-		Reading of similar material then Listening-speaking
26	28/02/2000	-	-	-	-	untaught words 'threw me' more than expected	-
27	03/03/2000	-	-	Reading before helps structure Spanish first better	-		-
28	04a/03/2000	-	pause button and reading the vocab more successful	pausing reading vocab + English association good	-		reading listening-speaking
29	04b/03/2000	-	-	reinforcement of words not consistent - affects success	-		-
30	04c/03/2000	-	Using a different source makes the lang. 'real'	Using a different source makes the lang. 'real'	-		Associating words with French e.g. palabra +parler (Fr)
31	07a/03/2000	-	-	reading vocab first; listening-speaking	-		-
32	07b/03/2000	-	-	-	-		-

33	08/03/2000	-	-	reading vocab first; listening-speaking	-	-
34	09/03/2000	-	-	reading vocab first; listening-speaking	-	-
35	10/03/2000	-	-	-	-	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
36	12/03/2000	-	-	This revision needed -couldn't recall known words	-	Listening-speaking
37	16/03/2000	-	-	No subtitles but actions and pause button help	-	-
38	18/03/2000	difficulty in retaining vocab may be due to age	Didn't follow suggested method	Changed the course to suit my learning style	willing to take risks while on own; not worrying re tests	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
39	19a/03/2000	difficulty in retaining vocab may be due to age	Didn't follow suggested method	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
40	19b/03/2000	Not relevant	Need to keep trying	Constant listening with concentration seems to help	willing to take huge risks + frustration	List- sp. integrating without conscious construction
41	19c/03/2000	-	-	-	-	Gap-fill vocab
42	20a/03/2000	difficulty in retaining vocab may be due to age	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
43	20b/03/2000	difficulty in remembering vocab. may be due to age	Trying to communicate important	I made an effort to understand and to try to speak	willing to take a risk - otherwise how will I learn?	listening and speaking to real conversations

44	21/03/00	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
45	22a/03/2000	difficulty in retaining vocab may be due to age	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
46	22b/03/2000	difficulty in remembering vocab. may be due to age	Trying to communicate important	I made an effort to understand and to try to speak	willing to take a risk - otherwise how will I learn?	listening and speaking to real conversations
47	23/03/2000	the difficulty in retaining vocab. = to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
48	24/03/2000	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
49	25a/03/2000	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
50	25b/03/2000	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	Trying to communicate important	I made an effort to understand and to try to speak	willing to take a risk - otherwise how will I learn?	listening and speaking to real conversations
51	26a/03/2000	the difficulty in retaining vocab. = age	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
52	26b/03/2000	my difficulty in remembering vocab due to age?	Trying to communicate important	I made an effort to understand and to try to speak	willing to take a risk - otherwise how will I learn?	listening and speaking to real conversations
53	27a/03/2000	the difficulty in retaining vocab. = to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
54	27b/03/2000	the difficulty in remembering vocab. may be due to age	Trying to communicate important	I made an effort to understand and to try to speak	willing to take a risk - otherwise how will I learn?	listening and speaking to real conversations

55	28/03/2000	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
56	29/03/2000	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	listening and speaking to real conversations
57	30/03/200	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	reading vocabulary related to reading and listening texts
58	31a/03/200000	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	-
59	31b/03/20	the difficulty in remembering vocab. = to age?	trying to communicate seems important	I made an effort to understand and to try to speak	willing to take a risk - otherwise how will I learn?	-
60	1/04/2000	my difficulty in retaining vocab due to age?	didn't follow the suggested approach strictly	adapted the course to suit my learning style	willing to take many risks while on own	concentrated on tape and vocab
61	07/04/2000	-	-	-	-	-
62	28/04/2000	-	-	I still preferred to think of the answer only	-	Reading and listening for gist
63	29/04/2000	-	Decided to read vocabulary listed first	I ignored written material - for pair work vocab good	-	Reading and listening for gist
64	06/05/2000	still seems to make vocabulary learning difficult to retain.	-	-	-	Reading and listening for gist
65	14/05/2000	memory still the problem	less detailed in approach	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	Taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	Reading and listening for gist

66	15/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	less conscious in approach relaxed reading & listening
67	16a/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	less conscious in approach relaxed reading & listening
68	16b/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	less conscious in approach relaxed reading & listening
69	17/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming may help acquire vocab. for speaking	taking huge risks by skimming over the material	less conscious in approach relaxed reading & listening
70	18/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	less conscious in approach relaxed reading & listening
71	19/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	less conscious in approach relaxed reading & listening
72	21/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	less conscious in approach relaxed reading & listening
73	22/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	-
74	23/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	-
75	24/05/2000	memory still the problem	a conscious process of adapting to maintain motivation	skimming being familiar rather than remembering OK	taking huge risks skimming ignoring grammar	Structure of unit
76	13/08/2000	no apparent difference	trying a new approach - the web	widening my horizons keeps me interested-the web	willing to take risks	-

77	15/08/2000	-	-	Good choice oral exercises ask you to add information	-	Did not follow suggested method with own flashcards
78	16/08/2000	-	-	clear instructions provides constant revision 'easy'	-	
79	17/08/2000	-	oral exercises better if spoken then shown	Ideal slow with test = feeling of success	-	
80	18/08/2000	-	flashcards should be provided by computer – not me	ideal: one section at a time, new material that revises	no risk perceived	finding connecting references to the English
81	08/09/2000	-	Will write down what I want to remember	Order of words easier to write memorising mat.	-	Writing down to memorize word order instinctive?
82	10/09/2000	not significant	Need more vocab	listening to normal conversation useful	little risk when I have too little vocabulary	listening speaking - speed vocabulary too advanced
83	12/09/2000	Not relevant although poor retention	Humour helps	Enjoyed looking at the vocab and guessing meanings	-	Writing words down definitely helps memory
84	13/09/2000	Not really relevant	-	Alternative answers should have been acceptable	-	learn a 7 words put in sentences and return OK only
85	14/09/2000	No significant influence	Course and testing needs to be more helpful	Bad score = review language building sections not helpful	-	learn vocab say Sp from Eng revising previous e.g.
86	16/09/2000	no significant influence	- Writing words down definitely helps memory	Writing down words helps memory	-	Listening and speaking
87	17/09/2000	-	Ignore text advice – any Spanish will do me	Good advice = work briefly, learn max. 7 words then revise	willing to risk ignoring advice	following structure of course

#	Date	no significant influence	Ignored test – only testing English comprehension	listening & using– speaker adapted level to suit me	confident enough to take risks	trying to remember by completing a test
88	18a/09/2000	no significant influence	Ignored test – only testing English comprehension	listening & using– speaker adapted level to suit me	confident enough to take risks	trying to remember by completing a test
89	18b/09/2000	no significant influence	trying to speak to understanding people ideal?	communicate with Spanish people effectively	willing to risk being misunderstood in conversation	Looking at vocab first and revising good
90	19/09/2000	not relevant	-	not relevant	high demands in tests implied criticism not liked	picking and choosing from the exercises
91	20/09/2000	No significant influence	-	testing not very motivating when you don't score well	willing to take risks - not taking it too seriously	-
92	21/09/2000	No significant influence	vocabulary first then trying to remember good	words from text in listening but also has unknown words	willing to risk failing to completing a section	following structure of course
93	22/09/2000	No significant influence	chose what to do	Chose what to do	not worried	-
94	23a/09/2000	-	-	Watching video didn't learn new words	-	-
95	23b/09/2000	not relevant	listening only not sufficient -fuiste a bailar or what?	help given in getting my tongue round unfamiliar sounds	-	-
96	24a/09/2000	-	-	interested - change and having answers immediately	-	thinking about how Spanish words are related to English
97	24b/09/2000	No great influence	Against using my own Spanish as memory aid or error?	Tired of same course changed it	-	-
98	25/09/2000	No great influence	Need a break even if course good	Principles of how lang works helps	-	using the keyword method

No.	Date					
99	26/09/2000	Not relevant	fed up so looked at new material	interested - change and having answers immediately	this information helped me to take 'informed' risks	associations with small group of isolated words
100	28/09/2000	No great influence	Associated words with bizarre rhymes	a Spanish sentence as memory aid not appropriate for me	-	associations with small group of isolated words
101	27/10/2000	-	-	using the keyword method	-	associations with small group of isolated words
102	31/10/2000	-	-	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	associations with a small group of isolated words
103	01/11/2000	Not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	associations with a small group of isolated words
104	02/11/2000	Not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	associations with a small group of isolated words
105	03/11/2000	not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	associations with a small group of isolated words
106	04/11/2000	not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	associations with a small group of isolated words
107	06/11/2000	not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	associations with a small group of isolated words
108	10/11/2000	not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	Notice, write use in interesting activity
109	11/11/2000	not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	trying to learn vocab using different methods

	Date		using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	-
110	12/11/2000	not relevant	using the keyword method good but short term?	associations with a small group of isolated words	No significant influence	-
111	17/11/2000	not relevant	an activity must be interesting for the student to learn	Using particular forms may help	not relevant	trying to think from a wider non-specific aspect
112	18/11/2000	no significant effect	is one way of learning vocab better than another?	3 sets of 10 new Spanish words to learn differently	-	-
113	20a/11/2000	-	To testis one way of learning vocab better than another?	-	-	-
114	20b/11/2000	no significant effect	Reading may help me become immersed	Spanish –Eng - Spanish = more Spanish learning?	take risks translating Spanish – no one there to judge	-
115	21/11/2000	Need easier learning material?	-	-	take risks because I am relaxed	-
116	24/11/2000	Not relevant	reading Spanish after English not the chore expected	many words being recycled which is what I want	Not relevant	I try to anticipate the Spanish before I read it
117	27/11/2000	Not relevant	looking at Spanish first more effective?.	Spanish first = more Spanish learning?	take risks translating Spanish - the Eng. version at hand	Word for word
118	29/11/2000	not relevant I am revelling in the book(s)	Spanish first = more Spanish learning?	Spanish to English then reading the Spanish again	take risks translating Spanish - the Eng. version at hand	-
119	15/12/2000	-	Repetition essential pause and rewind good	Pause and rewind button useful	Risks taken= superficial revision	Listening
120	16/12/2000	-	Reading vocab first helpful	good way to revise -not correct in predicting	willing to risk guessing before correcting answer	Listening

121	17/12/2000	-	Tried too hard to learn?	-	-	-
122	18/12/2000	-	gaps in time may help me remember language longer	I plan to listen to tapes often so that material repeated	-	listening
123	20/12/2000	-	aiming for fluency – not accuracy	a test can teach when it recycles language	-	completed two tests
124	27/12/2000	-	slow and trying to speak using cues from written good?	Confidently start conversations but language limits	willing to start conversations	I could use various grammatical forms verbally in lesson
125	30/12/2000	-	-	Spanish instructions interfered	-	translation of this study's questionnaire
126	31/12/2000	-	-	One-to-one lesson good changed book	willing to try	Speaking and listening with some written vocab
127	01/01/2001	-	Asking teacher for info helpful	Teaching methods usual yet egg letter no helpful for me	Taking risks with teacher but not outside	-
128	04/01/2001	Not relevant	Need to keep trying	teacher assistance invaluable +conversation	-	-
129	05/01/2001	-	need to try speaking the language	some confidence in importance of teacher assistance	Willing to take risks	Lessons helped use the language more than vocabulary
130	06/01/2001	-	Pact with other learners short learning periods		-	reading translating a whole letter and trying to write one
131	10/01/2001	-	Used quick learning method in studyspanish.com	Quick, guessing approach	Willing to take risks answers readily available	Choosing correct letters inside words good

			One to one lessons helpful	Lessons necessary?	More confidence	
132	17/01/2001	-	One to one lessons helpful	Lessons necessary?	More confidence	-
133	07/02/2001	-	Competition in learning	Stimulating effect of competition	-	Interaction with studysp. programme
134	10/02/2001	-	Studysp.	Practice exercises good	Allowed errors	Listening reading writing through studysp.
135	19/02/2001	-	-	Not good but better than nothing - revision	-	give the language through an example to read and then use
136	20/02/2001	-	-	Hearing and seeing word on site useful	Not willing to risk believing in learning material	Hear, see and repeat with immediacy +ans good
137	10/03/2001	-	-	-	-	Watching video - advanced language
138	11/03/2001	-	Conversations now occur more frequently.	-	-	Listening-speaking
139	12/03/2001	-	teacher E responded to need for conversation.	-	-	Listening -speaking
140	13/03/2001	-	I plan to write some Spanish from now – ready?	she corrected me just enough giving vocab on time	safer to try to use past historic sparingly	-
141	26/04/2001	-	reading gr is not sensible but helps reinforce	Reading through rules of grammar OK	explains confusing areas giving me confidence to try	Reading grammar rules
142	29/04/2001	No significant effect	Making a mistake can help learning	Making errors helps learning	-	Learning from making errors in use –e.g. ending of verb

143	06/05/2001	-	I needed to understand a different accent	listening to other speakers is useful	Not quite willing to take risks in real situations	Listening - speaking
144	10/05/2001	-	Need practise with a lot of correction to learn	Listening and talking to other speakers good	willing to take risks and start real conversations .	Listening- speaking
145	17/05/2001	-	I was too tired to learn anything so put the book away	not wise to try to learn when you are too tired	No risk	-
146	18/05/2001	-	mustn't panic when I reach an impasse such as this	need confidence that I will succeed in spite of impasse	Will risk using language I've prepared to use	reviewing verb endings and tenses
147	19/05/2001	-	-	-	-	-
148	21/05/2001	Not relevant	determination to use what language I had helped	One-to-one ideal but need trained teacher	Don't like risking mistakes in front of younger person	translating from the Spanish
149	24/05/2001	-	I do not usually do as much as I plan.	Could work fast – familiar; set out well	Willing to take risks, language familiar	General skimming approach
150	28/05/2001	-	Easy and with answers readily accessible good	Text good known words revised	Text format avoided risk-taking	Revising textbook material
151	29/05/2001	-	Easy and with answers readily accessible good	Textbook set out well	Text format avoided risk-taking	Using drills etc. in textbook
152	31/05/2001	-	First learning may hinder later acquisition	Trying to remember before checking answers good	Text format avoided risk-taking	reading remembering from Textbook material
153	02a/06/2001	-	-	useful having the 'rule' explained with e.g.s	-	revising + using rule explanations and e.g.s good

No.	Date		Revision, explanations with eg.s good	useful having the 'rule' explained with e.g.s	I do not feel an urgency about remembering	Revising didn't correct all exercises believed 50% right
154	02b/06/2001	-	-	-	-	Revising didn't correct all exercises believed 50% right
155	02c/06/2001	-	-	-	-	test
156	03/06/2001	-	Repeated; drills helpful remember word-order	too much to absorb too many rules to remember.	Risked including intuitive feeling of word order	Too much to absorb revised several times used intuition
157	05/06/2001	I feel I should cope with reflexive verbs but can't	may need to repeat but better in another format	important not to feel unsuccessful in remembering	Criticism wouldn't worry me – resigned to persistence	rely on reasoning rather than memory. Connect to Eng.
158	07/06/2001	Tired but capable of some learning	Hoping I will absorb new words naturally	Easy to get so many correct – learnt anything?	cautious -- only 3 guesses but lax later -no risk of discovery	not focused on detail - skimming more interesting
159	09a/06/2001	tired but motivated enough to achieve something I felt.	no change I'll keep plodding on hopefully.	suits a busy life + learn with prompt answers and covers	-	applied different cogn. apprs. but didn't understand
160	10/06/2001	-	-	-	-	-
161	21/06/2001	-	-	Too much information?	-	-
162	28/06/2001	-	too much information to learn at once?	Should work from limited clear info to apply	-	Tired = little learning; relaxed reading OK
163	07/07/2001	-	Constant practice in different forms better	Slow persistent approach	-	Reading and trying to remember
164	08/07/2001	-	Should be able to use verb forms eventually	Plateau – trying to learn too much too quickly?	trying to learn too much too soon	Drew charts as memory aids

		No affect (I hope)	this CD should be good for quick revision	Moved to more interesting and stimulating material	CD simple = less risk	Not noticeable
165	14/07/2001	No affect (I hope)	this CD should be good for quick revision	Moved to more interesting and stimulating material	CD simple = less risk	Not noticeable
166	16/07/2001	No influence	a little a day of this should suit	using CD ROM return function makes a difference	-	simple translation of simple phrases seems to suit
167	20/07/2001	-	Perhaps I should listen to material I understand better	No good listening to advanced conversation	-	Listening but language too advanced
168	23/07/2001	not remembering makes me wonder if it is my age	I should try to use the language when I can	choosing exercises and repeating them suits my approach	no checking no scores etc. = feel I am taking no risks.	small chunks of learning material are preferable
169	24/07/2001	memory not working so settling on persistence	changed to suit the purpose	this approach = to read, read and re-read - + thinking	self-criticism is spurring this action	short sections at a time
170	14/08/2001	-	Translating with access to correct lang good	translations + easy access to the correct form helps	took risks translating English into Spanish	reading revision material
171	16/08/2001	Have learnt but short term – time of day?	Afternoon may not be the best time to learn	Reading through in the afternoon learning short-term?	-	staring regularly does not seem to help me learn.
172	21/08/2001	No effect	-	not thorough just glimpsed out of interest	not important here so I didn't worry	-
173	27/08/2001	No effect	-	as a quick exercise this served its purpose	not relevant no one knew how my poor score (c 2/10)	not thorough just glimpsed out of interest
174	15/09/2001	-	-	-	-	
175	16/09/2001	-	-	-	-	

176	17/09/2001	-	-	-	I don't expect to learn what I have tried
177	18/09/2001	-	-	-	---
178	19/09/2001	-	-	-	
179	20/09/2001	not important or relevant	More relaxed approach better?	-	Focus on developing general feel for the language
180	21/09/2001	not relevant	will learn more if I consistently try to use the language	-	Not relevant
181	22/09/2001	no difference	some preparation in the language I am about helpful?	-	
182	24a/09/2001	Not important	quick pronunc./ recall Sp. not imp. =same diffic. Eng.	-	Belief vocab would surface eventually – pronunc imp.
183	24b/09/2001	-	-	-	listening reading and speaking in lesson
184	30/09/2001	not relevant	Songs perhaps not as helpful as novel	-	driven by the song text wild guessing ineffectively
185	01/10/2001	-		-	
186	03/10/2001	-	-	-	

187	05/10/2001	-	-	-	-	
188	06/10/2001	-	-	-	-	listening reading and speaking in lesson
189	10/10/2001	-	-	-	-	listening reading and speaking in lesson
190	17/10/2001	Not noticeable – I am determined	Accept success of learning words through reading	-	-	no conscious style - immersion in the language
191	22/10/2001	-	-	-	-	listening reading and speaking in lesson
192	31/10/2001	-		-	-	material so organized –dictated 'thinking'
193	03/11/2001		-	-	-	
194	09/11/2001	No difference but could I remember more when young?	not conducive into 'adapting' - unrelated context	Systematic approach and method	CD ROM format prevented taking risks	went systematically through forms
195	18/11/2001	-	-	-	-	
196	20/11/2001	-	Parallel novels good	Uninterrupted text helps develop 'feel for language	-	Reading English first then Spanish can guess words
197	21/11/2001	-	-	-	-	-

		Not relevant	Parallel novels good	Trying to develop fluency	not relevant here there is no one to criticise only me	I try to anticipate the Sp. before I read it
198	24/11/2001	Not relevant	Parallel novels good	Trying to develop fluency	not relevant here there is no one to criticise only me	I try to anticipate the Sp. before I read it
199	26/11/2001	Could have worked faster when younger?	I kept within the framework of the exercise	-	-	not much language learning going on
200	27/11/2001	Not relevant	Parallel novels good Sp first better for learning?	Spanish first	happily translate Sp. 'wildly' because translation is there	still word for word.
201	29/11/2001	-	Sp first	Spanish – English – Spanish learn more?	happily translate Sp. 'wildly' because translation is there	still word for word.
202	06/12/2001	Not important older learner better than younger	Should use a recycling board game	Board game variety and breaks = effective recycling	not attitude to risk - rather chances to recycle	focusing on small chunks of language and recycling often
203	08/12/2001	-	I hope that persistence will pay	constant effort may be the most appropriate now	I am avoiding it by reading the English first.	language as separate entities - i.e. word endings
204	13/12/2001	-	should learn lang chunks I can't remember	proper preparation or knowledge of the language imp.	took no end of risk language wise	an overall approach at understanding here
205	14/12/2001	-	more practice in trying to use Spanish better?	perhaps I was expecting too much	took no end of risk language wise	an overall approach at understanding here
206	28/12/2001	did not seem to make a difference	More practice in using Sp. in easier situations helpful?	conversation with friends better than with a teacher	Even in front of daughter willing to risk using Spanish	-
207	31/12/2001	-	Plan to write a diary in Spanish	trying to write in Spanish	-	Trying to retrieve language for writing
208	01/01/2002	again not relevant in my opinion	-	-	-	-
209	02/01/2002	-	-	tried Eng first then Spanish	-	-

210	03/01/2002	-	-	-	-	-
211	04/01/2002	not relevant but I am determined	continue reading fiction translated immediately	-	No risk	universal perspective rather than 'field specific'
212	07/01/2002	-	-	-	No risk	from a universal perspective
213	11/01/2002	No effect	Need to write Eng as well as Sp	Writing may help me with my Spanish	Willing to take risks = how to learn	from a universal perspective
214	13a/01/2002	-	Trying to write in Sp.	time to try to get to grips with the language properly	-	trying to recall vocab to write Spanish
215	13b/01/2002	No apparent significance	no new approach hoping persistence will pay	should look at are easier material than the news to underst.	I am pleased I am not worried – risking but not imp.	Concentrating on separate words
216	13c/01/2001	-	-	-	-	Reading+ trying (a little) to remember familiar vocab.
217	14/01/2002	Not relevant	-	Reading through for revision	no risk-taking here	reading with relaxed approach to remember words
218	15a/01/2002	Not relevant	Constant practice should help	Persistence should pay	little risk here - there is no problem if I don't understand	Intensive listening short sections of fluent language
219	15b/01/2002	-	-	-	-	-
220	16/01/2002	-	should try everyday - constant practice may reap rewards	persistence I hope will pay	little risk here - there is no problem if I don't understand	overall approach + intensive so I don't try to do it too long

221	18/01/2002	no significant influence	Continue to listen and practise	Trying to learn rather then just recognize words	no problem determination ignorance is bliss	overall effect + word groups + imaginary pause but
222	20/01/2002	Not relevant but similar age helpful?	should persist in accessing simple Sp.	persistence I hope will pay	Willing to take risks in spite of mistakes	I am still focusing on vocabulary
223	21/01/2002	Slowness and difficulty in retention?	determined + constant attempts to listen read	attending to advanced language not helpful	still willing to try without concern for losing face	trying to understand separate words
224	22/01/2002	-	continue to listen try to understand + look up words	Eng first beneficial	No problem	very much word for word
225	23/01/2002	-	to continue using methods that are successful.	Mixed approach good	Important to be willing to risk +not worry re mistakes	word for word + listening for gist on TV.
226	11/02/2002	Doesn't matter but score better when fresh?	going faster helps motivation (not learning perhaps)	Practice exercises good	-	reading Sp. + translation + memorising diff.
227	12/02/2002	No apparent significance	-	-	-	reading
228	04a/03/2002	Not that different from when I was younger?	Cheat by looking up missing letters helps	My cheating is 'appropriate' if the goal is to learn	Willing to take risks and guess quickly	Reading associating
229	04b/03/2002	-	-	listening to a native speaker	Not willing to take risk and lose face when teaching	Listening
230	08/03/2002	Does not seem to make any difference	going faster helps motivation (not learning perhaps)	Looked at given words first used flashcards	no one knows how I am doing here so there is no anxiety	Different methods of learning (website)
231	09/03/2002	Age =more tired than others? Health?	Change order of exercises = easier to learn	Look at whole word first before filling in missing letters	Happy to take risks and correct until exactly right	Different methods of learning (website)

No.	Date					
232	11a/03/2002	Not relevant	Familiarity= can learn more words?	'cheating' so that I can get the correct words sooner	Not concerned	reading, trying to write from memory then copying
233	11b/03/2002	-	rough and ready approach not interested in topic	Didn't use all methods offered – didn't like topic	willing to take great risks because there is no one checking	Reading-translating- recognising - missing letters
234	13/03/2002	-	6 words were very easy to learn	easy	no risk - because it was easy	Different methods of learning (website)
235	15/03/2002	-	-	working fast and confidently with some checking	Not good to take too many risks if I want to learn accurately	-
236	16/03/2002	-	-	doing at least one of the preliminary exercises helps	-	-
237	17/03/02	no apparent difference	less adaptation needed for words are very familiar	mixed activities suit me	little risk to take – feel secure – willing to take risk	look translate Spanish to English
238	18a/03/2002	Can't remember more than a few words at a time ?	less adaptation needed for the words familiar	same vocabulary with different exercises good	working on own = willing to take risks and 'cheat'	read Spanish and English; flashcards; + varied exercises.
239	18b/03/2002	Can't remember more than a few words at a time ?	less adaptation needed for the words familiar	same vocab. with different interesting exercises good	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	read Spanish and English; flashcards; + varied exercises.
240	19a/03/2002	Can't remember more than a few words at a time ?	less adaptation needed for the words familiar	same vocab. with different interesting exercises good	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	read Spanish and English; flashcards; + varied exercises.
241	19b/03/2002	Could only remember a few words at a time	less adaptation needed for the words familiar	same vocab. with different interesting exercises good	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	read Spanish and English; flashcards; + varied exercises.
242	19c/03/2002	Could only remember a few words at a time	less adaptation needed for the words familiar	same vocab. with different interesting exercises good	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	read Spanish and English; flashcards; + varied exercises.

243	20a/03/2002	Could only remember a few words at a time	less adaptation needed for the words familiar	same vocab. with different interesting exercises good	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	read Spanish and English; flashcards; + varied exercises.
244	20b/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	approach within this course	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	learning a small set of words in many different ways.
245	21a/03/2002	Could only remember a few words at a time	less adaptation needed for the words familiar	same vocab. with different interesting exercises good	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	read Spanish and English; flashcards; + varied exercises.
246	21b/03/2002	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' guilt free	learning a small set of words in many different ways.
247	21c/03/2002	Not affecting communication except need to see	I did not have enough vocab so need to still work	trying to have conversations will help	less willing to risk trying newly learnt words in live speech	Live conversation with a South American.
248	22/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' helpful	learning a small set of words in many different ways...
249	26a/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' helpful	learning a small set of words in many different ways...
250	26b/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' helpful	learning a small set of words in many different ways...
251	27/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' helpful	learning a small set of words in many different ways...
252	28/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' helpful	learning a small set of words in many different ways...
253	29/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' helpful	learning a small set of words in many different ways...

No.	Date					
254	30/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	the approach within this course suits me very well	competing against yourself can 'cheat' helpful	learning a small set of words in many different ways...
255	31/03/02	Not relevant	some words familiar/known I can adjust	Working at own pace good can repeat use of cards	-	learning a small set of words in many different ways.
256	01/04/02	Not relevant	A first (recognizing given words) then B (missing letters)	Working at own pace good can repeat use of cards	-	learning a small set of words in many different ways.
257	03/04/02	Not relevant	A first (recognizing given words) then B (missing letters)	Working at own pace good can repeat use of cards	-	learning a small set of words in many different ways...
258	14/04/2002	Age helps start conversations	I need to accept that dialect possible	need to change my attitude - annoyed with myself	going backwards? = worries me anxious when speaking	listening asking for repeats then not understanding
259	20/04/2002	Not relevant except need more stamina	Need to make allowances for myself and dialect	more listening and persistence should pay	not too worried but make more mistakes than I need speaking	listening, reading and speaking in that order of amount
260	23/04/2002	Not relevant	other people react differently to hearing new lang.	I need to be more open-minded	not concerned	listening intently, analysing the separate words
261	27/04/2002	Not relevant	Need to relax	speaking and with a native speaking teacher	both willing to take risks - as teachers we know the need	speaking and listening asking for words/grammar
262	28/04/2002	Not relevant	happily 'cheat' by using logic rather than knowledge	using logic in addition to a feeling of familiarity	not relevant though anxious to prove it is worthwhile	filling in gaps making informed guesses
263	30/04/2002	Not relevant	more of this exercise should help	writing, trying to translate comparing with website	happy to try even though I may make many errors	writing translating focusing on words phrases endings
264	03/05/2002	not relevant	more of this exercise should help	writing, translating and comparing with website translation	not concerned	writing translating focusing on words phrases endings

265	04/05/2002	Not relevant	should make more effort to use rather than remember	exchanging mixed Spanish/English conversations	afraid of taking too many risks 'teacher' might 'correct me'	communicating after conscious association of vocab
266	08/05/2002	Not relevant	-	trying to use the language helps me recall better	willing to make mistakes	filling in gaps making informed guesses at vocab.
267	18/06/2002	Age gave more confidence	-	this was an effective test	I tried to be accurate rather than fluent	Trying to express myself speaking and writing

Appendix B
Chart 2

Entry number	Date	Content (old/new)	Control of anxiety	Empathy	Input	Interest in Culture
1	15/09/1999	new	continued 'regardless' of problems	not yet enamoured with the language	'course' Teach Yourself Spanish by Juan K..n-Ibarra	not yet won over
2	19/09/1999	new	Little anxiety – not studying seriously	-	'course' Teach Yourself Spanish	-
3	18/10/1999	New	I soon overcame anxiety due to feelings of failure	Not enough knowledge but like the music on tape	Reader's Digest Course tape 1	planning to live in Spain so I was interested
4	21/10/1999	New.	Soon overcame anxiety from feelings of failure	I loved the Spanish music.	Reader's Digest Course tape 1 contd	Planning to live in Spain so interested
5	24/10/1999	Revision I had heard the tape before.	little anxiety except avoiding going ahead too fast	I loved the Spanish music.	Reader's Digest Course tape 1	I loved the Spanish music and always have.
6	16/10/1999	new	Irritated more than anxious	Too soon to comment = no empathy	Reader's Digest Course tape1 and 2 beginning of 3	Too new to comment – no empathy
7	31/10/1999	Revision/new	-	-	Tape continued 3 and 4	-
8	01/11/1999	New	Last conversation too fast = anxious	Too early for me to develop this	Tape 5	Still too early to develop this
9	20/11/1999	new	Anxiety high – not really ready to use the language	Difficult because of my slowness	Reader's Digest Tape 6 and Spanish in Spain	especially music interesting but not important
10	22/11/1999	new	made an effort to overcome anxiety about slow progress	I would like to have Spanish words come spontaneously	Reader's Digest Tape 6 and 7	music for tape 7 was FRENCH - which annoyed me

Appendix C
Chart 3

Entry number	Date	Interest in Language	Language Content	Language Learning Difficulties	Motivation	Personality
1	15/09/1999	I need the language rather than want it	1st tape + dictionary pronunciation chart	Needed more info to learn phonetic sounds/ symbols	Keen, not confident didn't want to repeat exercises	Dogged determination to learn may help
2	19/09/1999	-	-	Too many words to learn at the same time	Didn't want to give the course full attention	-
3	18/10/1999	I prefer French from previous attitude	Reader's Digest course beginning of tape 1	Not sure how my voice and accent sounded	very keen on starting Readers Digest tapes	impatient - quickly rejected first course but like this one.
4	21/10/1999	I prefer French from previous attitude	Reader's Digest course tape 1B	Not sure how my voice and accent sounded	Keen – on new tapes.	Impatient – changed course quickly
5	24/10/1999	Revived interest in language especially kinship with French	Reader's Digest course tape 1B	Need to see speakers' mouths – 'd' or 'th'?	Relaxed wanted to progress. I had time to kill.	-
6	26/10/1999	Too new to comment	Not recorded because written words not there	Need to see the written word	very motivated because of the slow pace	Determination still a key factor
7	31/10/1999	-	tape 3 side B and tape 4. I 'finished' tape 4 side A	-	motivated in spite of difficulty in remembering	-
8	01/11/1999	Still too early to develop this	-	Confusion between 'b' and 'v' distracting	Harder = slightly less motivated	dogged determination persists
9	20/11/1999	Crux of motivation I had	Reader's Digest tape 6	Increased difficulty speaking too fast	motivated to learn now the flat deal was a success	Resumed speaking in English for communication -OK
10	22/11/1999	Spanish 'easy'? - only a few words needed for meaning	Reader's Digest 6 and 7	Remembering and working fast = the major problems	wanted to listen for realized need for frequent practice	determination is the key issue here

Appendix D Chart 4 Entry number	Date	Place	Previous learning history	SUCCESS	'TEST' RESULTS	X-TRA COMMENTS
1	15/09/1999	Witchford Ely UK	I knew only one word – mañana - tomorrow	progress slow	Absorbed only about one-third of the material	-
2	18/09/1999	Witchford Ely UK	-	I remembered little even on repetition of tape.	I remembered little even on repetition of tape.	-
3	18/10/1999	Witchford Ely UK	Didn't like previous course –chunks of language too big	-	-	-
4	19/10/1999					
5	21/10/1999	Witchford Ely UK	Previous course chunks too big tape -book not matched	-	I think about 80% of the words remembered	-
6	24/10/1999	Witchford Ely UK	Some words were not remembered in their whole form.	-	I think about 80% of the words remembered	-
7	26/10/1999	Witchford Ely UK	Didn't need to see the words when younger	-	-	-
8	01/11/1999	Witchford Ely UK	-	-	-	-
9	20/11/1999	Witchford Ely UK	Difficulty never seemed to worry me before	-	-	-
10	22/11/1999	Witchford Ely UK	Some words recalled –used in context	not mastering the 80% required all the time	-	-

Appendix E: Whole diary
Stage 1
Entries 1 – 10 continued

Entry: 1
Date : 15/09/1999 Wednesday 15 September 1999 1010 a.m. for about 45 minutes
Age: this is already 'known' to be a disadvantage
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: the only change I made was to consider abandoning the course early in the procedure if I did not fulfil my needs - e.g. the need for help with pronunciation
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to take risks but not yet - too early
Cognitive style: listen-repeat from a tape may be a bit shallow for me
Content: new
Control of anxiety: decided to continue 'regardless' of problems
Empathy: not yet enamoured with the language
Input: first 'course' Teach Yourself Spanish by Juan Kattán-Ibarra, 1998: a complete course in understanding, speaking and writing Spanish. Teach Yourself Books Hodder and Stoughton 1998 and after discovering an initial need for pronunciation assistance: Collins Spanish-English English-Spanish Dictionary Unabridged by Colin Smith fifth edition 1997 Harper Collins.
Interest in culture: not yet won over
Interest in language: I need the language rather than want the language
Language content: the first tape of the course and the pronunciation chart from the dictionary. I also needed the following: "Educated Castilian pronunciation
Rules:
Word ends with a vowel, n or s penultimate syllable stressed
          Consonant, last syllable is stressed
Acute accent = stress that vowel
a e o = strong vowels i u weak
diphthong stress on strong vowel"
Language learning difficulties: There was a problem initially for phonetic symbols, sounds or pronunciation tables/appendices were not readily available in the first course to satisfy original aim to get to grips with the phonetic sounds and symbols of Spanish
Motivation: keen to learn but not confident that it will be easy
Personality: having studied for a number of years with equal determination I should eventually be able to learn to learn the language
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: I have no previous knowledge of the language save a very few adopted words - e.g. manaña for tomorrow
Success: progress slow. After getting the dictionary I read through the list of rules - got bored about half way through read to the end, it seemed very like straight English pronunciation with a few variations ready to have a go with the tape to hear someone else speaking again.
I listened for approx. one hour. I was slow to pick up the phrases although I knew I should go over it again and again - I didn't want to. I found I had to know the meaning of the words to be able to remember them for example usted = formal you.
Test results: estimated: I probably absorbed only about one-third of the lesson in approx. 30 mins to 1 hour
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 2
Date: 19/09/1999 Sunday 19th September
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: I put the tape on while doing other things but I remembered little even on repetition of the tape. I need to follow carefully from the book three times I think.
I also thought that too many words were being presented - I needed just one or two words of vocab. At a time = e.g. 'donde' for 'where' was more useful that the whole phrase given.

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: too many words were being presented - I needed just one or two words of vocab. At a time
Content: new
Control of anxiety: Little anxiety – not studying seriously
Empathy:
Input: first 'course' Teach Yourself Spanish by Juan Kattán-Ibarra, 1998: a complete course in understanding, speaking and writing Spanish. Teach Yourself Books Hodder and Stoughton 1998
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content:
Language learning difficulties: too many words were being presented - I needed just one or two words of vocab. at a time
Motivation:
Personality:
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 3
Date: 18/10/1999 Monday 18 October 1999
Age: I seemed to tire more quickly than I remembered from earlier learning experiences.
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I made the learning method more appropriate by changing course.
Approach: This course had a better approach now because it is slow enough for me and it was repetitive but I would still have preferred to see the written word.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I rejected first course because felt I was failing.
Cognitive style: I liked learning in steps as this course does
Content: new
Control of anxiety: I soon overcame anxiety due to feelings of failure
Empathy: I knew little of language at the time and therefore found it difficult to empathise but I was delighted to hear: music on tape
Input: Input: Reader's Digest *At home with Spanish a basic guide for speaking and reading Spanish* adapted and developed from the programmed language tapes devised by Dr Paul Pimsleur 1984 The Reader's Digest Association Limited tape: 1 tape one listened for 15 minutes on Monday 18th October (and I listened for about 15 minutes later – on the day, Thursday 21st October 1999 listed as an entry 4)
Interest in culture: I am planning to live in Spain so naturally I was interested in seeing what the culture is like
Interest in language: I had always felt a little prejudiced against the language because the people I have mixed with over the years seem to feel this way towards Spanish. They prefer French. So I felt I, too, 'didn't like' Spanish but I hoped I would be able to overcome this
Language content: Reader's Digest beginning of tape 1
Language learning difficulties: I wasn't sure how my voice and accent sounded
Motivation I was very keen on starting the Readers Digest tapes
Personality: I am impatient and quickly rejected the first course although I have taken to this one. My life style is busy so I always hard to fit in enough time for the language learning.
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: I tried one course before now but learnt little language because it was in too greater chunks and I found it frustrating when the book didn't correspond with tape.
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 4
Date: 21/10/1999 Thursday 21 Oct 1999 (comments the same as those for the 18/10/99)

Age: I seemed to tire more quickly than I remembered from earlier learning experiences.

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I made the learning method more appropriate by changing course.

Approach: This course had a better approach now because it is slow enough for me and it was repetitive but I would still have preferred to see the written word.

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I rejected first course because felt I was failing.

Cognitive style: I liked learning in steps as this course does

Content: new

Control of anxiety: I soon overcame anxiety due to feelings of failure

Empathy: I knew little of language at the time and therefore found it difficult to empathise but I was delighted to hear: music on tape

Input: Reader's Digest tape: 1 tape one listened for 15 minutes on Monday 18th October and I listened for about 15 minutes this day, Thursday 21st October 1999

Interest in culture: I am planning to live in Spain so naturally I was interested in seeing what the culture is like

Interest in language: I had always felt a little prejudiced against the language because the people I have mixed with over the years seem to feel this way towards Spanish. They prefer French. So I felt I, too, 'didn't like' Spanish but I hoped I would be able to overcome this

Language content: Reader's Digest end of tape 1

Language learning difficulties: I wasn't sure how my voice and accent sounded

Motivation: I was very keen on starting the Readers Digest tapes

Personality: I am impatient and quickly rejected the first course although I have taken to this one. My life style is busy so I always hard to fit in enough time for the language learning.

Place: Witchford UK

Previous learning history: I tried one course before now but learnt little language because it was in too greater chunks and I found it frustrating when the book didn't correspond with tape.

Success:

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 5

Date: 24/10/1999 24 October 1999

Age: I felt fairly fresh after a relaxing day the previous day. I didn't feel 'old'.

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I would have liked to have seen the words that were spoken, but I felt wary of trying to ferret out the book that was provided for I thought there was a lot to be said about having no other stimulus other than the spoken word in this way so I wouldn't have been distracted. A video using the same technique might have been more appropriate but it could also have been a little off-putting depending on the appearance of the speakers and any action or expressions they may have.

I thought I would need to listen for longer than 15 minutes for there were only a few new words I was learning at a time.

Approach: The listening and repeating at a relatively slow pace with plenty of repetition seems to suit me.

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: With no one to listen or hear I felt there was no need to feel inhibited and I felt as if I was taking no risks at all. Because of the practical difficulties (I had already heard the tape before) I had used it on a very cheap portable listening apparatus on the train last time when I couldn't rewind it and I must have put the wrong side on - but I felt the repetition would be useful and thought it might be too risky to listen ahead. I settled for being safe.

Cognitive style: the chunks of language provided seemed to suit my preference for learning or trying to remember in small chunks not worrying about any overall need or view.

Content: 'revision' - I had heard tape 1 before and new tape 2 beginning

Control of anxiety: I felt little anxiety other than avoiding going ahead too fast

Empathy: I loved the Spanish music. I felt I remembered learning French this way when I was in secondary school and I occasionally felt a similar delight in being able to respond directly with the Spanish with a question or a request for the language without translating directly from the English just as I did in my first French lessons that I thoroughly enjoyed.

Input: Reader's digest beginning of tape 2

Interest in culture: I love the Spanish music that is played in between sections and have always loved Spanish music - especially guitar music. Some o f my compositions were based on the Spanish style for piano by Albeniz (many years ago.)

Interest in language: I think I am rekindling my early interest in languages stemming from these very first French lesson s which were taught using the direct method. The Spanish language also seems to be very similar to the French which Id studied for A level and it is easier to pronounce a s there seem to be few variations on logical pronunciation

Language content: Reader's digest beginning of tape 2

Language learning difficulties: I am not sure whether it's 'd' or 'th' I should be saying and I would dearly like to be able to watch the speakers' mouths to ascertain which is appropriate. I also had some difficulty in getting the pronunciation just right. I felt I should have been bothered to say the same words into a tape myself so that I could check that my pronunciation was the same - but later

Motivation: I felt relaxed and wanted to progress a little further. I ha d time to kill

Personality:

Place: Witchford UK

Previous learning history: I could remember 80% of the words although some stresses e.g. inglés were not quite right and some of the words were not remembered entirely.

Success: I could remember 80% of the words although some stresses e.g. inglés were not quite right and some of the words were not remembered entirely.

Test results: estimated I could remember 80% of the words although some stresses e.g. inglés were not quite right and some of the words were not remembered entirely.

'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 6

Date: 16/10/1999 26 October 1999

Age: The word for 'left' I had to look up for it was almost impossible to guess what the word was without being able to visualise the spelling. I can remember having no wish to know the spelling when I first learnt French when I was much younger Is this a sign of different learning approaches with age?

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas: I felt the course was too new for me to be able to adapt the approach to be more effective

Approach: the fewer words presented suited me much better

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I was not prepared to risk 'guessing' how to spell the Spanish word for 'left' for example, so unwilling to be completely free in my approach

Cognitive style: whilst the listening -speaking approach should suit me as a musician with regards to learning this language this does not seem to be the case

Content: new

Control of anxiety: I felt irritated or annoyed with the difficulties I came across rather than 'anxious'

Empathy: The language is still so new I do not feel empathy with the language at all

Input: Reader's Digest Tape about 30 mins tape end tape 2 and beginning of tape three

Interest in culture: The language is still so new I do not feel empathy with the language at all

Interest in language: The language is still so new I do not feel empathy with the language at all

Language content: was not recorded because the language was so new and the written words were not easily available

Language learning difficulties: the need to be able to spell the words or at least to see how they are written was evident

Motivation: I was still highly motivated to learn because of the slow pace

Personality: determination still a key factor

Place: Witchford UK

Previous learning history: I can remember having no wish to know the spelling when I first learnt French when I was much younger.

Success:

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 7
Date: 31/10/1999 Sunday 31st October 1999
Age: The inability to remember may be the fact that the course is not entirely just what I want - i.e. the written words are not easily available - not just 'age' which also may be a factor
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: revision/new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: Reader's Digest Tape: tape 3 side B and tape 4. I 'finished' tape 4 side A
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: tape 3 side B and tape 4. I 'finished' tape 4 side A
Language learning difficulties: there has been a bit of a gap since I last listened and I had to return the tape and go over a number of phrases I didn't seem to be able to remember
Motivation: I remained reasonably well motivated but I felt there has been a bit of a gap since I last listened and I had to return the tape and go over a number of phrases I didn't seem to be able to remember
Personality:
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history:
Success: I had to return the tape and go over a number of phrases I didn't seem to be able to remember
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 8
Date: 01/11/1999 1st November 1999
Age: The concern with increased difficulty may be through being older and less willing to cast all care to the winds and 'go for it' no matter how difficult.
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: no change
Approach: I still liked the format especially the revision, the music and the repetition
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I felt I was making more mistakes which made me feel less willing to take risks and move forward
Cognitive style: I happily followed the approach in the tape
Content: new
Control of anxiety: I found the last conversation just a bit fast.
Empathy: It was still too early to develop this I felt.
Input: Reader's Digest Tape tape 5
Interest in culture: It was still too early to develop this I felt.
Interest in language: It was still too early to develop this I felt.
Language content:
Language learning difficulties: I felt I had to look up to see if its v or b - not knowing exactly which was which seemed to interfere in my learning. Although it may be reasonable to accept either, I find it difficult to approximate.
Motivation: I found it was getting harder which slightly decreased the motivation to do the learning.
Personality: dogged determination persists
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: Difficulty never seemed to worry me before - I happily made 'wild' translations if I was unsure
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 9
Date: 20/11/1999 20 November 1999
Age: I felt that age was slowing up my reactions so the language I produced was slow, stilted and had a limited length
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I felt I needed to practise more regularly - once a day no matter what - even just listening to a tape would have been enough - if I wanted to make any progress.
Approach: The Reader's Digest was the Approach because it often isolated and regularly repeated single words.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: Even though I attempted to speak the language as much as I could in spite of my limitations, the people I spoke to did not seem to belittle my feeble attempts as I half expected.
Cognitive style: To decline a verb I needed to think in grammatical structures occasionally e.g. 'tengo'
Content: new
Control of anxiety: My anxiety was quite high when I realized I was trying to communicate with a language I was not really ready to use for the purpose of accurate communication
Empathy: My slowness made it difficult to really empathise with the speakers
Input: Reader's Digest tape 6 and local conversations
Interest in culture: Whilst their culture was interesting especially the music I heard on the tape before the units began, but not crucial to the language learning experience.
Interest in language: This was probably the crux of the motivation I had
Language content:
Language learning difficulties: even after a week in Spain since the last listening to Reader's Digest tapes I found that the tape 6 I was doing was a little fast. I also wrote at the time: "When spoken at a sensible speed it still sounds fat too fast for me and many of the words I should know remain unfixed."
Motivation: I felt very motivated to learn so that I could communicate with the locals now the flat deal was going through
Personality: As communication was the most important thing I resumed speaking English whenever possible
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: The Spanish I had learnt still wouldn't spring into mind as much as I had hoped and I was quite often turning to the dictionary for words I knew I already 'had learnt'.
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 10
Date: 22/11/1999 22 November 1999
Age: I was still having problems with retention and with speeding up to match the speed of the tape
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I thought the inclusion of the dictionary may help with the pronunciation also ideas for improvements: I felt I should perhaps listen to a tape twice but I was eager to progress and so felt unable (or more particularly unwilling) to go back
Approach: This series of tapes seemed quite suitable even if I was not mastering the 80% required all the time. This session I chose to hold the Spanish - English dictionary and look up the spelling of the new words. This helped with pronunciation mainly and surprisingly didn't seem to help as much as I thought it would with remembering the actual words.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: Self –criticism could have easily crept in with the apparent slowness in absorbing the language
Cognitive style: This was not thought of on this occasion. The style was that presented by the tape.
Content: new
Control of anxiety: However, I was also making an effort to stave off this feeling of inadequacy - reassuring myself that learning a language is never a quick occurrence
Empathy: I felt that I would have liked to think the Spanish words more spontaneously as I did when I was first taught French by the direct method.
Interest in culture: The music played for tape 7 was FRENCH - the Toreador which annoyed me a little.

Input: Reader's Digest Tape 6 and 7
Interest in language: The language seemed to be 'easy' in that only a few words seemed to summarise the language needed.
Interest in language:
Language content:
Language learning difficulties: Remembering and working fast seemed to be the major problems.
Motivation: After realizing that practice needs to be more frequent in order to remember the vocabulary more easily I was motivated to listen to this tape while I had time that night."
Personality: determination is the key issue here
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: Some of the words I learnt from the very first lessons with the other programme came back in this tape - like 'I understand' I also remembered being able to use 'I understand' in context on my first visit to Spain
Success: I was not mastering the 80% required all the time.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 11
Date: 29 November 1999
Age: Even using the book in conjunction with the tapes helped me speed up the lesson but it seemed to make little difference with remembering - was this a result of age perhaps?
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I tried hurrying through the tapes and wasn't too concerned about the lack of subsequent success - just irritated
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: Reader's Digest Tape 6 and 7
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content:
Language learning difficulties: the use of the book in conjunction with the tape helped with pronunciation considerably
Motivation: I was still anxious to learn although not as highly motivated as I'd wished.
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 12
Date: 11 January 2000
Age: The difficulty of coping with the speed of the spoken word could this be attributed to inflexibility through age?
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: little risk
Cognitive style:
Content: revision
Control of anxiety: not anxious
Empathy: too soon to comment
Input: Reader's Digest Tape 5A
Interest in culture:

Interest in language:
Language content: I went to the back 'see you soon'
Language learning difficulties: I knew Spanish words are generally spoken faster, but the speed in these lessons is still too fast for me.
Motivation: quite motivated
Personality: determination
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history:
Success: I remembered more than I thought I would, although less than the 80% suggested.
 Test results: estimated I remembered more than I thought I would, although less than the 80% suggested.
'Xtra' comments:

…
Entry: 20
Date: 20 February 2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety: happy to roughly translate
Empathy:
Input: letter about the community Association in Spain
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: vocabulary in a letter concerning a committee meeting of the Community Association of my flat in Spain
Language learning difficulties: I felt I had understood 75% of the letter which was confirmed by a fluent speaker of Spanish although key words needed were missing from my vocab and I couldn't really establish whether I had to sign and return the paper or not. (I didn't need to.)
Motivation:
Personality:
Place: Witchford
Previous learning history: many words learnt on the Reader's Digest tape proved useful - e.g. 'su' and those that a similar to English.
Success: I felt I had understood 75% of the letter which was confirmed by a fluent speaker of Spanish
Test results: I felt I had understood 75% of the letter which was confirmed by a fluent speaker of Spanish although key words needed were missing from my vocab and I couldn't really establish whether I had to sign and return the paper or not. (I didn't need to.)
'Xtra' comments:

…
Entry: 25
Date: 27/2/2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I should repeat but I don't want to I am not sure I would achieve anything more by repeating I have some blockages over repeated phrases - e.g. me too - I can't remember. My plan is to revise these at the end of the course or better still in a different course.
Approach: I found relevant conversations in t eh accompanying book but they were not direct transcripts. Seeing the words first certainly helped but one 40% comprehension this time.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: some reading of similar related material then listening-speaking
Content: new
Control of anxiety:

Empathy:
Input: Reader's Digest Tape 11A
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: feeling ill aspirin
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success: 40% comprehension
Test results: 40% comprehension - not tested
'Xtra' comments: 40% comprehension

...

Entry: 27
Date: 3/03/2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: Reading beforehand paid off a few times a real reward when you can structure the Spanish first e.g. lejos remembered because I read it first (lejos corrected 26/02/2002 to legos)
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: Reader's Digest Tape 12A
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: calling the doctor; number of streets; "What's your name?"
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success: reading beforehand helps success
Test results: 50% successful - not tested
'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 29
Date: 04b/03/2000 second entry
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
 Approach: I suspect the reinforcement of words in the tape is not consistent so this affects success rates
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: I am also associating words with the French a lot - e.g. palabra + parler French 'to speak'
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: Reader's Digest Tape 13A
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: at the beach; What does ___ mean?
Language learning difficulties: I had to look up the Spanish for words (palabra)

Motivation:
Personality:
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history:
Success: 65% even with words and using the pause button
Test results: estimated 65% success rate and remembering and using the Spanish learnt
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 30
Date: 04c/03/2002 third entry
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: Using a second source such as this makes the learning more 'real'. The Readers' Digest course feels like learning a language disconnected from 'real life'.
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: English video The Spanish Experience Channel 4
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: for secondary school children, visiting Spain family situations arriving different customs food
Language learning difficulties: I was really interested in language learning because I understood 40% of the language in the conversations and some of the vocabulary was already known to me.
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 31
Date: 07a/03/2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: reading vocab first; listening-speaking
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: Reader's Digest Tape 13B
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: hiring a car; see/saw him
Language learning difficulties: I did not understand a word of the spoken dialogues at normal speed - far too fast
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history: I was able to produce 80% of the Spanish from direct translation using previously learned vocab often

Success: I was able to produce 80% of the Spanish from direct translation using previously learned vocab often
Test results: estimated 80% success with translation
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 32
Date: 07b/03/2000 second entry
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: newspaper The Guardian Education section p.53 an article about the bombing of a Spanish politician by ETA - Basque extremists and subsequent peace protest
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: newspaper text in Spanish suitable for school children to understand an article about the bombing of a Spanish politician by ETA - Basque extremists and subsequent peace protest
Language learning difficulties: I did not know enough vocab to really understand the article. Some of the words in the glossary I'd already guessed. - I needed more less easily 'guessed' words in the glossary.
Motivation:
Personality:
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: I'd guessed some of the meanings of the words from hearing foreign students speaking to each other when I taught them in Summer schools - e.g. 'basta' meaning stop
Success: I understood the gist because I'd read about the event before. I noticed some of the grammar - amus endings
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 40
Date: 19b/03/2000
Age: not relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: need to keep trying
Approach: listening with concentration may help
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to take huge risks in order to communicate, but frustration
Cognitive style: listening and speaking trying to integrate without conscious construction
Content: new everyday language at natural speed
Control of anxiety: more frustrated than anxious
Empathy: getting interested
Input: conversations
Interest in culture: no apparent significance
Interest in language: no apparent significance
Language content: e.g. ordering meals
Language learning difficulties: using vocabulary I should have learnt by now not always successful
Motivation: very keen to communicate
Personality: not relevant
Place: Torrevieja

Previous learning history: had to consciously construct every word I spoke before - not a few words are automatic - e.g. quiero

Success: I felt as if I'd reached the very first tiny rung in a long uphill struggle to learn the language. Now I could listen to everyday speech and I could recognise single general words such as 'because', 'what', 'why', 'and', 'the', 'same', 'good' etc. but I still had no idea of the content of the conversation

I also found that sometimes I could actually ask for something without going through the long slow process of conscious construction of the phrase before applying e.g. 'I want something to eat'.

Test results

'Xtra' comments

...

Entry: 59
Date: 31b/03/2000
Age: the difficulty in remembering vocab. May be due to age
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: trying to communicate seems important
Approach: I made an effort to understand and to try to speak - I had to, few of the market traders spoke English
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to take a risk - otherwise how will I learn?
Cognitive style: listening and speaking to real conversations
Content: mostly new
Control of anxiety: a little anxious and frustrated
Empathy: I like the Spaniards and the cheap prices at the market
Input: everyday conversations - buying goods at the market
Interest in culture: interested in integrating
Interest in language: still very new - like French/Italian
Language content: buying goods at the market
Language learning difficulties: couldn't remember or learn the vocab
Motivation: reasonably motivated
Personality: determination important
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history:
Success: not recorded but I am still at a very low level although there is a glimmer of hope
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 64
Date: 06/05/2000 6 May 2000
Age: still seems to make vocabulary learning difficult to retain.
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: Even as I write this diary I am conscious that the more detail and information I provide, the more useful this exercise will be for the final dissertation. Also having written down the words that have influenced me this way, - ones that I am using as examples, I am hoping that this will help me remember them better for the future. With exercise 2 in which you matched the person with the job what the person did and where the person worked, I found it saved time in just reading the answers directly. Conscious that the process of reading and re-reading given words to search for a set question may have helped me remember the words better, I still felt that it was important to come across the correct answers immediately - so that I didn't 'teach myself' something wrong. Time will tell.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: I still use English as a foundation from which I can guess the meanings because the words are so similar - e.g. Mechanic to mecánica.

Content: new - introducing vocabulary of work
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input (e.g. tape, people): Pasos 2 unit 2 pages 22 to 39 tape, book, dictionary and support book,
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: My interest in the language led me to abandon following the book and listening material in the way suggested - i.e. listening to the recording without having the script in front of me and completing the exercises including written exercises that 'teach' you the grammar.
Language Content: Work (trabajo) Content: Pasos 2 Unit 2 theme: work new vocabulary through listening,
Language learning difficulties: I found that even when I looked at the vocabulary at the back of unit 2, I still needed to use a dictionary to find more words that I did not know or had forgotten. I did find the exercises useful, although I am still unwilling to knuckle down to actually writing down the answers etc. Part of this is because I know there will be no immediate check on whether I have written correctly. That is why I find trying to answer the questions in my head and looking up the answers directly is more interesting for me to do. Whether it is more effective in the learning process is another question.
Motivation Keen to use the course to the best advantage and aware that I needed to return it to the library soon, I felt 'obliged' to do some work daily when possible and this is the motivation for starting this unit.
Personality:
Place: Ely
Previous learning history:
Success: Using the tape script while listening was a great help and having looked up an average of every second or so unknown word I found I could make an intelligent guess at the meaning of some of the other unknown words. I even managed to associate a word learnt previously to work out what a phrase meant in a new context. 'cambio' I have always associated with changing money but in this case the phrase was 'cambiar ruedas' Once I had looked up ruedas (wheels) then at last my memory was jogged when I realized that cambiar was 'to change'.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 65
Date, Sunday 14 May 2000
Age memory still the problem
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: this is a conscious process I hope to apply as detailed above.
Approach: if I'm learning to speak later I hope my skimming will accelerate my vocabulary eventually for I have found rather than trying to remember if I forget about this need and just allow myself to be aware that I have come across a familiar word an d then if I feel I really need to know that word I look it up in the dictionary this may help me extend my vocab eventually
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: taking huge risks by skimming over the material not ensuring I understand all words and taking little or no notice of grammar although I am aware I will need to know how to differentiate between the tenses at least
Cognitive style: decided to be less conscious and just practice reading and listening more without worrying about details and lack of comprehension I found returning to previous chapters out of curiosity - if I didn't stop to make sure I understood absolutely everything could I understand any of it late r by just having more experience - did somehow help. I remembered some of the material I at the time couldn't
Content: some revision of vocabulary, common phrases to do with hiring or buying and car and having it serviced
Control of anxiety focus on the need to communicate when in Spain
Empathy: little with this subject - I'm no car mechanic
Input (e.g. tape, people), book, support book and dictionary Interest in culture:
Interest in language: again the subject itself is of little interest I try to guess meanings of the words by thinking of similar English words - this seems to be a better way of trying to remember the words too e.g. 'escribe' meaning write - I remember this from the English word scribe which sound s like the Spanish

word and has a connected meaning
Interest in culture: the attitude and tone of the listening material with the parking problem brought to mind the exact tone of the Spaniards I had met - direct, no-nonsense
Language Content, Pasos 2 unit 3
Language learning difficulties: understanding the vocabulary not good
Motivation I plan to use a car rarely in Spain so the interest was not there although I realize I need to know the vocabulary for ordinary conversation purposes
Personality still too impatient to be thorough
Place: Ely
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:
Comments: 14 May 2000
Pasos 2 unit 3
I allowed myself to skip over many words that I didn't know and found that I could guess many of the meanings e.g. vendida meaning window although I am quite sure my comprehension of the written and spoken text was not very secure.
I did look up words that became irritating because I didn't know them.
When looking up the word or words I needed I also found that looking at the whole section on the word in which the word as other meanings and uses was quite a painless way of being introduced to new vocabulary.
I've now given up the idea of focusing on words in an effort to remember them and find it creates less pressure when I assume that I will not remember specific words and that I will only recognize them as words I have come across before. This seems to produce some results and not only do I remember coming across the words before but sometimes I remember the word itself and I can also bring to mind the page in which the word was written when I heard it in relation to a listening exercise in the previous language course.

...

Entry 81
Date: 8 September 2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: I've decided to write down what I need to learn to help memory
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: www.studyspanish.com
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content:
I am now 'learning' negatives new words:
algo something
nada nothing
alguien somebody
nadie nobody
algun some, something
ningun no, none
siempre always
nunca never
tambien also
tampoco neither not either

0 0 either or
ni ni neither nor
Language learning difficulties: The greatest difficulty was recalling the new words introduced directly.
Motivation:
Personality: determination
Place: Ely Library UK
Previous learning history:
Success: The order of the words was easier to copy for this I seem to have remembered from the previous practice mind my reproduction was not perfect
 Test results: made about 5 errors
'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 84
Date: 13/09/2000
Age: not really relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: the course is not perfect - some errors were for example missing out words I knew like quiero because the question said order a sandwich not say you would like a sandwich.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: no significant influence
Cognitive style:
Content: new Spanish Course: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin ISBN 0 19 860297 9 OUP unit 1 Test p12 and 13
Control of anxiety: a little anxious
Empathy: no significant influence
Input: Spanish Course: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin ISBN 0 19 860297 9 OUP unit 1 Test p12 and 13
Interest in culture: no significant influence
Interest in language:
Language content: Spanish Course: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin ISBN 0 19 860297 9 OUP unit 1 Test p12 and 13
Language learning difficulties: not very successful at remembering words
Motivation: reasonably motivated
Personality: no significant influence
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history:
Success: 40 (less than 41 and to revise) but some errors were for example missing out words I knew like quiero because the question said order a sandwich not say you would like a sandwich..
Test results: 40 (less than 41 and to revise) but some errors were for example missing out words I knew like quiero because the question said order a sandwich not say you would like a sandwich..
'Xtra' comments: test - complete test enclosed:
Spanish Course: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin ISBN 0 19 860297 9 OUP
Unit 1
 Test p12 and 13
1
1 i 2 f 3 h 4 b 5a 6d 7e 8c 9g 9
2
1 un cafe con leche 1
2 un bocadillo de queso y una cerveza 2
3 un zumo de naranja y un salada 0
4 un cafe solo y un bocadillo de jamon 2
3 1 es usted...2 soy 3encantado 4 Buenas dias MUCHO GUSTO 5 Como esta 6 bien
4 1 Es usted Sra Martin? 2 Como esta usted? 3 Buenos dias 4 Esta es LA Sra Martin 5 Quiero un cafe con leche

5 un te con imon
Si un bocadillo de jamon y un ENsalada Nada mas gracias
6 1 la senorA 2 la senorITa 3 el camarero 4 la camarara 5 el amigo

...

Entry: 89
Date: 18b/09/2000
Age: no significant influence
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: trying to speak to understanding people would be the ideal
Approach: this is what I am trying to do - communicate with Spanish people effectively
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to risk being misunderstood in conversation
Cognitive style: listening and speaking
Content: new and some familiar
Control of anxiety: anxious but willing to try
Empathy: enjoyed speaking to like-minded people?
Input: conversation introducing ourselves
Interest in culture: enjoyed speaking to Spanish people who appeared to be very kind patient and interesting
Interest in language: some of the language is becoming more recognizable
Language content: conversation with strangers at a restaurant
Language learning difficulties: still don't understand enough to feel 'fluent'
Motivation: very motivated now
Personality: willing to be extravert and strike up a conversation with strangers
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: some words learnt proved useful
Success: Success at last. I may be at the pre intermediate stage i.e. I managed to strike up half a conversation with some locals who actually understood the few words of Spanish I muttered. I asked where they came from and they said Bilbao I recommended the lenguado (sole) at Peppi's restaurant so they had lamb chops I think Peppi teased them about it. I managed to say I was pleased (couldn't remember to meet just said encandarda and they said tambien - the same for them (I think)
I also find myself forgetting to take the dictionary when I go out and I can now hear a few more words than the simple ands and buts some nouns are starting to be recognisable when I eavesdrop.
Test results: not relevant
'Xtra' comments: full comments: Success at last. I may be at the pre intermediate stage i.e. I managed to strike up half a conversation with some locals who actually understood the few words of Spanish I muttered. I asked where they came from and they said Bilbao I recommended the lenguado (sole) at Peppi's restaurant so they had lamb chops I think Peppi teased them about it. I managed to say I was pleased (couldn't remember to meet just said encandarda and they said tambien - the same for them (I think)
I also find myself forgetting to take the dictionary when I go out and I can now hear a few more words than the simple ands and buts some nouns are starting to be recognisable when I eavesdrop.

Stage 2
Entries 90 – 100

Entry: 90
Date: 19/09/2000
Age: not relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: not relevant
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: high demands in tests implied criticism not liked
Cognitive style: following structure of course
Content: new
Control of anxiety: testing only point of anxiety
Empathy: no significant influence

Input: Spanish Course: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin
Interest in culture: no significant influence
Interest in language: course didn't allow alternatives
Language content: unit 6 test
Language learning difficulties: course too narrow and inflexible
Motivation: not very
Personality: determination to overcome challenges
Place: Torrevieja
Previous learning history:
Success: 44 out of 60
Test results: 44 out of 60 = 73%
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 91
Date: 20/09/2000
Age: no significant influence
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: no significant influence
Approach: testing not very motivating when you don't score well
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to take risks - not taking it too seriously
Cognitive style: trying to remember by completing a test
Content: revision
Control of anxiety: not too anxious
Empathy: no significant influence
Input: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 6 and 7
Interest in culture: no significant influence
Interest in language: no significant influence
Language content: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 6 and 7
Language learning difficulties: the material learnt more recently better and got no marks for one question because I had forgotten the relevant vocabulary However, the test provided a good revision period. Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 7 test 45 out of 58 with generous marking not the required 48 much of the material has been 'covered before'.
Motivation: quite motivated
Personality: determination to continue in spite of poor scores
Place: Torrevieja Spain?
Previous learning history: remembered more recently learnt vocabulary better
Success: test completed over a few days 44 out of 60 the material learnt more recently better and got no marks for one question because I had forgotten the relevant vocabulary However, the test provided a good revision period. Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 7 test 45 out of 58 with generous marking not the required 48 much of the material has been 'covered before'.
Test results: test completed over a few days 44 out of 60 used as revision remembered the material learnt more recently better and got no marks for one question because I had forgotten the relevant vocabulary However, the test provided a good revision period. Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 7 test 45 out of 58 with generous marking not the required 48 much of the material has been 'covered before'.
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 92
Date: 21/09/2000
Age: no significant influence
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: going over the vocabulary first and making some effort to try to remember the vocabulary is helpful.
Approach: going through it faster and less securely to finish in time but I am sure there are some extra un translated words. Those that have been included are usefully incorporated in the listening. Going over the vocabulary first and making some effort to try to remember the vocabulary is helpful.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to risk failing for the sake of completing a section
Cognitive style: Going over the vocabulary first and making some effort to try to remember the vocabulary

is helpful. Extra un translated words included are usefully incorporated in the listening.
Content: revision
Control of anxiety: not too anxious
Empathy: no significant influence
Input: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8 .1 and 2
Interest in culture: no significant influence
Interest in language: Extra un translated words included in the listening helpful. Language content: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8 .1 and 2
Language learning difficulties: Gong through it faster and less securely to finish in time. Slightly put off my there being some extra un translated words but problem redressed when they were incorporated in the listening. Going over the vocabulary first and making some effort to try to remember the vocabulary is helpful but difficult
Motivation: quite motivated
Personality: determination to finish
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: some words not learnt before
Success: Going over the vocabulary first and making some effort to try to remember the vocabulary is helpful.
Test results: not relevant
'Xtra' comments: full comments: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8 .1 and 2 gong through it faster and less securely to finish in time but I am sure there are some extra un translated words those that have been included are usefully incorporated in the listening going over the vocabulary first and making some effort to try to remember the vocabulary is helpful.

Entry: 93
Date: 22/09/2000
Age: no significant influence
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: chose what to do
Approach: chose what to do
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: not worried
Cognitive style: picking and choosing from the exercises
Content: new
Control of anxiety: not anxious
Empathy: not important
Input: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8, 9 on People and Unit e 10 on Free time Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin
p137 question if me I te you le he or she les they if you ask your colleague why le and not te.
Interest in culture:
I chose not to do activity 7 for it is all in English and asks to correct in English wrong comprehension facts I find it seems much more effective beneficial even enjoyable as I now immerse myself in the language and culture e.g. I decided against going to the English speaking Writers' Circle her in Spain, for I feel a need to join a Spanish society when my language improves enough. I managed to ask a man if he lives in this building and I understood partly that he wanted to visit friends on the 5th floor so I rashly let him in with my key...
Interest in language: no great influence
Language content: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8, 9 on People and Unit 10 on Free time Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin
p137 question if me I te you le he or she les they if you ask your colleague why le and not te.
Language learning difficulties: test for Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8 very rough 32 and a half much done verbally for speed and some of the questions were confusing because of the sense not being clear e.g. no example given and not usually expected to alter the way requested from my books are good to yours are better type of answer. However, doing the test was a good way of revising some of the grammar I had read but couldn't quite remember I will probably need one of two more bits of tuition on the same and I may improve with writing more but I feel the priority is to extend vocabulary as much as possible while I am trying out the language for real while I am in Spain.
Test for 9 on People 46 out of 60 There was one error in the test which gave answers with words that were

not asked to be translated i.e. long hair not just blond Also there were often other ways to translate negatives just by using no again I marked generously using the test for revision purposes rather than testing purposes.

Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 10 Free time

p137 question if me I te you le he or she les they if you ask your colleague why le and not te.

also with the listening and repeating this gave a prime example of misconceptions - mistakes - that can easily arise I thought the speaker asked me to say I like this course not I like discotheques.

p139 mistake again there are 6 questions in the text but only 5 answers given in the answer section so now I will never know whether compro is the correct past e.g. he/or she bought or not.

The exercise which takes out certain phrases from the given dialogue are excellent for there is a need to be able to get my tongue around unfamiliar combinations of sounds in these phrases with an effort to repeat until I can say them quickly gives me a chance and also alerts me to the difficulties in trying to speak a new language quickly it is not just understanding the vocabulary that matters it is simply being able to string the new sounds together efficiently.

Here it is also necessary to see the words chosen for fuiste a bailar could easily have been misheard as fuiste bailar.

I chose not to do activity 7 for it is all in English and asks to correct in English wrong comprehension facts I find it seems much more effective beneficial even enjoyable as I now immerse myself in the language and culture e.g. I decided against going to the English speaking Writers' Circle her in Spain, for I feel a need to join a Spanish society when my language improves enough. I managed to ask a man if he lives in this building and I understood partly that he wanted to visit friends on the 5th floor so I rashly let him in with my key...

Motivation: quite motivated to get on

Personality: determination persistence

Place: Torrevieja Spain

Previous learning history:

Success: test for Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8 very rough 32 and a half much done verbally for speed and some of the questions were confusing because of the sense not being clear e.g. no example given and not usually expected to alter the way requested from my books are good to yours are better type of answer. However, doing the test was a good way of revising some of the grammar I had read but couldn't quite remember I will probably need one of two more bits of tuition on the same and I may improve with writing more but I feel the priority is to extend vocabulary as much as possible while I am trying out the language for real while I am in Spain.

Test for 9 on People 46 out of 60 There was one error in the test which gave answers with words that were not asked to be translated i.e. long hair not just blond Also there were often other ways to translate negatives just by using no again I marked generously using the test for revision purposes rather than testing purposes.

Test results: test for Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8 very rough 32 and a half Test for 9 on People 46 out of 60

'Xtra' comments: full comments:

test for Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin unit 8 very rough 32 and a half much done verbally for speed and some of the questions were confusing because of the sense not being clear e.g. no example given and not usually expected to alter the way requested from my books are good to yours are better type of answer. However, doing the test was a good way of revising some of the grammar I had read but couldn't quite remember I will probably need one of two more bits of tuition on the same and I may improve with writing more but I feel the priority is to extend vocabulary as much as possible while I am trying out the language for real while I am in Spain.

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Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 10 Free time

p137 question if me I te you le he or she les they if you ask your colleague why le and not te.

also with the listening and repeating this gave a prime example of misconceptions - mistakes - that can easily arise I thought the speaker asked me to say I like this course not I like discotheques.

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The exercise which takes out certain phrases from the given dialogue are excellent for there is a need to be able to get my tongue around unfamiliar combinations of sounds in these phrases with an effort to repeat until I can say them quickly gives me a chance and also alerts me to the difficulties in trying to speak a new language quickly it is not just understanding the vocabulary that matters it is simply being able to string the new sounds together efficiently.

Here it is also necessary to see the words chosen for fuiste a bailar could easily have been misheard as fuiste bailar.

I chose not to do activity 7 for it is all in English and asks to correct in English wrong comprehension facts I find it seems much more effective beneficial even enjoyable as I now immerse myself in the language and culture e.g. I decided against going to the English speaking Writers' Circle her in Spain, for I feel a need to join a Spanish society when my language improves enough. I managed to ask a man if he lives in this building and I understood partly that he wanted to visit friends on the 5th floor so I rashly let him in with my key...

Entry: 94
Date: 23a/09/2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: I watched a series of Suenos BBC programme on TV for learning Spanish did not really learn many new words.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: some new mostly familiar I watched a series of Suenos BBC programme on TV for learning Spanish did not really learn many new words.
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: I watched a series of Suenos BBC programme on TV for learning Spanish did not really learn many new words.
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: I watched a series of Suenos BBC programme on TV for learning Spanish did not really learn many new words.
Language learning difficulties: I watched a series of Suenos BBC programme on TV for learning Spanish did not really learn many new words.
Motivation:
Personality:

Place: Witchford Ely UK
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry 95
Date: 23b/09/2000
Age: not relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: listening only not sufficient -fuiste a bailar or fuiste bailar?
Approach: help given in getting my tongue round unfamiliar sounds
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: high demands in tests implied criticism not liked
Cognitive style: following structure of course
Content: new
Control of anxiety: testing only point of anxiety
Empathy: no significant influence
Input: Spanish Course: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin
Interest in culture: no significant influence
Interest in language: course didn't allow alternatives
Language content: Unit 10 Free time
Language learning difficulties: not clear 'this course' or' discotheque'?
Motivation: not very
Personality: determination overcame challenges
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: no significant influence
Success: some limited success in exchange with local
Test results test incorrect 6 questions asked 5 answers given
'Xtra' comments: completed tests verbally. Tests not 'valid'

Entry: 96
Date: 24a/09/2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: Looking at the language building section would not be enough to catch up. I've reached the stage where good as a course is, I'm getting a little tired of it, so I changed course.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 10 test
Interest in culture:
Interest in language
Language content: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 10 test
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success: I completely forgot pronouns and will have to relearn Looking back at them seems to not have been enough. I scored only about 37 out of 70 and again looking at the language building section would not be enough to catch up. I've reached the stage where good as a course is, I'm getting a little tired of it.
Test results: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin Unit 10 test 37 out of 70
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 97
Date: 24b/09/2000
Age: no great influence
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
On page 18 after the last principle 26 ideas are given for what to do when there is no linguistic association
Create your own mnemonic dictionary mnemonic merely means a memory aid and is described in full in the ACCELERATED LEARNING book. ...
Take the new Spanish word and find a strong visual image to associate with it. The image should be deliberately be at odd, comic, or bizarre (even vulgar) as possible. If there is a rhyming association so much the better.
e.g. Gafas p spectacles = old gaffers with white sideboards wear spectacles.
It also suggests constructing a simple Spanish sentence e.g. madera = wood amo el vino madiera en una mesa de madera.
However, I couldn't bring myself to use the Spanish sentence for memory purposes for I could not be sure my Spanish construction would be correct and my other teaching experience tells me to unlearn an error is more difficult than to learn something correctly the first time.
Approach: Looking at the language building section would not be enough to catch up. I've reached the stage where good as a course is, I'm getting a little tired of it, so I changed tack.
Attitude towards risk and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin ACCELERATED LEARNING book
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: Take off in Spanish by Rosa Martin ACCELERATED LEARNING book
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
 Success:
 Test results:
 'Xtra' comments: full comments

Entry: 98
Date: 25/09/2000
Age: no great influence
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: Looking back at words seems to not have been enough. I've reached the stage where good as a course is, I'm getting a little tired of it. I changed tack I read "The Spanish Language Game Name Game" a series of 24 pages lent to me.
Approach: A series of basic principles of the way the Spanish language works helps establish confidence that some similar words can be understood.
Attitude to criticism:
Cognitive style:
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: "The Spanish Language Game Name Game" a series of 24 pages giving basic principles of the way the Spanish language works.
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: "The Spanish Language Game Name Game" a series of 24 pages of basic
principles of the way the Spanish language works. e.g. Principle 1
..Profesor is very recognisably professor. Is there a principle? Yes, the Spanish do not have as many double letters. so it was easy to deduce intelligent from inteligente. Similarly the following Spanish words should

not give you any problem!
asimilar = assimilate...etc.
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history
Success: I couldn't bring myself to use the Spanish sentence for memory purposes for I could not be sure my Spanish construction would be correct and my other teaching experience tells me to unlearn an error is more difficult than to learn something correctly the first time.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments: full comments Having the answers immediately but with a space available was much better than having to search again and again to the end of the book.
e.g. Principle 1
..Profesor is very recognisably professor. Is there a principle? Yes, the Spanish do not have as many double letters. so it was easy to deduce intelligent from inteligente. Similarly the following Spanish words should not give you any problem!
asimilar = assimilate...etc.
On page 18 after the last principle 26 ideas are given for what to do when there is no linguistic association Create your own mnemonic dictionary mnemonic merely means a memory aid and is described in full in the ACCELERATED LEARNING book. ...
Take the new Spanish word and find a strong visual image to associate with it. The image should be deliberately be at odd, comic, or bizarre (even vulgar) as possible. If there is a rhyming association so much the better.
e.g. Gafas p spectacles = old gaffers with white sideboards wear spectacles.
It also suggests constructing a simple Spanish sentence e.g. madera = wood amo el vino madiera en una mesa de madera.
However, I couldn't bring myself to use the Spanish sentence for memory purposes for I could not be sure my Spanish construction would be correct and my other teaching experience tells me to unlearn an error is more difficult than to learn something correctly the first time.
Approach: Having the answers immediately but with a space available was much better than having to search again and again to the end of the book.

Entry: 99
Date: 26/09/2000
Age: not relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: fed up so looked at new material
Approach: interested because of the change and having the answers immediately available was much better than having to search at the end of the book.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: this information helped me to take 'informed' risks
Cognitive style: thinking about how many Spanish words are related to English
Content: mostly new
Control of anxiety: being helped to compare known language controlled anxiety for me
Empathy: finding something similar in the new language helps
Input: Spanish Course: "The Spanish Language Game Name Game"
Interest in culture: no significant influence
Interest in language: similarities between the languages are very interesting
Language content: principles of language structure e.g. the Spanish do not have as many double letters so it is easy to deduce intelligent from inteligente
Language learning difficulties: I may guess wrongly
Motivation: very motivating
Personality: constant application helps
Place: Torrevieja
Previous learning history: I knew about this approach but haven't really tried it to learn Spanish before
Success: this makes me feel 'successful'

Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 100
Date: 28/09/2000
Age: no great influence
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: using a visual image that rhymes as a memory aid when there does not seem to be a linguist connection seems to be a good way forward
However, I couldn't bring myself to use the Spanish sentence for memory purposes for I could not be sure my Spanish construction would be correct and my other teaching experience tells me to unlearn an error is more difficult than to learn something correctly the first time.
Approach: using sentences as memory aids does not seem to suit me It suggests constructing a simple Spanish sentence e.g. madera = wood amo el vino madiera en una mesa de madera.
Attitude towards risk and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Control of anxiety: anxiety is decreased with this help for the memory
Empathy: this method does not really encourage 'empathy'
Input: accelerated learning methods
Interest in culture: this does not really incorporate much of the Spanish culture
Interest in language: this method helps me focus on the language
Language content: Spanish vocabulary with English connections
Language learning difficulties: using sentences is too difficult to do confidently
Motivation: these ideas are highly motivating
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: using this technique may help me remember past words
Success: I 'feel' more successful using this approach
 'Xtra' comments:
…

Entry: 102
Date: 31/10/2000
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: After having listened to the tape that uses this method I felt more confident about using the pictures as memory aids more than before when I thought that perhaps similarity to the English would be more beneficial. Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: no significant influence here
Cognitive style: focus on associations with a small group of isolated words
Content: new
Control of anxiety: not anxious generally although keen to remember
Empathy: not relevant
Input: Linkword Spanish in a Day by Dr Michael M. Gruneberg pub Corgi Books ISBN 0-552-14247-6 1994 pages 1 to 9
Interest in culture: no significant influence
Interest in language: associations with pictures and other ideas interesting, but not the language itself
Language content: content nouns: 8 or 9words to a page on Food and Drink, Clothes, and Furniture and Fittings
Language learning difficulties: There is still one slight problem and that is the word endings. These were not always remembered perfectly amario for cupboard was remembered initially as amare.
Motivation: very motivated although after the 9 pages I found the interest beginning to wander elsewhere so I opted for a break
Personality: interested and determined
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history: After having listened to the tape that uses this method I felt more confident about using the pictures as memory aids more than before when I thought that perhaps similarity to the English

would be more beneficial. The pictures again sprang to mind very quickly sooner than I could remember the words using the previous learning method.

Success: The pictures again sprang to mind very quickly sooner than I could remember the words using the previous learning method. There is definitely something about the connection between the sound of the word, the pictures with interacting components and the memory.

Test results: not taken

'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 114

Date: 20b/11 2000

Age: no significant effect

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: reading may help me become more immersed in Spanish could read English without interruption and confusion

Approach: I enjoy reading Durrell's novels in English so this is motivating and I am able to 'translate' more quickly and more accurately - reading Spanish-English-Spanish again. easier working in paragraphs - reading the English then the Spanish.

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: no 'real risks taken as no one knows how little I am 'translating' successfully

Cognitive style: trying to think from a wider non-specific aspect

Content: new p.31-36 English

Control of anxiety: a little anxious but OK because no one knows my lack of success

Empathy: this may help me develop real empathy with the Spanish language

Input: lengthy prose in English and Spanish

Interest in culture: the culture represented is from Cyprus rather than Spain but it is different to Australian/English and I do related to the Greek/Mediterranean culture

Interest in language: there are more pages in the Spanish book – pl 31 in the English version and p.39 in the Spanish - does this mean that the Spanish language is much more 'flowery' much more laboured flamboyant and emotionally descriptive than the English?

Language content: first use of an English copy of "The Garden of the Gods" by Gerald Durrell Collins 1978 combined with a copy of a Spanish translation

Language learning difficulties: the language is far too advanced for me to really understand

Motivation: very motivated to read because of my appreciation of Durrell's writing and interests

Personality: determination and constant attention to learning the way I am motivated to learn

Place: UK?

Previous learning history: I could guess some words because I had come across them before

Success: I can understand more quickly than before because before I would have been much less confident in guessing the meanings.

Test results: not taken

'Xtra' e.g. the Spanish 'El turco vació la copa' for me, initially, without remembering or referring to the English said something about 'the Turk xxx head' yet after reading the English I knew I should have known la copa as a glass for I remember trying to learn that word in Spain in context - when I wanted an extra glass for the mineral water I had requested to have in conjunction with the bottle of wine.

......

Entry: 116

Date: 24/11/200

Age: not relevant like a recycled youth I am revelling in the book(s)

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: Stopping to read the Spanish after reading the English does not seem to be the chore I expected it to be

Approach: many of the words are now being painlessly recycled which is what I want.

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: not relevant I only have self criticism which I can ignore to avoid hindering my interest in learning Spanish.

Cognitive style: I try to anticipate the Spanish before I read it

Content: new

Control of anxiety: I feel a little 'anxious' about my slow progress although this method helps with immediate feedback.

Empathy: I feel strong empathy with the atmosphere and ideas in this novel. (flat in Spain, holiday in Corfu where Durrell's book set and Greek boyfriend in Tasmania)

Input: the novel "El jardin de los Dioses" and the English version "The Garden of the Gods" by Gerald Durrell (original language English)

Interest in culture:

Interest in language: entertaining descriptive language Gerald Durrell translated introduces me to much more Spanish vocabulary.

Language content: the language of the novel - highly descriptive

Language learning difficulties: vocabulary still not known but I can recognize the past verb endings but recognition slow and recognition and expectation of the verb forms slow

Motivation: can't wait to read the next paragraph. I am very motivated for I have always enjoyed reading Gerald Durrell and had a similar interest in insects/animals/history (of Tasmania) as a child (although I was no t nearly as informed).

Personality: little effect here other than my curiosity about animals/insects

Place: Witchford

Previous learning history: some of the vocabulary is familiar which gives me a certain amount of confidence

Success: but I am by no means ready to understand the Spanish novel without immediate recourse to the translated English and very occasionally I have been delighted to find that I have chosen the right vocabulary although verb endings and word order are rarely correct.

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

…

Entry: 124

Date: 27/12/2000

Age:

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:

Tomorrow will be my first Spanish lesson one to one and I am hoping for a very patient teacher who will let me move very slowly and try to speak the language using many cues from written vocabulary. We shall see..

Approach: I quite confidently start conversations with a very little Spanish and not using the dictionary too often. However, I am still very limited in my understanding of the language and this becomes very evident when I try to eavesdrop in on conversations I understand very little and I am still reduced to understanding only the occasional word. If I had time to press a pause button and to think at great length about the last few words that were spoken I might be able to guess what was the gist of what was being said. However, as this is not possible I don't understand.

Tomorrow will be my first Spanish lesson one to one and I am hoping for a very patient teacher who will let me move very slowly and try to speak the language using many cues from written vocabulary. We shall see..

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I quite confidently start conversations with a very little Spanish and not using the dictionary too often.

Cognitive style: I start conversations with a very little Spanish and not using the dictionary too often.

Tomorrow will be my first Spanish lesson one to one and I am hoping for a very patient teacher who will let me move very slowly and try to speak the language using many cues from written vocabulary.

Content: some new some revision conversations with local Spaniards

Control of anxiety: I quite confidently start conversations with a very little Spanish and not using the dictionary too often. However, I am still very limited in my understanding of the language.

Empathy:

Input:

Interest in culture:

Interest in language:

Language content: What I found I could do, was to try to use the future tense with va and the infinitive

taught to me by Spanish at the wheel. I've also managed it was estaba (originally written estaba - which could have been a typing error) in conversation when ordering a meal.

Language learning difficulties: I quite confidently start conversations with a very little Spanish and not using the dictionary too often. However, I am still very limited in my understanding of the language and this becomes very evident when I try to eavesdrop in on conversations I understand very little and I am still reduced to understanding only the occasional word. If I had time to press a pause button and to think at great length about the last few words that were spoken I might be able to guess what was the gist of what was being said. However, as this is not possible I don't understand.

Motivation:

Personality:

Place: Torrevieja Spain

Previous learning history: I am still very limited in my understanding of the language and this becomes very evident when I try to eavesdrop in on conversations I understand very little and I am still reduced to understanding only the occasional word. If I had time to press a pause button and to think at great length about the last few words that were spoken I might be able to guess what was the gist of what was being said. However, as this is not possible I don't understand.

Success: I quite confidently start conversations with a very little Spanish and not using the dictionary too often.

What I found I could do, was to try to use the future tense with va and the infinitive taught to me by Spanish at the wheel. I've also managed it was estaba in conversation when ordering a meal.

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 130

Date: 06/01/2001

Age:

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: it is important to have a good teacher who, for example, asked me to talk using the present or to talk using the past and my own experience. She gave me a hint for example when suggested I could use the va plus verb form for the future or the ...a from (the one that is more difficult and that I do not really know).

Approach: One aspect of the language learning yesterday the teacher was under the weather had a cold and for most of the lesson I simply read and translated a letter that I largely understood save for the few words that were unfamiliar now forgotten. She assumed I think that the letter I read would give me the language to do what I think she was asking an that was for me to describe or to verbalize a similar letter as though I was visiting England. I was not exactly sure what she wanted which did not help and just using the language in complete form was not as useful as I'd hoped. It needed breaking up in chunks. the most effective questions asked was by another teacher Pilar when she asked me to talk using the present or to talk using the past and my own experience. She gave me a hint for example when suggested I could use the va plus verb form for the future or the ...a from (the one that is more difficult and that I do not really know).

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:

Cognitive style: reading translating a whole letter and trying to write or 'verbalise' a similar letter.

Content: new with some revision

Control of anxiety:

Empathy:

Input: a Spanish letter and the Spanish teacher

Interest in culture:

Interest in language: I simply read and translated a letter that I largely understood save for the few words that were unfamiliar now forgotten. Just using the language in complete form was not as useful as I'd hoped. It needed breaking up in chunks. the most effective questions asked was by another teacher Pilar when she asked me to talk using the present or to talk using the past and my own experience. She gave me a hint for example when suggested I could use the va plus verb form for the future or the ...a from (the one that is more difficult and that I do not really know).

Language content: translating a letter and trying to write or verbalize a similar letter with some input from a Spanish teacher

Language learning difficulties:

One aspect of the language learning yesterday the teacher was under the weather had a cold ad for most of the lesson I simply read and translated a letter that I largely understood save for the few words that were unfamiliar now forgotten. She assumed I think that the letter I read would give me the language to do what I think she was asking an that was for me to describe or to verbalize a similar letter as though I was visiting England. I was not exactly sure what she wanted which did not help and just using the language in complete form was not as useful as I'd hoped. It needed breaking up in chunks. the most effective questions asked was by another teacher Pilar when she asked me to talk using the present or to talk using the past and my own experience. She gave me a hint for example when suggested I could use the va plus verb form for the future or the ...a from (the one that is more difficult and that I do not really know).

Motivation:

Personality:

Place: Torrevieja Spain

Previous learning history: I did know some vocabulary which was rewarding

Success: The teacher was ill I simply read and translated a letter that I largely understood save for the few words that were unfamiliar now forgotten.

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 134

Date: 10/02/2001

Age:

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:

Approach: I used a suitable learning tool that was quick -the studyspanish website. With this programme I had the opportunity to see and hear the words one at a time with the pronunciation. The practice exercises were ideal I had to fill in missing letters to the words presented and couldn't always do this then in a second exercise the words were offered I had to choose the correct one. This was easier than filling in missing letters and if it had been presented first it would have helped me more I think. I would have seen the correct version first and then I could have more easily remembered or referred back to this in order to fill in the correct letters. As the programme lists the questions you get wrong it was easy and beneficial to return to my test answers and try again until I got it right. If I were wise I would probably go through the words once more but I am not doing this at the moment..

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I allowed myself to get a number wrong and as the programme lists the question you get wrong it was easy and beneficial to return to my test answers and try again until I got it right. If I were wise I would probably go through the words once more but I am not doing this at the moment..

Cognitive style: I used the studyspanish website again this time learning vocabulary specifically animals 1. There were many more - 20+ items this time which was better and with this programme I had the opportunity to see and hear the words one at a time with the pronunciation. I noticed differences in pronunciation. The practice exercises were ideal I had to fill in missing letters to the words presented and couldn't always do this then in a second exercise the words were offered I had to choose the correct one.

Content: new studyspanish.com

Control of anxiety:

Empathy:

Input: studyspanish.com vocabulary animals 1. There were many more - 20+ items.

Interest in culture:

Interest in language: I noticed already that many of the 'c's were pronounced as c and not as th as in the area of Spain where I lived. There was also a problem with the 'b' sounding like a 'p' and the 'v' sounding like a 'b' which I believe is a constant problem.

Language content: studyspanish.com vocabulary animals 1.

Language learning difficulties: I noticed already that many of the 'c's were pronounced as c and not as th as

in the area of Spain where I lived. There was also a problem with the 'b' sounding like a 'p' and the 'v' sounding like a 'b' which I believe is a constant problem.

In the practice exercises were ideal I had to fill in missing letters to the words presented but couldn't always do this.

Motivation:

Personality:

Place: Witchford UK

Previous learning history:

Success: The second exercise when the words were offered and I had to choose the correct one was relatively easy

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

…

Entry: 139

Date: 12/03/2001

Age:

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: The teacher Emily responded well when it was clear I just wanted conversation. The way she corrected me just enough and the way she provided me with the missing vocabulary even though I knew I knew it helped the flow of the conversation considerably.

Approach:

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:

Cognitive style:

Content: new

Control of anxiety:

Empathy:

Input: I had my first one-hour lesson for the week - four hours only planned.

Interest in culture:

Interest in language:

Language content:

Language learning difficulties: I seemed to forget what she told me quite easily and even when I tried to make myself use the vocabulary or the phrase again I forgot. Part of the reason for this was the effort I forming a new phrase about a new idea - this was one reason for the slow recall. I now marshal together the Spanish corner of my mind before speaking and this proved to be difficult when I met the next door neighbours who I thought were Spanish. When they proved to be German - recalling the little German I know to converse with them became an impossible task - I was too geared up for producing some Spanish.

Motivation:

Personality:

Place:

Previous learning history:

Success: Very recently I noticed that at last some words are coming to mind spontaneously. When the water on the shore flowed rather quickly suddenly instead of thinking 'why' I noticed I though por que - however this was the only Spanish word that 'appeared' at the time - the remainder of the phrase was in English if such thoughts are in a language at all.

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 141

Date 26/04/2001 Thursday 26 April 2001

Age:

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:

Approach: Just reading it through I know is not a sensible way to learn but it helps the reinforce the occasional vaguely remembered features and on occasions explains something that has been a little confusing more clearly giving me a little more confidence to try it out.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new and revision
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: I read through the list o f grammar rules in the Berlitz Spanish Learner's GuideISBN 2-8315-6723-8 pub 1998 Berlitz
Interest in culture:
Interest in language:
Language content: The rules of Spanish wee explained clearly with useful examples.
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history: Some of it I remember trying when speaking to Caroline on our Friday lunch speaking Spanish times particularly yo no le se I think I didn't know that...?
Success: I felt I understood 80 per cent of te words and much of the grammar was familiar but not known.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 152
Date: 31/05/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: As it is after 5 p.m. my plan to try to go through the whole chapter ended when I realized I had absorbed enough even though most of the content was revision. Because I have already come across the cardinal and ordinal numbers before as well as the mine yours etc. it was all familiar but still not known. I did attempt to try to remember the cardinal numbers and I believe I remain shaky on about four of the number still coming from when I first tried to learn them and found particular ones confusing.
Approach: On the train from London to Ely I started on chapter 4 of Spanish in Three Months. As it is after 5 p.m. my plan to try to go through the whole chapter ended when I realized I had absorbed enough even though most of the content was revision. Because I have already come across the cardinal and ordinal numbers before as well as the mine yours etc. it was all familiar but still not known. I did attempt to try to remember the cardinal numbers and I believe I remain shaky on about four of the number still coming from when I first tried to learn them and found particular ones confusing. One of the problematic numbers is five cinco fifteen quinze, fifty cinquenta and 500 quinientos.
I have written them from memory so will be able to see if I have remembered them correctly.
As I am going through the book although I am taking note of the spelling I am not writing anything down I am merely reading the information given as advised, then trying the exercises once or twice depending on how well I think I have coped checking the answers to the exercises at the back after a first attempt to go through the list entirely to stop me cheating which is what I seem to do be doing as I'm so anxious to remember and get it right.
Again the way the book is set out is really helpful no knowledge is assumed and every from your yours plurals etc. is set out clearly so that I am reassuringly reminded of the whole structure. Also the way in which I am made to try to remember previous vocabulary is reassuring for I do seem to remember most of the vocabulary and knowing that I need to remember the words more than once and over a time span in order to retain it effective I am reassured that the exercises in this book seem to be taking this into account e.g. the word for daughters hijas.
Chapter 4 sections 22 to 25 completed. i.e. four sections seemed to be a reasonable amount of work to do before I reached what I felt was saturation point or it indicated I was tired at the end of the day and not as capable of the amount of work I might be capable of in the mornings.

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: The way the book words make me feel as though I am being criticised very little.

Control of anxiety: very anxious to get it right.

Empathy: not relevant

Interest in culture: no significant influence.

Motivation:

Personality:

Place: UK

Previous learning history: Because I have already come across the cardinal and ordinal numbers before as well as the mine yours etc. it was all familiar but still not known. I did attempt to try to remember the cardinal numbers and I believe I remain shaky on about four of the number still coming from when I first tried to learn them and found particular ones confusing. One of the problematic numbers is five cinco fifteen quinze, fifty cinquenta and 500 quinientos.

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The way in which I am made to try to remember previous vocabulary is reassuring for I do seem to remember most of the vocabulary and knowing that I need to remember the words more than once and over a time span in order to retain it effective I am reassured that the exercises in this book seem to be taking this into account e.g. the word for daughters hijas.

Success: I have written them from memory so will be able to see if I have remembered them correctly.

Test results: I also did a test today - online address:

 HYPERLINK http://www.nll.co.uk

www.nll.co.uk

 and was delighted to learn that, according to this test, I have at least risen above the beginner level to the elementary level. I was only one mark below the pre-intermediate level too. Some of the question s included some of the material I had learnt through the book Spanish in Three Months which was interesting.

'Xtra' comments: full comments Thursday 31 May On the train from London to Ely I started on chapter 4 of Spanish in Three Months. As it is after 5 p.m. my plan to try to go through the whole chapter ended when I realized I had absorbed enough even though most of the content was revision. Because I have already come across the cardinal and ordinal numbers before as well as the mine yours etc. it was all familiar but still not known. I did attempt to try to remember the cardinal numbers and I believe I remain shaky on about four of the number still coming from when I first tried to learn them and found particular ones confusing. One of the problematic numbers is five cinco fifteen quinze, fifty cinquenta and 500 quinientos.

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As I am going through the book although I am taking note of the spelling I am not writing anything down I am merely reading the information given as advised, then trying the exercises once or twice depending on how well I think I have coped checking the answers to the exercises at the back after a first attempt to go through the list entirely to stop me cheating which is what I seem to do be doing as I'm so anxious to remember and get it right.

Again the way the book is set out is really helpful no knowledge is assumed and every from your yours plurals etc. is set out clearly so that I am reassuringly reminded of the whole structure. Also the way in which I am made to try to remember previous vocabulary is reassuring for I do seem to remember most of the vocabulary and knowing that I need to remember the words more than once and over a time span in order to retain it effective I am reassured that the exercises in this book seem to be taking this into account e.g. the word for daughters hijas.

Chapter 4 sections 22 to 25 completed. i.e. four sections seemed to be a reasonable amount of work to do before I reached what I felt was saturation point or it indicated I was tired at the end of the day and not as capable of the amount of work I might be capable of in the mornings.

I also did a test today - online address:

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 and was delighted to learn that, according to this test, I have at least risen above the beginner level to the elementary level. I was only one mark below the pre-intermediate level too. Some of the question s included some of the material I had learnt through the book Spanish in Three Months which was interesting.

...

Entry: 157
Date 05/06/2001 Date Tuesday 5 June 2001
Age: I feel I should know how to handle reflexive verbs but this seems to be one of my 'brick walls'
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I may need to go through these pages again if I do not come across the material again clearly enough to understand and internalise but it would be better if I could go over it again in another format or context.
Approach: I think it is important not to become bogged down with the feeling of not fully remembering or understanding what is being 'taught'
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: if someone was to criticise me for failing at this stage it would not worry me at all - I know I am but I am now resigned to the fact that I can't expect to learn everything perfectly for the first second or third time - the light will dawn eventually if I persist
Cognitive style: I seem to rely on reasoning rather than memory. In order to remember something I try to create a connection with English still.
Control of anxiety: I am not anxious at all I remain confident that with constant persistence I should eventually master reflexive verbs
Content: new but much of the material is familiar but not 'known'
Empathy: I am warming to the language now and the way verbs seem to become reflexive makes more sense than perhaps the English way
Input: Textbook: Spanish in Three Months Chapter 6 reflexive verbs
Interest in culture: realizing that Pedro would not enjoy the style of party I hold here for my friends - i.e. starting in the spa - I realize there is a very formal side to Spanish socialising that quite like/appreciate.
Interest in language: I now enjoy trying to speak the language and do not feel as antagonistic towards the language as I was when I first started. I delight in recognising Spanish when it is used in films set in South America. The 'foreign' Spanish language no longer sounds 'foreign' or 'alien as it used to - I now try to understand what is being said.
Language content: Interrogative words, Exclamative, radical-changing verbs, Reflexive verbs, Reciprocal form
Language learning difficulties: the work in these pages seems just a little beyond my full understanding and I do not expect to remember or cope with what I am beige taught at present. However, I am will to go on and try to learn this material again when I come across it in another area or at another r time.
Motivation: Although this work today is a little daunting the course on a whole is presented well enough for me to be motivated to struggle on
Personality: dogged to the end I am still determined to plough on
Previous learning history: I know I have covered some of these terms several times already, but I remain confused
Place: Witch ford
Success? Definitely no feeling of success here - mostly inadequacy but I am willing to accept that the material itself may be producing too much to learn at the one time.
Test results:
Xtra
...

Entry: 162
Date: 28/06/2001 Thursday 28 June 2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: I tried to make myself remember by looking at the word or declensions and saying it over looking at it three times etc.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: re learning and the structure of lessons. I have been asked to help design a course for adults and this was part of my MA TESOL dissertation. As result of this I have become convinced that in order for students to learn the learning material needs to be structured so that first the student notices the main substance of the material then the student needs to be presented the bare bones of the material in an easily

understood formula after which the students are asked to use this knowledge in some easy way followed by applying the information more extensively.

This I must try with the tense forms I seem unable to learn. The plan is to a) make myself guess what the forms will be

b) check my answers against the correct forms

c) read the relevant forms in their correct forms and in use

d) use these forms myself unaided

e) be corrected in my usage

f) revise them with a second or third lesson using the same material in a different way and to do this until feel fully satisfied.

Finally I should use the forms in a normal conversation with a native speaker.

Content: new

Control of anxiety:

Empathy:

Input: Spanish in Three Months

Interest in culture:

Interest in language

Language content:

Language learning difficulties: I seem to have left the learning too long for much of the material seemed vaguely familiar but not known. When I looked at next material I was horrified to see more verb tenses I feel too many of them have been grouped together one chapter after the other so I am not sure whether I'm doing the future the conditional the past historic or what. but I feel tired after little sleep last night so I assume my mind is not feeling receptive.

Motivation: When I allowed myself to read out of interest and not try to retain what was happening I was far more motivated the go on.

Personality: up to p 125 I think I have reached one of those plateaus where you feel you're not making any progress and you cannot remember or apply anything you have read. However, dogged to the last, I allowed myself to read a reasonable amount of new language forms to use irregular verbs in the past historic or past definite a term I have actually just learnt hoping that when I come across his again and again I may then have absorbed enough of it to use.

Place:

Previous learning history:

Success: Unfortunately I remember seeing the page before but nothing seems to be absorbed. p117 consciously aware that I am not succeeding very well with the translations I know I have been given the material but I think I have been trying to master too much too soon. I need to revise when and where to use lo and la me etc. and I could do with summarizing the tenses that have been given.

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

Stage 3
Entries 180 – 190

Entry: 180
Date: 21/09/2001 date: Friday September 21
Age: not relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: our discussion reinforces my feeling that I will learn more if I consistently use the language well try to use the language.
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: not really relevant for there was so little chance to focus on the language. However, we did discuss learning Spanish and I agreed with one of my friends that the only way to learn the language was to interact with the natives.
Content: new
Control of anxiety: none at all there was no anxiety for there was little challenge
Empathy: I felt I had more empathy with the Spanish culture than my English friends for I found it a little disheartening to be surrounded by other English speakers while in Spain. I even felt I would have preferred hearing Spanish even though I do not know the language very well.
Input: simple Spanish mostly English
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: I am obviously interested in using the language taking into account my reaction to being surrounded by English people.
Language content: ordering food at a restaurant
Language learning difficulties: not relevant for I was using so little of the language
Motivation: little opportunity
Personality:
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 181
Date: 22/09/2001
Age: no difference
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: some preparation in the language I am about to use would be advisable I think
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety: no anxiety in spite of confusion I am now more confident in demanding what I want even if I am using pidgin Spanish
Empathy: I understand the people rather than fully empathise it is a macho type of society giving me the incentive to make it possible for a woman to become almost a equal
Input: conversation with native speaker
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: I like its simplicity in the directness you can get e.g. it is is just 'is' etc.
Language content: talking about leaving for England
Language learning difficulties: vocabulary and tenses seem to be the main problem when I am speaking and understanding rapid speech with their thick accent and lack of mouth movement seem to be my main problems.
Motivation: very motivated to be able to extend the conversation so that I can become one of the society but realize I have limitations. Now that I have been visiting this restaurant frequently the waiters and owners are now treating me more as a friend than a visiting stranger who is a foreign English person. They

seem to realize I am trying to communicate in their language and so speak to me without making any compensation for my poor level of understanding. When I indicate I don't understand they repeat exactly what they have just said without slowing up or changing words. I have sometimes managed to say in Spanish "other words" and some of them have managed to change the words to simpler ones for me to understand (and some haven't). This communication in general is very motivating and I want to continue to try speaking much more than I did in the earlier stages.
Personality:
Place: place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: Immersion best before not entirely now
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments: Date: 22/09/2001 Date: Saturday 22 September

Entry: 182
Date: 24a/09/2001
Age: not important here, I felt although it may have had a bearing on my difficulty in switching to expressing myself constantly in English again brief though it was
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I will probably not worry so much about the difficulty of actually pronouncing the Spanish quickly and of recalling vocabulary I feel I should know for I had just had the same difficulty in English.
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: while I searched for the vocabulary I used no special method I just knew it would surface eventually. The cognitive style seemed less of a priority than getting my mouth round a different language than Spanish even though I know the language far better and have known it for longer.
Content: new
Control of anxiety: I was a little concerned at my initial difficulty but I soon settled back into normal talking mode in English.
Empathy: very keen on Spain and the Spanish although on reflection upon returning home to England I felt more at ease here.
Input: no Spanish input
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: interest in the language: I was interested in the reversal of the difficulty I had in suddenly switching my thinking not a different language even though it was my native tongue.
Language content: none
Language learning difficulties: language difficulties: none regarding the learning of Spanish just in recall of English and in speaking swiftly relatively recently 'unused' sound combinations.
Motivation: I found after my fortnight in Spain I have been so geared up to trying to speak the language that I found myself tripping over English words as though I was having the same difficulty in getting my mouth round the words as I did when I first started trying to speak Spanish. Even some of the English vocabulary I was trying to find did not come easily just for a few seconds more than usual. I felt it was because of my concentration on Spanish rather that the usual difficulty because of advancing years.
Personality:
Place: Witchford UK
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 183
Date: 24b/09/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:

Content: new and familiar
Control of anxiety: a little anxious almost controlled
Empathy: not relevant
Input: one-to-one lesson with B
Interest in culture: not relevant
Interest in language
Language content:
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry 184
Date: 30/09/2001
Age: not relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: adaptation: decided that my novel reading might be more effective as a language learning tool than this method but this is still worth doing in moments of relaxation without any determination to succeed just pick up the odd word or
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style: driven by the song text just wild guessing ineffectively
Content: new
Control of anxiety: as I was in the company of friends I felt a little anxious that I needed to show that I had learnt some Spanish after telling them I had been learning it for so long so I felt obliged to be able to recognize at least one or two words
Empathy: as for motivation like the singers and the language and the songs
Input: Spanish from songs
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: more a preference for it than interest the endings still irritate me I could now recognize some of the endings e.g. - ndo as being the English -ing form but I was more interested in knowing the first bit of the word.
Language content: song material
Language learning difficulties: not enough vocabulary or knowledge to be able to guess the words from the song as well as I believe I can in English for the stretching of the vowels makes it difficult.
Motivation: like the singers and now the language
Personality:
Place: Ely UK
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 185
Date: 01/10/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:

Empathy:
Input: Gerald Durrell novel
Interest in culture:
Interest in language
Language content:
Language learning difficulties: Could guess meaning but wasn't sure
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history: some material familiar from previous learning
Success: some
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry 186
Date 03/10/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input:
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: teacher assists my approach to language and needs
Language content: verb tenses vocabulary
Language learning difficulties: find remembering difficult
Motivation: quite motivated
Personality: determination and courage to control lesson
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 187
Date: 05/10/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new and familiar
Control of anxiety: a little anxious almost controlled
Empathy: not relevant
Input: one-to-one lesson with B
Interest in culture: not relevant
Interest in language
Language content:
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:

Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 188
Date: 06/10/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: revision
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: conversation with Portuguese people
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: Disagreed with person re p.perfect different usage Sp.
Language content: Discussion with Portuguese re language
Language learning difficulties: Spanish interfered with my speaking English!
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history: Spanish interfered with my speaking English!
Success: Spanish interfered with my speaking English!
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 189
Date: 10/10/2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach:
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety: not anxious – happy to take my time
Empathy: Conjures up right picture in the mind
Input: Durrell novel
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: Language conjures up right pictures in mind
Language content:
Language learning difficulties: Guessing not always correct
Motivation:
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history: Language conjures up right pictures in mind
Success: Guessing not always correct
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 190
Date: 17/10/2001
Age: not so noticeable now I am determined to succeed. I am continuing to try to improve my memory by trying to remember phone numbers. Sometimes this is successful and sometimes not but having been told Jenny's new phone number I immediately tried to learn it and was delighted that I was successful when I tried to phone her the number 024 7676 3596 I remembered before her partner living with her has learnt it

(and he is a PhD student in Maths!)

Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I was delighted to find that when we came across 'alrededor' I already knew it from my trying to read the Gerald Durrell book *Island of the Gods* so I feel there is some worth in trying to struggle through a novel it does have its benefits. I am now also reading in English Joanna Trollope's The Spanish Lover' and was delighted to empathize with the Spanish cavalier attitude to time and to carrying out activities their own leisurely pace.

Approach:

Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:

Cognitive style: no conscious style used other than trying to absorb myself in the language and use it as much as possible

Content: new

Control of anxiety: I am not too anxious for I feel strongly that one has to throw oneself in the deep end and try knowing full well that your language will not be correct and I can take Bertha's smiles at my mistake without feeling too much loss of face even then what does it matter?:

Empathy: I still feel a little annoyed that the Spanish people I meet in Spain use a sound 'th' rather than s when using c or z. I notice this from time to time when Bertha pronounces with a South American accent I believe.

Input: Spanish one-to-one lesson with Bertha

Interest in culture: I still feel a little annoyed that the Spanish people I meet in Spain use a sound 'th' rather than s when using c or z. I notice this from time to time when Bertha pronounces with a South American accent I believe.

Interest in language: at the moment while I am trying to come to grips with the verb endings for the past and the future the language is a little annoying for it seems very like the Latin I struggled with for one year at secondary school with so many confusing endings.

Language content: prepositions with de and the past

Language learning difficulties: memory seems to be the main problem although I am now feeling that I am expecting myself to remember too much too correctly. I tried to drill in the verbs I had been given the previous week to learn but I did not succeed. I should perhaps try to use the language much more by doing my home work properly and regularly but, as with most other human beings and activities I may plan to do the work but as life events take over very little gets done so I work on the assumption that this will be the case and make allowances. accordingly. I was very surprised when the very little I have been doing with the novel proved to be helpful even if I feel I have only learnt one extra word I have probably learnt much more but I am not fully aware of what and will not be until it springs to mind while I am trying to use the language.

Motivation: highly motivated because Bertha happily adjusts to my desire to read answer rather than write them. She also takes the time to prepare three worksheets for me that give me the forms of the verb I need before trying to use them. She asks me to read them listening for pronunciation but I feel perhaps a little more practice would help me remember more.

Personality:

Place: Ely UK

Previous learning history: I was very surprised when the very little I have been doing with the novel proved to be helpful

Success: I am expecting myself to remember too much too correctly

Test results:

'Xtra' comments:

...

Entry: 196
Date: 20/11/ 2001
Age:
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate:
Approach: At last I have an English copy of "The Garden of the Gods" by Gerald Durrell Collins 1978. Looking at the first page the translation seems very close to the original so having reached p.38 I've decided to try to understand the Spanish after reading the page in English. I can guess many of the words because of their similar root or because they seem familiar from my previous learning so having read the

English already I hope my guesses can be more accurate and that I can develop a feel for the language the meaning and feel less of a need to look up every word. I anticipate I may need to look up words but I am hoping I can get away with not doing this so that I can get through the book much faster.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism:
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety:
Empathy:
Input: novel "The Garden of the Gods" by Gerald Durrell Collins 1978.
Interest in culture:
Interest in language: The page numbers do not tally but I was able to translate Sister clearly and by the shape of the text which has been kept I was able to start at a similar place in the book. – p 31 in the English version and p.39 in the Spanish - does this mean that the Spanish language is much more 'flowery' much more laboured flamboyant emotionally descriptive than the English?
Language content: "The Garden of the Gods" by Gerald Durrell Collins 1978.
Language learning difficulties:
Motivation: Now I have both versions, I can't wait to read the book I am very highly motivated more than ever before.
Personality:
Place:
Previous learning history:
Success: p.31-36 English version thoroughly enjoyed it! Understood every word and appreciated something of the humour of Gerald Durrell - much more as I could read it so swiftly and without interruption or confusion.
Spanish version Great to be able to understand without looking everything up - but I did need to read the English again and find it easier working in paragraphs - reading the English then the Spanish. I am sure this is going to help me much more - I can guess the meaning of the words much more quickly and easily an d they seem to fit their meaning much more readily for it feels as though this new confidence in having the English translation immediately available is making a real difference with the speed of comprehension - words that I can understand more quickly than before because before I would have been much less confident in guessing the meanings.
e.g. the Spanish 'El turco vació la copa' for me, initially, without remembering or referring to the English said something about 'the Turk xxx head' yet after reading the English I knew I should have known la copa as a glass for I remember trying to learn that word in Spain in context - when I wanted an extra glass for the mineral water I had requested to have in conjunction with the bottle of wine.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments: full comments

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Entry: 206
Date: 28/12/2001
Age: did not seem to make a difference
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: speaking to people who are willing to adjust their language so that I can participate at a lower level than normal speech might be a good idea
Approach: conversation with friends feels as though it would be much more beneficial than conversing with a teacher in the sense I feel more willing and confident.
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: even in front of friends and my daughter I was willing to take risks and try a very little Spanish
Cognitive style:
Content: new
Control of anxiety: not anxious just interested
Empathy: no Spanish present - not relevant
Input: a little Spanish shared by my daughter
Interest in culture: not relevant

Interest in language: interested to see if I could remember any vocab. - I could
Language content: not significant
Language learning difficulties: the very simple words I used which were some of the first elementary
phrases taught e.g. How are you? Que tal? Can not really constitute tremendous progress but being able to
use words my friends who do not speak Spanish at all but who have been to Spain did not understand gave
me confidence that I might just be able to learn some of the Spanish language
Motivation: trying to see if I have learnt any Spanish motivated me to try
Personality: determination
Place: UK
Previous learning history: my daughter had studied Spanish as part of her university degree and had spent
some time in Spain so I expected her to be more fluent than I am but it seems she too has forgotten some
although it was only about a year ago when she was last in Spain for a short time
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

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Entry: 222
Date: 20/01/2002
Age: not relevant although the fact that I am of a similar age to the local people I am talking to
may make it easier for me to talk to them - they may be more willing to try to understand me.
Although there were two children yesterday who wanted to come into the building. I am cautious
about who to let in so I managed to say something like "Where are your parents?" - by saying los
padres? And the children did response by pressing the button for their flat. When their mother
answered I managed to say that I had a key when the door didn't open for them even though
their mother had obviously tried to open it from above and I could let the children in - scooter
and all.
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I think I
should persist in trying to access as much Spanish as possible in as many different ways as
possible - the best ones would present the language in 'simple' form.
Approach: I have persisted to absorb as much of the language as I can in any way I can which I
believe is the only way
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I am very willing to take risks and it does not worry
me when the locals smile knowingly when I am obviously making terrible mistakes. When the
lady in the local newspaper shop said I had improved my Spanish it gave me real incentive (but
not necessarily real improvement)
Cognitive style: I am still focusing on vocabulary
Content: new and 'known'
Control of anxiety: there is little anxiety to control
Empathy: I am beginning to feel a part of the community - I go to Pepe's restaurant on the beach
for a long lunch every day so Pepe and his family and the waiters all know me and will say
hello if we meet in the street - although I can't yet engage in proper conversation. I have
managed to book a table for three of us today, I believe.
Input: conversation with local people, TV, newspaper and quiz book
Interest in culture: Although you are regularly warned about the thieves and thugs that are in
Torrevieja I have found for the most part, most of the people are very honest and will even hand
me the change I drop to the floor etc.
Interest in language: The more I try to read, the more words seem to be similar to English and
can be guessed within the sentence. However, I still need to look up a lot of words and I am
motivated to look up some now but not nearly as many as I need to understand the text fully.
Language content: casual conversation about the weather and domestic matter, speaking
programmes on the TV. - e.g. documentaries, news about Spain and the Alicante area and
vocabulary from given clues in the quiz book (all in Spanish)
Language learning difficulties: I still can't understand much of what is said to me in rapid local
language and there are only a few people speaking on TV. that I understand at all - even then it
is only a few phrases or words that I understand.

Motivation: I'm really keen to continue battling on in spite of my understanding being so limited
Personality: lack of fear seems to help
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: Having tried to make myself speak no matter how limited my language has probably helped for now I launch into any conversation I think I can initiate with the locals but I often have to say - I'm sorry I don't understand Spanish much for I don't understand them at all sometimes. I'm not sure if it is complete lack of vocabulary on my part or their thicker accents on their part.
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments: Spanish: INTERÓS EN LA CULTURA: Utilisé esse para practicar hablando espagnol en un diario. Esta mañana he comprado dos periodicos y un libros de *crucigramas. En las crucigramas hay muchas exemplas donde tenir que buscar parablas. Antes de esse puede leer algunos *indiciónes.
Creo que estar importante que escribé mucha aqui, aunque, el sol brilla y la playa me seduci. Llevé. Hasta muchas tarde..

...

Entry: 242
Date: 19c/03/2002
Age: difficulty remembering more than a few words at a time may be a problem
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: allowing for some of the vocabulary already being familiar or ''known'. I do less of the original exercises accordingly
Approach: approaching the same vocabulary with different interesting practice exercises seems most beneficial
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: when working on your own competing against yourself you are willing to take risks and 'cheat' to get to your goal - i.e. to learn new Spanish words. Your cheating does not make you feel guilty as it would in a class room situation
Cognitive style:
I read the Spanish words with the associated English translation,
then used flashcards trying to remember the English meaning of the Spanish words and vice versa,
matched the translation with the Spanish word,
tried to find the Spanish words in a Word search,
In Concentration I tried to remember where the words were and match them with their associated English meanings under cards 'face down'
I did Practice Exercise A filling in missing letters in the Spanish words
Practice Exercise B chose the Spanish words that matched given English words - this time going using the exercises to help correct mistakes I had made before submitting my answers (i.e. 'cheating')
Content: mostly new but with some words familiar and a few 'known'
Control of anxiety: Not very anxious
Empathy: not relevant - more like a classroom test in any country
Input: studyspanish.com – a computer software programme on the Worldwide Web
Interest in culture: not related to culture in any significant way
Interest in language: words that can be easily associated with a similar English word or with a vivid mind picture are easier to remember
Language content: Unit 3 (which does not seem to indicate any increased difficulty from Unit 2) vocabulary Sports 15 words
Language learning difficulties: the Concentration exercise seems the most difficult I can't easily remember where the words are - not as well as I remember what the translations are. I also seem to get worse the more I do it.
Motivation: not as motivated as with the other topics - I am not that interested in sport but I remain motivated still because I am in control of the learning activities that work quickly and effectively
Personality: having control over the learning process and respect for the site suits my personality very well
Place: Witch ford UK

Previous learning history: knowing some of the words from previous learning experiences gives me confidence to learn the others
Success: in the practice exercises - 2 real mistakes (a few words familiar or known)
In Concentration (which I find the most difficult learning exercise) my scores in order were 19 then 16 and finally 18 (the lowest number reflects the most success in remembering) - I find saying the words out loud seems to help although the scores depend a lot on 'luck'. even though I was using the site constantly I was 'timed out' during this session so had to do the test some 12 hours later. This did not seem to affect my score so I could remember the words for 12 hours at least!
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

Entry: 243
Date: 20a/03/2002
Age: difficulty remembering more than a few words at a time may be a problem
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: allowing for some of the vocabulary already being familiar or 'known' I do less of the original exercises accordingly
Approach: approaching the same vocabulary with different interesting practice exercises seems most beneficial
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: when working on your own competing against yourself you are willing to take risks and 'cheat' to get to your goal - i.e. to learn new Spanish words. Your cheating does not make you feel guilty as it would in a class room situation
Cognitive style:
I read the Spanish words with the associated English translation,
Then used flashcards trying to remember the English meaning of the Spanish words and vice versa,
Matched the translation with the Spanish word,
Tried to find the Spanish words in a Word search,
In Concentration I tried to remember where the words were and match them with their associated English meanings under cards 'face down'
I did Practice Exercise A filling in missing letters in the Spanish words
Then in Practice Exercise B chose the Spanish words that matched given English words
Content: mostly new but with some words familiar and a few 'known'
Control of anxiety: Not very anxious
Empathy: not relevant - more like a classroom test in any country
Input: studyspanish.com – a computer software programme on the Worldwide Web
Interest in culture: not related to culture in any significant way
Interest in language: words that can be easily associated with similar English words or with a vivid mind picture are easier to remember
Language content: vocabulary studyspanish.com web site
Language learning difficulties: the Concentration exercise seems the most difficult I can't easily remember where the words are - not as well as I remember what the translations are. I remain unobservant - so I do not use the exercises effectively - I have only just noticed that the English and the Spanish are in different colours - more easily recognisable for searching than the words themselves.
Motivation: very motivated mainly because I am in control of the learning activities that work quickly and effectively
Personality: having control over the learning process and respect for the site suits my personality very well
Place: Witch ford UK
Previous learning history: knowing some of the words from previous learning experiences gives me confidence to learn the others
Success: in the practice exercises - 1 real mistake I found about 4 of the words in the word search and the concentration scores were (in order) 18/23/13 - speaking the words out loud seemed to help.
Test results:
'Xtra' comments: a breakthrough? I found I seemed to score higher in the concentration exercise when I actually spoke the Spanish and English words out loud.

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Entry: 259
Date: 14/04/2002
Age: my age may be helping with starting up conversations - I am not seen as a threat and people are willing to try to speak to me
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: I need to accept that the words I have learnt are not necessarily those that the people here use
Approach: I need to change my attitude somehow I am feeling more annoyed with myself than ever for not fully understanding everything that is said
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: I seem to be going backwards and it worries me - I actually said woman instead of better yesterday and knew the mistake but believe I was anxious at the time
Cognitive style: listening saying que to get the language repeated and then realizing I do not understand
Content: new and a very little familiar
Control of anxiety: I am not controlling it too well at present
Empathy: I enjoyed watching a probable grandfather playing with his grandson and they tried to engage me in conversation but I failed to understand what was said - I was expecting something like boy but it obviously wasn't said
Input: real conversation
Interest in culture: the way the adults spend time playing and communicating with their young appeals
Interest in language: somehow I may need to have access to local language in a formal situation but I am not sure how to do this
Language content: real conversation
Language learning difficulties: the language is still too fast. When I listen to TV I can sometimes work out a phrase - usually unrelated to the real substance of the language but the main problem is by the time I have decided I understood the phrase I have missed a lot more of the spoken language - the imaginary pause button is still needed
Motivation: although I feel less enthusiastic I am still motivated to try especially as a friend who claims to speak Spanish is joining me
Personality: determination and persistence
Place: Torrevieja Spain
Previous learning history: I believe I was more confident and more able to use Spanish before..?
Success:
Test results:
'Xtra' comments:

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Entry: 266
Date: 08/05/2002
Age: not relevant
Adaptation and/or incorporation of new ideas and/or approaches to be more appropriate: -
Approach: trying to use the language helps me recall better
Attitude towards risk-taking and criticism: willing to make mistakes
Cognitive style: trying to express myself in the language - speaking and writing
Content: revision
Control of anxiety: slightly anxious but under control
Empathy: my attitude towards bringing up children may be different because e of cultural differences
Input: everyday conversation
Interest in culture: the warm friendly approach of the Latin people appreciated
Interest in language: awareness of the Latin roots really helpful
Language content: everyday events
Language learning difficulties: still cannot find the words or the endings easily.
Motivation: quite motivated
Personality: determination and willingness to vary what I do
Place: Witch ford Ely
Previous learning history: the availability of immediate translation - imperfect as it is - is a real encouragement to try to write in the language

Success: not as successful as the other day. I have to make a conscious effort to try the Spanish before S. says what she wants in English.
Test results: 37%
'Xtra' comments: this testing is not accurate - I may have used acceptable alternatives - but realizing this I am not too despondent when I have low scores. Hopefully I will eventually learn from my mistakes if I keep reading over the test.