

LEARNER BELIEFS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

by

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Learner Beliefs and their Implications for Language Learning

Abstract

In this thesis, learner beliefs and their implications for second language learning were examined. Individual learner differences have traditionally been measured statistically by using age, motivation and other variables that have been studied within a quantitative research framework. Recently, second language acquisition (SLA) research has been experiencing a shift from the etic, or outsider perspective to the emic, or insider perspective that is characteristic of qualitative research. Benson (2005) states, “learners are individuals and that their individuality may have significant consequences for their learning” (p. 5). Larson-Freeman (2001) ended her assessment of research by calling for “more holistic research that links integrated individual difference research from emic and etic perspectives to the processes, mechanisms and conditions of learning within different contexts over time (p. 24). Learner beliefs thus demand further exploration.

In order to show the implications that learner beliefs have for language learning, I met with three beginner German students and asked about their language learning processes and their language learning beliefs and experiences over a period of three months. This was done by conducting several interviews with these students, which provided me with a wealth of data to explore. This collected material and its potential influence on language learning was analyzed and is discussed in this thesis. This work begins with an overview of existing research in the field and a description of the research questions and methodology. This is followed by a description of the learners’ comments

and concludes with my findings and a discussion that points toward future research in the field.

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1. Introduction

In the field of second language learning, research into individual learner differences has typically been done within a quantitative framework. According to Benson and Nunan (2005), “the majority of studies have been based on experimental and survey methods aimed at isolating and scaling factors of difference and statistically correlating them with measure of proficiency” (p. 2). Much emphasis has been put on finding learner factors or variables within the fields of language learning. The purpose of this thesis is to show that learner beliefs and stories have major implications for second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language learning research. This thesis will also show that exploratory and interpretive research can yield a wealth of data by conducting semistructured interviews. Interviews of this nature provide extremely rich data from the insider viewpoint, or the emic perspective. This allows researchers to gain new insight into learner individuality and learner diversity, something that existing research in the field has not been able to achieve.

I have conducted a study with students of a beginner German class at the University of Waterloo during the fall semester of the academic year 2005. All students are individuals who have personal beliefs and experiences with learning foreign languages. Larsen-Freeman (2001) states, “... it seems to me, we have underestimated the significance of the learners’ role in the SLA process.” (p. 12). I also argue that learner beliefs and experiences play a major role in their own personal process of learning German and have major implications for language learning in general. Varied outcomes in a language class must be accounted for in a different way because quantifiable factors have not been able to do so in the past. The measuring and scaling of factors places

students into limiting categories. Instead, I wish to concentrate on the individual and his or her respective subjective learning experience. This study is exploratory and interpretive in nature. I have collected some personal narratives about individual learners' experiences and they have been transcribed. The data was then analyzed, and implications for the field were revealed.

This thesis is made up of six chapters. The following chapter takes a look at some existing research in SLA, and why a study of this nature is necessary in order to better understand learner individuality and learner diversity. In the third chapter, the methodology of my exploratory study is introduced and discussed. I will provide information regarding how the participants were selected as well as how the data was collected, transcribed and analyzed in this chapter. The description of the context of this study, the participants and the collected data begins in chapter four. This includes sections entitled *Learner Individuality* and *Learner Diversity*. Chapter five contains my results and discussion. In this section, the implications this study has for language learning will be presented and discussed. Finally, the concluding chapter will provide a summary of results, possible limitations and a section on coping with diversity, also pointing toward future research in the field.

2. Literature Review

In second language acquisition and foreign language learning research there has been a recent shift towards the importance of the learner's point of view regarding how their own beliefs and backgrounds play a role in their language learning experiences. In order to show the implications that learner beliefs have for these fields, I have undertaken an exploratory study in which three interviews with three students of introductory German were conducted. The purpose of these interviews was to provide me with an insider perspective of the students' particular views of their learning processes. In this chapter I will present a literature review of existing research in the field of SLA. To introduce this chapter, I will explain how I became interested in these topics and then briefly highlight the concentration of past research in SLA. Next, I will discuss some existing research in SLA including the already established variables of individual difference and the implications that research on these differences has for language learning. Finally, I will take a look at learner focused research and SLA and the recent call for continued research on learner beliefs and stories will be discussed.

2.1 Foreign Language Teaching vs. Foreign Language Learning

After taking a course on applied language didactics at the University of Waterloo in the first semester of my program, I became more interested in undertaking an exploratory study with beginner learners of German. In this course, it was often notable that a lot of existing research seemed to focus on the language teacher. Many methods and approaches to second language teaching were discussed and each one seemed to claim that they were more likely to facilitate a desirable outcome. However, very little of this existing research appeared to dwell on the actual learner. Amidst the many methods

and approaches, the foreign language (FL) learner almost seemed to disappear. In fact, it has only been in the past few decades that SLA research has started to reflect that language learners are individuals, and thus that continued exploratory research on learner beliefs and learner stories are essential (Benson and Nunan, 2005; Breen, 2001). Van Lier (1998) also commented that learning must be understood before teaching begins, stating, “it is not possible to understand learning by investigating teaching” (p. 130). *Learner-centredness* is thus becoming an important term in SLA research. It is now understood that one teaching method or approach does not yield a positive outcome for each and every learner. Neither can the same approach or method produce the same or even a similar outcome amongst them. Such discussion shows that more investigation is necessary. In order to present my study, discuss my results and ultimately show the implications that these findings have for future SLA research, an in-depth look into existing SLA research is essential. At the end of the chapter, a detailed look at learner focused research and SLA and some ongoing debates in the field will be given.

2.2 SLA Research

SLA is said to contain no less than 40 different theories, thus it is a field with a multiplicity of theories that is not well unified (Kasper, 1997, p. 311). Chapple (2005) also says that these existing theories almost completely rely on “positivistic methods that ignore cultural and socio-political contexts” (p. 32). According to Watson-Gegeo (2004) “the conventional paradigm for SLA research has come under increasing criticism since the late 1970s” (p. 332). Reasons for this include its dependence on positivistic suppositions, its methods of inquiry that do not consider cultural and socio-political aspects, its foundation in structuralist linguistics theories and its failure to provide some

implications for pedagogy that are actually effective in second language teaching (Watson-Gegeo, 2004, p. 332). With the aforementioned increase of learner focused research, SLA is slowly emerging as an area of research that emphasizes theories of second language *learning* (Benson, 2005, p. 7). SLA researchers, however, have largely adopted what Benson (2005, p. 7) says could be called a “two-pronged’ strategy”, where one ‘prong’ essentially ignores the issue of learner diversity, and the other tries to account for it through a set of individual learner variables.

Benson (2005) says that the first ‘prong’ is the assumption that a ‘universal’ second language learning process exists, thus discarding the issue of diversity (p. 7). Indeed, SLA research has often been focused on solving the so-called ‘main question’ posed by Long (1990, p. 661): “[w]hich aspects of SLA are universal?” Benson (2005) concurs that “the second language learning process is often seen as an exclusively cognitive process that is both unique to language acquisition and shared by all human beings” (p. 8). Looking for universal aspects of SLA seems to emphasize, however, that commonalities amongst learners are more important or significant than any possible differences. Breen (2001), however, points out that “[a] concern for what is common among learners necessarily identifies as crucial those contributions that all learners share as human beings; contributions that exemplify their inherent biological and psychological capacities” (p. 2). Therefore, eliminating or discarding the issue of diversity in SLA cannot be a viable option if we really want to understand how individual learners actually learn.

2.3 Individual Learner Differences

The second ‘prong’ in Benson’s so-called ‘two-pronged’ strategy sees the issue of learner diversity making a comeback as ‘*contextual variables*’ that could possibly shed light on varied linguistic results of the supposed universal processes for different groups or individuals (Benson, 2005, p. 7). Larsen-Freeman (1997) also states that “[a] major strand of SLA research has been devoted to the study of differential success among second language learners” (p. 156). Stressing how important it is to establish a set of learner variables (such as age, aptitude, and socio-psychological factors like attitude, motivation, personality, etc.) has still often meant emphasizing the search of commonalities amongst learners instead of focusing on the individual. Riemer (1997) notes, “[p]aradoxerweise ist jedoch das Merkmal *individuell* in der bisherigen Forschungspraxis kaum berücksichtigt worden. Die prominente nordamerikanische Forschung hat sich zumeist mit *allgemeinen* Tendenzen von Relationen zwischen Variablen beschäftigt“ (1997, p. IX). The fact that a lot of research has been done looking only at the general tendencies of individual learner variables and their relationships with one another is surprising. Riemer (1997) continues:

[e]ine Stichprobe, die die Grundgesamtheit ... repräsentieren soll, kann jedoch immer nur zentrale Tendenzen und Signifikanzen erfassen. Tendenzen werden Individuen jedoch nie gerecht; ob allgemeine Tendenzen auch antizipierte genuin individuelle Unterschiede repräsentieren, ist damit nicht nachgewiesen. Gerade aber die Praxis des Fremdsprachenunterrichts hat es mit Individuen zu tun, mit ihren spezifischen Bedürfnissen und Voraussetzungen. (p. IX)

It would therefore seem useful to research individuals according to their diversity

and not according to which factors they may or may not have in common. If identifying general tendencies does not represent individual learners well, then more exploratory research and description from the learner's point of view, or the emic perspective, must be done. Lantolf (1996) concurs by saying that we need to concern ourselves with the way in which people can change our experiments, which will inevitably help us to gain some insight into how learners learn second languages (p. 717). Van Lier (1994) also suggests that "we should control our tendency to over-categorize, and might do well to remember that the Greek word *kategorein* meant 'to accuse in public'" (p. 332). A lot of emphasis has been put on finding learner factors or variables within the field of language learning. Larsen-Freeman (1997) mentions that Schumann (1976) spoke of 4+ factors and that by 1989 Spolsky had noted 74 (p. 156). This research has been significant and necessary to get SLA to the point that it is at today, but it can only bring us so far. Researchers have frequently tried to make independent learner variables account for the non-cognitive processes in SLA. Even if often treated as secondary, the countless number of factors and variables has been hotly debated in these fields for many years. One major argument is that there is no way to actually measure such variables (Kohonen, 1992, p. 22). Kohonen (1992) noted that "[t]he influence of affective personality factors on language learning is difficult to isolate for valid and reliable measurement, but there is consistent evidence to suggest that learning attitude and motivation are important predictors of achievement" (p. 22).

Another discussion regarding individual learner differences is the overlap of learner variables. One variable will inevitably interact with other variables, "suggesting that we are not getting a true measure of a factor if we isolate it from others" (d'Anglejan

and Renaud, 1995, p. 9). Larsen-Freeman (1997) has also stated that “[o]ne of the major questions has revolved around the validity and applicability of the instruments used to measure these variables. Are the measures of cognitive style ... really applicable to language acquisition?” (p. 156), showing that treating learner variables as measurable categories could be problematic.

It is also important to note that perhaps none of these variables are significant enough to play a role on their own, but the interaction of them certainly does (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 151). Ellis (1986) comments that identifying and classifying different individual variables has been quite challenging (p. 100). In 1991, however, Larsen-Freeman and Long provided details about how second language learners might achieve differential success, saying that existing evidence shows that there is a relationship between learners who are field independent and success in second language learning (p. 193). According to the same authors, field independent learners “are oriented toward active striving, appear to be colder and more distant, and have strong analytic skills” (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991, p. 194). Ellis (1986) also discussed independent learner variables and came up with a chart based on Hawkey 1982, saying that field independent learners have an impersonal orientation, and rely on an internal frame of reference to process information (p. 115). He also stated that they are analytic, independent, and not very socially aware (Ellis, 1986, p. 115). On the contrary, he stated that field dependent learners have a personal orientation, thus rely on an external frame of reference to process information. They are also holistic, dependent and socially sensitive, according to Ellis (1986) (p. 115). Leaver, Ehrman and Shekhtman (2004) also comment on field dependence and independence, saying that field independence can be defined as

“decontextualized learning”, while field dependence is thus “contextualized learning” (p. 71). Leaver et al. (2004) continue by naming other similar variables, such as being *global*, or “oriented toward the big picture” or being *particular*, or, “oriented toward details” (p. 71). They also talk about visual learning in a section entitled learning styles, talking about verbalist and imagist visual learners, where a verbalist is more likely to picture structures and forms, and imagists appropriately picture images in their mind (p. 67). Van Lier’s (1994) comment about controlling the urge to over-categorize is better understood when considering these and other learner variables, the number of which Larsen-Freeman (1997) has suggested have been increasing over the years (p. 156). Although some progress has been made in this area, it cannot be possible to name or measure all of these variables accurately, nor predict the results of their combinations (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 157). Certainly, the “mysteries of SLA” will not be unraveled just because new learner variables that are believed to have some sort of influence on language learners are discovered (Larsen-Freeman, 1997, p. 156). As it is impossible to measure these variables, there is no way to know how much or how little they affect individuals alone or in combination with one another. This is likely another reason why a lot of the existing research on learner differences has not succeeded in informing us how and why learners achieve differential success.

As mentioned, recent research focusing on the beliefs of the individual language learner has come to the forefront. This move from the etic to the emic perspective has allowed for a lot of new studies and research using qualitative research methods. Pike (1982) coined the term *emic* and its counterpart *etic* in 1954, designating emic as the “insider’s view” and etic as the “generalized view” (p. 11, 73). Brend (1974) also states

that “the etic standpoint is a view from outside ... [t]he emic standpoint is a view from within ...” (p. 3.) So far, research from the emic perspective has allowed language learners to provide in-depth accounts of their own diverse beliefs and backgrounds. Such research perspectives have also caused many to realize that learner differences cannot simply be eliminated as variables of the language learning process in order to get answers. Larsen-Freeman (1997) also came to believe that “both individual creativity and social interaction combine to influence the shape of the developing grammar” (p. 154). The understanding that these variables cannot easily be discarded nor can they be treated as secondary has many implications for SLA and language learning. It would appear, however, that categories of individual differences are too broad to actually capture how diverse learners are.

2.4 Learner Focused Research and SLA

The language learner has become more “visible” in SLA research. It has become apparent, however, that in order to help us understand individual learners better, more description of what these learners believe and experience is necessary, as Lantolf wrote in 1996. FL research focusing on the learner did not really take off until the 1970’s, when the term “‘learner-centredness’ had emerged as a key concept in second language teaching” (Benson, 2005, p. 6). Although this term became very significant in the 1970’s, some similar research did exist in the late 1950’s. At this time, studies were undertaken on attitudes and motivation (Spolsky, 2000; Benson, 2005, p. 6). It was in the 1970’s, however, that it started to be understood that learners’ diverse responses to teaching were just as central to language learning as the actual teaching itself (Benson, 2005, p. 6). The significance of the emic perspective started to become apparent at this time in SLA. In a

way, this new research was a humanistic reaction to behaviourist theories (Benson, 2005, p. 6). Altogether, however, it seems more likely that the general increase in learner-centred research was an “intellectual development” that came from the increasing influence that social psychology had on foreign and second language teaching research (Benson, 2005, p. 6). Still, research done within SLA has frequently focused on the language learners “linguistic deficiencies” and “communicative problems” (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 286). It is only recently that the relevance of an emic perspective has been evident in SLA research, and most feel that it is about time (see Benson and Nunan, 2005; Firth and Wagner, 1997; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000). Many researchers have stepped forward to call for major changes in SLA research (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001, p. 141). Van Lier (1994) writes that for some, SLA falls into the field of linguistics, and for others, it falls into the field of education. He continues to say that SLA and language pedagogy are “interdependent pursuits” and that those involved in theory should not exclude praxis, and those involved in praxis should not exclude theory (van Lier, 1994, pp. 339-41). In response to van Lier’s 1994 article, Lantolf (1996) suggests that we “let all the flowers bloom, not just a chosen few,” suggesting that having a plurality of theories in SLA is not necessarily a bad thing (p. 739). Others have also been critical of existing SLA research. Riemer (1997) states that in SLA research, “[e]s ist das Paradox zu beobachten, dass individuelle Merkmale als universelle Prädiktoren erfasst werden”, and calls for more longitudinal studies on individual differences. In the well-known but heavily disputed paper by Firth and Wagner (1997), both authors argue that “SLA would appear to require not so much a ‘theory culling’ but rather a more critical discussion of its own presuppositions, methods, and fundamental (and implicitly accepted) concepts”

(Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 286). In one of many responses to this controversial paper, Kasper (1997) suggested that researchers should “peel away the multiple and complex layers that constitute real individuals in order to focus attention on one or two features of interest to us.” This shift in SLA research from the outsider or etic to the insider or emic perspective is especially evident in the many language memoirs and learners’ testimonies that have been published in the last decade, and that are consistently being used as data by SLA researchers, as Kramsch wrote in 2005. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that the qualitative researcher uses an array of interconnected interpretive practices with the hopes that they will be able to better understand the topic they are studying. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also write that “[q]ualitative research has a long, distinguished, and sometimes anguished history in the human disciplines” (p. 1). Qualitative research includes the studied use and gathering of empirical data through case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life stories, interviews, artifacts, cultural texts and productions, as well as observational, historical, interactional and visual texts that illustrate various moments and meanings in each person’s life, whether routine or difficult (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). Grotjahn (1993) states that it is traditionally suggested that the dichotomy of qualitative vs. quantitative be used only to distinguish between various types of concepts and levels of measurement (p. 223). He proposes that in order to make a distinction between two essential methodological paradigms, we must not speak of qualitative but “explorative-interpretive” research and not quantitative but “analytical-nomological” research (Grotjahn, 1993, p. 223). These research paradigms appear more descriptive and are especially relevant to the recent shift of research in the field SLA. Where research within a quantitative or “analytical-nomological” framework

tends to oversimplify, qualitative researchers try to give so-called “thick descriptions” Geertz (1973). “Thick description”, a notion that cultural anthropologist Geertz (1973) borrows from philosopher Gilbert Ryle, looks at contextual factors in order to interpret instances of language use, such as gestures, whereas “thin description” describes these gestures as they are, without considering the context (Geertz, 1973). According to Geertz (1973), “thick description” is also what ethnography is: “an elaborate venture *in*” (p. 6). It would seem that existing qualitative research on learners’ stories also attempts to get *in*. A good example of this is Christiane Kallenbach’s study on “was Schüler und Schülerinnen über Fremdsprachenlernen denken” (1996). In her study, 5 German high school students were asked about their thoughts regarding language learning. Pavlenko and Lantolf also published important book articles on the significance of learner contributions in 2000 and 2001. Benson and Nunan (2005) have also edited a book titled “Learners’ Stories: Difference and Diversity in Language Learning”, an entire book devoted to exploratory and interpretive studies using language memoirs, learners’ stories and testimonies. It has been widely accepted that qualitative research, alone and together with quantitative research, can help us better understand learner diversity as a result of its descriptive nature. In this thesis, I will attempt to show that such exploratory and interpretive research has implications for language learning when it comes to understanding individual learners and their very personal learning experiences, and that further inquiry is necessary.

3. Methodology

The main intention of a methodology chapter is to clarify how research (in this case exploratory research) was undertaken (Berg, 2004, p. 307). This chapter will describe in detail all issues related to the “how” of this study. In other words, it will discuss and explain how and why this study has been conducted in this way. This will include all matters to do with data selection, including sampling, sample size and information regarding how data was collected. Finally, how the data was transcribed and analyzed will be discussed.

3.1 Data Selection and Collection

Doing a qualitative study on learner beliefs and experiences requires various contributions from the emic perspective, thus, from human participants. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that qualitative researchers are concerned with the individual’s perspective and also argue that they can access their perspective through detailed interviewing and observation (p. 10). One of the aims of this exploratory study was to access the insider perspective in order to gain rich data sets from the participants. When first undertaking a study of this nature, one of the first questions is regarding where and how to select human participants in order to gain access to the insider viewpoint. Information regarding sampling and sample size will be provided in the following sections.

3.1.1 *Sampling*

In the social sciences, it is common for researchers to rely on locating participants by using what is known as *purposeful sampling*. This kind of sampling is much different

from random probability sampling, a common sampling strategy often used in research within a quantitative framework. Purposeful sampling does not focus on finding a group of participants that are mathematically said to broadly represent a given population as probability sampling does. It is a nonprobability approach to finding participants for exploratory research. Schwandt (1997) says that purposeful sampling sees “[s]ites or cases ... [being] chosen because there may be good reason to believe that ‘what goes on there’ is critical to understanding some process or concept, or to testing or elaborating some established theory” (p. 128).

As previously mentioned, I chose to conduct this study in one section of a German 101 (beginner) class at the University of Waterloo during the fall semester of 2005. This group of students is a combination of a purposeful sample and a convenience sample. Convenience sampling “relies on available subjects – those who are close at hand or easily accessible” (Berg, 2004, p. 35). Carrying out exploratory research with these participants (who are also students within the same university setting) is an example of this kind of sampling. The initial group included 24 students. The first day I attended the class I introduced myself and handed out information letters about my study. The second time, I brought consent forms and questionnaires, asking all interested students to sign the form, take a questionnaire, and bring it back in less than a week’s time. Over the course of two weeks, I had collected ten questionnaires from a total group of 16 students who had taken questionnaires home to fill out. The questionnaire participants were all beginner German students in the same German 101 course and thus shared this one predetermined characteristic. It was the only preset attribute, however. The focus of this project was not to seek out common characteristics. When I looked through the

questionnaires, I attempted to identify learners who appeared reflective, therefore seemed interested in answering the questions provided. In this way, I also attempted to find maximum variation while sampling. It was also my intention to try and choose a group of learners who appeared to be diverse. Most of the ten students appeared to be reflective and interested in sharing their thoughts and beliefs, but the three participants that I selected seemed the most diverse as a group, based on the answers they provided in their respective questionnaires. All ten questionnaires can be found in appendix A of this thesis.

3.1.2 *Sample Size*

In qualitative research, the issue of sample size is often brought to the forefront. The more the better is a common thought. However, this is not necessarily true. Although qualitative researchers, especially ethnographers, are naturally interested in “thick description” (Geertz, 1973), it does not mean that the sample size should be vast. There are no tests to tell the researchers when or if the sample is large enough for their study (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, 129). Sometimes, the size of the sample will not be decided until much later, when the span of the project is clearer. Generally, studies start with more subjects and end with fewer. Thus, if data sets become too vast, the researcher can focus on a smaller group towards the end. Having a larger sample at the start will also give the researcher an idea of the select few with whom they could do more exploratory research. My study started with a ten participants who took part in the questionnaire component and finished off with three interview participants. I was able to obtain a lot of information from the three participants that I ended up interviewing. Starting with a

larger group and ending with a smaller group was the plan from the beginning, but no numbers were actually determined until much later on in the study.

3.1.3 Data Collection and the Questionnaire

There were two ways in which participants could contribute to my study. The first way was to fill out the questionnaire and the second way was to take part in the interview component. Their contributions allowed me to access ample material for my research. In order to allow interested students to give concise histories regarding their language learning backgrounds, I first administered a questionnaire to the aforementioned German 101 section. This questionnaire helped me understand more about each learner, and aided me in selecting participants for the interview component of my study. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) rightly state that “quantitative methods and data need not be antithetical to the conduct of qualitative studies” (p. 119). The questionnaire that I distributed gave the participant a lot of room to write freely instead of only being able to check off one or some of the boxes provided. The reason for using a questionnaire was to allow the consenting participants to give me a glimpse into their foreign language learning backgrounds, so that I would be able to choose learners who would best contribute to the semistructured interview component of this study. As required by the Office of Research at the University of Waterloo (ORE #12530), students were provided with all of the information regarding my study, and were asked to sign a participation consent form before being asked to fill out the questionnaire. The remaining eight students who wished to decline the opportunity to participate did so. On the questionnaire, participating students were asked to provide information regarding their native language, languages learned in a classroom setting, languages learned outside of a classroom setting, and

reasons for taking German 101. The participants were also asked to check off a few boxes that gave various descriptions of different kinds of language learners, as well as tell why they did or did not enjoy learning new languages. This process has allowed me to look at many different language learning backgrounds. In the end, I received ten questionnaires, which are attached in appendix A of this thesis. The questionnaires were all completely filled out and full of information that was quite helpful in narrowing down the group to three students for the semistructured interviews, in which all three of these participants were interviewed one-on-one. In order to select three participants for the semistructured interview, I used various criteria. First, I looked for students with an ability and willingness to share and write about their learning experiences. Second, I concentrated on finding students with what appeared to be diverse learner styles and varied learning backgrounds. Ideally, I would have liked to hear from all of the questionnaire participants, but it was also important to keep data to a manageable size. Instead of interviewing many people once, I also believed that having a small number of participants would be beneficial to my investigation, as I could then focus on each individual over a longer period of time. Riemer (1997) speaks about longitudinal studies, saying “[d]er Längsschnitt hat außerdem die Funktion, die Gültigkeit von möglicherweise zeitlich bedingten Erkenntnissen zu überprüfen” (p. 88). Another benefit of spending more time with each individual participant was that over time, each interview would render more detailed information about their own language learning experiences and beliefs. Meeting with three participants over three months also allowed them to open up more to me, because they started to feel more comfortable around me, the idea of being

interviewed and the room we were located in. Geertz (1973) discusses the importance of this kind of “complex specificness” (p. 23) when collecting data. He states

[i]t is with the kind of material produced by long-term, mainly ... qualitative, highly participative, and almost obsessively fine-comb field study in confined contexts that the mega-concepts with which contemporary social science is afflicted ... can be given the sort of sensible actuality that makes it possible to think not only realistically and concretely *about* them, but, what is more important, creatively and imaginatively *with* them. (Geertz, 1973, p. 23)

That is to say, qualitative studies that focus on long-term processes can also lead us to more accurate interpretations. I thus felt that it was important to hear the participants over a certain range of time. Things that were discussed in the first interview might give them some reason to be more reflective. This would thus allow them to be more thoughtful when answering questions in further interviews, but also assist them in becoming more reflective about their language learning processes in general.

3.1.4 *Data Collection and the Qualitative Interview*

Asking questions and getting answers from study participants is much more difficult than what most might think at first (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 645). In a relatively short time, the researcher must gain the trust of and establish a rapport with each participant. If this is not done successfully, significant data might never be accessed. In qualitative research, the emic perspective, or the experiences and beliefs meaningful to the participant, is incredibly important. This is a project on learner beliefs, and it was therefore clear from the beginning that each interview had to be carried out in a way that would encourage the participants to disclose as much as they could about their own

beliefs and regarding their own language learning experiences. Interviews are helpful when it comes to understanding “the social actor’s experience and perspective” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 173). In order to hear as much from the participants as possible, thus, acquire information from the emic perspective, I conducted what are called *semistructured* interviews.

Semistructured interviews allow researchers to conduct studies that are exploratory, and thus can allow for a wide range of data. They involve using of a set of predetermined questions and topics to access information, however, although these questions are usually asked in a specific order, there is room for the participant to speak freely and even deviate from the point (Berg, 2004, p. 81). This simply allows the researcher to conduct studies that are exploratory in nature. This is indicative of research of a qualitative nature. Structured interviews, on the other hand, are limiting in that they do not allow the participant to say more than what is asked of them. The questions are also predetermined, however there is little to no room for deviations from the order of questioning (Berg, 2004, p. 79). Berg (2004) also notes that the “wording of each question is asked exactly as written” (p. 79). In my semistructured interviews, I came up with questions that I wanted to ask before going into each interview. The interviews, as expected, did not always follow my plan. These questions are attached in appendix B of this thesis. Unstructured and most semistructured interviews focus primarily on understanding rather than explaining (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 654). This can be seen in the statement that “[q]uestions used in a semistandardized interview can reflect an awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways” (Berg, 2004, p. 81).

Participants in the semistructured interview component of this study signed consent forms to allow their contributions to be released for purposes of research, just as the questionnaire participants did. The selected participants who took part in the interview element of this study were also audio-recorded. This allowed me to make accurate use of their comments, as I could continually refer back to the interviews by listening to the recordings.

Lindlof and Taylor (2002) comment that “[w]hen and where to conduct interviews can be consequential issues in a project” (p. 185). The setting for these recordings was a soundproof audio recording room in the language laboratory at the University of Waterloo. It is a private room, with technology set up specifically for audio recording, as the name would suggest. The interviews were captured on a small recorder that with the push of one button immediately transferred the recorded interview as an .mp3 file to the host computer. I would contact the participants by email and give them various options of when to meet. The participants usually replied quickly, agreeing to one of the times I had offered, or offering one of their own. I always attempted to meet them on school days during regular hours, so to keep them from going out of their way. This usually seemed to work very well, and the “when” question of the interview component was always easily settled. The “where” question was solved quickly, although I initially had some doubts. Three characteristics of the room made me believe at first that it would intimidate the participants. First, the size of the room is quite small. Secondly, the chairs are very close together, thus not a lot of room for both the researcher and the participant. Lastly, it is a recording room. I thought this environment might seem somewhat overwhelming to the participants. However, as it turned out, each participant and I were

able to sit comfortably facing one another. Also, because the room is soundproof, the microphone did not have to be put in any crucial position. It picked up our entire discussion without any problem. Two of the participants often forgot that the interview was even being recorded, and it frequently seemed that they even forgot that they were being interviewed. The room was quiet, comfortable and it was easy to focus on the task at hand. Thus, in the end, using the audio recording room was surprisingly unobtrusive. In fact, I believe it was conducive to accessing the participants' learner beliefs and experiences. After each interview was completed, I would transfer the files to the host computer. Following that, the files were given anonymous names, burned to a CD and deleted from the host computer right away.

Research of this nature can never be completely objective. It must be noted that my role in this study as the interviewer of the participants was considerable, as I was often sympathetic or acting sympathetic to their thoughts and frustrations with learning a new language. As a native English speaker with no German background, I started learning German in a classroom environment as well. I often understood the frustrations that the participants mentioned as beginner German students. This was often helpful, as it helped build an understanding between the participants and myself. This environment, however, could also have led me from being a mostly objective outsider to a subjective insider. I would thus have false conclusions about the participants' comments and perhaps the study in general. During the interview process, I attempted to build a rapport, thus gain the participants' trust. It was also important to remain nonjudgmental with regard to the participants' comments. After listening to the first interview, I noticed that I had come across as judgmental in some cases. I constantly tried to correct this and

improve my interviewing skills as I continued with the second and third interviews. In this way, I was able to learn how to conduct better interviews, because I consistently gained more experience.

3.2 Qualitative Analysis and Interpretation

In the previous section, I described the ways in which the data was collected. Full concentration will now be given to the transcription, analysis and interpretation of the data. First, I will explain how the collected data was transcribed. Then, the approach that I used to analyze and code my data will be introduced. The challenges of doing this will also be discussed.

3.2.1 *Transcription*

In order to properly and consistently transcribe the texts, a basic form of the *Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem* (GAT) was used. This is “a system for the transcription of natural discourse data ... in order to help reduce the hitherto often unmotivated variation in transcripts of spoken verbal interaction” (Selting et al., 1998, p. 91). There has been some indecision in the past regarding which transcription system to use. Selting et al. (1998) also state, “daß sprachliche Interaktion nicht hinreichend mit dem Standard-Schriftsystem erfaßt werden kann, sondern ein eigenes Transkriptionssystem erfordert” (p. 91). Thus, GAT was created in order to produce a minimum standard for transcriptions of spoken language, within the scope of conversation and discourse analysis (Selting et al., 1998, p. 92). Although I am not doing discourse analysis, using a basic form of GAT enabled me to transcribe my data without a lot of difficulty. My transcript is neither as detailed as the *Feintranskript* nor the *Basistranskript* (Selting et al., 1998). It did, however, allow for very consistent

transcriptions for analysis. It was necessary to transcribe the interviews in order to produce lines of data that would enable me to do line-by-line coding, also known as open coding (Charmaz, 2000, p. 515). The following section will describe the analysis of my data and how it was carried out.

3.2.2 *Grounded Theory*

While transcribing the interviews, I started a content analysis of the texts, using the *grounded theory* approach. Coming up with inductive categories allow researchers to link or *ground* them to their data (Berg, 2004, p. 273). Grounded theory is a type of content analysis typically used within a qualitative research framework. Both grounded theory and ethnography, “the practice of which places researchers in the midst of whatever it is they study” (Berg, 2004, p. 148), have some similarities. Geertz (1973) states that ethnography is “interpretive; what it is interpretive of is the flow of social discourse; and the interpreting involved consists in trying to rescue the ‘said’ of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms” (p. 20). The grounded theory approach also allows researchers to interpret the data and “fix it” by linking codes to their data. Both utilize a bottom-up approach that is characteristic of qualitative research. The grounded theory approach is said to be “one of the most influential models for coding qualitative data” (Lindlof and Taylor, 2002, p. 218). In 1967, Glaser and Strauss wrote “The Discovery of Grounded Theory”, and since then it has been used extensively in many areas of the social sciences. This book paved the way for a new kind of content analysis, one that would allow for inductive research, or research in a qualitative paradigm. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) say that two things are notable about grounded theory (also known as the *constant-comparative method*): first,

that “theory is grounded in the relationships between data and the categories into which they are coded” (p. 218) and second, that researchers are quite flexible in finding and connecting codes and categories as they can be modified while the project is still ongoing (p. 218). One reason for this is that the researcher is often still collecting data, and these new situations are continually changing “the scope and terms of his or her analytic framework” (p. 218). Charmaz (2000) writes that “grounded theory methods consist of systematic inductive guidelines for collecting and analyzing data to build middle-range theoretical frameworks that explain the collected data” (p. 509). This inductive approach begins with researchers plunging themselves into the materials collected where they should eventually find frequent themes that appear to be meaningful to the person or people who conveyed the message (Abrahamson, 1983, p. 286). In grounded theory, this is what is known as *open coding*. Specific items to count and compare while coding in order to seek out categories could be words, themes, characters, paragraphs, items, concepts or semantics (Berg, 2004, pp. 273-4). Strauss (1987, p. 30) proposes “four basic guidelines when conducting open coding” (Berg, 2004, p. 278). First, question the data specifically and consistently; second, examine the data minutely; third, regularly pause the coding process to write notes; and fourth, never take for granted the analytic significance of any traditional variable until the data show it to be of some importance (Strauss, 1987, p. 30). Charmaz (2000) comments that analysis starts early on when using grounded theory methods and that “[w]e grounded theorists code our emerging data as we collect it” (p. 515). That is to say that coding often happens right from the start, done simultaneously alongside data collection, and codes are thus created as the data is read and studied. Where quantitative-nomological analysis starts out with predetermined

standardized codes, qualitative or explorative-interpretive analysis begins with the researcher, a pen, a blank piece of paper and the data. In fact, the researcher might find that what he or she originally thought about the data will change quite drastically as he or she goes through the coding process. This inductive process of open coding allows the researcher to demonstrate the perception of others but it is also important to note that it should not simply exclude deduction (Berg, 2004, p. 273). Glaser and Strauss (1967) talk about their description of grounded theory

[t]o generate theory ... we suggest as the best approach an initial, systematic discovery of theory from the data of social research. Then one can be relatively sure that the theory will fit the work. And since categories are discovered by examination of the data, laymen involved in the area to which the theory applies will usually be able to understand it, while sociologists who work in other areas will recognize an understandable theory linked with the data of a given area. (pp. 2-3)

Years later, when there was some criticism about the process being completely inductive, Strauss (1987) suggested that the categories used by researchers could be found inductively, deductively or with a combination of the two. To say that categories must only be found through an inductive process appears to take a reductionist position, and thus could belie the kind of qualitative analysis which grounded theory encourages. Still, most say that any existing concept must still earn its way into the analysis (Glaser, 1978). Researchers, like the participants, are inspired by their own experiences and tend to suggest possible comparisons that help create various deductions which may or may not end up having implications for the study (Berg, 2004, p. 273). Therefore, experience

plays a crucial role in both the inductive and deductive processes (Berg, 2004, p. 273). There are researchers who state that categories *must* be grounded from the data that they come from (Denzin, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). In this case, the development of categories in any content analysis would ideally come from inductive reference concerning patterns that materialize from the collected data (Berg, 2004, p. 276). Whether using inductive or deductive processes (or a combination of both), it is safe to say that grounded theory has been very popular in all kinds of qualitative research analysis, and in an extreme case has even been noted that “the qualitative researcher has no real alternative to pursuing something very close to grounded theory” (Turner, 1998, p. 112). And even though there appears to be no simple way to describe how categories should be found or linked to other categories, Charmaz (2000) contends that “[t]he rigor of grounded theory approaches offer qualitative researchers a set of clear guidelines from which to build explanatory frameworks that specify relationships among concepts” (p. 510). And as one continues working and thinking about the data, questions and even some plausible answers will most likely emerge (Berg, 2004, p. 276).

In the semistructured interviews, the participants’ were asked about their thoughts on the various learning environments in their German class as well as their motives and goals for German. Their views on grammar and how they believe they learn it were also discussed. I also asked about their beliefs regarding the lexical aspects of language learning reading and listening comprehension activities. They were also asked to talk about their thoughts regarding speaking German. The open coding process led me to create codes or categories in which I could arrange my data. A chart of categories that summarizes the entire coding process is attached in appendix C of this thesis. As I coded

the data, I found that the participants' comments led me to produce categories based on the way they had answered my questions. I thus was able to organize my data by placing the participants' comments into these categories and then lining them up together in a chart. The codes that were established include places where learning takes place, such as the classroom, laboratory, independent and collaborative learning environments. Each participant had various comments about each environment. More codes were evident through their comments regarding parts of the curriculum, including the learning of grammar concepts, vocabulary, completing reading and listening comprehension activities as well as actually speaking German. The final code that presented itself to me was their motives and goals for German. These categories were coded in this way not only because I questioned the participants about some of the topics mentioned, but also because they would often digress and provide more information than I had planned to ask. The participants often provided more information than had been asked of them, because the interviews were semistructured. Codes were thus grounded from the data that they provided. An example of my coding can be found in appendix C of this thesis.

4. Description of Study

4.1 The Course

All three participants were registered students of German 101 (section three of seven sections in total) taught at the University of Waterloo in the fall semester of 2005. Since the collected data can only be understood in the context of this course, I will now provide a description of German 101. Section three of the course was taught by a doctoral candidate in the department of Germanic and Slavic Studies. The following information originates from the German 101 syllabus from the fall semester of 2005, and is attached in appendix D of this thesis. Section three of German 101 met four times a week for one hour at a time; there are three lecture hours, and one laboratory hour. The main goal of this course is to equip the students with a basic ability in German. In the syllabus, it says that they “will learn to comprehend and speak German with a good degree of accuracy” (Appendix D). As well, students were told that they will be able to grasp the main content of simple German texts, and will also “be able to write basic German” (Appendix D). This course is not open to students who have grade 12 or OAC German (or equivalent), thus is meant for beginner learners of German only. The syllabus also mentions that “class time will be devoted to practicing German in a fun and communicative way” and that students will be able to interact with peers during the class (Appendix D). Learning German grammar will only be the focus of *some* class time (Appendix D). The syllabus introduces the laboratory hour as a place where audio, video and multi-media exercises will prepare the students for learning how to comprehend German (Appendix D). Homework expectations are also discussed in the syllabus, saying that students should expect about one and a half hours of homework for every hour of class. The required

textbook, *Vorsprung* is also found in the syllabus (Appendix D). Lovik, Guy and Chavez (2002) say that *Vorsprung* provides a wealth of comprehensible input, a visual contextualization of language, a continuing story line, authentic readings, systematic progression of activities, *Deutsch im Beruf* sections and extensive cultural programs which will encourage and assist the students in their quest to learn German (pp. 4-5). They also comment that *Vorsprung* highlights the improvement of communicative and cultural know-how “without sacrificing attention to formal and structural patterns in German” (Lovik et al., 2002, p. 6). Those familiar with the textbook will know, however, that there does appear to be a lot of focus on learning forms and structures. Nonetheless the authors state that language instruction should focus first on comprehension and that this notion is “integral to teaching with *Vorsprung*” (Lovik et al., 2002, p. 7). The grade distribution of German 101 is as follows: the section grade, including quiz, homework, attendance and participation marks is worth 15%. The laboratory component, which incorporates the laboratory tasks and the major laboratory test, comprises 20% of the final grade. The speaking test is worth 15%, the mid-term examination is worth 20%, and the final examination is comprised of the remaining 30%.

4.2 Participants

The data in this study was generated by three individuals who provided me with their personal beliefs and experiences with foreign language learning throughout the fall semester of 2005. They supplied a wealth of data which has been reviewed and analyzed.

To quickly review, data collection began with ten questionnaires collected from ten students; sixteen questionnaires were handed out in total. Six students who originally agreed to fill them out did not hand in their questionnaires. The selection of participants

for the semistructured interviews was accomplished by looking for certain criteria in the questionnaires. Potential participants were those who appeared to have an ability and willingness to share and write about their language learning experiences and a varied language learning background. I also looked for students who appeared to be diverse as a group. Finding students who appeared to have a desire to divulge their own personal language learning beliefs and experiences was the most important criterion, however. As I selected the three participants, I realized that even with an open concept questionnaire, the pre-conceived notions that I had about each learner would continue to change as the interview process ensued. These participants and the results of their interviews will be discussed later on in this chapter.

In order to maintain the anonymity of the three participants of the semistructured interview component of this study as required by the Office of Research at the University of Waterloo, I will henceforth refer to them simply as participant A, B and C. Each of the three interview participants took part in three semistructured interviews. I will designate these individual interviews using a combination of the participants' aliases and interview numbers as well as the line number(s) that designate(s) exactly where the comment is located in the transcript (e.g. A1, 133 refers to participant A's first interview, line 133). To access the interview transcripts, please see appendix E of this thesis.

To introduce each participant, I will briefly touch on their academic programs, language courses taken in the past, and reasons for studying German. Participant A is a first year arts student who claims to go out of her way to study languages. Nonetheless, this is her first experience with learning German. Participant A took French throughout

elementary and high school, and has started to learn a number of other languages independently, by reading do-it-yourself books.

Participant B is a first year science student who has had German language lessons before. Because her family is of German heritage, she took classes at a German Language school on Saturdays as a child. Although she claims to remember very little of it, B believes this is an advantage. Another advantage B believes she has is having done years of French throughout elementary and high school.

Participant C is a first year computer science student who has no experiences with German at all. He took French throughout elementary school and then did grade 12 French with special permission. C also took some Spanish in high school. He enjoys learning new languages by reading them on the internet, or listening to foreign music. Participant C also finds grammar and vocabulary learning very easy.

The following section will discuss each participant's questionnaire results further, thus showing why I chose them for the semistructured interview component.

4.3 Questionnaire Results

This section will touch on the interview participants' questionnaire results and provide some examples of what the three interview participants wrote. As mentioned, I first looked at the questionnaires to see which students appeared to be willing and able to give thoughtful and interesting answers to the questions. All three participants had very different but interesting approaches to filling out the questionnaire. Participant A wrote one detailed answer to an open-ended question in a way that emulated self-confidence. Participant C, on the other hand, wrote simple but ample sentences that were very direct. The responses from participant C also showed his confidence in learning foreign

language structures. Participant B was quite detailed, speaking more about prior language learning experiences and German heritage. When asked to circle whether they perceived themselves to be very good, above average, average, below average, or very weak language learners, they were subsequently prompted to describe why they felt they fit into that specific category. As mentioned, participant B, a self-proclaimed “above average” language learner, wrote of past language classes in her questionnaire, saying, “because I find that since I have taken language before this class (French) it is easier for me to relate the concepts being learned now to the concepts I’ve already learned in French” (Appendix A). Participant C also circled “above average.” He described this decision by writing, “I can remember almost any grammar rule, verb or conjugation with only one or two times reading it” (Appendix A). For participant C, the focus thus seemed to be more on the structure of the specific language in question. Participant A, a self-proclaimed “very good” language learner took an almost defensive position, commenting, “I generally go out of my way to study different languages and I always learn them extremely quickly and easily, although it’s probably due to the fact that I actually *want* to learn them and other people aren’t that interested” (Appendix A). All three were clearly enthusiastic about sharing their beliefs and personal experiences, which was exactly what I was looking for. One common theme seemed to be that each one of them felt almost superior to other language learners for various reasons. At the time, I concluded that participant A appeared to be a very self-assured language learner, one who believed to know exactly what was going on at all times. In her questionnaire A compared herself with “other people”, making it clear that she felt somewhat superior because she “actually want[ed] to learn” (Appendix A). Participant B, I presumed, felt confident in German 101

for two reasons: being of German heritage and having some French language experience. Participant C's answers also appeared confident, but focused mostly on language structure and his ease in understanding and memorizing concepts and vocabulary. All three seemed passionate and willing to divulge some very interesting information about their perceptions of foreign language learning processes, thus, I approached them about contributing to the interview component of this study. Of the seven other students who handed in questionnaires, two did not want to be contacted for the interview component of my study. Thus eight students in total agreed to be contacted for interviews. All of these students said that they are either above average or average language learners. When I looked at their questionnaires, it seemed that all of the students were willing to talk about their language learning beliefs. When asked if they enjoy learning languages, five students mentioned the word "communicate" and most of the eight students wrote about proficiency and understanding. Thus, in some cases, the answers were quite similar. I therefore tried to come up with a group that seemed diverse based on the data that I was given. The three students that ended up partaking in the interview component all had varied answers throughout the questionnaire, and appeared more reflective than some of the others. The first participant discussed her language learning abilities in comparison with other students' lackluster performances in class, where the second participant discussed her experiences with learning French. The third participant said that he remembers new grammar rules quickly. I felt their answers showed that as a group, they appeared to be diverse.

4.4 Learner Individuality

In this section, I will introduce and describe the thoughts and experiences of each individual participant as provided in the semistructured interviews. This will include topics such as various settings where learning takes place and their respective strengths and weaknesses, thoughts regarding the course material as well as their personal motives and goals for German 101.

Interviewing each individual participant has given me access to their personal perceptions and views regarding language learning. This is vital in that it provides a wealth of data with which I could work. Accessing the learner's in-depth 'insider' viewpoint is something that can only be done by conducting interviews. This rich data could not have been accessed by only having students fill out a questionnaire. Research of this nature also allows the student to be seen as a learning person, and not just as a category which they may or may not fall into.

After thoroughly coding and analyzing the data, it was possible to identify potential learner variables for each participant. This was done in an attempt to show that such classifications are too broad to give rich details about individual learners, thus creating vague results. It was also done in order to show that predetermined categories cannot be relied on in an exploratory research framework, because they limit exploration. In order to accomplish this, at the end of each section, I will discuss why each participant appears to fall into certain learner variable categories.

4.3.1 Participant A: *"Classroom learning has its uses."*

First, the beliefs and thoughts of participant A that were provided through three semistructured interviews will be described. This section is titled by her words

“classroom learning has its uses” (A1, 262-63) and is a good summary of her thoughts that will be discussed later on.

The Classroom Environment

First, we talked about the different settings where learning takes place. I asked her about the lecture, laboratory, group work and independent work. Regarding the lecture, she had positive things to say about hearing spoken German, completing activities, and the visual aids available to her in the classroom (A1, 42-4, 305-7). She mostly disliked the textbook *Vorsprung*, though, saying that the book was only good if you learned everything at the pace of the class (A1, 762-64, 769-72, 782-83). She also said that you only learned small building blocks in the class, and it could get boring (A1, 77-80).

Another negative part of the classroom environment according to participant A was the idea of making mistakes in front of the class. She commented that “it’s associated with intelligence maybe ... you’re afraid of making a language error” (A1, 676-77).

Participant A liked, however, that even when she made a mistake; she got feedback, and could thus correct it (A1, 321-23).

The Laboratory Environment

The laboratory component was mostly enjoyable for her. The only negative thing she could think of was that some German websites were too hard for beginners to read (A1, 520-22, 529-30). She commented that this sort of thing can be “kind of motivating and intimidating at the same time” (A1, 550-51).

The Group Work Environment

Her thoughts on group work in the classroom were extremely negative. The only positive group work environment for her would be meeting with a tutor (A1, 341-42). Participant A talked about always being one of if not the best student in the group, and how that made her feel as though she had to take a “step down” (A1, 347). She said “I have to go backwards and remain with these people” (A1, 349-50). She also talked about how she disliked people expecting more of her because of her intelligence (A1, 367-69). Participant A did show some reflection on this topic, however, saying

it could be just because I’m so used to ... just reading the books and doing it on my own ... that like once you do that for years and years and years it’s pretty hard to ... go back. (A1, 379-84)

The Independent Work Environment

Next, I asked her about independent study. Participant A loves to learn on her own and go at her own pace, which is evident in the sheer amount of book learning she has done (A1, 145-58). She said, “I normally just read books on my own”, adding that she finds it hard to compare being in a classroom and reading books or “book learning” as she calls it, the latter of which she is more accustomed to (A1, 36-8). She spoke of reading do-it-yourself language books for Latin, French, Spanish and Esperanto (A1, 149-54). Participant A still spoke of some weaknesses of independent learning, including getting little feedback and not having anyone around to correct your mistakes (A1, 321-23). She also thought that her listening and speaking skills did not improve much during independent study, because she usually studies by reading and *sometimes* writing (A1, 470-77).

Learning Grammar Concepts

Participant A was then asked about her strengths and weaknesses with the course material in German 101. She was asked to describe her thoughts on learning grammar concepts. Participant A thought that understanding grammar concepts is one of the easiest things in the course, and said it is her major strength (A1, 566-67). She stated, “[grammar’s] not like a thinking thing ... it’s just something like an automatic thing” (A2, 107-8) and “I guess subconsciously ... I can see the difference in my mind” (A2, 112-13). She went on to describe grammar as an “inner thing” (A2, 156). When I asked how she learns grammar concepts, she told me that she “compares the cases” to make sense of them (A2, 70-73). She said

the relation of what they’re talking about and how they change ... how the sentence is structured is different because of the relation to the object. You can kinda get the feeling of a natural instinct of what kind of case it would be ... that’s probably how I learn stuff like grammar. (A2, 84-100)

Participant A also stated, “I think I learn by comparison” (A2, 50-1). She was somewhat reflective as well, saying that when learning grammar “I don’t really think about it ... I can see the difference in my mind” (A2, 110-3).

Learning Vocabulary and Genders

Next, I asked her about learning vocabulary and genders. She spoke of rote memorization and how doing this was one of the hardest things, and a weakness for her (A1, 573-78). She said “vocabulary for me ... that’s the part I have to memorize” (A1, 570-1). Most of what she said had to do with her visualizing images and anything else that might help her memorize the words (A1, 579-80). She stated, “... table in German is

male, and boy is male ... so you kinda like try and relate boy and table together so I don't know maybe I'll see a boy running on a table or something" (A1, 738, 747-49). She also commented that "you just have a list of words and you don't use it ... I have a hard time learning that" (A1, 598-99). When speaking of learning genders, she consistently spoke of how difficult it is, saying that when you think it might be masculine, it is probably feminine or neutral (A1, 712-18). In the end, she stated, "I would like to have a little bit more vocabulary but it's not ... really such a thing I think the grammar is better" (A1, 628-30).

Reading Comprehension Activities

When asked to describe how she approaches reading comprehension texts, she spoke of word for word translation (A2, 170-2). Participant A said that for her, translating the text word for word is the easiest way to successfully complete them, and thus it is one of her strengths (A2, 179-81). She commented, "I'm generally not very good at ... just reading the language and NOT thinking of it in English" (A2, 183-5). She went on to say "it's not like a slow process but ... as I'm reading it ... I see it in German but I'm thinking about it in ... its English context" (A2, 198-201).

Listening Comprehension Activities

Listening comprehension activities, however, are different. Participant A said that she does not translate everything word for word (A2, 258-60). She said she finds that translating a listening text requires too much attention and that you can miss stuff that is important and can not go back (A2, 280-1). Instead, she stated that "it's kinda like ... a word for word dissection, what did she say here, what did she say here" (A2, 283-7). Participant A said you might only understand the first part and the last part so you have

to, according to her, “formulate what the middle might have been” (A2, 306-8).

Participant also talked about how she improves her listening skills. She said she believes that if you study by reading “listening and writing kind of falls into place” (A2, 467-8).

Speaking German

Participant A said that speaking was very difficult for her (A1, 644). She said “I usually have to fix it in my mind” (A1, 643). Her low confidence level with speaking was evident when she said she does not feel secure while speaking, emphasizing that by saying “speaking is my worst” (A1, 644). It was interesting to note that she still saw speaking as the most important language skill, but continually talked about it being her worst (A1, 420-1). Participant A still spoke hopefully of learning to speak German better, and still wanting to continue with German 102 (A1, 441-2).

Motives and Goals

When asked about her motives and goals with German, she explained that language learning is a hobby of hers, and that her main motivation is “knowing a language that nobody else knows” (A1, 445-51). She even went so far as to say that “I don’t think that there’s really a possibility of me not enjoying it” (A1, 17-8). Having taken languages like Latin motivates her as well, she said, “you go into it thinking that it’s gonna be easy because nothing could possibly get that hard” (A1, 248-50).

Participant A said her “specific” goal with German 101 “would probably be to be able to conduct a conversation” (A2, 771-2). She thought this was a realistic goal for this course. She went on to say fluency is hard to “reach” because language books “generally stop at a certain point that’s before fluency” (A2, 788-94). Participant A explained her belief that idioms prevent fluency (A2, 800-2). When speaking of idioms, participant A

refers to informal language or slang, stating that “fifty percent of conversation is ... not formal stuff that you get in the textbook. ... I think the only thing that could really get you fluent is ... to spend a lot of time with people who speak that language” (A2, 804-16). This challenge of learning informal language in a classroom setting is also why she believes that just being able to conduct a conversation is a realistic goal for German 101.

Summary

In terms of setting, Participant A made her distaste for group work clear, but mostly liked the classroom. She liked the laboratory component and in general, she loved working independently. She said her major strengths are understanding grammar concepts quickly and completing reading comprehension texts. She felt that one of her weaknesses is learning all the vocabulary. In her opinion, her two other major weaknesses are trying to memorize genders and speaking German. Her own motives for taking the course include knowing a language that few people know, as well as the fact that she simply enjoys learning new languages. Participant A’s goal for German 101 is to be able to conduct a conversation.

Participant A’s beliefs regarding how she learns grammar concepts show that she perceives grammar in terms of its component parts, which hints at an analytic tendency. She does not seem to view language as a whole; instead she works with its pieces and tries to put them back together. Her way of completing reading comprehension activities is quite similar. Translating word for word shows that she goes through the text part for part until she grasps the whole. Even when speaking of listening activities, she refers to them as “dissections” that must be pieced back together (A2, 283-7). Participant A also seems to put emphasis on the importance of the visual aspect when learning vocabulary.

She likes to picture images in context, whether in the book or on the board. She likes to understand things by seeing them first. This is supported by her claim that if you study by reading “listening and writing kind of falls into place”, where she places the visual ahead of the aural (A2, 467-8). Participant A’s dislike of group work shows a sense of a separate identity from the class, also said to be characteristic of a field-independent learner. It also shows signs of a person less skilled in social relationships. In the end, all of this data told me that in most cases participant A tends to be analytic, independent, impersonal and even socially awkward, field-independent learner who also shows some preference for visual presentation. Returning to her quotation “classroom learning has its uses”, further support is found (A1, 262-3). What she says shows that classroom learning is not the most important part of her language learning experience. This quote hints at her preference for independent learning. By saying that classroom learning has its uses, she suggests that it does not play a central role in how she learns a language, rather a peripheral one.

4.3.2 *Participant B: “Once you’ve learned one course ... one language kind of interacts with the other.”*

The thoughts and experiences of the second student, participant B, will be illustrated in the following section. This section is appropriately titled with her words “once you’ve learned one course ... one language kind of interacts with the other” (B1, 60-3), which will be discussed at the end of this section.

The Classroom Environment

To start, I asked about the various settings where learning takes place. Participant B said she enjoyed the class (B1, 14-6). “I do like the classes just because ... they are somewhat necessary because of the exposure to the actual ... hearing German spoken” (B1, 463-66). She also gave some examples regarding why the class was important to her when she stated that “going through problems afterwards or ... questions afterwards ... that helps me understand it” (B1, 394-401). When asked why she felt that it was helpful, participant B answered, “because it’s different, like reading it and saying ok I understand it and then applying it” (B1, 408-9). She also liked getting immediate feedback from those activities and examples (B1, 939-41). Participant B said that she found attending lectures helped cement certain concepts for her. “I find that helps me a lot with learning grammar and that kind of thing, vocabulary too” (B1, 559-60). In her opinion, the one negative thing about being in the classroom was that it could get boring. She said, “in any class when there’s people that understand it and then people that don’t ... then you have to ... go over and over it and the people that do understand it get bored” (B1, 428-32).

The Laboratory Environment

It was quickly apparent that participant B was not fond of the laboratory component of German 101. She stated that it often seemed to be a waste of time (B1, 231). She said, “I’ve got a course load that’s heavy and ... why am I spending an hour sitting here looking at an Ikea website, like it’s pointless to me” (B1, 225-8). She continued by saying “I don’t really see how it’s helping me looking at websites ... any student can go on the internet and find anything they want” (B1, 233, 275-276). The only

positive thing about the laboratory component that she mentioned was the visual component (B1, 249-259). However, her overall thoughts were negative.

The Group Work Environment

Participant B was then asked about her thoughts on group work. Her first thought was, “it depends on what kind of group work it is” (B1, 564). However, it quickly became clear that she is not averse to being in a group work situation, saying, “I don’t feel pulled down at all by having a partner” (B1, 581-2). She also gave reasoning for this by stating “[it’s] not so much negative, just because ... each individual person is gonna perform differently ... and you kinda get marked on that so I’m not so much worried about that” (B1, 616-25). Participant B said that the main reason why a group work situation could be negative was because “you can’t really learn the concept [from other people in a group]” (B1, 844-6). Thus, she commented “I would have to understand that concept before I could go in a group and discuss it” (B1, 888-90).

The Independent Work Environment

Participant B spoke highly of doing work independently, because she said she likes to go at her own pace (B1, 457-8). Her reasoning was, “I don’t feel like I’m waiting around” (B1, 460-1). She also talked about learning better independently by saying “I don’t think anybody else can really help you understand or learn something. You kind of have to learn it on your own to really understand it, because nobody else can make you understand it” (B1, 827-31). The only possible weakness of independent learning was shown by participant B talking about how important getting feedback is. (B1, 397-404).

Learning Grammar Concepts

Participant B was subsequently asked about her strengths and weaknesses with the course material in German 101. First, I asked about her thoughts regarding learning grammar concepts. She informed me that she enjoys learning grammar and that it is easy for her (B1, 56-8). She said, “I can look at it and be like ok, well, you drop this ending and you add this and this is how it conjugates” (B1, 67-9). Participant B learns grammar concepts by making patterns. She commented, “I’ll look for different patterns ... if we’re learning say like a verb translation then I’ll look for specific endings and then I’ll memorize ... ich goes with e and this and this” (B1, 121-7). In order to learn irregularities, participant B stated “I’ll just try and memorize the ones that don’t fit it” (B1, 132-4). She went on to say that “with grammar ... when you understand the concept it’s not that hard to use it, like it’s just understanding the concept” (B1, 756-9). Another comment made by participant B was, “I find that ... once you’ve learned one course it’s kind of ... one language kind of ... interacts with the other” (B1, 60-3).

Learning Vocabulary and Genders

I then asked about her thoughts regarding learning the vocabulary and genders in German 101. Participant B informed me that she always writes out the vocabulary and repeats it to herself, in order to memorize it. “When it comes to vocabulary I’ll say it to myself and ... say ok this is this ... and like just kind of repeat it or even write it out to get the spelling” (B1, 678-81). She put major emphasis on writing things out and making lists, supported by the following comment that she said in half jest, “write it out three times and that’s the amount that’s supposed to be able to make you remember it the best” (B1, 683-5). It did appear, however, that making lists was indeed a strategy often

employed by participant B. For her, writing things out seemed to equal memorization. She stated, “once you’ve written out the words it’s ok”, which also shows support for this comment (B1, 767-8). Participant B mentioned having more problems with learning the genders when she stated, “I think I do have a problem more with ... whether it’s masculine, feminine that kinda thing, and that is more difficult” (B1, 768-72). She said she deals with this best by looking for patterns, and told me her logic: “I ended up ... looking for patterns and I learned, like I saw that most of the words that end in e are usually feminine” (B1, 738-9).

Reading Comprehension Activities

With regard to how she approaches reading comprehension activities, participant B stated, “I would pre-read the questions and know what the questions are ... then I would read through the sentence and do it that way” (B2, 103-5). She said that reading is her strength, especially compared to listening, because “it’s easier for me to read it” (B1, 162). She also stated, “I can read something and then see the words and like figure it out from there” (B1, 152-4).

Listening Comprehension Activities

Listening comprehension texts and activities are not all too different. Participant B said that her approach is to listen for key words. “What I did was ... just listen for like general key words that I knew and then ... that helps me piece the sentence together if there aren’t words that I specifically know” (B2, 42-5).

She also stated, “I translate it in my head ... I listen to these words and I ... try and make the sentence in English in my head” (B2, 48-51). Speaking further on this topic, she explains, “once I translate, and I understand the sentences, then I can look at that sentence

and know what it means” (B2, 82-4). Listening is hard though, because words go quickly, “and it’s hard to ... pick out the words ... so it’s easier for me to read it” (B1, 162).

Speaking German

Following that, participant B was asked to describe her thoughts on actually speaking German. She spoke immediately of translating things first, saying, “I always end up ... translating it in my head and then saying it” (B1, 87-8). She continued by saying “[speaking’s] what I find difficult, so I’m not a huge fan of that” (B1, 90-1). For her, “it’s hard to translate it, and you have to take your time too” (B1, 180-1). She also said she gets very nervous when speaking, thus making it even more difficult (B1, 189-90). Participant B commented that reading and writing is a lot easier than speaking (B1, 152-4). She still showed some interest in learning to speak better though, “I would like to be more fluent speaking but it’s so ... hard for me even with French and ... everything it’s hard for me to speak fluently” (B1, 84-7).

Motives and Goals

Finally, I asked participant B to talk about her motives and goals with German. She said that her main motivation was the fact that she comes from a German family (B1, 961-4). She stated, “I am proud of my heritage” (B1, 964). She said another motivation was that “I like being able to speak other languages, I think that’s a really cool concept” (B1, 956-7). Participant B also spoke of long term benefits, like for her career (B2, 958-9). Another more minor motivation, she claimed, was that she always gets high marks in language courses (B1, 976-8).

Participant B’s main goal with German is “to one day be able to speak it”

(B2, 318-9). She spoke of plans to go to Germany, and her desire to be able to communicate with family members she had never met (B3, 232-4). She said “to become really fluent I think you have to be in the atmosphere” (B2, 261-3).

Summary

Participant B generally enjoyed the classroom environment in German 101, and did not mind taking part in group work situations. She disliked the laboratory component, saying it was mostly useless. Participant B then emphasized her preference of working independently, noting that she could go at her own pace. In terms of course material, she found that learning grammar concepts and completing reading comprehension activities were her stronger points. Learning vocabulary and completing listening comprehension activities were not as easy for her, but she did not consider them weaknesses. Learning genders, however, and actually speaking German were major weaknesses according to participant B.

With all of this in mind, I have attempted to identify possible learner variables for this participant. Her dislike of the laboratory component hints that she is likely not an auditory learner. She also commented that listening comprehension activities are more difficult than reading texts, and that she would attempt to translate the text as she heard it. Many comments further hint towards her possibly being a visual learner, including the many times she mentioned writing out lists of vocabulary. She also stated, “I’ll look for different patterns ... if we’re learning say like a verb translation then I’ll look for specific endings and then I’ll memorize” (B1, 121-4). This picturing of words and patterns in her mind and then memorizing them shows that she her tendencies to be a visual learner. More specifically, this quote also shows that Participant B tends to be a verbalist visual

learner. Leaver et al. (2005, p. 67) define a verbalist as someone who will not necessarily conjure up an image of the term to be learned, rather, they will see the letters or spelling in their heads. The same group (2005, p. 67) also define an imagist visual learner. “When imagists hear or read something in a foreign language ... they see a picture of what they have heard or read. In other words, they make an image of it” (Leaver et al, 2005, p. 67). Understanding grammar concepts by making patterns hints at a verbalist visual learner, because she spoke often of memorizing patterns and words, not conjuring up images. When it comes to speaking German as well as reading German texts, she admitted to often translating everything in her head. This disassembling of wholes into pieces and then into English wholes speaks of a more analytic learner style. Participant B mentioned, however, that learning a language “isn’t really a memorizing thing” (B2, 303-4). This shows her recognition that language is not something that can be learned by reading or analyzing, but that it should be used and even learned in context. She hinted at this when she said, “because [learning grammar] is different, like reading it and saying ok I understand it, and then applying it” as well as her statement “to become really fluent I think you have to be in the atmosphere” (B1, 408-9; B2, 261-3). These statements seem to point towards a more holistic or global learner, not an analytic one. It shows that she recognizes that all parts have a place in what can be considered the whole. To some degree, she is thus oriented towards the big picture. In the end, what this data suggests is that in most cases participant B tends to be a verbalist visual learner and she also tends to be a socially sensitive, independent learner who appears holistic but also has some analytic tendencies. Looking at her quotation that helped title this section, “once you’ve learned one course it’s kind of ... one language kind of interacts with the other”, more support is

found for participant B possibly being a verbalist visual learner, as well as a more holistic learner (B1, 60-3). What she says indicates that she finds similarities among languages she has learned, and that these similarities essentially help her to figure things out while learning a new language. The grammar and vocabulary patterns that she wrote out and thus successfully memorized in French class are still accessible for her when she learns German. She stated, “[there’s] a lot of parallels ... the verb conjugations ... the articles, like they’re ... all similar ... and French for a female article mostly ends in e ... German mostly ends in e” (B2, 408-13). This statement shows how she tends to memorize the way in which verb conjugations or noun genders are spelled or constructed, likely using similar strategies for each new language learned. It also shows her tendency to level information to seek out similarities. Finally, what her words also show is that she can look beyond the structure of languages and see them as wholes.

4.3.3 *Participant C: “The culture’s not bad, but I’d rather just learn how to speak the language.”*

The third student’s thoughts and experiences with German 101 will be described in the following section. This final participant will be referred to as participant C. This section is appropriately titled “the culture’s not bad, but I’d rather just learn how to speak the language” (C1, 278-9). This quote was chosen to represent participant C and will be discussed more thoroughly at the end of this section.

The Classroom Environment

To start, I asked participant C about the various settings where learning takes place. The lecture and laboratory environments as well as group and independent work

were discussed. He pointed out immediately that the lecture environment was mostly beneficial because “you actually have to speak the language ... it’s not just reading and thinking” and “you actually have to say it” (C1, 44-7, 49). The other major benefit of the classroom is hearing German spoken, according to participant C (C1, 205). He then talked about some negative points, saying, “it’s alright sometimes, well it’s a language course ... I’d rather just take ... the structure, the grammar and ... like a verb chart ... and let me go” (C1, 05-8). He continued by pointing out that it often went too slow, and that the activities often got boring for him (C1, 26-9). He commented, “writing things ... writing simple sentences that don’t really mean anything just practice ... [that’s] sometimes boring” (C1, 32-5). He did state, however, that he occasionally found classroom activities to be useful by saying, “I usually don’t need to practice but sometimes ... maybe a few little of those little questions the fill in the blank stuff ... those are sometimes helpful” (C1, 477-81). Participant C also talked about the textbook, *Vorsprung*, saying it was “too spread out” (C1, 293). He admitted to not reading the book very often, but still found that it lacked a lot of detail (C1, 343-4).

The Laboratory Environment

As for the laboratory component, participant C said that he enjoys it because it forces him to learn to listen. “I like that because then it ... does force you to listen and learn how to listen ... which is one of my weak spots” (C1, 250-1). He did state, however, that learning about German culture was less necessary and thus somewhat of a negative. “The culture’s not bad, but I’d rather just learn how to speak the language” (C1, 278-9). He also went on to say that “the audio parts are good, the looking at the culture

and stuff is not so great” (C1, 270-2). Participant C therefore seems to suggest that one can attempt to learn a language without putting an emphasis on learning cultural aspects.

The Group Work Environment

Next, we talked about group work in the classroom. He informed me that he does not dislike group work, but would rather work on his own (C1, 540). He commented, “I don’t really see it as a break [from the lecture] ... just kinda like busy work” (C1, 598-600). Participant C sees group work mostly as a negative situation, but it’s not necessarily a large burden. “[I] usually just [want] to just quick get it over with ... [and] do it ... whenever I want on my own” (C1, 562-5).

The Independent Work Environment

“I’d rather do stuff at home”, is what participant C informed me when I asked him about independent work (C1, 176). He does not seem to need a lot of repetition, so class gets boring for him sometimes. “Usually in a classroom setting they go over it and over it” (C1, 223-5). Thus, independent learning is better for him, he said, because he learns things quickly. “I learn really easy just by looking at it” (C1, 223-4). Participant C worried that the one negative thing about learning independently is that his spoken German could suffer (C1, 195-200.)

Learning Grammar Concepts

Participant C was asked about his strengths and weaknesses with the course material in German 101. I first addressed the issue of learning grammar concepts. He immediately talked about how grammar was easiest to learn by reading it and that this was his strength. He said, “well usually if I read it, it’s easier” (C1, 61). When asked to

describe more in detail how he learns grammar concepts, participant C stated, “I look at the parts of speech” and “I’ll remember how the sentence is structured, whether it’s subject, object, verb or however it works ... and then I just seem to be able to remember” (C2, 16, 18-24). He gave further proof of his enjoyment of learning grammar concepts by saying the he likes to learn grammar first and practice speaking second (C1, 674-6). Participant C also said, however, “I think the best way to remember [grammar concepts] would be to actually know how to use it in a sentence”, contradicting his first statement somewhat (C2, 36-7).

Learning Vocabulary and Genders

Participant C commented that learning lists of vocabulary was one of his weaknesses, thus quite difficult. “I would need to go over that ... several times” (C1, 432). He said he mostly learns the new vocabulary by memorizing them, but also pointed to one strategy he sometimes uses, saying, “sometimes I’ll write it out ... occasionally ... when there’s a lot” (C1, 399-404). Something else that he thought helps him learn vocabulary is seeing the words in context and in use. He stated, “if I’m reading a passage and then I have to look up a word ... I usually remember that fairly easily” (C2, 65-8). Vocabulary is harder to memorize than grammar concepts because of the sheer amount, he said. “There’s more to know for ... vocab than grammar” (C1, 45-6). Participant C noted that memorizing genders is also difficult for him. “It’s just remembering what nouns are feminine, masculine ... I sometimes need to look back at it” (C1, 389-92). When asked how he memorizes genders, he stated, “I just do. I guess from studying Spanish and French” (C1, 410-11).

Reading Comprehension Activities

Reading comprehension activities, however, are a strength of participant C's. He feels confident in his reading skills, noting, "I'll read the questions and then if I can't, if I don't know the answers, I'll re-go through the text and look for key words" (C2, 83-5). He also said that he sometimes translates words if it's a particularly difficult passage, but mostly tries to read it as it is, saying, "I usually read it through and hope I understand" (C2, 80-1).

Listening Comprehension Activities

He then talked about his thoughts regarding listening comprehension activities. Participant C discussed his approach to listening texts by saying, "I just try to remember enough of the questions at a time that when it comes up in the text I can answer them, write them down quickly" (C2, 115-7). He explained this further by saying, "[just] scribble as many answers as you can" (C2, 126-7).

Speaking German

Participant C's thoughts on speaking German showed that although he is a self-described hesitant speaker, he does enjoy getting the opportunity to speak the language. "Well I like that ... you actually have to speak the language" (C1, 44-5). He also stated, however, that "my spoken French and Spanish isn't nearly as good as my written" (C1, 199-200). Participant C informed me that he is afraid of making errors, and therefore wants to know what he is going to say first (C1, 681-5). He also said that he sometimes translates words in his head, but finds that it is not something that he does constantly (C1, 694-5).

Motives and Goals

Finally, I asked participant C about his motives and goals for learning German. He commented more than once that his main motivation for learning German is that it is a “fairly big” and “well-spoken language” (C2, 106-7). He said that he has no German background, and just enjoys learning new languages. Participant C spoke of “picking up” languages on the internet by reading foreign websites as well as listening to foreign music (C1, 765-93). I have called it “picking up” because I am not aware of the extent of his foreign language learning through the internet and music. Participant C told me that he has not attempted to “pick up” any German online or through listening to music, but it does give some evidence that he has some interest in foreign languages (C1, 797-8). He noted that his specific goal with German is fluency (C2, 255-60). He has taken only French and Spanish in a classroom environment, and as mentioned, is said to have become familiar with a few other languages through listening to music and reading websites.

Summary

To summarize, participant C enjoys the classroom environment for the most part, but sometimes finds it boring. The laboratory part of the course is something he says is necessary, but he dislikes the culture components, stating he would “rather just learn how to speak the language.” Group work is not his favourite, but he does not find it a burden. Participant C would simply rather be independent, because he likes to be able to go at his own pace, and not be pinned to a schedule. He did, however, show concern for how his spoken language would fare were he to learn a language without the lecture environment. Next, he talked about learning grammar concepts and how it is one of his strengths.

Reading comprehension activities are also his strength, thought participant C. Completing listening comprehension activities posed more difficulties, and he thus found them to be somewhat of a weakness. Learning vocabulary and genders was also a weakness according to participant C, but it was actually speaking German the he believed to be his major weakness.

This information provides some hints as to what participant C's learner styles might be. His dislike for learning cultural components is intriguing, namely because he believes that they are a waste of time and that they almost prevent him from learning to speak German. The fact that he sees learning a language and encountering cultural aspects as mutually exclusive processes shows that he does not perceive the field as a whole. This hints at an analytic learner style, because he does not see the component parts as being fused together in any way. The way he learns grammar also speaks of an analytic learner. Participant C talked about breaking down sentences into the parts of speech to make sense of grammar concepts. It thus appears that he tends to view grammar in terms of its component parts, and not so much as a whole. Participant C also made many comments about his preference for reading, and how it helps him. He spoke of how grammar is easiest to learn by reading it, saying, "well usually if I read it, it's easier" (C1, 61). He also often speaks of preferring to work independently, because he can go at his own pace. Participant C still seems to be able to collaborate with groups and not feel burdened, however. This hints that he is possibly a combination of being social sensitive and independent. The fact that he appears to be an analytic and independent learner hints that he is likely field independent. Thus, overall, participant C tends to be an independent but socially sensitive, analytic, mostly field independent learner. I say mostly field

independent, because he appears to have *some* skill in interpersonal and social relationships, making him more socially aware than would be the typical field independent learner. However, most of his other tendencies as a learner appear to point towards field independence, not field dependence. Returning to the title of this section, a quote by participant C, that, “the culture’s not bad, but I’d rather just learn how to speak the language”, it is shown that he tends to focus on the structure, or the actual form of the language, and does not seem to look at it in a holistic sense (C1, 278-9). This is shown in his statement, “well it’s a language course ... I’d rather just take ... the structure the grammar and ... like a verb chart ... and let me go” (C1, 05-8). With this quote, one can see that participant C associates language learning chiefly with structure and the four language skills, although his likely unattainable goal of fluency makes it obvious that he does not really have a good understanding of language learning processes. If he did, he might realize that learning cultural aspects is an integral part of learning a language. This shows that language learners must not only learn how to become more holistic, but also reflective. Learner reflection in the classroom is necessary for students to better understand what is required so that their understanding of language learning processes can be ameliorated.

In the following section, the beliefs and experiences of the participants will be brought up again, but from a different perspective. Instead of looking at their individuality, the diversity of these participants will be considered. This will be done by comparing and contrasting their personal beliefs and experiences.

4.5 Learner Diversity

The purpose of this chapter is to compare and contrast the various comments of the participants who took part in my study. In the previous chapter I provided information regarding each participant's learner individuality, and will now discuss their learner diversity. I will compare and contrast the participants in a similar way to how I presented their individual comments in the previous chapter. Therefore, I will begin by looking at their responses regarding the settings where learning takes place, then the various course material topics including each participant's strengths and weaknesses, and finally compare and contrast their motives and goals for German.

The term learner diversity has become more common in SLA research. Benson (2005) states

[d]iversity is perhaps most apparent in classrooms where the learners come from varied sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds. We have also come to recognize, however, that even learners with similar backgrounds vary in terms of their psychological predispositions and learning experiences that they bring to the classroom. (p. 5)

Language learners' identities in a classroom are dynamic as well. I adapt Norton's (2000) position regarding identity, in that it refers to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). Norton (2000) also states that students who invest in learning a foreign language also invest in their own identity (p. 11). This investment could be complex and in a state of instability, she also points out (Norton, 2000, p. 11). This illustrates another reason why exploratory studies on learner

diversity will continue to be an important part of SLA research, because the investment that individual students make in their own identity and in learning a FL is not something that is static.

4.4.1 *The Classroom Environment*

Discussions regarding the classroom environment brought about some similar comments among the participants. Participants A, B and C all mentioned that one of the main benefits of the classroom environment was hearing German spoken (A1, 42-4; B1, 463-66; C1, 205). They also all acknowledged that the class could get boring, but their reasoning here varied. Participant A thought that “small things” made the class somewhat boring (A1, 79-80). Participant B, however, thought that the class was sometimes boring because the pace was too slow. “[They] go over and over it and the people that do understand it get bored” (B1, 430-2). Lastly, participant C stated that it was the “busy work”, such as doing activities that he found boring (C1, 600). “Writing things ... writing simple sentences that don’t really mean anything just practice ... [that’s] sometimes boring” (C1, 32-5). A comment by participant B showed her belief that she finds repetition in the classroom very helpful. “Going through problems afterwards or ... questions afterwards ... that helps me understand it” (B1, 395-401). Participant A said that repetition in the classroom was good only when learning a more difficult concept (A2, 384-92). Participant A also appreciated what she called getting a “visual base” in the classroom (A1, 306-7). Having read a lot of beginner language books, she commented on how creative classroom textbooks are (A1, 312-5). That being said, she did not like *Vorsprung* because it lacked explanations and detail (A1, 762-7). Participant C thought the same thing, saying it was “too spread out” (C1, 293). Participant B, however, had

positive things to say about the textbook. She spoke again of repetition, saying the book provided a lot of it, and that she found it helpful (B1, 308-9). Participant B also thought that the book explained the tough grammar concepts well, and that the activities were quite useful (B1, 316-28). Lastly, participants A and B both commented that getting their mistakes corrected immediately, thus immediate feedback, was another benefit of the language learning classroom environment for them (A1, 321-3; B1, 939-43). Participant C did not mention feedback; however, he talked about how he also enjoyed the classroom because it forced him to try and speak (C1, 44-5). Looking at all of their responses, some similarities can be seen. For the most part, however, the similarities cease to exist once they started explaining their beliefs and what their own experiences were. This shows that although students may appear to have the same general belief, the ways in which they came to that conclusion are quite varied.

4.4.2 *The Laboratory Environment*

The participants' thoughts about the laboratory component were also quite diverse. Although both participant A and C said that they enjoyed the language laboratory, they seemed to have very different reasons for doing so. Participant A found the laboratory enjoyable because of the cultural component (A1, 513-8). She particularly liked visiting websites of German cities and imagining herself traveling to those places (A1, 513-8). Participant C, however, said he disliked learning cultural information (C1, 270-2). He said that he simply wanted to "learn how to speak the language", suggesting that one can do so without learning a lot of cultural information (C1, 278-9). Participant C enjoyed the laboratory mostly because "[they] force you to listen and learn how to listen ... which is one of my weak spots" (C1, 250-3). He even said it was a necessary

complement to the course, even though he was not fond of the cultural component.

Participant B had very different thoughts regarding the laboratory. She believed that it was mostly useless, and a waste of time (B1, 231). Each participant's various thoughts regarding the laboratory component appears to suggest again that they are diverse learners with diverse needs.

4.4.3 *Group Work Environment*

When asked about working in a group, two of the three participants had somewhat similar responses. Participants B and C both commented that they did not feel burdened when working with other members of the class (B1, 581-4; C1, 611-18). Participant C said that the only negative thing about a group work situation would be the time. He commented, "I'd rather do stuff at home" (C1, 176). The similarities ended there, though, because participant B went on to say that because group work is often marked separately, it is not a burden for her (B1, 620-5). She continued by saying that although she doesn't mind group work, "you can't really learn the concept [from other people in a group]" (B1, 844-5). She stated her belief that one must learn the concept on one's own before attempting to work in a group, because it is not possible to learn it from the other group members (B1, 888-90). Both participants B and C also mentioned their preference for independent work, even though they do not mind doing group work (B1, 427; C1, 176, 565). Participant A also had a lot to say regarding group work, but most of it was in stark contrast to the other two participants' comments. Her belief, that working with a tutor is the only positive group work situation, shows that she prefers independent work not only because of time and pace, but also because she probably does not feel comfortable working with peers for various social reasons (A1, 341-2). Participant A commented that

groups often expect that she will do most of the work, because she is smart. “I go into group work expecting that I’ll probably do most of the work” (A1, 364-5). Such thoughts show that participant A probably does not enjoy working with her peers, unless they are people she looks up to (i.e. teachers or tutors). Both she and participant B, however, do not believe they can learn concepts from other students when in a group work situation, showing that perhaps some sort of “team reflection” would be useful (Kohonen, 1992, p. 35). If they could actually reflect on what goes on in a group work situation, they might sense that taking part in other group members learning processes (and vice versa) might be a positive experience for them. If a learner is not socially sensitive, however, collaborating with other students will probably be more difficult.

4.4.4 Independent Work Environment

All of the participants mentioned at various points in their interviews that they enjoy working independently. Participant A’s preference for independent learning is made clear through her love of book learning, as mentioned elsewhere (A1, 148-58). All of the participants talked about the benefit of being able to set one’s own pace in an independent work environment (A1, 262-7). They each had different comments, however. Participant B stated that by setting her own pace, “I don’t feel like I’m waiting around” (B1, 460-1). Participant C said that he learns things very quickly, and therefore likes to work on his own. All of the participants also recognized possible drawbacks of working independently. Two of the three participants mentioned their concern for how their spoken German would fare in an independent learning situation. Participant A and participant C both spoke of their preference to learn and study by reading, thus feeling that their speaking and listening skills could not improve during independent study (A2,

466-8; C1, 195-8). Participant A and B also talked about not getting immediate feedback. Participant A said that in that situation, it is harder to know when you are wrong, and what the correct answer is (A2, 489-92). Overall, all three participants, and most notably participant A, were quite fond of independent study. They each have different reasons for working independently, however, and this shows their diversity as well.

4.4.5 *Learning Grammar Concepts*

This paragraph begins with another similarity amongst the participants, namely that they all enjoy learning grammar concepts. Nunan (1999) commented that “[f]or most people, the essence of language lies in grammar” (p. 96). Each participant mentioned that learning grammar concepts is their strength, thus very easy. When asked why, participant A talked about grammar being an “inner” or “automatic thing” (A2, 156, 107-8). She also talked about having a good grammar base, which she said is thanks to having read books on Latin. She commented that this helps her with German grammar concepts, as they seem relatively easy compared to the Latin (A1, 209-13). Participant B said that “with grammar ... when you understand the concept it’s not that hard to use it, like it’s just understanding the concept” (B1, 756-9). She also stated that she makes patterns in order to memorize concepts (B2, 119). Participant C, however, talked about how he learns grammar concepts by saying, “I’ll remember how the sentence is structured, whether it’s subject, object, verb or however it works ... and then I just seem to be able to remember” (C1, 18-24). The participants’ comments show that the ways in which they go about learning grammar concepts are quite varied. Each participant generally enjoyed the way that they learned grammar in the course, but participants A and C commented that the textbook lacked explanation and detail when presenting new grammar concepts.

Participant B, who tends to be a more holistic learner, praised *Vorsprung*, saying “grammar ... isn’t the easiest to learn, and with that textbook it’s really [good] at explaining it” (B1, 326-8). This shows that no textbook can employ a teaching method that will be liked by individual student. Thus, the issue of how to teach grammar most effectively is not as important as understanding what individual language learners actually think about language and about learning grammar concepts.

4.4.6 *Learning Vocabulary and Genders*

All three participants agreed that memorizing vocabulary is difficult, though participant C commented that when the words are in context, he usually memorizes them pretty quickly (C1, 65-8). Otherwise, he stated, “I would need to go over that ... several times” (C1, 432). Participant A spoke of reading vocabulary from the book to memorize by rote (A1, 575-8). Participant A also informed me that she does not learn by repetition, thus writing out words and keeping lists is not helpful for her (A1, 598-99). She prefers to learn everything in some context, including the genders, facilitating memorization (A1, 731-2). Participant B does quite the opposite. She always takes notes and writes everything out (sometimes two or three times) to memorize it (B1, 678-81). Participant B seems to believe that repetition is the key to her success, as she makes vocabulary lists to learn words and genders (B1, 683-5). Reading, she said, is not enough. “Once you’ve written out the words, it’s ok” (B1, 767-8). Participant C is similar to participant A in that he prefers to see the words in context, but admits to occasionally writing out vocabulary lists when there is a large amount to memorize (C1, 399-404). When it comes to learning genders, memorizing whether a noun is masculine, feminine, or neutral is quite difficult, thought all three participants. Participant A noted that there is usually no reason for a

noun to be a certain gender, thus creating a difficult situation (A1, 712-18). Participant B commented that she looks for patterns, saying, “most of the words that end in e are usually feminine” (B2, 131-2). She then writes them out in their pattern groups. (B1, 744-5). Participant C did not have a lot to say about how he learns genders, simply stating, “I just do. I guess from studying Spanish and French” (C1, 410-1). Overall, participants A and C have some similarities in the way in which they prefer to learn vocabulary and genders. They both wish to see new words in some sort of context, to make memorizing them faster and easier. Participant C also mentioned that he writes out lists, albeit rarely. He stated that he only does so when there are large amounts of vocabulary to memorize (C1, 399-404). Where Participant A says she does not learn by repetition, participant B appears to learn best by doing so (A2, 187-8; B1, 308-9). Participant B never mentioned learning words in context; rather, she seemed to prefer to write everything out, thus learning and memorizing by repetition. The ways in which participants A and B learn vocabulary and gender are quite contrasting, whereas participant C seems to be a hybrid of the two. Yet again, the diversity of these learners is apparent in this section.

4.4.7 Reading Comprehension Activities

When speaking of reading comprehension activities, participant B spoke readily of word for word translation, saying “it’s easier for me to read it” (B1, 162). Participant A also commented that translating it made it much easier, and thus she finds reading comprehension activities to be one of her strengths. “I’m generally not very good at ... just reading the language and not thinking of it in English” (A2, 183-5). Participant C, however, said he feels confident in his German reading skills, and stated that he tries not to translate texts into English (C2, 89-92). “I usually read it through and hope I

understand” (C2, 80-1). In completing such reading activities, participant B said that she pre-reads the questions and then reads and translates the text (B2, 103-5). That way, she said, she can answer the questions as she goes through it. Similarly, participant C said, “I’ll read the questions and then ... if I don’t know the answers, I’ll re-go through the text and look for key words” (C2, 83-5). Like participant B, participant A translates as she goes, but said it was more in her mind. “As I’m reading it ... I see it in German but I’m thinking about it in ... its English context” (A2, 198-201). At first glance, the participants appeared to have very similar thoughts regarding reading comprehension activities. The way in which they approach such tasks, however, is much more diverse. It is hard to know exactly what the participants mean when they speak of translating texts, but when questioned, participant A said “word for word translation” (A2, 170-2) and participant B said she translates reading and listening comprehension texts into English (B2, 48-54).

4.4.8 *Listening Comprehension Activities*

A discussion regarding listening comprehension activities followed. I asked the two participants who said they translate reading texts if they do the same for listening texts. Participant B said yes, she translates what she can, and pieces together the rest to try and make sense of it (B2, 47-51). She also said she keeps side notes to assist her when answering questions (B2, 65). Participant B also said that sometimes the listening texts go by very fast, but that such texts are usually played at least twice, so she said it was still manageable (B2, 61-3). Participant A, on the other hand, had other thoughts. Although she admitted to translating reading texts word for word, she said with listening texts it is almost impossible (A2, 257-60). In a listening comprehension text, words and sentences blur together, so she thought it was “kinda like ... a word for word dissection, what did

she say here, what did she say here” (A2, 286-7). Participant A still spoke of breaking the text down into sections, but claimed to avoid translating them simply because she might miss important information (A2, 306-8). Participant C’s thoughts regarding listening texts are not too different from participant A. He did not mention translation at all, simply saying, “I just try to remember enough of the questions at a time that when it comes up in the text I can answer them, write them down quickly” (C2, 115-7).

4.4.9 *Speaking German*

When it comes to speaking German, all three participants have similar thoughts. Each participant described that among their weaknesses in the course, speaking German was one of them. Participants A, B and C all mentioned that they had to think about what they were going to say before speaking (A1, 643-4; B1, 84-8; C1, 681-5). Participants B and C talked about often translating things in their head before uttering a word (B1, 84-8; C1, 692-5). Participant B described herself as a nervous speaker, and participant C called himself very hesitant (B1, 189-90; C1, 688). Participant A talked about how as a society, we equate language errors with low intelligence, and said it is primarily this that makes her nervous to speak (A1, 675-80). All three participants’ insecurities and anxieties with speaking German were apparent, although they still emphasized its importance. The fact that the classroom environment provides a lot of opportunity for speaking practice is a major benefit, thought participant C. Even though he talked about his insecurities with speaking German, he stated, “I like that ... you actually have to speak the language” (C1, 44-5). Participant B, although an anxious speaker, talked about why she thought such classroom practice was useful. “One day I would like to go to Germany and be able to ... meet relatives and converse with them” (B3, 232-4). She also communicated her belief

that in order to gain confidence and really speak the language well, you have to be in an atmosphere where the language is spoken (B2, 261-3). Participant A really emphasized her lack of confidence with speaking German by stating that “speaking is my worst” (A1, 644). Still, she stated that speaking is, in her opinion, the most important language skill (A1, 420-1). Although participant A kept reiterating her insecurities with speaking German, she was still hopeful that with further instruction and time, she could be able to conduct a conversation (A2, 772). Although the participants all thought that speaking German is difficult, they each said that learning to do so is important when learning the language. The participants’ thoughts regarding why it is important to speak German are diverse, showing once again that although on the surface they appear to have similar beliefs, the diversity of those beliefs became apparent with more detail.

4.4.10 *Motives and Goals*

Each participant was asked to talk about personal motives for learning German. Both participants A and C hinted that language learning is a hobby of theirs (A1, 12-9; C1, 787-9). Participant A said that she loves reading books about obscure languages, while participant C mentioned that he likes to try and read foreign language websites as well as download foreign language music (A1, 151-7; C1, 784-8). This drew them to take German 101. Participant C also mentioned that he liked the idea of taking German because it is “fairly big” and “well-spoken” (C1, 106-7). Previous experience with other “difficult languages” such as Latin, gave participant A an extra edge, she thought. “You go into it thinking that it’s gonna be easy because nothing could possibly get that hard” (A1, 248-50). Participant B’s main motivation was her German heritage (B2, 318). As a child, her family was involved in German community events and she went to Saturday

language school (B1, 21-3, 25-6, 64-5; B3, 93-94, 106-107). She told me that she lost most of her German, and thus wants to learn it again. Participant B spoke of being proud of her heritage, and wanting to visit relatives in Germany. She also felt that her previous exposure to German as well as years of school French would give her some advantage (B1, 21-2; B3, 105-6). Other advantages named by participant B were things like career benefits and simply that “[speaking other languages is] a really cool concept” (B1, 956-7). The comments given by the participants were all varied. These individual students had very different reasons for taking German 101. They all seemed to have one thing in common, however, and that is their interest in learning new languages. The words of participant A fit well here: “I don’t think that there’s really a possibility of me not enjoying it” (A1, 17-8). The participants’ goals for German were also quite varied. Participant C communicated in a very simple and direct way that his goal is fluency (C2, 260). Even though he does not want to learn cultural information in class, his goal is to speak German fluently. The word *fluency* as it is used here shows that it means different things to different people because it is difficult to define in a comprehensive way. Participant C used the word fluency as if it were an easily attainable goal that one should expect to reach when learning a language. This shows that he does not fully understand how he learns languages. When learning a language, there is no final goal; instead, it is an ongoing process. Becoming fluent, however, is a common goal for language learners. The dynamic process of language learning as we know it makes it difficult to believe that something as static and final as what fluency implies can ever be “reached.” If we understand our own language learning process as something that is continually changing and growing, how can there ever be one final destination? Participant C’s thoughts about

his goals are a stark contrast to what participant A had to say about her goals for German. She talked of wanting simply “to be able to conduct a conversation” (A2, 772). To be fluent, she said, seemed unlikely and pretty much unattainable (A2, 777-8). She also informed me of her belief that in order to speak German fluently, she felt it would be necessary to either go to Germany, or spend a lot of time with people who speak German (A2, 812-6). Participant B also shared that belief. Her goal, however, is not as simple as conducting a conversation; rather, she wishes to be able to speak it (B2, 318-9). She did not mention a desire to be fluent, but my interpretation is that she wants to be able to communicate well with relatives in Germany, and not just on a basic level. Looking at each of the participants’ goals, it is apparent that they each have their own specific, personal and diverse goal.

5. Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings of my exploratory study. First, I will talk about what I believe to be the current strengths and weaknesses of the course in question, German 101 for each participant, as well as what I believe to be the ideal language learning environments, language teachers and classmates, based on the participants' comments. I will continue with a discussion of the implications of my results for language learning. Next, a brief summary of the results and the possible limitations of this study will be provided. I will conclude with a discussion about coping with learner diversity in language programs, looking toward future research in the field.

5.1 Individual Learners and Social Learning Environments

It has been shown that each participant has varied thoughts and beliefs regarding language learning. Thus, what is ideal and problematic for them in the German 101 course and in other learning environments cannot be identical. The likely strengths and weaknesses of German 101 will be discussed for each participant, as well as their ideal language learning environments, language teachers and classmates. It must be stated that the following suggestions are based only on self-reported data and thus should not be understood as well-founded diagnostic measures.

5.1.1 *Participant A*

German 101 is beneficial for participant A in a number of ways. She enjoys learning new grammar concepts and applying them by doing activities and exercises. *Vorsprung* offers a range of activities and exercises that would allow her to practice concepts. The writers of *Vorsprung* talk about how language materials should be flexible

enough to accommodate various learner styles (Lovik et al., 2002, p. 8). They also say that *Vorsprung* emphasizes the development of communicative and cultural competence, which likely challenges participant A to practice her speaking and listening and to learn about the culture in the class (Lovik et al., p. 6). Although it claims to accommodate various learner styles, another obstacle for participant A could be *Vorsprung* itself (Lovik et al., 2002, p. 8). Participant A seems to enjoy the visuals offered in *Vorsprung*, but feels that it lacked in detail. Although she likes the comic strips and pictures, she was concerned that the explanations were too short. There are also many times when the textbook encourages students to work in groups. Her negative view of group work could possibly alienate her from other classmates and therefore hinder her progress. Participant A appears to dislike group work so much that she could be difficult to work with.

Working in a collaborative environment may seem like a weakness to her, but language is inherently social. It must be said that in order to be a successful language learner attempts should be made to speak it often with classmates and teachers, and anyone else who can speak the language. Van Lier (1998) stated, “[s]ince the person is a social being, relations and experiences with fellow-persons form the core and the engine of the construction of consciousness” (p. 133). In order for participant A to learn the benefits of collaborative learning environments, she could reflect more on how she interacts with her peers in a group work situation. There are probably other students in her class that dislike group work, hence implementing a tool for student reflection might help the teacher understand those students better. The students themselves could also learn more about their language learning processes. Taking full advantage of the classroom environment, however, seems

to heavily depend on participant A being open to helping, talking to and learning from her peers. I believe this is her main obstacle in a classroom setting.

An ideal language learning environment for participant A is apt to be one where she can work at her own pace and be independent, get feedback, hear German spoken and practice her speaking, something she said she wants to improve. The classroom environment is probably a good challenge for her learner style, as it forces her to be in situations that she dislikes, such as group work. It also requires her to speak more German than if she were to learn it on her own. This would probably help her develop her language learning skills in ways that she could not do independently. It would thus be challenging, but still manageable. If she took a distance education course, it would probably be easier for her to maintain high results. She would not have to do group work, could go more at her own pace than in a classroom, as well as speak German via the oral tasks. Also, she would get regular feedback through submitted tasks. She would probably not find it as much of a challenge as the classroom situation, however. Participant A would probably learn more material by taking German in a classroom environment.

An ideal teacher for participant A is someone who challenges her to speak more than she would on her own, and focuses on teaching grammar concepts and introducing vocabulary in context in a creative way. She mentioned that she does not learn by repetition. Thus, reading through vocabulary lists is unlikely to help participant A. Providing her with challenging reading texts containing a small *Wortschatz* on the side would probably help her learn new vocabulary better. Participant A might also get along best with a teacher who has an interest in language structure and grammar but is also passionate about teaching students about Germany and German culture. One way that a

teacher could challenge participant A would be getting her to speak more often and translate less.

Ideal classmates for participant A would be students who also show a great interest in learning German, and most importantly, are quick to understand concepts. These students would not need to be similar learners. If they did, she would likely not be challenged enough. Students with varied beliefs and experiences who are keen on learning languages and learn things at a quick pace would likely be the most challenging classmates for participant A. Learners who appear detached or disinterested might irritate her. She noted many times that she dislikes students who do not try, showing also that some reflection on learner diversity would be helpful. At first, students who need more repetition or learn at a slower pace would seem frustrating to her as well. Being in a group of interested and open-minded learners could be a good challenge for participant A. She would gain some new insight into language learning processes as well as understand individual language learners better by reflecting on activities that they completed together.

5.1.2 *Participant B*

At first glance, participant B appears to be the ideal student for this course. She does not mind group work, thus, she is likely able to collaborate well with peers. She also enjoys completing activities in class, another aspect of German 101 that is helpful for participant B. This is probably one reason why she thinks the textbook *Vorsprung* is very useful. She had many positive comments regarding the book. In theory, *Vorsprung* should play to some of her strengths as a language learner, since the authors state that it contains different activities for varying learner styles and vocabulary lists at the end of

each chapter (Lovik et al., 2002, p. 8). Overall, *Vorsprung* probably presents its material in ways that participant B is able to cope well with. She does feel, however, that laboratory component is a weakness of the course. Participant B commented that it does not challenge her enough. This suggests that more reflection is necessary in order for her to take a more active role in her language learning. Her comments about a laboratory activity that had students “shopping” online at a furniture store website show that she does not understand the reasons that such activities are implemented. Thus, some sort of tool for reflection would be necessary for participant B in order to help her understand how she learns. One of the most challenging things in a classroom environment for participant B is speaking German. Both speaking German and being stimulated in the laboratory environment are likely the main obstacles for participant B in German 101.

Although she enjoys working independently, participant B seems to enjoy the German 101 classroom environment, and likely benefits most from it. She also speaks of memorizing forms and words by seeing them on the board, in the textbook and in her many lists. She mentioned numerous times that repetition is the key to memorizing concepts, vocabulary and genders. Thus, it seems that the classroom setting is likely more beneficial for her. In a classroom, participant B is probably stimulated visually in different ways. Also, she gets hands on practice in the classroom, which she commented was very helpful. Participant B also said she works well in groups. Because of this, the classroom situation offers another advantage. She mentioned that she also works quite well on her own, and enjoys it, but compared to participants A and C, she was the least inclined to talk about independent learning. In my opinion, the classroom environment is

thus most suited to a learner like participant B, because it plays to all of her strengths and challenges her weaknesses, such as speaking German.

An ideal teacher for participant B is likely someone who teaches a classroom lesson that focuses on one topic per class. In doing this, a lot of varied but repetitive hands-on practice will follow the lesson, such as working in groups on assigned activities and writing answers on the board. This kind of application and practice would play to participant B's strengths, because she said she learns best by repetition. Participant B would also benefit from a teacher who teaches a laboratory component comprised of challenging and relevant activities, followed by a reflective activity. If participant B is stimulated consistently for one full hour and can see the relevance of the activities to what is happening in the lecture, I feel that she would be more challenged during laboratory time. Perhaps the teacher could start each laboratory hour for a quick and relevant web task followed by some sort of discussion. Students could work together or separately answering the questions in the activity. This could be followed by some discussion or reflection; focusing on what was learned in that particular task and helping the students understand how they actually learn. An ideal teacher would also encourage participant B to speak more German, in class and in the language laboratory. Most teachers would probably be able to keep participant B stimulated because of her said ability to work well with peers and her motivation to learn German.

Ideal fellow students are those who would show an interest in learning German while in class and in the laboratory. This would probably keep participant B motivated as well. Students who work well in groups are also beneficial for participant B, as they could collaborate well and complete in-class activities together. Students who are averse

to working in groups might be somewhat problematic for participant B in a one on one situation. If participants A and B were to work together, it could be difficult at first. Participant B said that she learns best by repetition, something that participant A disagrees with. It would likely be a challenge for the two of them to collaborate, however it could also turn out to be helpful for both of them. If they were part of a larger group with more varied approaches to completing the assigned tasks, a general collaboration could also be useful and beneficial for both students.

5.1.3 Participant C

German 101 is also beneficial for participant C, but in other ways. Some strengths include having grammar concepts explained in class, completing activities in class, hearing German spoken, speaking German and partaking in the laboratory component. Some of these play to his strengths as a language learner. His negative view regarding learning cultural information will hinder him in his quest to learn German. Participant C does not see the relevance of learning the cultural information, and this would be an obstacle for him. It would be necessary for participant C to reflect on this issue, because it would probably help him to understand that encountering new cultural aspects and learning a language are not mutually exclusive, giving him some insight into how he actually learns languages. Speaking German in class is a challenge for him, but he finds it a necessary part of the course. Participant C said that *Vorsprung* lacks detail. Therefore, the textbook could also be an obstacle for participant C.

Participant C appears to lose interest quickly if not stimulated constantly throughout a class. Thus, distance education class is probably not the right course of action for him. Although it plays to his strengths as a said independent learner, he might

lose motivation and get lazy. Participant C said that he is always battling his own laziness. This is why the classroom environment is probably the best place for him. He can hear and speak German, something he noted as being beneficial and important to him. In a classroom, he is also stimulated more. This would probably not happen were he to learn German at home on his own. Constantly stimulating participant C would be a challenge for any teacher though, because he often talked about getting bored. This shows that participant C needs to take a more active role in his language learning process, in order to make the most of the opportunity.

Encouraging and stimulating participant C consistently for a whole class hour would be ideal. Thus, an ideal teacher would need to come up with creative ways to keep him interested in the various tasks and lessons at hand without leaving other students behind. Participant C mentioned that he gets bored by repetitious activities. An ideal teacher would create varied activities and tasks for the students to do that would not appear to be overly repetitious. Perhaps this would keep participant C from detaching himself from the lesson, as he admitted to occasionally doing. He also talked about his dislike for learning cultural aspects. An ideal teacher would introduce cultural aspects in small amounts, but would always show the relevance of these aspects to the current lesson and to the course. Thus, participant C would be challenged and might learn to see the importance and practical side of learning the cultural component. This paired with some daily or weekly reflection on the lessons taught would hopefully eventually alter his views.

Ideal peers would be those who continuously encourage participant C. His tendency to get bored quickly and be somewhat lazy might be problematic when he

works on his own. This could be especially difficult if surrounded by other bored learners in a classroom. In order to remain stimulated, surrounding himself with a varied group of learners might help. Participant A would probably work well with participant C. They both learn concepts quickly, and are both interested in hearing the language spoken. Although participant A said she does not enjoy group work, they might work well together, because participant C would probably be able to work at her pace. Both would want to focus on grammar concepts and structure. Participant C might benefit from working with a group of learners who are intent on speaking German with one another. In this group situation he would be encouraged to take part, thus practice his German more often.

The implications of all of my findings will be addressed in the following section.

5.2 Implications for Language Learning

The implications that this interpretive and exploratory study on learner beliefs may have for SLA and language learning are significant. In order to properly address the implications of my findings, they will be presented in a similar way to the analysis section, looking at the classroom, laboratory, collaborative and independent work environments, as well as focusing on learning grammar and vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension activities, speaking German, and then their motives and goals with German. I will then address the implications of my results regarding individual learners and social learning environments.

The participants' varied beliefs and experiences regarding the language learning classroom environment have various implications for language learning. First, that it is impractical to focus on teaching before learning. Van Lier (1998) states, “[n]or is it

possible to understand failure to learn solely by examining teaching practices” (p. 130). Their learner individuality shows that a wealth of rich data can and should be collected, and that it can help us better understand learners. Such material could never be accessed without undertaking an exploratory study of this nature. Accessing this data first can help teachers understand their own specific classroom environments. This exploratory study also has implications for classroom diversity. Although all three participants generally enjoyed the classroom, their thoughts are extremely varied. This implies that although learners can appear to be somewhat similar on the surface, in reality they are quite diverse. A teacher who knows that classrooms are diverse does not always address the students as such, however. This is also true when speaking of language textbooks, such as *Vorsprung*. If it is impossible to understand learning by examining how teachers teach, then it cannot be possible to understand learning by examining what textbooks preach. The same textbook is often used for the same course every year. The course textbook remains static, but the classroom environment does not. It is naturally unfeasible to purchase brand new textbooks each and every year, but other alternatives could be found. It is in the teacher’s best interest to learn more about their students and adapt to a new and diverse classroom. The textbook is best used as an aid instead something that is to be relied on. In the case of *Vorsprung*, chapter one starts of “with a focus on comprehension as exemplified by the use of Total Physical Response” (Lovik et al., 2002, p. 7). Like many teaching methods, focusing on comprehension first may work well for some learners, but the students are diverse. The implication here is that learning more about individual students must be emphasized first. Once that process has been started, teachers can then decide how best to address the class. In a language learning classroom, there

should also be more time allotted for student reflection. Students might start by introducing themselves and their own language learning histories to the teacher. As the semester continues, they can continue by stating what is helpful, what is not, and how they have grown to understand how learners actually learn.

The results regarding the laboratory environment have implications for language learning as well. The participants' comments show that even when a group of 24 students sit in front of 24 computers in a laboratory setting, they do not suddenly become a unified group. This is something that is surprisingly easy to forget. 24 students independently carrying out the same task are not necessarily understanding it, addressing it in the same manner, getting the same answers or even enjoying it. This shows that a teachers' presence in the laboratory environment should be quite active. Felix (2001) comments that "new technologies offer excellent potential for adding value to classroom teaching in a large variety of ways" (p. 57). Thus, with careful preparation, the laboratory can be an environment that encourages individual learners in many ways. Laboratory assignments are sometimes independent, but not always. Participant B did not enjoy the laboratory component because she said she finds it boring. When the teacher assigns independent activities, he or she should be available constantly for guided help and discussion, so students can remain focused, and move onto another task should they finish quickly. The teacher should also carefully read the materials themselves so that they can help and encourage students. In the case of my three participants, a combination of group and independent work leading up to some listening activities with a group discussion at the end of the laboratory hour would be most useful. Felix's (2001) comment suggests that there are many ways in which such technology could benefit the students, and these ways

should be explored further by the teacher. These results also imply that even when learners appear similar, they are still a diverse group and must be addressed as such.

One major implication that this research has for collaborative learning in a language classroom is that students must take a more active role in their learning when in a group work situation. What seems clear is that students cannot rely on other group members to do the work, or the environment will not be conducive to a free exchange of thoughts and ideas. This situation would not promote spoken practice either. Students must also learn how to learn from others. Participant B said she believes that she cannot learn from other students in a group. This shows that she does not have a good understanding of the many ways in which learners learn. Participant A had even more negative things to say about group work, mentioning that the only positive collaborative environment would be working with a tutor. It is clear that both participants A and B do not fully grasp why group work is beneficial in a language learning environment. The implications that these findings have for language learning is once again that students must begin to take a more active role in their learning and actually reflect on what they are doing and how it helps them learn. This could be achieved through a discussion at the end of each lesson, or a weekly journal entry. Even bi-weekly or monthly open-ended questionnaires about class sessions would help them to reflect more on their own learning.

A lot of independent work happens outside of the classroom, and my results show that the participants' beliefs have implications for language learning. All three mentioned how they enjoy setting their own pace and therefore enjoy working independently. They all commented that the class is sometimes too slow for them. This does not have to mean,

however, that they should be encouraged to do a lot of independent work or even do all of the work at home. It would probably be even more beneficial for fast-paced learners to take an active role in helping others adapt to the pace of the class by working with students who are still grasping a new concept. Helping others achieve success would also be a beneficial collaborative environment, thus showing them that working independently is not the only situation in which they have some control over pace. In doing so, fast-paced students could learn and understand how other individual students learn. This would allow them to see how they can learn from other students, thus enabling them to become more reflective learners as well. This might be an interesting way for students to reflect their beliefs and experiences in a questionnaire or a classroom journal. This simply implies that students should reflect more on the various tasks one encounters in a language classroom.

Participant A, B and C's thoughts regarding grammar concepts were also significant. Although they were all outspoken about the relative ease in which they learned and applied grammar concepts, participants A and C seemed most reflective about grammar. Participant C focused on structures, saying, "I'd rather just take ... the structure the grammar and ... like a verb chart ... and let me go" (C1, 05-8). Participant B also enjoyed learning grammar concepts, but commented that, "learning a language isn't really a memorizing thing" (B2, 303-5). This is another example that shows their varied comments. In this case, neither participant B and C are wrong, they simply share different views. It also implies that the teaching of grammar concepts and the assigning of relevant activities should reflect that learning grammar is one part of a larger, language learning process. Putting a lot of emphasis on learning grammar could exaggerate its

importance. It could also tell students that if they find grammar concepts extremely difficult, they might not be successful language learners. When participants A, B and C talked about weaker students in the course, they often implied that the students are weak because they are slow to understand grammar concepts. Students should learn that learning grammar is not the same as learning a language. This is difficult to understand, however, as most language course marks reflect the understanding and application of grammar concepts in quizzes, tests, mid-terms and final exams. My research shows that at least two of my participants seem to believe this in some way. Participant A stated, “I mean the grammar’s there and we’ve got a lot of grammar done which is really important ...”, implying that learning grammar concepts comes first and other material comes second (A1, 126-8). Participant C also stated, “the culture’s not bad, but I’d rather just learn how to speak the language” implying that speaking a language can be accomplished by studying structure and form only (C1, 278-9). It is thus no surprise that the same two participants felt that *Vorsprung* lacked detailed explanations regarding grammar, and wished it had been a more noticeable part of the textbook. Lovik et al. (2002) state that *Vorsprung* should emphasize “the development of communicative as well as cultural competence without sacrificing attention to formal and structural patterns in the language” (p. 6). The same group also says that *Vorsprung* concentrates on the notion that “language instruction should focus initially on comprehension”, which will then lead to the identification and production of new structures and vocabulary (Lovik et al., 2002, p. 7). Here is another instance where a learner ascribes to certain notions, and the textbook ascribes to others. Because of this, *Vorsprung* and other language textbooks will not benefit everyone. In the case of my participants, only participant B said she finds the

textbook to be extremely useful and well-written. The implication here is that individual learning must be investigated more thoroughly before pre-conceived notions regarding teaching methods and approaches are employed. It would also be helpful for students to discuss the textbooks aims and approaches with the teacher and with fellow students. The teacher would thus be better equipped to introduce outside exercises and activities to benefit those who feel the textbook does not meet their needs. The learner would perhaps better understand why the textbook is utilizing certain activities, exercises or explanations to help him or her learn German.

The participants' thoughts regarding vocabulary learning also rendered implications for language learning. Participant B employs strategies of repetition by writing out many lists in order to facilitate memorization. Participant A talked about how she does not learn by repetition. Participant C said that he can learn words fairly easily and does not write out lists of words very often. Each participant had a very different response, again showing their diversity. The implication here is that learners must, again, become more reflective. They need to better understand how they learn in order to improve. Participant A believes she cannot learn by repetition. She was, however, quite reflective on this issue, pointing out that she would rather read new words in a familiar context. She felt this would help her remember new words better. Reflecting on her apparent difficulties with learning by repetition, she has come up with a suitable solution for learning new vocabulary. By doing this, students not only improve their understanding of the material at hand, but also their understanding of how they learn a language. An implication that these findings have for SLA is that this clearly shows how diverse students really are, even if they appear to have similar learner styles.

One implication that the collected results regarding reading and listening comprehension activities have for SLA is that students must take a more active role in their language learning by learning how to learn by reading, not translating. Another implication that these results show is that although reading is important, students should also give equal attention to the other three language skills, speaking, listening and writing. Participant A commented, “I find that if you study the reading, listening and writing kind of falls into place” (A2, 466-8). Participant B also equated writing with memorization (B1, 713-5), showing that my participants put a lot of emphasis on certain language skills and very little on others. This shows once again that the more effort students put into their own learning, whether actively trying new things or simply reflecting on how they do things, a lot can be learned about individual learners. This, in turn, will help teachers address a diverse group of students in the best way possible. Findings on reading comprehension and listening comprehension activities also show, again, how diverse learners actually are even when they all appear to be somewhat analytic, focusing on reading and writing skills. Results of this nature demonstrate that the previously discussed categories of individual learner differences are much too broad and are in no way able to actually capture and explain learner diversity.

All three participants are often afraid to speak German. Participant A’s thoughts regarding speaking German show that she has done some reflection. She admits to being a hesitant speaker, but also seems to realize the importance of speaking. Participant B also said that language learning is not all about memorization, showing that she has reflected that in order to speak German well, she cannot simply memorize grammar rules and lists of vocabulary. Participant C talked often about the benefits of being forced to

speak German in class, also commenting that he is a hesitant speaker. He appeared to be the least reflective on this issue, however, mentioning his desire to be fluent and his disinterest in learning about the culture. These results show that if a student takes the time to think and reflect on their experiences with speaking German, they will have a better understanding of how they learn or how they should learn. Given the opportunity to reflect, they will likely take a more active role in their language learning.

The participants' comments regarding their motives and goals for taking the course are also quite significant. They each had different goals for the course. Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) comment that "it is not necessarily the case that all of the people in language classes have the goal of learning the language and the reason for this is because they have different motives for being in the class, because in turn they have different histories" (p. 148). Participant C's comment that his goal is fluency implies that in order to gain a better understanding of how he learns a language, more reflection is required, especially considering his comments regarding learning cultural information (C1, 278-9). Participants A and B demonstrated their understanding of language learning by indicating that they wanted to be able to communicate on some level, never mentioning fluency. Another implication for language learning is demonstrated by the participants' various comments regarding their motivation. Their comments show how diverse they are even though they appear to have similarities on the surface. This implies that individual learner variables are far too general to actually capture learner diversity. Measuring the effect of individual learner differences and coming up with some sort of generalizable outcome is thus not possible when looking at variables like motivation. Larsen-Freeman (1997) says that even if it were possible to measure these variables accurately, "we would still be

unable to predict the outcome of their combination” (p. 157). It is also important to note that motivation is not something that remains stable; rather it is dynamic, and changes over time. Still, Kohonen (1992) commented that “there is consistent evidence to suggest that learning attitude and motivation are important predictors of achievement” (p. 22). This implies that in order to understand motivation better, it might be useful conduct research by accessing the learner’s perspective. Otherwise how can research on individual learner differences be done when the individual language learner rarely has a voice?

The general implications of placing learners into limiting categories must be addressed as well. Pigeon-holing students into certain learner variable categories is limiting in that it does not give us a sense of how diverse learners are. Identifying the participants as analytic, holistic, visual or field-independent learners does not actually help us understand them as individual learners. These classifications are unspecified, and do not describe the diversity of my participants. More importantly, they rely on predetermined pigeon-holes. Predetermined classifications cannot possibly be used within an exploratory framework of research, especially if the aim is to investigate diversity in language learning. I attempted to suggest a suitable classroom, teacher and fellow group of learners, and although the participants’ learner diversity has already been shown, the results of my suggestions were not diverse, rather quite similar. This also illustrates how placing the participants into pre-conceived categories of individual difference fails to provide significant information about the learners as individuals, because what is to be explored cannot be predetermined. It has allowed me, however, to show that placing students in such categories does not tell us nearly enough about the

learner. It moves away from understanding the learners and once again focuses on coming up with general solutions that do not help us to further our understanding of them. My study has provided a lot of information not only about individual learners, but also about how limiting the previous attempts to study them have been.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Results

In my analysis, I have attempted to demonstrate, first, each participants' individuality, and second, their learner diversity as a group while being compared and contrasted. The former has been done primarily to understand each participant as an individual learner who has certain beliefs, thoughts and experiences. Once this was established, the participants' comments were compared and contrasted in various coded categories. It was important to do so in order to show that when looking at a group, their differences can provide us with a lot more information than their similarities. In discussing these results, I also commented on the likely strengths of the participants in social learning environments, talking about German 101 as well as their ideal learning environments, teachers and fellow students. Their learner individuality is evident in their many comments which led to these findings. Upon comparing and contrasting their comments as a group, and then showing that placing students into learner variable categories is quite limiting, their learner diversity is even more apparent. This also shows that predetermined categories have no place in an exploratory study. This variation amongst classmates in what they think and believe has great implications for the field, which were also discussed in this chapter. Three major implications for SLA are one, that learner reflection is essential to the language learning process, as it allows for students to take a more active role in their language learning. Reflection might also help them to gain a better understanding of how they actually learn. A second implication is that continued research on language learning, not language teaching, will help us better understand language learning processes. More exploratory research must be done and data from the

emic (thus the learner's) perspective should be collected. Only an interpretive and exploratory study of this nature will yield such rich data from individual learners. A third implication that this study has for SLA is that pigeon-holing students into categories of individual learner differences does not actually capture the participants' diversity. This is especially true in an exploratory framework of research, where predetermined categories limit our understanding of the individual learner(s). Understanding learner individuality will only be accomplished by studying individual learners.

It is also interesting to note that the students, in their many comments, show that they have the ability to view themselves as individuals within a larger diverse group. They talked much more about their own individualities than similarities with classmates. Participant B talked about her own ease with learning grammar concepts, and other students difficulties, saying, "... whereas, ... other people in my class will be like, oh my gosh, I don't get it, I don't understand what's going on" (B1, 69-71). Participant A noted, "I'm generally the highest person in the group and I don't really like to ... step down" and "I have to go backwards and remain with these people" (A1, 347, 349-50). She also noted that a lot of people probably expect more of her in a group work situation, because of her intelligence. Participant C said about other language learners, "sometimes people, they just don't seem to concentrate on [learning a language]" (C2, 201-3). These comments show that the students seem to understand that they are one individual part of a larger diverse learning environment. They may not be as sympathetic to other classmates needs as one might think; but by reflecting on this and other issues in the classroom, they will hopefully learn to appreciate the diversity of such an group. SLA researchers have only recently acknowledged diversity in language learning as something that requires

more research and study. If students are able to perceive themselves as individual learners in a diverse environment then so must we. Recognizing students as individual learners and classrooms as diverse learning environments implies again that more research focusing on understanding the individual learner is necessary.

6.2 Possible Limitations

To say that any one study could come up with all the answers to the many lingering questions that exist in SLA research is futile. Whether the study is explorative-interpretive or analytical-nomological in nature (Grotjahn, 1993), such a feat could not be accomplished. Thus, it is important to recognize that all projects present certain limitations which must be addressed. For example, skeptics of a study on learner beliefs may find, firstly, that first-person accounts tend to be ‘subjective’, secondly, that learners would probably lack awareness of the processes involved in their learning, and lastly, that their memories are not reliable enough (Benson and Nunan, p. 3). These are issues that are already known to exist in what Benson and Nunan refer to as “(auto)biographical” research. Similarly, the one-on-one, semistructured interviews that I have conducted are certainly limited by some of these issues, but these “potential drawbacks ... are amply compensated by the ways in which researchers can use the stories that comprise their data to cast light on dimensions of difference and diversity that would otherwise remain concealed” (Benson and Nunan, p. 3). More support for first-person accounts comes from Pavlenko and Lantolf (2001) when they state, “...in recent years narrative approaches and first-person tellings have found their way back into a variety of disciplines, including anthropology and psychology” (2001, p. 157). They go on to argue that “in the human sciences first-person accounts ... provide a much richer source of data than do third-

person distal observations” (Pavlenko and Lantolf, p. 157). Any would-be drawbacks do not seem to carry as much significance as would the potential data from such a study.

Another possible limitation of this study is the use of self-reports. Using the participants’ interview data, I pigeon-holed them into certain learner variable categories and hence suggested ideal social learning environments for them. This was done, however, to show that placing students into learner variable categories yields little information about their individuality. Without true observation as to what their so-called learner styles may or may not be, my suggestions for social learning environments are based only on what was provided via the interview transcripts.

6.3 Coping with Diversity

This study has shown that each language classroom is a learning environment that contains a diverse group of language learners. It also tells us that individual learners, when grouped together, remain diverse. Understanding each student as an individual learner is beneficial for the teacher because he or she will know how to address the class. In order to understand each individual learner, a tool for student reflection should be introduced. Teachers and students alike will understand one another better. Teachers will know more about their students and know their language learning beliefs and experiences. Students will have become more reflective learners, and will hopefully take a more active role in their language learning processes. Each new class will be diverse in a different way, but teachers can still be prepared. This is why a teacher’s curriculum should not be focused on the textbook; it should allow for changes and variations. Teachers should get to know their students right away, however, perhaps by handing out small questionnaires or having them write a small essay about themselves. Teachers

should continue to provide a variety of activities, hand-outs, games that challenge that particular group of students. Teachers must remain open to making changes, and recognize when it is necessary to do so, because no classroom situation remains static. In order to make positive changes in how we cope with learner diversity as well as help those in the field better understand how individual learner beliefs and experiences can play a role in SLA research, more student reflection is necessary. Any kind of reflection from the learner's perspective will improve our understanding of language learning. Exploratory and interpretive studies must also be undertaken in order for us to gain a better understanding of individual language learners. With these new data sets, new results about language learning processes will be found.

Appendix A



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101



1. Name: _____
2. Age: 20
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	For how long?
i) <u>French</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>14 years</u>
ii) <u>German</u>	<u>poor</u>	<u>2 months</u>
iii)		
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	How did you learn it?
<u>Spanish</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>3 years</u>
<u>Latin</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>2 years</u>

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify):

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
 - Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
 - Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
 - I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
 - I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
 - I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
 - I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
 - Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
 - The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
 - The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
 - The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
 - The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
 - I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
 - I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
 - I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
 - I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
 - Other:
-

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good

above average

average

below average

very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category:

I generally go out of my way to study different languages and I always learn them extremely quickly and easily, although its probably due to the fact that I actually WANT to learn them and other people aren't that interested.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? *I don't know why, I just am.*



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101



1. Name: _____
2. Age: 20
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	For how long?
i) French	good	10 yrs.
ii) German	fair	semester.
iii)		
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	How did you learn it?

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important important not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify):

It's part of my heritage

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good

above average

average

below average

very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category: Because I find that since

I have taken language before this class (French) it is
easier for me to relate the concepts being learned now to
the concepts I've already learned in French.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? I love being able to communicate in other
languages.



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101

1. Name: _____
2. Age: 19 _____
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	For how long?
i) Spanish	good	2 HS class
ii) French	Fair	1 HS class
iii) German	poor	1
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	How did you learn it?
Spanish	good	Music, internet
Basque	poor	Music, internet
Many dialects/creeoles	poor	internet

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify): _____

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good

above average

average

below average

very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category: I can remember

almost any grammar rule, verb or conjugation
with only 1 or 2 times reading it.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? I like to be able to look at or hear any
language and be able to understand it



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101

1. Name: _____
2. Age: 19
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	For how long?
i) French	good	9 yrs core French
ii) German	poor	2 months
iii)		
iv)		

27 months in French on exchange

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	How did you learn it?

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify):

my mom's family speaks german
I'm interested in that part of my heritage

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

both {

Grammar is almost impossible but I do see why we need it.

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good

above average

average →

below average

very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category: I'd say I'm an average to below average language learner, I am always struggling to learn but am very interested in what I'm learning so I work at it.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? Languages are unlike anything else you learn there is a sense of accomplishment when you can actually communicate in a foreign language. You also learn about other cultures.



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101



1. Name: _____
2. Age: 18
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	For how long?
i) <u>French</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>9 years</u>
ii) <u>German</u>	<u>fair</u>	<u>1 year</u>
iii)		
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	How did you learn it?

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify): _____

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good

above average

average

below average

very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category:

My marks

reflect grade average.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why?

Fun to be able to communicate
in new ways.



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101



1. Name: _____
2. Age: 19
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	For how long?
i) French	Good	5 years
ii) German	Good	1 year
iii)		
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	How did you learn it?

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify): _____

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good

above average

average

below average

very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category: I seem to progress
well w/ subjects I'm interested in,
I am usually interested in languages.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? Its interesting to see how proficiency
progresses.



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101

1. Name: _____
2. Age: 18
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	For how long?
i) <u>French</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>8th - 9th 10th and FA 151</u>
ii) <u>German</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>highschool level 1 and Ger 101</u>
iii)		
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	How did you learn it?
<u>Spanish</u>	<u>poor</u>	<u>Friends looking up random words/phrases in translator before going to Ecuador</u>

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify):

I love languages + travelling

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- a little* The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good above average average below average very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category: My top marks in school and the classes that I enjoyed most were languages (English, French, German). They always seem^d easy to understand and I did well in those classes

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? Languages always seem to make sense to me and are the most amazing things to learn. My mom said I was obsessed with learning how to read when I was 3 yrs old. Learning about other cultures and how they relate to your own is also really interesting.



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101



1. Name: _____
2. Age: 19
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	For how long?
i) French	fair	1/2 yr
ii) German	upoor - fair	till grad II
iii)		one year
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)	How did you learn it?

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify): _____

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good above average average below average very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category: I'm not especially
good at languages - but I'm not especially
bad.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? I plan on spending many years
travelling, and would like to be able
to communicate with people.



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101



1. Name: _____
2. Age: 19
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	For how long?
i) <u>German</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>2 months</u>
ii)		
iii)		
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	How did you learn it?
<u>urdu</u>	<u>good</u>	<u>grew up in Pakistan</u>

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify): _____

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good

above average

average

below average

very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category:

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? It's somewhat of a personal interest; I've always wanted to learn many languages



Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101



1. Name: _____
2. Age: 19
3. Sex: F M
3. What is your mother tongue? English French Other: _____
4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

Language Classes Taken	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	For how long?
i) English	excellent	15 years
ii) French	good	14 years
iii) German	poor	2 months
iv)		

5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

Language	Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)	How did you learn it?

4. How important is it for you to become proficient in German? (circle one):

very important

important

not so important

5. Why did you decide to take German 101? (check all that apply)

- interested in the language
- interested in the culture
- have friends who speak the language
- required to take course to graduate
- need it for my future career
- need it for travelling purposes
- other (please specify):

my father is German and my German background is very important to me.

6. What qualities do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- Learning languages isn't really easy or really hard for me; somewhere in the middle.
- Learning languages has always been somewhat difficult for me.
- I am very quick to understand grammar rules, but am often too afraid to speak.
- I don't mind speaking, even if I make mistakes.
- I enjoy learning the grammar first, then later learning to speak.
- I like learning to speak a language while learning grammar concepts at the same time.
- Grammar is almost impossible. I don't see why we have to learn it. I just want to speak!
- The teacher/professor always seems to be speaking too fast for me, and I get lost.
- The teacher/professor usually speaks a little too fast, but it's a good challenge.
- The teacher/professor speaks at a regular speed.
- The teacher/professor is always speaking too slowly and I feel bored in class.
- I have had bad experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had OK experiences with language learning in the past.
- I have had good experiences with language learning in the past.
- I haven't had enough experience with learning foreign languages yet to know.
- Other:

7. In general I would say that I am a [fill in the blank] language learner.

very good above average average below average very weak

Describe why you believe you fit into this category: I am very interested
in the formulas used to make up languages and once
you understand all the formulas, the rest of the
language just falls into place.

8. Do you enjoy learning languages? (Please also explain why.)

- Yes
- Sometimes
- No

Why? I enjoy learning about other cultures and how
they express themselves differently than we do.

Appendix B

Questions for First Interview

1. Are you enjoying your language lessons? How is it going for you?
 - What do you enjoy specifically?
 - What don't you enjoy?
2. Why motivated you to take German?
3. Do you enjoy class meetings more than studying at home or in the lab?
 - Can you give reasons why?
4. This is not the first time you are taking language classes. What were your language learning experiences like in the past?
 - Discuss for each language.
 - Languages spoken outside of classroom?
5. What kind of activities did you like best and why?
 - Does anything specifically stand out from those classes that you enjoyed or disliked?
6. What do you do in order to memorize or practice German grammar?
7. What do you do in order to memorize vocabulary?
8. How do you memorize genders?
9. Are you finding the explanations in the book useful?
10. Are you finding the explanations from the teacher useful?
11. Which explanations do you prefer – those from the book or those from the teacher?
12. Do you learn languages better doing group work or independent work?
 - Why?

Questions for Second Interview

General Questions:

- What characteristics does someone have to bring with them in order to successfully learn German (or a foreign language)? Do you have these characteristics? Are there negative characteristics?
- Do you have a certain goal in mind when you learn a FL? Do you feel that expectations from others play a role when you learn a FL (from parents, school or society)?

- When do you have the feeling that you have learned something? How/when do you notice that? What is then different from before?
- Do you learn German differently than you have learned other FL's?
- What words would you use to describe the German language? Germany?

Student A – In depth

1. You say you learn grammar concepts quickly. Can you try and describe what you think the exact processes are that go on in your mind when you are learning grammar concepts?
2. You have said vocabulary is harder for you to learn. What processes, in your opinion, need to happen in order for vocabulary to be learned?
3. Describe in your own words the processes that go on in your mind when you are reading a German text.
4. ...when you do a listening comprehension activity.
5. What do you think you put the most emphasis on when studying (writing, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking)

Student #2 – In depth

1. You have said you don't really like the lab. Why do you think this is?
2. Describe in your own words the processes that go on in your mind as you do a listening comprehension activity.
3. when you read a German text.
4. when you learn grammar.
5. when you learn vocabulary.

Student #3 – In depth

1. You say you learn grammar concepts quickly. Can you describe in your own words the exact processes that go on in your mind when you are learning grammar concepts?
2. You have said vocabulary is harder for you to learn. What processes, in your opinion, need to happen in order for vocabulary to be learned?
3. Describe in your own words the processes that go on in your mind when you are reading a German text.
4. when you do a listening comprehension activity.

Questions for Third Interview

- Draw your learning curve over the course of this semester
- Record them drawing (perhaps speaking along) and then explaining afterwards what they have drawn
- If prompts are necessary, ask about which parts of the line would include learning certain parts of the course
- Ask them to do draw a motivation curve over the same time frame, explaining as they go

Appendix C

Table C1

Interview One

Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
Likes German 101 (very high mark)	Likes German 101 so far (doing well)	Course is OK (doing fairly well)
Language learning is a hobby for her (motivated lang. learner) - no German heritage	German heritage - heard German at home - part of German club as child	German is well-spoken - has no German background
French language learned in a classroom	French language learned in a classroom	Spanish, French learned in a classroom
Reads language how-to books on her own	Not pushed a whole lot to speak French in HS, teacher tried to make you but more willing to explain in Eng.	
Likes to be independent	Likes to be independent	Rather be completely independent
In a classroom situation you talk more, hear more of the language - There's also a lot of repetition (good and bad) - Room to make errors , scarier too so you learn quick - Concepts are always being used - Visual base (creativity, pictures in textbooks) - Slow building blocks (slow process, a bit boring), but classroom still has uses	Classroom activities - practicing concepts in class (exercises) is very helpful (helps with grammar/vocab) - reading it and understanding is different than applying it - still prefers more independent stuff - says she has background so class gets boring some time, independently she can govern her own time - does enjoy classes though, likes to hear the German - immediate feedback important in class	Classroom - finds course slow sometimes - activities in class are boring for him usually - for example, writing simple sentences - enjoys getting to speak and hear the language - "not just reading and thining, you actually have to say it" - Class sometimes too slow though - Next term taking 102 distance ed, worried might not get speaking practice
Pretty good pace in Ger 101		
With book learning ,		Learns or picks up other

<p>progress is easy to see (not in classroom i.e. covers just the basics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can also move ahead faster on your own - but no one to correct mistakes - mostly just reading and writing 		<p>languages online or through listening to foreign music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basque, Spanish, also interested in Creole - Learns better independently because he can learn quickly, doesn't need repetition
<p>Thinks grammar is really important, and has done lots in class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - has strong grammar base, good at it - Latin = base grammar knowledge - reads it once and she's fine - likes to learn some grammar first before vocab, but not completely separated 	<p>Likes grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - likes learning grammar and learning to speak at the same time - with grammar, once you understand the concepts it's not hard at all 	<p>Grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grammar is very easy in book and in class - likes to learn grammar first, then learn to speak later - wants to know a lot so that he doesn't make errors
<p>Not as much vocabulary taught</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - but it's hard to memorize, pictures it in head and rote memorization - can't learn well from a list though, tries to make context 	<p>Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - writes out vocabulary - repeats it, says it to self - writes everything out 3X (she says that's "supposed to be able to make your remember it the best" in jest) - also says "writing it out (...) equals memorization" - goes over charts - finds patterns, remembers endings 	<p>Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - he can remember vocab usually pretty quickly
<p>Genders – very hard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - words have little reason to be a gender 	<p>Genders – hard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - learns patterns gender is hardest to learn 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when you think it's F it's N or M, etc. - memorizes with nouns of same gender - groups nouns to memorize by rote 		
<p>Textbook does not stand on own, needs class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - as a text with a class it's good - pretty bare though, few details - missing explanations - assumes you "get it" and have to look new words up - 1 concept, 2 ex's and moves on fast - Not strong on its own 	<p>Likes Vorsprung</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - repetition in the book makes you understand it - vocab and activities are good - explains tough grammar stuff well 	<p>Vorsprung</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doesn't like it, too spread out - chapter summaries good, vocab lists, charts) - but book lacks detail - grammar explained well, but not a lot - admits that he doesn't read the book that often, only when teacher's explanations are unclear - says doesn't usually need practice, but doing exercises in class helps a little
<p>Relies on book explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doesn't listen to teacher's much - goes back to book on own time - uses no other sources even though book is weak on its own, she thinks she could still do well with just the book, but others wouldn't be able to - would maybe go online for help 	<p>Teachers explanations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - based from book - teacher provides lesson through book - extra explanations for others with more difficulties - she understands mostly from textbook, class does help cement it though - in some instances the teacher's exp. is more helpful 	<p>Learns mostly from class, i.e. teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - doesn't go to other sources - finds he doesn't need to study a lot - not taking Ger 101 just because it's easy, but actually wants to learn how to speak it - finds teachers explanations useful
<p>Group work, not fond of it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - negative situation unless a tutor - feels is one of the best students in most 	<p>Group work (it's ok)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - it's ok, depends - doesn't mind working in group - does not feel 	<p>Group work (doesn't dislike)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prefers independent - only reason it's negative is <i>time</i>

<p>groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - group work takes her “down a step”, constantly staying behind - thinks groups expect more of her than themselves because she’s smart 	<p>burdened by others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - says group work often marked individually, so usually doesn’t think it’s negative because she can control her own destiny - but learning concepts from others is not really possible, she says - must understand concepts before working in groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prefers to do work at his own pace, on his own time - group work not a burden though
<p>Speaking Test – dreads it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can’t memorize well - rather do it on her own 		
<p>Language skills – they are important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speaking is most important she says, but she thinks it’s her worst one - she emphasizes reading and writing while studying, because that’s what most exams require 	<p>Speaking important, still have to have grammar though</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - her reading/writing is better than speaking/listening she says - hard to pick out words while listening - when studying, studies by reading (from notes) 	
<p>Reading easier for her, but wants to speak it (main motivation is learning to actually use it) why? Mysterious, knowing a language no one else knows</p>	<p>Thinks she learns better independently</p>	
<p>Lab – pretty good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - culture stuff in lab is interesting (pictures, visuals) - websites in German sometimes maybe too challenging 	<p>Lab – dislikes greatly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sees it mostly as a waste of time, has a heavy courseload - doesn’t see how it helps - only thing that’s good is looking at 	<p>Lab – likes lab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - forces you to learn to listen (a weakness he says) - finds lab component necessary - only thing is, doesn’t like culture

	<p>pictures, learning their vocab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - other activities pointless (IKEA activity) - not useful 	<p>parts (negative)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - would rather just learn to speak (implies that it's possible without knowing culture)
<p>Reading difficult texts is motivating and scary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes her excited and feel like it's impossible at the same time 		
<p>When speaking, fixes answers in mind first so it's right</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - afraid to speak on the spot - making a mistake=low intelligence 	<p>Speaking – hard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ends up translating in head nervous about speaking - thinks it would be easier to speak if she went to the community where lang is spoken 	<p>Speaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a very hesitant speaker - sometimes translates in head before speaking - lots of speaking practice in class
<p>Still prefers independent book learning</p>	<p>Learning languages will benefit in the long run</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - proud of heritage 	

Table C2

Interview Two

Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
<p>Processes when learning German grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - compare cases, sentence structure - learns by comparison - position in a sentence makes it obvious what case - visualizes placement in sentence - learning grammar is “an automatic thing” - subconsciously can see the difference in 	<p>Processes when learning German grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - makes patters - verbs i.e. patterns of endings - memorizes ones that don't fit - writing out helps to memorize more than reading - writes out in her own words 	<p>Learning grammar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - looks at parts of speech, sub. verb. etc.

<p>her mind</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - grammar is “an inner thing” 		
<p>Processes when learning German vocab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - especially verbs are difficult, many ways to use a verb..one might be wrong - tenses of verbs and meanings both hard to learn 	<p>Vocab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - also writes it out 	<p>Vocab</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - best way to learn vocab is to actually know how to use it in a sentence - contextual - vocab harder, “more to know” than grammar - learns it by memorization but helps seeing them in use
<p>When reading a text in German...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - does a word for word translation in head, easiest for her - doesn't learn by repetition 	<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - translates in head word for word - answers questions as they come - pre reads questions first then reads text and answers questions as she goes along 	<p>Reading texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reads, tries to understand - then reads questions - if doesn't know answer, re-reads text - translates sometimes, first read in German though, not always word for word
<p>When doing a listening comp. German text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when listening, doesn't do word for word translation because reading requires more attention than listening - but still says it's easy to miss stuff when listening, so it's like a dissection word for word - things blur together and words throw you off. It's like picking out info - if she hears the first 	<p>Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - listens for key words - pieces sentences together (from what she doesn't understand) - translates in head word for word usually - keeps side notes - when listening, it's hard because it goes fast, but at least it's usually played twice - once translated, it's much easier 	<p>Listening comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tries to remember enough of the questions at a time so he can write down the answers fast - gets more from second listening usually, he says - doesn't jot down notes on the side

<p>and last part, she can infer the middle part</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - jots notes only when it's part of the answer..fills in as much as possible 1st time, then rest in the 2nd time 		
<p>When studying, emphasizes learning vocabulary (and gender of words), and also grammar rules that are similar to others, hence confusing</p>	<p>Studying – (from interview #1 – reads her own notes)</p>	
<p>Sometimes understands grammar rules but application is harder, i.e. accusative where does the “n” change</p>		
<p>When studying, does not do listening practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if you study by reading, listening and writing “falls into place” 		
<p>Reading gives longer correct examples – not writing..you could write it wrong</p>		
<p>Words terms when hears “learning a foreign language”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - happiness - child bilingualism - how those languages “play off each other” - psychological stuff that goes with LL - verbal ability - frustration - payoff - pride - travel & benefits - how good you feel - being different - mystery 		<p>Words that come to mind when hears “learning a foreign language”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - speaking - reading, writing - understanding - so, proficiency (all technical stuff!)

<p>What characteristics should LLeavers have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not be cynical or judgmental - open-minded - not people who waste time, only take langs if you want to be there - determination - base knowledge of grammar 	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - persistence - aptitude - for fluency, you have to be in the atmosphere <p>Negative ones?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - when people think too much about concepts and they get confused - learning a language “isn’t really a memorizing things” 	<p>Characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - persistence - some kind of interest/desire - ability to remember stuff <p>Negative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - laziness (sees in himself) - not seeing the need to learn a part
<p>Goal when learning German?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to be able to conduct a conversation 	<p>Goal? Being able to speak it</p> <p>Expectations from Society? No outside expectations, but Dad happy she’s learning it which she likes</p>	<p>Goal? Fluency</p> <p>No expectations from outside, personal reasons for taking course</p>
<p>What keeps you from fluency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no books that are written as far as fluency - possible? Probably not - she’s says idioms prevent fluency (she says that’s about 50% of the conversation) - don’t see idioms in textbooks - going to the country only thing that can get you fluent - 50% of lang can’t be translated properly - Unless a book on <i>all idioms</i> comes out, achieving fluency by books can’t be done 	<p>What keeps you from fluency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not going to the country/place where language is spoken 	
<p>When you know you’ve</p>	<p>When you know you’ve</p>	<p>When you know you’ve</p>

<p>learned something:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in chatrooms, can communicate better (see how much she uses BabelFish) 	<p>learned something:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - finds the class too simple so far, no big “aha” moments 	<p>learned something</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - feels he’s learned something if reading something online and can understand more - or from music
<p>Learn German different from other languages?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - same - probably learns it consistently, because it’s not crazy different ie. Chinese 	<p>Learns German similar to French</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sometimes wants to answer in French - sees parallels, especially with verb conjugations 	<p>Learns German slightly differently because he’s already learned 2 languages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - now it’s easier - sees the similarities in how he learns them though
<p>Things in German sound very english to her</p>		
<p>Words to describe German</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - guttural - attitude - everything has an emphasis - only really heard it in movies 	<p>Words to describe German</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - harsh - it’s influence on English 	<p>Words to describe German</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ugly - foolish - well-spoken - useful to know
<p>Describe Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - rustic, manliness, burly (even women), eating sausages - and then in opposition stuff like Grimm brothers fairy tales, pretty landscape 	<p>Germany:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - loud and fun - Lederhosen & beer - punctuality 	<p>Germany is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - very similar to here

Table C3

Interview Three

Participant A	Participant B	Participant C
<p>Taking Ger 102 distance ed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not as good as she thought, because she finds the textbook useless 	<p>Taking Ger 102 distance ed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - finds it harder, explanations are now in German only 	<p>Taking Ger 102 because of independence and scheduling</p>
<p>Learning Curve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drew a very detailed 	<p>Learning Curve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - curve is not 	<p>Learning Curve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - very few details, not

<p>curve, little notes all along it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specifically wrote out months and even some material learned in course - major evaluations included, plus beginning of WS 06 - implies that it was “all straight” at one point because it was all useful grammar (hence, she learned a lot) - wherever she says she learned new vocab, it’s “blah”, meaning the line doesn’t go up as consistently as when grammar was learned - beginning of Ger 102 doesn’t increase as much because she feels it’s “reviewish” 	<p>extremely detailed, very general</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - includes a timeline labeled simply begin and exam for the end - talks about her previous knowledge of German (family, German club, Saturday school) and how she started off a bit higher than others - curve up and down (curvy) to start because of learning the new and old in a short time - as it got towards the end, general gradual increase - at the end kind of leveled off because didn’t study a lot for exam (had another exam on the same day) - now with Ger 102 it’s increasing again she says (didn’t draw) 	<p>even a timeline axis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - drew line extremely fast and seemed reluctant to do exercise - at the beginning he has a “large jump” because of his lack of knowledge at the start - then, a lesser increase (no more big jumps) but an overall increase - didn’t really study for exam, no increase there, had another exam that day - midterm, didn’t require much studying - toughest part of course was prepositions he thought
<p>Motivation line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - steep at the beginning, then dwindling off (says she tends to do that) - she sees her motivation generally increasing, with a few plateaus 	<p>Motivation line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - beginning, pretty motivated - towards exams, leveled off - declining even, because of Christmas holiday, little desire to study - overall still motivated to learn German though - wants to be able to communicate with 	<p>Motivation line</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - again, very reluctant to draw it, wanted to explain it instead - he says, probably would have been up and down - line drops every once in awhile, then goes up again - in the end, doesn’t end up because he thinks he would have rather taken

	relatives in Germany	Spanish instead - in the beginning, motivation was medium to low because he didn't know how difficult it would be
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Appendix D

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC & SLAVIC STUDIES

GERMAN 101
Fall Term 2005

[Schedule](#) [Welcome](#) [Assignments and Grade Distribution](#) [Textbooks](#) [Important Dates](#) [Course Outline](#) [Instructors](#)

This course is taught in several sections at various times during the day and in the evening. It meets four times a week: three hours in the class room plus one lab hour. All sections cover the same amount of core material and write a common mid-term and final. The follow-up courses using the same textbook as GER 101 are GER 102, 201 and 202. Please ask us about opportunities for German exchange programs.

Section	Classes	Lab	Instructors
1	08.30 - 9.20 MWF ML 212	08.30 - 09.20 T ML 109	Janet Janzen/Janice McGregor
2	9.30 - 10.20 MWF ML 212	09.30 - 10.20 T ML 109	Dr. Barbara Schmenk
4	11.30 - 12.20 MWF ML 315	11.30 - 12.20 Th ML 113	Hanna Lin
5	12.30 - 01.20 MWF ML 315	12.30 - 01.20 T ML 109	Ferdinand Dachs
3	01.30 - 02.20 MWF ML 216	01.30 - 02.20 Th ML 109	Ferdinand Dachs
6	03.30 - 04.20 MWF ML 216	03.30 - 04.20 Th ML 109	Anne Löchte
7	07.00 - 7.50 M, 07.00 - 08.50 W ML 212	08.00 - 08.50 M ML 109	Norma Chapple/Mark Wilkinson

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Welcome to GER 101!

What are the goals of GER 101?

The main goal of this course is to equip you with a basic ability in German. You will learn to comprehend and speak German with a good degree of accuracy. You will also be able to read and understand the main content of simple German texts, and you will be able to write basic German.

Another goal of this course is to introduce you to a style of language learning in which communication plays a key role. You will learn grammar and language structures, too, but the main emphasis will be in helping you to develop the ability to communicate in German. Your instructors hope that you will have fun in the classroom, and that this fun will help ease the transition into another language.

Please note that GER 101 is **not open** to students with Ontario High School Grade 13 German, OAC, or equivalent, e.g. 4U. Students with some background in German should speak to their instructor to ensure they are in the right course.

What will we be doing in class?

Class time will be devoted to practicing German in a fun and communicative way. You will have the opportunity to interact with your classmates in exercises and in role-playing situations. Some class time will be taken up with analyzing German language structure.

What is the lab all about?

Once a week you will be assigned audio, video, and multi-media exercises that train your ability to comprehend German. You find these exercises in the language lab. You must do these during the lab time assigned to your class. The lab classes are supervised by your instructor or by a German TA, who will be there to offer help and support. At regular intervals, graded lab tasks will be set. Towards the end of the term, there will also be a lab test which mainly assesses your ability to comprehend spoken German. Lab hours will start in week 2.

Please note that you need a Nexus account to access these exercises; if you do not have a Nexus account, get one immediately! (How? Go to a Nexus computer on campus, click on the icon 'scratch' and follow the procedures. If you need help with this see **Todd Taylor in the language laboratory ML110.**)

If you would like to get your own audio tapes, go to the Cashier's office (first floor, Needles Hall) to purchase the language lab "green card" (called Purchase of Service Card) for \$3. Take the card to the ML lab office (ML 110) to get the tapes for GER 101. (Don't bring your own tapes, you will get tapes from there.)

What kind of homework will be assigned?

Your instructor will assign homework for you to do. Often you will be asked to read up on particular language structures. At other times you may be asked to prepare an exercise to be handed in for marking. You should expect to do about 1.5 hours of homework for every hour spent in class.

Please note: in order to learn a language, you need to review the material in a regular, consistent fashion. Remaining on top of the material is essential for doing well in this course.

Textbooks

Required and available at the UW Bookstore:	<i>Vorsprung</i> by Lovik, Guy and Chavez (Student Text + Arbeitsbuch/workbook + Interactive CD)
For reference at the UW Porter Library:	<i>Vorsprung Correction Key</i>
Recommended as a good reference (available at the UW Bookstore):	<i>English Grammar for Students of German</i> by Zorach and Melin

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Assignments and Grade Distribution

Section Grade (15%)	Each section instructor will assign you a grade worth 15% of your final mark. At the beginning of the term, your instructor will explain to you in detail what the requirements for the Section Grade are.
Mid-term (20%)	The mid-term will be an one-hour in-class exam that tests your abilities in writing and reading.
Lab (20%)	The lab grade has two components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be one test which takes place in the language laboratory. It will test your ability to comprehend German and it is worth 15%. 2. You will also complete 4 lab tasks in the course of the term. Together, the results of these lab tasks will make up the remaining 5%.
Speaking Test (15%)	During the last week of classes you will be required to do a speaking test. This is a combination of a skit involving usually two people and a spontaneous question-answer session. You will be graded on your ability to communicate, your pronunciation, and your accuracy.
Final (30%)	There will be a two-hour written final exam during the exam period that tests your abilities to understand and to use structures and vocabulary acquired during the semester.

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Note on Avoidance of Academic Offenses

All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with [Policy #71](#) (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of [Policy #71](#) (Student Academic Discipline). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

Notice of Grievance Procedure

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to [Policy #70](#), Student Grievance.

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Important Dates							
Section	section 1	section 2	section 3	section 4	section 5	section 6	se
Midterm	Monday, October 31st, 2005						
Lab test	Tuesday, November 14	Tuesday, November 14	Thursday, November 16	Tuesday, November 14	Thursday, November 16	Thursday, November 16	M Nov.
Speaking test	ALL SECTIONS during week of November 28 - December 2						
Final	ALL SECTIONS during final exam period (December 8 - 22, 2005)						

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Course Outline

Week starting ...	
September 12	Introduction and chapter 1 (no lab class)
September 19	Chapter 1
September 26	Chapter 1 and lab task 1
October 3	Chapter 1 and Chapter 2
October 10	Chapter 2 and lab task 2
October 17	Chapter 2
October 24	Chapter 2 and lab task 3
October 31	Mid-term and Chapter 3
November 7	Chapter 3 and lab task 4
November 14	Chapter 3 and Lab test
November 21	Chapter 3
November 28	Speaking test and review
December 5	Review
	Lectures end
Examination period (December 8 - 22, 2005)	Final

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Instructors

We want to help you get the most out of your studies. Please contact us if you have any questions, comments, or problems!

Section	Instructor	Contact Information	Office Hours	Teaching Assistants
1	Janet Janzen/ Janice McGregor	Janet: office: Janice: janice06@hotmail.com office:	tba tab	
2	Dr Barbara Schmenk coordinator of all sections	bschmenk@uwaterloo.ca 888-4567 x2148 ML306	tba and by appointment	Sabine Mürbeth
3	Hanna Lin	c4lin@uwaterloo.ca	tba	
4	Ferdinand Dachs	tba ML 305	tba	
5	Ferdinand Dachs	tba ML 305	tba	
6	Anne Löchte	tba ML 2	tba	
7	Norma Chapple/ Mark Wilkinson	Norma: norma_j_chapple@hotmail.com office: Mark: office:	tba	

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Appendix E

Interview #1, Student A

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

November 24th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 33 minutes 20 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semistructured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: alright. okay so the first, (.) make sure that we
02 talk into this kind of um the first thing i was
03 wondering is how you are enjoying german 101 like
04 like are you enjoying it do you like what do you
05 find what is it like for you?
06 SA: um i, i really do like it it's uh (--) do you want
07 like the specifics of what i enjoy, or:
08 Me: well i'll probably uh: like to hear anything you
09 have to say but i i have also specific questions
10 about that but um just you do enjoy it so
11 SA: oh yeah
12 Me: you do you generally like learning languages? like
13 it is like [like]
14 SA: [hobby?] ((laughs))
15 Me: yeah so it's something that you always wanted to
16 learn
17 SA: yeah so i don't think that there's really a
18 possibility of me not enjoying it ((laughs)) quite
19 honestly
20 Me: right
21 SA: so
22 Me: now how how is it going um in terms of your um (--)
23 (co) like how do you feel you're doing in the
24 course? like
25 SA: oh (---) really good
26 Me: yeah okay (.) so it's like for you one of your
27 better marks or you do really [well]
28 SA: [yeah] it's probably
29 my highest mark in the term [or maybe] tied
30 Me: [ok]
31 right so but it's one of the top
32 SA: yeah
33 Me: courses ok ok so then now specifically what aspects
34 of the course do you (-) enjoy;
35 SA: um (-) well (--) i haven't (.) really taken other
36 (.) beginners classes (.) in languages (-) um so i
37 can't really compare it to anything else that i've
38 taken cause i normally just read books on my own

39 Me: =mm-hm
40 SA: =i don't go into a class setting
41 Me: ok
42 SA: but um (.) what i like about it is that you can
43 hear somebody (.) and listen to (.) the way they
44 TALK (.) and there's um there's lots of repetition
45 whereas like in book learning it just (.) you know
46 they basically just present this concept to you
47 Me: [yeah]
48 SA: [=they] go over a couple of um like practice
49 scenarios but they don't really try and like firm
50 it into your head
51 Me: sure
52 SA: but like when you're in a class setting it just
53 like it (.) it's constantly coming up and you're
54 constantly u:sing it like .hh even like a month
55 down the line (--) excuse me, like you find that
56 (--) something from like the first day of class has
57 just come up (.) so
58 Me: mm-hm
59 SA: that's what i really like about it too it's it
60 doesn't just go over a concept and then forget
61 about it
62 Me: [it's]
63 SA: [builds] yeah and hanna goes (--) um (-) really
64 like at a pretty good pace, like she doesn't go too
65 slow (.) um (.) but she doesn't go to fast either
66 Me: ok
67 SA: so (.) i really like how she paces it
68 Me: ok (-) cool (.) is there anything you DON'T enjoy
69 (-) um is there any aspect of it, i mean you have
70 you have obviously .h three lectures a week (.) and
71 one lab so um (-) is there something within thOse
72 classes that (.) that stands out as something that
73 you can say that for you doesn't work or-
74 SA: probably just like like the pacing is really good
75 like she goes over a couple things (-) but um (--)
76 sometimes it feels like um (---) like you g' (.)
77 like sometimes it feels like you go into class and
78 (-) .hh um: (-) it just you know <<snapping> bam
79 bam bam> small things that you're learning and
80 doesn't feel like you're really getting anywhere?
81 Me: ok so
82 SA: that's kinda like (-) just (-) like i can say =i've
83 taken german for three months but <<laughing> and i
84 know that i know some stuff> but it doesn't feel
85 like there's really been a whole lot accomplished

86 because it's soo (.) beginner;
87 Me: right
88 SA: =so i can't like actually use it really (.) in any
89 kind of (.) way except (-) wie heißen sie
90 [(laughs)]
91 Me: [yeah: yeah:]
92 SA: you know
93 Me: ok so it co' so if i understand you correctly
94 you're trying to say that it's frustrating
95 sometimes because it's just like small building
96 blocks at this point'
97 SA: yeah
98 Me: ok so (-) you know i guess (-) uh: (-) did you
99 expEct (.) it to be more?
100 SA: .h um (-) i (.) think (.) i might have did i think
101 that was probably it has to do with book learning
102 the difference between book learning like (-) they
103 really shove a whole bunch on you at once and they
104 go like they go through it so fast .h like it's
105 really easy to see all the progress you've been
106 making (.) whereas in the classroom um: (-) .h they
107 go they just kinda (.) do the basics and there's
108 not a lot of readings
109 Me: ok
110 SA: and they just [you know] a b c kinda thing
111 Me: [so for you]
112 right (.) so for you um (-) when you say um it's
113 (-) you don't feel like you've got a lot (.) to (.)
114 say does that fo' for you mean that uh: speaking
115 SA: yeah [like] i couldn't say much
116 Me: [should]
117 ok so: (.) you would like to be able to communicate
118 by the end of this course this is a you know this
119 is for you uh what you expected when you first came
120 in that you would be able to .h um: on a basic
121 level (.) communicate and you don't feel that
122 that's it's you feel it's really slow going [to
123 that]
124 SA: [yeah]
125 Me: =ok
126 SA: =yeah just like i (c) i mean the grammar's there
127 and we've got a lot of grammar done which is really
128 important (.) and it's just that the vocabulary's
129 not so much
130 Me: ok so y' the vocabulary (.) worry about that
131 because you want to be able to communicate
132 SA: yeah

133 Me: um and y' you were talking about book learning now
134 what do you mean by that do you mean like a
135 distance ed course or you mean just on your own
136 (.) you know buying a beginner intro to spanish or
137 [that type of thing?]
138 SA: [yeah that kind of stuff mostly yeah i don't think
139 i've ever (.) taken a distance ed course except (-)
140 [online]
141 Me: [cause] that would be different [on' again] from
142 just you and a book obviously i guess
143 SA: [yeah]
144 =yeah
145 Me: um: (.) so when you when you would have have you do
146 you have an example of a book that or a language
147 you've (-) [tried to learn] from a book;
148 SA: [um:]
149 yeah, um:: i did la:tin
150 Me: =latin-
151 SA: i still have a latin book i have two books on
152 french (.) i have one on spanish (.) one on
153 esperanto and
154 Me: =oh esperanto
155 SA: <<laughing> yeah>
156 Me: that's cool ((laughs)) AWESome
157 SA: and um (-) cassettes on turkish which are really
158 useless ((laughs))
159 Me: ok so you you have you have your own motivated
160 interest in learning languages
161 SA: yeah
162 Me: =interesting um so (-) uh what was i gonna say
163 () lAtin um:: (-) THAT'S a different language
164 anyway and i guess esperanto too because [they're
165 not]
166 SA: [<<whisper
167 ing> oh] latin's killer>
168 Me: they're not [spoken right]
169 SA: [god] [<<laughing> yeah>]
170 Me: [i mean] they're (.) well
171 especially esperanto is another case entirely but
172 lAtin (.) uh: obviously um (.) very grammatic (.)
173 [grammatical]
174 SA: [yeah] <<sighing> oh god> [((laughs))]
175 Me: [and you and you would
176 need] YEAH so like (-) well i think all textbooks
177 in latin are are focused on reading comprehension
178 and and and (.) understanding
179 SA: yeah

180 Me: written texts
181 SA: yeah latin's so easy to comprehend when you read it
182 but y' y' can't really put anything down like you
183 couldn't formulate a sentence [cause it's] always
184 like th' like the declensions
185 Me: [yeah]
186 SA: [you know]
187 Me: [exactly] now do you find that that helps for this
188 course that you've already got an idea of (-) or do
189 you feel that you have an idea of um: (-) you know
190 (-) um (.) subject direct object d' did that help
191 in latin [too]
192 SA: [yeah]
193 Me: did you know that before latin or [was it ()
194 bl' blurry]
195 SA: [well i had an
196 (.) idea] but it really kind of firmed everything
197 Me: ok
198 SA: [like because it's::]
199 Me: [so that must help]
200 SA: yeah it concentrates so much in latin on that kind
201 of stuff (.) it really like (-) like you hAve to
202 know it and
203 Me: =yeah
204 SA: you hAve to learn it
205 Me: yeah
206 [so;]
207 SA: [and also;] sorry
208 Me: no no keep going go ((laughs))
209 SA: <<smiling> one thing too is um when you get
210 something as tricky as latin>
211 Me: yeah
212 SA: .h and then you come to german you're like oh. this
213 is <<whispering> nothing> <<laughing> you know>
214 Me: RIGHT and then you have the people that have only
215 taken maybe french and
216 SA: [yeah]
217 Me: [um] (-) it IS hard for them
218 SA: yeah:
219 Me: =and rightly so because they haven't seen these
220 complex structures before;
221 SA: yeah it could be worse [((laughs))]
222 Me: [yeah but it's interesting]
223 that you come from sort of (.) a more complex uh:
224 structure like learning latin a more complex um
225 grammar and the you come to german and so you think
226 that the grammar perhaps so far [seems much easier]

227 SA: [so:: much easier]
228 Me: [yeah]
229 SA: [yeah] it's like that and german and then
230 Me: which giv' which actually i would think coming into
231 this course gives you a completely different
232 () like uh mindset on how the language is
233 SA: yeah
234 Me: so it it maybe that that would also probably do you
235 think that would affect how you see german, like
236 SA: yeah
237 Me: or how it motivates you in german,
238 SA: [yeah]
239 Me: [because it] (-) if you were if you go to study (.)
240 for german (.) do you find that you're already
241 thinking oh this isn't hard
242 SA: <<laughing> yeah>
243 Me: yeah, ok
244 SA: it's just, yeah; ((laughs))
245 Me: so that kind of a barrier isn't there for you
246 SA: yeah
247 Me: you have that [uh openness about it]
248 SA: [yeah y' you go into]
249 it thinking that it's gonna be easy because nothing
250 could possibly get that hard [you know]
251 Me: [right right right]
252 yeah as bad as uh (.) latin i know i took latin so
253 i i understand i g' when i took latin it it cleared
254 up german grammar for me right away (.) personally
255 (.) so i (.) can understand um (-) now you have
256 done a lot of independent learning then (.) you've
257 done a lot of book (learning) you said .hh so do
258 you enjoy the classroom setting more than
259 independent or () do you see?
260 SA: =↓probably not [no]
261 Me: [no?]
262 SA: i think i (.) the cassroom classroom learning has
263 it's uses but um (--) like i like being able to (.)
264 to look ahead (.) and you know like like you could
265 like you could have this book on spanish and you
266 could be on the fourth chapter (.) but you could
267 always go ahead to the other chapters and (-) in
268 textbooks everything's not as self explanatory as
269 in books where you learn because they're expecting
270 that you're in a classroom and doing everything
271 Me: [right]
272 SA: [so there's] a lot bigger of a (.) like a knowledge
273 gap

274 Me: [ok]
 275 SA: [and]
 276 so you can't really look ahead (.) you can't [go]
 277 Me: [so
 278 you are] then dependent on the class in a way
 279 SA: =yeah
 280 Me: =yeah
 281 SA: =basically like i couldn't take my textbook and
 282 feel really that if i was to read my textbook i
 283 would (.) when i'm finished come out with like
 284 really good knowledge of german like i cOULD with
 285 like a (-)
 286 Me: [there would be]
 287 SA: [let's learn german book]
 288 Me: right there would be gaps
 289 SA: yeah
 290 Me: in the learning
 291 um:: (-) what do you (-) so th' what do you take uh
 292 from since you say l' you work well independently
 293 that must be obvious because you've done all this
 294 stuff before (.) um:: and you enjoy it at home
 295 studying on your own (.) do you uh: find what
 296 things specifically in a classroom do you think are
 297 what you really take from what help your german the
 298 most you know or what uh: is it just because of the
 299 textbook or is there other sort of aspects in the
 300 classroom that that you don't that you that you
 301 realize sort of now taking the instead of being in
 302 a book learning situation that you would uh: see as
 303 an advantage as opposed to being independent; or
 304 are [there any ((laughs))]
 305 SA: [<<h> probably yeah> ((smiles))]
 306 that it kind of gives a little bit more of a visual
 307 base,
 308 Me: ok
 309 SA: because um:: (.) you cou' there's a lot more
 310 pictures in textbooks you know
 311 Me: [sure]
 312 SA: [so you] can go with that there's a lot more
 313 creativity in textbooks it's not just text (.) you
 314 know and like one two three answer these questions
 315 there's like comics in the vorsprung [()]
 316 Me: [of course]
 317 SA: and also [um::]
 318 Me: [anna adler]
 319 SA: yeah ((laughs))
 320 Me: ((laughs))

321 SA: there's more room to make mistakes in the classroom
322 and mistakes kinda like once you make the mistake
323 you'll remember it [a lot longer]
324 Me: [sure]
325 SA: =but (.) because it's it's more traumatizing i
326 guess you could say in a classroom to make those
327 mistakes and .h when you're on your own there's no
328 it's like oh:: that's too bad i didn't get that one
329 but who cares no big deal right so it doesn't like
330 cement in your mind the same way it does in the
331 classroom
332 Me: ok (.) yeah i can see that (.) .h um what about
333 working with others (.) in the classroom does that
334 does that provide (.) for you is that an advantage?
335 [does it is it indifferent? you don't like it? ok]
336 SA: [mm:: it get's on my nerves yeah: no:] i don't
337 really like it
338 Me: so y' you would prefer then if if you have to work
339 in a group is that a for you do you automatically
340 see that as a negative situation or or
341 SA: yeah pretty negative unless the people like if i
342 was working like with a tutor
343 Me: ok
344 SA: i would probably think that is more positive but
345 generally like not wanting to SOUND conceited or
346 anything (.) im generally the highest person in the
347 group and i don't really like to (.) to step DOWN
348 and like you know have to like nOt go ahead and
349 then because i have to go backwards and remain with
350 these people
351 Me: right
352 SA: like i don't mind helping like but (.) there's so
353 much like group work [in the classroom]
354 Me: [you feel ahead of the game,]
355 SA: yeah (.) and it feels like you can't really get
356 farther because you're constantly having to stay
357 behind som' sometimes
358 Me: and you (-) do you feel that you might have to then
359 take over a lot of the work
360 SA: yeah
361 Me: in a group
362 SA: [yeah]
363 Me: [which is] frustrating?
364 SA: yeah generally i go into group works expecting that
365 i'll probably do most of the work
366 Me: mm-hmm
367 SA: and i think lots of people have the same

368 expectation they just think oh you know she's you
369 know she's pretty good at this you know
370 Me: [mm-hmm]
371 SA: [she'll probably] do most of it for us
372 Me: so you don't feel that you essentially you don't
373 feel that you learn or take a lot from other
374 people's knowledge of german in [this situation]
375 SA: [no]
376 Me: ok so your independent learning is
377 SA: mm-hm
378 Me: sort of
379 SA: and it could yeah it could be just because i'm so
380 used to um:: (-) just reading the books and doing
381 it on my own
382 Me: right
383 SA: that like once you do that for years and years and
384 years it's pretty hard to to go go back
385 Me: what about the speaking test that's coming up
386 SA: oh::: [((laughs))]
387 Me: [is that a is that] for you something that
388 you that you kind of dread in a way [like?]
389 SA: [yup] i do
390 dread it [((laughs))]
391 Me: [yeah? ok] [i can see that]
392 SA: [i generally can't] memorize
393 things that well
394 Me: ok but i mean in terms of the group work is [that
395 is that] a difficult thing to do?
396 SA: [oh:::
397 yeah] i'd rather do it by myself
398 Me: yeah
399 SA: yeah i just i don't
400 Me: but do you understand why it's part of the course,
401 (.) i mean
402 SA: yeah (.) yeah (.) like just interaction i guess
403 mostly (.) um: (.) being able to hold a
404 conversation and just (-) you know the cause like
405 you can't you can't expect to learn a language and
406 then not use it and not go into like a situation
407 where you have to like be on the the the ball and
408 Me: right (.) [right right]
409 SA: [be thinking a lot so]
410 Me: now because you saying you know you've done reading
411 books and courses and and all that do you find for
412 you um: when you learn a language you put more
413 emphasis on the actual understanding of the reading
414 of a text as opposed to listening and and speaking?

415 SA: yeah

416 Me: yeah and does that would you rather have that

417 knowledge or would you rather have the

418 comprehensive knowledge? or would you (.) what to

419 you is the most important skill when you-

420 SA: well to me i think the most important skill is the

421 speaking (.) which is the one i am the worst at

422 ((laughs))

423 Me: well i i that's [true for a lot of people it takes]

424 SA: [<<sighing> yeah]

425 Me: that's i think it's takes the longest to [get]

426 SA: [<<sigh

427 ing>> yeah]

428 Me: but i mean because there are people that there that

429 take you know (.) there are specific courses out

430 there that are um: for reading (.) purposes only

431 you know people let's say archeology who wanna

432 learn written to read you know and understand you

433 know certain [academic texts]

434 SA: [↑hieroglyphs ((smiling))] i have two

435 book textbooks on hieroglyphs

436 Me: right so [yeah see]

437 SA: [yeah]

438 Me: well i mean and latin of course um isn't usually

439 geared towards <<laughing> speaking>

440 SA: yeah

441 Me: but i mean um is that the same for german or would

442 you actually honestly say i i do want to learn how

443 to speak it um: (.) as well [just as well as

444 everything else]

445 SA: [yeah] yeah because

446 like the main motivation for me like when i wanna

447 learn a language is because um i'm kind of

448 attracted to the idea of knowing a language that

449 nobody else knows you know which is why i liked

450 latin and which is why i got the hieroglyphs right

451 because nobody else knows it

452 Me: sure

453 SA: which is why i'm so attracted to esperanto because

454 it's you know it's mysterious [you know?]

455 Me: [yes yes the unknown]

456 SA: yeah but it's it's not really worth much if you

457 can't (.) like (.) if you can't (-) USE it [like]

458 Me: [ok] so

459 it is a comprehensive thing for you [it's not] just

460 ()

461 SA: [yeah] like

462 with the reading and the like that that really
463 helps because from there like that's the part that
464 i'm (.) i'm the best at so
465 Me: right
466 SA: like that's where i basically have to start from
467 Me: mm-hm
468 SA: so if i didn't have that i would probably be
469 nowhere
470 Me: cool ok um:: let's see what else do i have here
471 um (.) have you you said this you don't you haven't
472 taken many courses in languages did you take french
473 in school?
474 SA: yeah [i took]
475 Me: [ok]
476 SA: french that was about the only one
477 Me: so fren' this is your second course language course
478 SA: =yeah
479 Me: you've done only other things by the book
480 SA: .h oh i did do: some language but i don't think
481 that really counts
482 Me: oh: that's (.) i mean it's different
483 SA: yeah
484 Me: it's just different because you're not learning
485 grammar it's
486 SA: yeah just
487 Me: it's english ((laughs))
488 SA: [yeah]
489 Me: [but yeah]
490 but that's still it's still probably benefi' like
491 it somehow probably affects how you see things
492 differently and when you're learning a language
493 SA: yeah
494 Me: um: (-) do you (.) um: (-) kay so we've talked
495 about the activities in class (.) .h group work you
496 don't specifically find to be the most beneficial
497 for you (.) you said um: what about any other
498 activities in like lab activities, (.) do you like
499 the lab? [what is your feeling;]
500 SA: [well i actually] find that in th' that we
501 haven't done that much during lab she usually uses
502 that () time to do tests
503 Me: okay
504 SA: s:o i couldn't really give an opinion on the labs
505 Me: have you done lab activities where you do a wEb
506 search or a wEb [based]
507 SA: [um: we] just did that today
508 Me: ok and how did you think of that

509 SA: um she turned it into a test ((laughs))
510 Me: <<laughing> oh did she? ha ha ok (.) well i mean
511 but the idea of it y' you can see like it it was it
512 a group work or an independent work;
513 SA: it was it was an independent and we got to look up
514 heidelberg and um
515 Me: does that interest
516 SA: yeah
517 Me: yeah
518 SA: yeah i like to look at the pictures ((laughs))
519 Me: right yeah ok
520 SA: <<laughing> so> i didn't really understand what it
521 was talking about cause it was way to far ahead of
522 me but
523 Me: but that could be a benefit couldn't it?
524 SA: yeah
525 Me: do you like that do you like how it's uh always a
526 step ahead,
527 SA: um
528 Me: even though [it's like]
529 SA: [i think possibly] that's that was TOO
530 much ahead
531 Me: ok
532 SA: cause: i could probably get one word in (.) ten
533 Me: ok
534 SA: right,
535 Me: [so fell behind a bit]
536 SA: [but um] it does kinda like when you think that
537 you're getting up there it kinda puts everything
538 into place you know this is where i am (.) .h not
539 too far but at least I got you know stAdt over here
540 that means city <<laughing> you know>
541 Me: right right so you pick out words
542 SA: yeah
543 Me: do you find that that's motivating? or not
544 motivating
545 SA: um,
546 Me: in in a si' in a situation where there's (.) words
547 you don't know (.) but you do find yourself
548 somewhere in there what do you find does that mo'
549 demotivate or motivate;
550 SA: it's kind of moti'vating and intimidating at the
551 same time
552 Me: ok
553 SA: like (.) [like]
554 Me: [it's a] scary motivation, ((laughs))
555 SA: yeah ((laughs)) yeah you s' you want to cause you

556 want to go oh::: i want to be able to understand
557 this: and i wanted to be completely fluent right,
558 but the same time you're like i'm never gonna learn
559 this
560 Me: so it can have those SET[backs]
561 SA: [yeah]
562 Me: yeah (.) alright um:: (-) .h when you (.) learn (.)
563 grammar concepts or or go to memorize things (.)
564 how do you do that how do you how do you study for
565 things like that;
566 SA: um: i don't (-) grammar tends to be my stronger
567 point (.) so [like]
568 Me: [takes a] little time (.) to do it
569 SA: um:: (-) not really usually i can just i like if i
570 just go over it (.) like VOCAbulary for me is
571 that's the part i have to memorize
572 Me: sure
573 SA: um but the grammar like generally once i read it
574 once i'll get the feeling for it and from then on i
575 can do it (.) but vocabulary (.) um i find is the
576 trickiest (.) um:: (--) i don't really have a lot
577 of <<laughing> strategies for memorizing it except
578 (.) memorizing it by rote you know> um stadt city
579 stadt city stadt city and then maybe i'll try and
580 think of a picture of it in my head or something
581 but (.) i don't know a lot of little tricks that
582 people do
583 Me: right (.) so for you it's a matter of (.) um: just
584 going it ov' over and over it again and again and
585 just trying to
586 SA: mm-hm
587 Me: ok
588 SA: and i try and like um: (.) something that like in
589 french class um: something that she does is uh: in
590 the textbook (.) they have um:: (-) they have like
591 after like a story they put like little thing about
592 a city that they do (.) um: they have the
593 vocabulary and after that they have like stuff like
594 um: THIS means the same thing as THIS and or: fill
595 in the blank with the word which really helps
596 because then you use it right [but if]
597 Me: [yeah]
598 SA: you just have a list of words (.) and you don't use
599 it i (.) i have a hard time learning that
600 Me: right so you need a you find that you need a
601 context?
602 SA: yeah

603 Me: to apply it to?
604 SA: mm-hm
605 Me: and that works for you;
606 SA: especially the verbs
607 Me: [yeah]
608 SA: [()] like they'll give you a verb but:
609 because verbs generally mean more than one thing i
610 don't usually know where to put them, (-) and so i
611 prefer have verbs in a context
612 Me: ok (.) right (-) um: (.) so (-) that's vocabulary
613 (.) so vocabulary for you is more difficult and it
614 takes you it' you need a context to apply and blah
615 blah blah
616 SA: [mm-hm]
617 Me: [do you think] that (-) there should be more
618 emphasis on learning vocab in this course then?
619 because it's difficult for you?
620 SA: um,
621 Me: or do find that it's good it's just one of those
622 things that you just have to do yourself and:
623 SA: well i think like ju' the fact that we spend so
624 much time on grammar is a really good help because
625 it means that once we get into the vocabulary .h
626 (.) we'll be able to use it right away,
627 Me: right
628 SA: um (.) i would like to have a little bit of a' more
629 vocabulary but (.) um: (.) it's not it's not really
630 such a thing i i think the grammar is better
631 Me: ok so do you then think uh:: it's a good thing to
632 learn grammar and (.) you know language use at the
633 same time i mean or uh would you rather learn gl'
634 grammar explicitly and then start using the
635 language more-
636 SA: um: i think at the same time
637 Me: mm-hm
638 SA: [uh]
639 Me: [as] a speaker if you go to speak do you do you
640 feel confident even if you don't know something is
641 exactly right to say it or do you want to fix it in
642 your mind first
643 SA: i i usually have to fix it in my mind yeah i can't
644 i can't really (.) speaking is my worst i can
645 usually like i can usually write it really quickly
646 on paper but when [i speak] it i have to go over it
647 in my mind
648 Me: [sure]
649 Me: ok um (.) i always find it interesting because it

650 it was the same for me (.) that um: i would be so
651 afraid to and it sounds like the same to SAY
652 something (.) um: even though i KNEW (.) certain
653 things and I and I was very good at at stringing
654 words together and grammar and all the written and
655 th' you know understanding and it was no problem
656 .hh I always find it interesting that um: people
657 have trouble (.) or or this sort of block where
658 they they're SURE that you know they're not
659 confident enough to say (.) thIs and and even if
660 it's wrong they or even if it's right they they
661 they're SURE that it's still not
662 SA: [it's just way out there]
663 Me: [they shouldn't do it] yeah ((laughs)) and i always
664 wonder why that is you know because it's ()
665 there's some sort of psychological barrier in a way
666 that they [just can't]
667 SA: [yeah]
668 Me: get past it
669 SA: it might be the i think it might be (.) like when
670 normally when you see a person who's speaking and
671 they make a mistake you kind of get this
672 psychological idea that they're they're not very
673 bright (.) because [the language is kind of]
674 Me: [so it's a societal thing too]
675 SA: yeah it's associated with intelligence maybe (.)
676 maybe just that you're afraid of making a language
677 error (.) like when you see someone who says like
678 ain't no doubt about it right you're like that
679 person's not very smart even though they could be
680 like (.) PhD
681 Me: [right]
682 SA: [you know] but just because they speak that way'
683 (.) and maybe:: it has something to do with that
684 that you think that you'll look (.) you know that
685 you'll look (.) not so smart to other people
686 Me: yeah because uh: so in our (.) basically what
687 you're saying in our society we always associate
688 how people speak with their intelligence
689 SA: mm-hm
690 Me: and so (.) um people in the class if y' they know
691 that you're getting a good mark (.) and y' you
692 don't want to put yourself out there and then have
693 them look at you differently right [by saying]
694 SA: [yeah]
695 Me: and especially the teacher right because they knOw
696 you're doing well and and what not

697 SA: mm-hm
698 Me: and so that's make's you nervous
699 SA: mm-hm
700 Me: yeah that's how i felt too [i understand]
701 SA: [yeah]
702 Me: um and genders (.) uh there's something that latin
703 also has ((laughs)) what do you think about about
704 memorizing genders,
705 SA: [um:] i don't think much about it quite honestly
706 Me: [or or]
707 SA: ((laughs)) i can't say i'm a fan ((laughs))
708 Me: yeah so that's uh up there with uh like you know
709 you have to learn with the nouns all the genders is
710 that [also] an issue context related issue because
711 it's d' difficult to
712 SA: yeah yeah because they don't generally have like
713 a reason to be that gender um: (.) and normally
714 like there are lots of words that you think sound
715 like it should be like masculine gender like not
716 like not that you go like you know (-) boy:: is
717 masculine right but because just the way the word
718 sounds,
719 Me: right the ending or something
720 SA: yeah like pe' they're always like just listen to it
721 like (.) but it still ((laughter)) doesn't sound
722 like it i i still think it should be the other way
723 [you know]
724 Me: [right yeah yeah]
725 SA: and and it's generally the opposite and (.) so yeah
726 Me: do you have a way to memorize the gender with the
727 word or do you just try to memorize it as one group
728 you don't try to be like oh you know the desk that
729 seems like a male object [or something like that]
730 SA: [<<laughing> yeah] um (.)
731 i try and um (-) um sort of uh: (-) kinda put it
732 together with other words of the same gender
733 Me: ok
734 SA: like once i know some [things,] a certain gender
735 i'll go like
736 Me: [ok so you group them]
737 SA: yeah i'll kinda go like ooh and this has to do with
738 like table in german is like male and boy is male
739 (---) i don't actually know how to say boy in
740 german ((laughs))
741 Me: junge
742 SA: <<laughing> oh there you go>
743 Me: <<laughing> that's ok>

744 SA: we haven't learned that one yet
745 Me: no no yeah: you've only learned like family parts
746 uh [of the family]
747 SA: [yeah] so you kinda like try and relate boy and
748 table together so i don't know maybe i'll see a boy
749 running on a table or something
750 Me: =so you try to make a context out of them and
751 [and]
752 SA: [yeah]
753 Me: connect them by like certain (.) bridges ge'
754 bridging gaps and [stuff like that]
755 SA: [mm-hm otherwise there'd] just be
756 no way <<laughing> i don't think>
757 Me: right (.) um (.) the textbook (.) vorsprung (.) do
758 you think it's a good book in your opinion
759 SA: [hmmm]
760 Me: [or (.)] what do you think about the book
761 ((laughs));
762 SA: i think probably as a textbook it's pretty good but
763 i think that it kind of is pretty bare (.) like it
764 doesn't seem very detailed like
765 Me: mm-hm (.) what do you think's missing in it'
766 [that if it's bare]
767 SA: [((sighs))] explanations [((laughs))]
768 Me: [explanations, ok so]
769 SA: yeah they put in a whole bunch of new words and
770 never explain them (.) and they just assume that
771 you get it and then it's such a pain in the butt to
772 go to the .h to the dictionary and look it up
773 Me: ok
774 SA: and um i they kind of gloss over everything really
775 quickly i think
776 Me: [i agree ((chuckles))]
777 SA: [like all::] they'll give you this concept and
778 here's two examples and move on
779 Me: sure
780 SA: and um wh' you have to pack like that's a pretty
781 full course in in that book so you can kinda see
782 why they would do it but (.) it just doesn't seem
783 like like on it's own it's very strong
784 Me: mm-hm
785 SA: i don't think
786 Me: no on it's well i guess it's not meant to be on
787 it's own [(.) too]
788 SA: [no it's supposed to go with the class]
789 Me: do you find the explanations i' when you go to
790 study do you find that you're relying more on the

791 book explanations or the teacher explanations
792 SA: always the book (.) i don't usually pay attention
793 to the teacher's explanations
794 Me: ok do you ever:: uh:: (.) in class then you know
795 when when something's being s' discussed a certain
796 concept .h does the teach' and the teacher would
797 uh: probably explain it more or or go into more
798 detail use examples does that cement it better?
799 SA: yeah (.) yeah so yeah like basically like i'll look
800 at the book (.) and generally like like like we'll
801 all be in class and she'll go over like a grammar
802 thing (.) and um: i'll just listen and i'll get my
803 feel for it and you can you know so that way
804 intuitively you should know what's coming and what
805 it should sound like right and then just read the
806 book and that should kind of put everything in
807 place
808 Me: right ok so you always go back to the book to sort
809 of cement after the explanation was sort of um
810 explained maybe a bit more in class,
811 SA: mm-hm
812 Me: ok so you do take you do use the book a lot then
813 you um: don't go to other sources for explanations
814 you're really
815 SA: yeah just the book
816 Me: using the book explanations? ok um: (--) what was i
817 gonna ask (---) how much um: when the teacher you
818 say in class your teacher explains how much does
819 that affect your understanding of the material does
820 that make a significant contribution (.) um:: or is
821 it really more relying on the book in the end;
822 SA: i think in the end i could probably do without the
823 entire lecture and class i would think
824 Me: ok
825 SA: um: even when i study like i never take any notes
826 in class even when i study um: but often by the
827 time we get to the end of the chapter i don't
828 really remember what we did in class anyway,
829 Me: mm-hm
830 SA: but because i read it from the book (.) um i'm i'm
831 fine when i get to the test
832 Me: ok
833 SA: um: (-) i'm okay enough with languages that i can i
834 can look at an example and i can probably go from
835 there and i'd be fine in other situations (.)
836 probably other students like could not because they
837 don't have like some people just aren't good at

838 languages and they couldn't do that which is i
 839 think probably the textbook is weaker for them
 840 really for me i mean for me it's fine but i'm kind
 841 of looking from the point of somebody who naturally
 842 wasn't very good at languages
 843 Me: [right]
 844 SA: [MATH] you know like <<laughing>> i couldn't do
 845 math i mean>
 846 Me: ((laughs)) so you think in general that (.) with or
 847 without the teacher's explanation you would learn
 848 it anyway
 849 SA: yeah
 850 Me: you would get it
 851 SA: and if i didn't i would just go online
 852 Me: right so you have your ways of independently
 853 finding the answer
 854 SA: yeah
 855 Me: if you couldn't remember the teacher's thing but
 856 usually you wouldn't need another source
 857 SA: yeah
 858 Me: you'd be ok (.) ok um: (.) so: i've already asked
 859 you that question um: (.) um: i'm trying to
 860 remember what you wrote on the questionnaire um: in
 861 terms of how you say or you think of yourself as a
 862 language learner um: and u' in the past were your
 863 experiences with french good or bad; [i can't
 864 remember]
 865 SA: [um it was
 866 pretty good] i actually wasn't too good at it um:
 867 in the very beginning (.) um: and then i don't know
 868 like i was like nine or so somebody gave me like my
 869 grandparents gave me the book' NO YEAH i i went to
 870 her house i went to my grandma's house and i saw
 871 the book on french and um: she was like and by that
 872 point i had already been doing spanish cause my
 873 aunt had a spanish book
 874 Me: ok
 875 SA: and [um:]
 876 Me: [reading the book]
 877 SA: yeah
 878 Me: yeah
 879 SA: and um: and when i saw the book i was like oh: you
 880 know: i'm in french class and because (.) up until
 881 grade three i had really bad french teachers and
 882 once i hit grade four and i had changed to a
 883 different school um: (.) the teacher there uh she
 884 was just talking words i just didn't i had never

885 heard before every oth' everybody else seemed to
 886 know what she was talking about so i was really
 887 behind and so i went to i went to my grandma's
 888 house um: that summer like in grade four i was just
 889 (.) i got through grade four
 890 Me: right
 891 SA: but um: i was just kinda baffled for the first
 892 couple of months before i got into the swing of
 893 things and i managed to find my grandma's book and
 894 i just read it and from there like
 895 Me: it was clear
 896 SA: yeah you know (.) i didn't (.) I think like people
 897 would go oh you're so good at french and it's
 898 because you're family is french isn't
 899 Me: ((chuckles))
 900 SA: because my family is french [and]
 901 Me: [ok]
 902 SA: but they never spoke french to me they speak french
 903 with each other but never to me ((laughs))
 904 Me: right right
 905 SA: i mean [and um]
 906 Me: [so you] attribute that to the book
 907 SA: yeah i mean i'll just say yeah it' cause my
 908 family's french cause i'm not gonna tell people no
 909 i just i read a book ((laughs))
 910 Me: [yeah yeah ((laughs))]
 911 SA: [you know] <<laughing> who reads books on french>
 912 but um: but yeah i mean if that french book is
 913 really what gAve me and it probably is what (-)
 914 cemented like um: like my language learning (.)
 915 things cause i did spanish um: probably when i was
 916 even a little bit younger than that but: um:: (-)
 917 it was: more of like a vocabulary thing rather than
 918 a grammatical thing (.) at first cause at that
 919 point i didn't know what grammar was so
 920 Me: right
 921 SA: just kinda like [learning the words]
 922 Me: [learning words]
 923 SA: and but (.) when i read the french book i just
 924 started out with all the grammar' and i got the
 925 idea for grammar,
 926 Me: sure
 927 SA: and so: when you learn young enough it go it goes
 928 into your head enough and so from I think that's
 929 probably like the impetus for (.) just being good
 930 at language learning
 931 Me: ok so um: ever since then you've had sort of this

932 the light switched on or [type thing?]
933 SA: [yeah:]
934 Me: yeah so you've been open to it and and
935 understanding it pretty easily by the sounds of
936 things anyway if i'm not mistaken (.) now you said
937 um i' just on your questionnaire i think it was you
938 that said um:: that (-) you do well in class but
939 that you especially attribute it to the fact that
940 you really want to learn and you really .h um: uh:
941 you know take the effort and and you notice other
942 people that don't and but you really feel that .h
943 um: for you it's it's a great attribute of your
944 learning that you really have this motivation there
945 to um: independently learn everything (.) um: does
946 that once again coming back to the whole in this
947 group situation i mean in a class where where
948 you've learned other languages without anybody
949 around right' (.) um: do you find that which
950 situation do you prefer now now that you're sort of
951 back into the classroom with languages;
952 SA: um
953 Me: or can you say yet do you know, ((laughs))
954 SA: mm: (---) probably i don't
955 Me: you don't know yet?
956 SA: no (.) i don't really have en' i don't think i have
957 enough experience
958 Me: mm:
959 SA: like i've i've been thinking that um (.) like if i
960 was like i can't take german two next semester
961 because it conflicts with another class that i have
962 to take
963 Me: right
964 SA: but i wanted to and i'm thinking that like once
965 this class is over, like and you get into n' part
966 two of it i think that's where like i'll really
967 start to think see things pick up, and i think that
968 the classroom learning would be a lot more you know
969 (-) som' a lot less negative for me,
970 Me: mm-hm
971 SA: so i gu' i would think that i probably couldn't
972 make that decision until i had that experience
973 Me: right ok so but you wouldn't mind learning from a
974 book again
975 SA: oh no
976 Me: [you do it all the time]
977 SA: [it's still my preference]
978 Me: ok so in generally in general you find that you

979 learn well anyway so it's y' you've noticed that
980 there are differences though in the classroom which
981 you've said already but probably that either way
982 you will learn it
983 SA: yeah
984 Me: is that what i'm understanding, cool um: what about
985 um: do you guys watch videos at all (.) in the lab?
986 SA: um: (.) not in german we do in french
987 Me: ok well what do you uh: what do you does that are
988 you f' d' you when you cause you said in the
989 classroom you're getting this visual (.) thing
990 where in the book you don't get this as much you
991 get more written explanations and what not (.) does
992 that benefit you the visual?
993 SA: um:
994 Me: cause you were talking about heidelberg and
995 mannheim
996 and all that [pictures]
997 SA: [yeah] the visual the visual does help
998 i don't like i don't think it actually um: (.) i
999 don't think i actually learn anything from it but
1000 it kind of ups the motivation a bit because you
1001 think i could go to you know i could go to
1002 heidelberg and see all this stuff and talk to the
1003 people and if you didn't see a picture of
1004 heidelberg you probably wouldn't be that interested
1005 in doing it
1006 Me: =that's true yeah (-) so the visual is a neat
1007 aspect that you don't get in a book but you're
1008 still gonna learn it without it is that what you're
1009 saying,
1010 SA: i would still i'd still go online and maybe go onto
1011 like um like wikipedia and look up some pictures of
1012 heidelberg anyway just [to see] what it looks like
1013 Me: [right] that's awesome yeah
1014 no i i'm getting that you're a very motivated
1015 learner i definitely can see that
1016 SA: well in certain things
1017 Me: well at least in this uh: topic uh area
1018 SA: yeah i couldn't say that across the board and there
1019 are some classes i kinda slack off in because i
1020 don't really enjoy it but
1021 Me: so when you like something you don't need external
1022 push you can go on your own and do it
1023 SA: yeah

Interview 2

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

December 13th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 35 minutes 57 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semi-structured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: OK (.) um: (-) SO (.) today we are going to i'm
02 gonna ask you some more questions but um: (.) the
03 first part is gonna be basically (.) a little more
04 (.) detailed (.) um: from what we were sim' like
05 similar to what we were talking about last time
06 SA: mm-hm
07 Me: um: i guess more: explanation a little more detail
08 from you just um: (.) yeah more in depth (.) and
09 then i have some more general questions about (-)
10 well you'll see (.) they're more general
11 SA: ok
12 Me: the first ones relate to um: (.) some stuff that we
13 talked about (.) um so (.) basically in the first
14 interview you said you were a very fast grammar
15 learner
16 SA: mm-hm
17 Me: um: and i want you to try and describe what you
18 think the exact processes are that go on in your
19 mind when you're learning grammar and what like
20 what makes it fast for you and i w' just as don't
21 worry about being all correct (.) w' usage of words
22 i just wanna see what what you think it is that
23 makes it like that,
24 SA: ok i'll have to think about it because i've never
25 really thought about the process before [so]
26 Me: [yeah] well
27 that's ok just sort of
28 SA: ok
29 Me: take your time
30 (3)
31 SA: hm
32 (30.00)
33 SA: ok i guess probably um: the way that i learn it (-)
34 is that um: like i'll i'll compare it to like in
35 german how they have to like with the um:: oh i can
36 never remember the names of the tenses not the
37 tenses but the
38 Me: the cases,

39 SA: yeah the cases like with the the one case (.) whose
40 name i can't remember wh' which i cAn use
41 ((laughs)) [anyway]
42 Me: [accusative maybe?]
43 SA: yeah maybe yeah probably that um where you have to
44 have the n at the end?
45 Me: mm-hm
46 SA: um prob' i think what happens is i generally like
47 um: like you learn you learn it one way
48 Me: mm-hm
49 SA: (.) .h and um: then the teacher introduces another
50 way to you (.) and i think i probably learn by
51 comparison,
52 Me: ok
53 SA: like um i know how to do it the other way (.) and
54 then i have to kinda take a look at the difference
55 in between the situations? of where you use it?
56 Me: mm-hm
57 SA: and um: (.) so: i would compare the difference to
58 like the cont' not the context but uh: (-) like in
59 one in (.) one situation um:: (.) like it's a lot
60 different to say that i AM: you know something then
61 to say (.) you know i gAve you something like
62 Me: mm-hm
63 SA: one of them ha' like they're just completely
64 different things like there's like one to do with
65 BEING something
66 Me: right
67 SA: and the other one to do with it has nothing to do
68 like there's really no connection
69 Me: ok
70 SA: so i kinda like just compare it to like the
71 different situations and: (.) kinda like different
72 i don't know like psychological concepts of (.) of
73 why maybe you would change it,
74 Me: right
75 SA: even though that's probably not the reason but i
76 just try and think of stuff like that to help um
77 re' um: to remember better?
78 Me: ok so you use like the context of each case
79 SA: yeah
80 Me: how the person would be in this ins' sentence
81 technically?
82 SA: =yeah [()]
83 Me: [or the object whatever]
84 SA: yeah like the relation of what they're talking
85 about and how they change like how like the

86 sentence is structured is different (.) because of
87 the relation to the object i guess maybe you [could
88 say? (.) and um::]
89 Me: [yeah
90 yeah hm that makes sense]
91 SA: i like from there you kind of once you go over it a
92 couple times you can kinda get the feeling of like
93 a natural instinct of what kind of case it would be
94 because you know like you've thought about the con'
95 like not not the context but you know the situation
96 Me: yep
97 SA: well it's the same thing ((laughs))
98 Me: yeah no that makes sense um:
99 SA: but i think that's probably how i learn stuff like
100 grammar
101 Me: ok so that makes you fast able to qui' pick it up
102 faster maybe then
103 SA: [probably]
104 Me: [um: um:] if you did s' a different way you think,
105 SA: yeah
106 Me: well that's the easiest for you i guess
107 SA: yeah it's not like a thinking thing like it's just
108 something (.) like an automatic thing,
109 Me: mm-hm
110 SA: you know that you don't i don't really think about,
111 Me: mm-hm
112 SA: but um: (.) i guess subconsciously i guess like (.)
113 i can see the difference in my minds
114 Me: mm-hm
115 SA: and i think that's probably
116 Me: [ok]
117 SA: [because] y' can cause like as long as you can see
118 the differences between the situation .h it's clear
119 that they're really far apart so you don't mix them
120 up,
121 Me: right. (.) ok (.) so that's how you would
122 differentiate
123 SA: yeah
124 Me: and make things (.) correct or do things correctly
125 ok um:: (.) and if i remember correctly you also
126 said you were (.) very fast grammar learner
127 attributing to that um:: and vocabulary was a
128 little harder it took more time
129 SA: mm-hm
130 Me: um: so what processes then do you think need to
131 happen in order for vocabulary to be (.) .h learned
132 SA: i think you definitely it's um: like ((laughs)) (-)

133 like all the teachers i guess say you just need to
134 use it i can like like if they give you a word
135 because you're just like (.) especially verbs
136 they're so different so many different ways that
137 you can use a verb' (.) and one of them might be
138 wrong' (.) like like they'll they'll give you a
139 word and they'll sAy you know this means um: (.)
140 you know (.) becOmIng: (.) and they'll just say
141 becoming but if you look in the like the thesaurus
142 there's a whole bunch of different definitions of
143 becoming .h but what they dOn't tell you is this is
144 only if it's one of them
145 Me: right
146 SA: so you kinda have to be able see it um: in
147 different situations before you can rEally use it
148 (.) and um that's just for understanding but also
149 for memorization for me as well
150 Me: mm-hm
151 SA: i can't really memorize it unless i've heard it
152 somewhere before
153 Me: so um: whereas grammar you can feel it quicker like
154 or exam' with your example with the cases you can
155 feel [inherently where things go]
156 SA: [mm-hm yeah it's like an inner thing] yeah
157 because you don't have to memorize it you just have
158 to sort of () you just have to sort of
159 kind of like um (.) soak it in
160 Me: right
161 SA: like it's like even if you don't remember any of
162 the verbs like the words for the verbs' (.) inside
163 like you still know how they wOUld feel and if they
164 gIve you a verb you can kind of put it into place
165 Me: ok (-) um:: (.) ok when you're reading something in
166 german like a text (.) what what do you think about
167 in your mind to understand the text
168 SA: [um i gener']
169 Me: [what do the steps]
170 SA: i generally um:: ((coughs)) it's bad but i
171 generally try and do word for word translation in
172 my head
173 Me: mm-hm
174 SA: like um: like if i was to read a text in german um:
175 (-) i would ha' like in my head i would just g'
176 like i th' it'd say like guten tAg and i would i
177 would think to myself HELLO you know,
178 Me: mm-hm
179 SA: and i would just you know in my head i'd just do it

180 word for word because i think that's the easiest
181 way,
182 Me: mm-hm
183 SA: i'm generally not very good at um: (.) you know (.)
184 just reading the language and NOT thinking of it
185 (.) in english,
186 Me: ok
187 SA: and i generally ha' (.) i generally don't learn
188 words by like just hearing it over and over again,
189 Me: mm-hm
190 SA: i'll s' i'll never i'll never figure <<laughing> it
191 out> i have to actually have somebody tell me this
192 is what it means
193 Me: ok (.) ok so it's (.) pretty much always a (.) word
194 word you read one word [at a time]
195 SA: [yeah]
196 Me: and and then [sort of make sense of a sentence]
197 SA: [yeah and i' in my head] i like i can
198 do it like (.) um: (.) it's not like a slow process
199 but just like as i'm reading it i'm still like (.)
200 i see it in german but i'm thinking about it in
201 like (.) [in] its english context
202 Me: [ok] ok so you start slow and build it all
203 together
204 SA: mm-hm
205 Me: .hh um:: (.) and in the lab i know you said that
206 you guys haven't done a whole lot of um: listening
207 stuff in the lab or whatever i don't know you have
208 your quizzes there or something
209 SA: mm-hm
210 Me: .hh but um: (-) if you were doing when you were
211 ever doing a listening comprehension activity (.)
212 um:: (.) what do you how do you succeed through
213 those like what what are the steps you go through
214 then in in order to come (.) to finish an exercise
215 or something like that
216 SA: um:
217 Me: =can you describe the process of that
218 SA: can you give me an example of a listening activity
219 just so i know what [type you're] looking at
220 Me: [have you] ok well have you
221 done for example the: lab manual section in the:
222 workbook? do you know how there's lab manual (.)
223 chapter one to three or whatever,
224 SA: ((laughs))
225 Me: ((laughs)) in vorsprung
226 SA: um::

227 Me: you know how you have the green workbook
 228 SA: yeah (-) [so the exercises?]
 229 Me: [there's like] yeah like the ones where
 230 you're in the lab and you put on the earphones and
 231 you go [to the]
 232 SA: [no we don't] do those
 233 Me: =you don't do those ok
 234 SA: =no (.) no we do them .hh (.) um we do them like on
 235 our own
 236 Me: yes
 237 SA: but um: without listening like generally they're
 238 just homework exercises fill in the blanks
 239 Me: so the first half of the book you do only
 240 SA: yeah i don't [think we've gone into the second]
 241 Me: [ok cause the second half] has the the
 242 lab where you need the [listening]
 243 SA: [yeah]
 244 Me: ok well well for example then maybe you can
 245 remember doing the lab test
 246 SA: yeah
 247 Me: where the teacher would read out some texts
 248 SA: mm-hm
 249 Me: or a text (.) alright whatever (.) and you were to
 250 find the details (.) so eh' you know answer the
 251 questions [based] on the text
 252 SA: [yeah]
 253 Me: =so what what what d' what do you do when you hear
 254 and you know you have to complete this exercise so
 255 what are the steps you take to k' successfully
 256 complete that exercise'
 257 SA: =ok um: (--) well i would hear it and: (.) usually
 258 it works different for me for like when i read it i
 259 translate it into english but when i hear it i
 260 don't generally need to do that
 261 Me: ok
 262 SA: um: so: it k' it's kinda like um (.) so that
 263 () kinda completely ruled out because i
 264 generally (.) when people say like (.) gehen sie an
 265 die tafel or <<laughing> whatever> you know i don't
 266 i' like it's just like a (-) it's kinda like
 267 english you don't really think about what people
 268 are saying you [just] know that that's what they're
 269 saying
 270 Me: [ok] yeah
 271 SA: um: (.) but like when you're reading you have even
 272 in english you have to think about what you're
 273 reading because (-) i don't know i guess it

274 requires more attention,
275 Me: right
276 SA: and um: so: from there i would just um: (-) .h uh
277 like just after listening (.) um it requires like
278 for that it does require a lot of attention
279 Me: mm-hm
280 SA: and so um: (.) sometimes (.) um it's easy to
281 actually miss stuff that's important,
282 Me: yeah
283 SA: and: (.) so (-) it's kinda like a dissection
284 <<laughing> you know>
285 Me: ok
286 SA: like a word for word dissection what did she say
287 here what did she say here
288 Me: yeah
289 SA: um because sometimes um when you're listening to
290 that closely everything se' sorta seems to (.) for
291 me anyway it sorta seems to (-) blur into each
292 other and (.) um (-) there's like s' the longer
293 like paragraphs because there's so many more um:
294 like there are more a lot more detail than just
295 simple sentences,
296 Me: mm-hm
297 SA: um there's often a lot of um like words that you
298 don't know in there that kinda th' like kinda
299 threw you off,
300 Me: sure
301 SA: just a little bit (.) um even though you can kinda
302 get around them (.) and so it's kinda like picking
303 out um: (.) yeah i did get this (.) and this is
304 what i heard (.) and i missed this entire gap
305 Me: right
306 SA: but i heard the first part and i heard the last
307 part so i can kind of (.) like (.) formulate what
308 the middle might have been? you're not sure?
309 Me: ok so you can infer based on
310 SA: yeah and so there's a lot of um: (.) yeah
311 inferences i guess (.) in that
312 Me: mm-hm
313 SA: um: <<whispering> what was the question again?>
314 Me: just how (.) what you do like d' when so when she
315 would be reading the text out (.) also f' like what
316 so you've said y' you listen to it and try to you
317 know figure out what's going on
318 SA: yeah
319 Me: but in terms of like do you do anything else while
320 you're listening?

321 SA: um what do you mean by anything else
322 Me: like some people you know jot notes down [like in
323 english even]
324 SA: [oh::] um:
325 generally we have to like i don't know if i would
326 do that naturally but because um: usually when
327 she's reading a paragraph or when anybody's reading
328 a paragraph it requires you to be writing something
329 down,
330 Me: right
331 SA: um so i wouldn't know if i would do that naturally
332 cause i've never
333 Me: ok so you're usually doing it because that's the
334 answer
335 SA: yeah
336 Me: but uh' d' does she would she have read it out
337 twice three time maybe
338 SA: yeah she definitely does that all the time
339 Me: ok so you would just try and answer it as you go
340 each time? and you wouldn't take one time to sort
341 of take notes and then fill in?
342 SA: i no i yeah i would answer it um like i would do as
343 much as i can that first time,
344 Me: ok
345 SA: and the times after that would be: um: like getting
346 what i may have missed or i didn't have time to
347 write down but by the time i'd gOt around to
348 writing it down i forgotten what she'd said in the
349 first place
350 Me: mm-hm
351 SA: and i would just catch up on that
352 Me: ok um:: (-) i guess that's pretty much what i (.)
353 meant um: last question uh: (.) of this section
354 what do you think you put the most emphasis on when
355 you're studying what to you do you pick up first to
356 study thinking ah: i really need to get this part
357 of (.) it ((laughs))
358 SA: mm: (-) well i generally go for like the
359 meaningless vocabulary like the stuff that you like
360 that you like you don't use like um the food
361 Me: mm-hm
362 SA: like that one i just pour over because (.) like i
363 always forget the names for the food because i i
364 don't go to home and go hey mom can I have
365 [some you know german chick' word for chicken]
366 Me: [((laughs)) yeah]
367 SA: but and you don't use that in class either so

368 there's basically if y' if i don't study that um
369 that part of the vocabulary i know i'll forget it
370 because there's not any chance that i'm gonna get
371 to do that in class really maybe one day we'll go
372 over a little bit
373 Me: mm-hm
374 SA: um: and she'll just go over the words you know get
375 the pronunciation (.) but the next day um: (.) you
376 know the words start to mean a little bit less
377 Me: mm-hm
378 SA: and so that's where i s' focus the most on (.) and
379 then i focus on parts of the grammar that look the
380 same as other parts of the grammar' (-) like there
381 are some grammar rules that are almost the exact
382 same as other grammar rules,
383 Me: mm-hm
384 SA: and i always focus on them just to make sure i do
385 have it clear in my head that they're different
386 Me: ok
387 SA: and um: because um: lots of times like you
388 understand the grammar rules but when you like have
389 to write a sentence,
390 Me: mm-hm
391 SA: um:: (--) you just you just like you don't have
392 that feeling yet because you haven't used it enough
393 Me: mm-hm
394 SA: and so it's still the kinda it's still thinking
395 about it' (.) and so i just have you just have to
396 kinda (.) like with the cases because there's only
397 like small differences in when you put n here and
398 when you put n here .h you have to make sure like
399 and put it into sentences and just make that sure
400 you do get the difference
401 Me: right
402 SA: um: (.) because it's sUch a (.) you know such a
403 tiny difference
404 Me: but it's wrong if you don't
405 SA: yeah
406 Me: =yeah
407 SA: =and um: (--) um: like when you have like the words
408 for unsere and stuff like that
409 Me: mm-hm
410 SA: um those two like they're all really similar so i
411 kinda focus on that just to make sure because
412 especially in test time you're kinda self doubting
413 Me: yeah
414 SA: and you're like ok i know this is this but do i

415 really know or am i just thinking that i know
416 Me: mm-hm
417 SA: so (.) i kinda (.) obsess about that in making sure
418 that i DO know ((laughs)) you know
419 Me: yeah ok .h um: (.) so when you're studying like
420 right now probably for the <<laughing> final> (.)
421 which is coming up (.) um:: what do you put the
422 most emphasis on (.) of these skills writing (.)
423 like wri' like being able to write being able to
424 read a text being able to listen to a text i know
425 this probably doesn't apply for this but just
426 generally when you study for things or being able
427 to s' to speak well like what do you think are the
428 most important when you study to you like (-) wha'
429 what does that wha' what does your studying reflect
430 the import' like how do you rank those-
431 SA: um: if i could i'd probably i'd probably choose::
432 to study to speak well it's hard to study for that,
433 Me: mm:
434 SA: unless you know somebody who speaks that language
435 and i don't,
436 Me: right
437 SA: um so that's kind of generally cut out;
438 Me: ok
439 SA: from my studying especially because it's so little
440 cause i'm never gonna like i'm never gonna see that
441 on the exam anyway?
442 Me: ok
443 SA: um we did have a speaking test but it was it was
444 more of a writing and then memorizing
445 Me: mm:
446 SA: so it wasn't really speaking there was a little bit
447 of speaking cause um the one the one uh german
448 german lady came in and asked some questions but um
449 they were really easy questions so it didn't
450 require a lot of speaking ability
451 Me: ok
452 SA: um maybe it was more like what's your favourite
453 colour and then
454 Me: sure
455 SA: you would just answer your favourite colour right
456 because you just you had already written that
457 already so many times it was already memorized
458 Me: [ok]
459 SA: [so] you didn't need to think about actually
460 speaking it
461 Me: mm-hm

462 SA: and so that kinda just leaves um writing and
463 reading and what was the other one?
464 Me: listening
465 SA: listening um: listening i generally um: (.) don't
466 really pay attention to either because um::(-) i
467 find that if you study the reading (.) listening
468 and writing kind of falls into place
469 Me: ok
470 SA: um: (-) i don't know if that's the same for
471 everybody like lot' that's just because .h (-) you
472 know that's how i learn for myself but i know that
473 lots of people have an easier time um like
474 listening and speaking whereas i'm the opposite but
475 like generally if i read something um: (.) by
476 reading something is how i tEnd to like (.) pick up
477 (.) um:: like the intuitive kind of grammar rules,
478 Me: mm-hm
479 SA: like .h (.) um: like if somebody just said to me
480 hh, this is the nominative nominative case and
481 didn't give me like .h an example of a sentence
482 that showed the nominative case i probably wouldn't
483 understand what they were talking about .h like the
484 difference so they would just have to say yes you
485 know i have a book and then i go oh: ok so like
486 reading gives longer correct examples
487 Me: mm-hm
488 SA: um rather if you're writing you don't know if
489 you're actually writing it properly but if you're
490 reading it (.) chances are you're reading it from
491 like somebody who DOES know what they're talking
492 about
493 Me: mm-hm
494 SA: and um: you can kinda (.) learn that way
495 Me: ok
496 SA: just cause it (.) you can see it in action i guess
497 Me: so when you study you're aiming for written and re'
498 (.) re' uh: writing and reading comprehension
499 mostly because that's what mostly comes into play
500 in this course
501 SA: mm-hm
502 Me: so it's just it cOmes basically or the um
503 priorities are for the exam because that's what
504 SA: yeah
505 Me: [yeah (--) you study ()]
506 SA: [yeah definitely i i go for the exam] because i
507 like the listening and .h speaking but i like the
508 grades better ((laughs))

509 Me: yeah ok (.) well (-) uh ok so a couple other things
510 um: (.) when i say when you hear people say to
511 learn learning a foreign language or to learn a
512 foreign language (.) .h what are some key things
513 that pop into your head about that [or terms]
514 SA: [oh::: oh ok]
515 (.) just just the words make happiness ((laughs))
516 Me: ((laughs))
517 SA: don't you think just learning a foreign language
518 and then it makes you just feel happy
519 Me: ok
520 SA: um:: what do you mean by key terms
521 Me: well anything that just comes into your mind when
522 you hear just people talking about learning a
523 foreign language like what (.) terms as in words
524 basically [like what]
525 SA: [ok]
526 Me: nothing technical i mean i (.) so like happy th'
527 happiness ((laughs))
528 SA: ((laughs))
529 Me: [<<laughing> one of them<>]
530 SA: [happiness definitely is happiness]
531 Me: and like i mean uh negative positive right anything
532 anything that that goes along [with the process of
533 learning]
534 SA: [ok ok so] not like
535 um: ok so anything
536 Me: yep
537 SA: ok even like learning stuff
538 Me: yep
539 SA: ok probably like um: (--) um: (--) oh my gosh
540 ((laughs))
541 Me: ((laughs))
542 SA: i have ideas in my head but i'm trying to think of
543 words for them (--) um: (--) ((sighs)) what's the
544 word i'm trying to think of i knOw it
545 Me: ((laughs))
546 SA: i knOw it (.) it's ((sighs)) it's the one i haven't
547 read anything about it in a long time which is why
548 i forget the term for it but i generally think of
549 um: (.) not bilingualism but um: like you know when
550 people study like children who have um: like (.)
551 two languages?
552 Me: uh-huh
553 SA: and they're studying like the difficulties and that
554 they might have?
555 Me: mm-hm

556 SA: um i generally think of that term but i can't
557 member what that term is at this moment (-) um:
558 Me: ((laughs))
559 SA: oh no ((sighs)) [i read a lot about it too]
560 Me: [well bilingual' (.) child
561 bilingualism] like
562 SA: yeah (.) yeah just that
563 Me: i mean that's good enough probably [(.) to describe
564 what you mean]
565 SA: [yeah that's it]
566 yeah i generally think of that and how like um: (.)
567 they kind of play off each other like each language
568 plays off each other' (.) and: then i think about
569 um: (-) i think a lot about um: (.) like the
570 psychological stuff that goes along with language
571 learning,
572 Me: mm-hm
573 SA: like um: (-) like um: (.) verbal ability
574 Me: yep
575 SA: and stuff (--)
576 Me: ((laughs)) that's ok
577 SA: [um:]
578 Me: [i like] anything at all you know i mean
579 SA: yeah:
580 Me: if someone came up to you and was like oh: i'm
581 thinking about taking a foreign language or why why
582 should i or like what (.) what do you think about
583 them you know like [or]
584 SA: [i think great,] [you know]
585 Me: [((laughs))]
586 what would be difficult [or if] somebody was asking
587 you
588 SA: [so like] um: hh,
589 difficult;
590 Me: =or a couple things like
591 SA: like frustration (.) i would think of that word
592 Me: yeah
593 SA: just as like a des' description of something that
594 you would feel while doing it
595 Me: sure makes sense
596 SA: and them um: (.) PAYoff
597 Me: payoff that's a good one
598 SA: yeah and um: just um: (.) like PRIDE
599 Me: mm-hm
600 SA: you know in being able to do something like that
601 Me: mm-hm
602 SA: and then um: i would think along the lines of um:

603 (-) um: TRAVEL
604 Me: travel,
605 SA: you know and just how you could benefit from that,
606 Me: mm-hm
607 SA: and um: is that kinda what you're going for?
608 Me: that's yeah that's good i like that [(laughs)]
609 SA: [ok] just stuff
610 along those lines i would probably .hh likemost of
611 what i what i think about like language learning
612 Me: mm-hm
613 SA: is generally about you know how good it makes you
614 feel ((laughs))
615 Me: YEAH confidence boosting and that sort of thing
616 SA: yeah
617 Me: ok (.) and being different
618 SA: [yeah and being different]
619 Me: [i you seem to think] from your last interview you
620 liked learning languages because uh
621 SA: =yeah
622 Me: especially more obscure ones with your esperanto
623 [book] and what not
624 SA: [yeah] yeah [stuff]
625 Me: [right']
626 SA: that are like mysterious and it just c' adds [it
627 kinda adds']
628 Me: [the
629 unknown]
630 SA: yeah like an element you know?
631 Me: sure
632 SA: =of you know not danger but of like ((laughs))
633 Me: ((laughs))
634 SA: you know well
635 Me: mystery
636 SA: yeah mystery
637 Me: yeah (.) the unknown
638 SA: yep (.) definitely the unknown
639 Me: ok um: (-) once again more general what
640 characteristics do you think people or somebody
641 would bring with them would have to bring with them
642 in order to successfully learn german or a foreign
643 language like what are some characteristics that
644 people need to have to be successful
645 SA: um: (.) well they would have to uh: (.) not be (-)
646 like (.) cynical
647 Me: ok
648 SA: not cynical but (.) judgmental you know they would
649 have to you know cause generally i don't know like

650 i get i'm one of the types to get really offended
651 <<laughing> like>
652 Me: yeah
653 SA: um: ((laughs)) at the fact that you know (.) um:
654 (.) i don't know like in uh: (.) in frEnch you know
655 (.) you know a man a husband you know is like a
656 husband but a wOman is a still just like a wOman
657 you know
658 Me: mm-hm
659 SA: like a wife is a woman like they don't really
660 change the names until modern times
661 Me: ok
662 SA: you know kinda sexism in language you know
663 Me: mm-hm
664 SA: that really turns me off [i'm just]
665 Me: [so people should be open
666 minded maybe?]
667 SA: =yeah and like there's lots of cultural things that
668 pop up when you uh: (.) when you learn languages
669 and you have to be kinda (.) you know let it go
670 ((laughs))
671 Me: right right
672 SA: but um: it's generally not offensive stuff so
673 except for the sexism i just don't like that
674 Me: yep
675 SA: and um: they would have to uh: (.) you know lots of
676 people just kinda like they're like oh: you know
677 this is just a fad you know well they don't think
678 it's just a fad but they think WOW GREAT i wanna
679 learn GERman and they're like oh: wow: you know
680 it's kinda hard (.) maybe i'll just stop going to
681 clAsses (.) and um lots of people would do that and
682 they would have to not be like that and (-) if
683 you're gonna be like that like lots of people like
684 that i just you know don't bother;
685 Me: mm-hm
686 SA: like NOT because we don't want you there but just
687 (.) why waste your time if you're not doing it for
688 a good reason;
689 Me: right
690 SA: um you mi' as well just a wait until you're ready
691 to do it instead of wasting your own time (.) and
692 then disappointing me and making me sad and angry
693 with YOU because
694 Me: ((laughs))
695 SA: i'm like why aren't you liking this (.) but um: (-)
696 and they would have to uh: (.) you wouldn't have to

697 go in and have lots of knowledge of grammar (.) um
698 i guess maybe for a class you would have to
699 Me: mm-hm
700 SA: like y' (.) you need to know have more abilities
701 for grammar for taking a class but if you're just
702 gonna go to the country (.) .h and learn by picking
703 it up (.) that's a better way for people to do it
704 who don't have (.) grammar ability
705 Me: mm-hm
706 SA: cause people t' tend to be able to do that really
707 easily even not easily but a lot quicker even if
708 they don't (.) um: (.) naturally pick up on
709 languages
710 Me: mm-hm
711 SA: so: um: (.) you probably wanna read up on grammar
712 before you came into a class (.) just to make it
713 easier because if they c' like the teachers don't
714 have time to sit down to you because when you're
715 learning a language you in like formally in a
716 classroom you sort of need to have an idea of nouns
717 and verbs (.) and:
718 Me: [what the subject is]
719 SA: [indirect objects] exactly but: um: (.) if you
720 don't know that (.) the teachers not gonna have
721 time to explain it to you just so that way you can
722 move on (.) and so you should probably read a book
723 and kind of refresh yourself on that before you go
724 before you go into the class and
725 Me: mm-hm
726 SA: you know and have to learn it while you're in class
727 while you're already trying to learn how to do it
728 in GERman
729 Me: right
730 SA: because it there are some differences between the
731 languages and um: (-) so definitely like not even a
732 book like you don't have to read a book but like
733 i'm sure you can get like one of those little like
734 things from wal-mart where they give you those big
735 plastic rectangular sheets
736 Me: mm-hm
737 SA: and just goes over the basic [like] even in english
738 Me: [yep] mm-hm
739 SA: and they could just basically do that (.) hh, and I
740 think that would h' (.) like (.) that would push
741 somebody a lOnG way into making a language learning
742 class a lot easier because (.) um: (.) i' l' like
743 in language classes even when they do explain what

744 nouns are they didn't they generally don't do it
745 (.) um: in a way that you can understand'
746 Me: mm-hm
747 SA: because they they uh: (.) they change it to suit
748 the language that they're in' (.) and but you can't
749 relate to that because you don't know the language
750 yet
751 Me: right
752 SA: so you had to do it like from an english context
753 Me: ok
754 SA: and do it from there
755 Me: so open minded (.) det' like consistent [or
756 determined to] (.) finish and do well
757 SA: [consistent
758 and determined yeah] yeah
759 Me: um: (.) AND what was the last one that you just
760 said um:
761 SA: um:
762 Me: =what's a good word to describe it
763 SA: [refresher course is (.) yeah BASE knowledge of
764 grammar yeah]
765 Me: [well a base base knowledge (-) or something yeah
766 ok
767 SA: yeah ((coughs))
768 Me: um:: (--) ok when you lear' when you're learning a
769 foreign language do you have a s' specific goal in
770 mind? or is it more just the fun of it process;
771 SA: um: generally um: my specific goal would probably
772 be to be able to conduct a conversation
773 Me: ok
774 SA: [like it's no']
775 Me: [so you don't] want to be like super amazing you
776 [just] wanna be able to
777 SA: [no] well i would like to be super amazing but i'm
778 realistic ((laughs))
779 Me: [sure of course] ((laughs))
780 SA: i would love to i've never reached that kind of
781 super amazingness in any languages so i'm like by
782 now i'm pretty like down to earth on how far i'm
783 ACTually gonna get (.)
784 Me: what d' [what]
785 SA: [so]
786 Me: do you think keeps you from being super amazing
787 what's the [missing component]
788 SA: [well] (-) well a' like a' when when
789 people write books about a language which is
790 generally as far as you're ever gonna go in l' um:

791 (-) um they generally stop at a certain point
792 that's before fluency (.) like it doesn't get any
793 harder once you get to like nobody ever writes a
794 book that seems to finish off fluency right,
795 Me: right
796 SA: =[they just h,]
797 Me: =[do you think it's possible?]
798 SA: it's (.) probably not
799 Me: yeah
800 SA: um unless they really because generally what
801 prevents fluency (.) is um: like: (.) like (.)
802 idioms and
803 Me: [yeah]
804 SA: [you know] sayings and all that that you REALLY
805 need because like fifty percent of conversation
806 like is like (.)
807 Me: not authentic [((laughs))]
808 SA: [yeah] it's not it's not formal stuff
809 that you get in (.) in the textbook
810 Me: mm-hm
811 SA: like so you need to be able to know that and so:
812 (.) i think the only thing that could REALLY (.) h,
813 get you fluent (.) is um: (.) being able to go to
814 this:: (.) to a maybe not even to the country but
815 to spend a lot of time people (.) who speak that
816 language
817 Me: mm-hm
818 SA: so that way you could pick up on all those things
819 Me: yep
820 SA: .h um: (.) because like even like (.) like somebody
821 might not even understand what they were what i was
822 saying if i say pick up on
823 Me: right
824 SA: because that is generally not something that you
825 would (.) that they would put into a textbook
826 Me: yep
827 SA: because they would say learn: or you know just
828 [something] more
829 Me: [sure] (.) simple
830 SA: yeah and um: (.) but like like i said like fifty
831 percent of your language that you speak (.) is: (.)
832 like (.) sayings and
833 Me: mm-hm
834 SA: stuff that can't be translated (.) properly and (.)
835 [so you can't get fluent]
836 Me: [so it's important to]
837 SA: yeah

838 Me: so you think a book can't do that then
839 SA: mm-hm yeah so you couldn't not unless the book was
840 based (.) on teaching you (.) um: (.) like if you
841 if you were to find like if you were like as high
842 as like you get to fren' in french and you knew all
843 the grammar and you knew a LOT of vocabulary you
844 don't need to know it all (.) um: (.) and somebody
845 wrote like this big book about like every single
846 possible like saying that somebody could say like
847 not even just like um: (.) the po' that's the pot
848 calling the kettle black right but (.) just even
849 smaller like little things like i'm going to go
850 hang out with my friends
851 Me: mm-hm
852 SA: um: just stuff that like even that wouldn't go into
853 like a book of sayings
854 Me: mm-hm
855 SA: um: but it's just such a common thing to hear
856 Me: yep
857 SA: it just prevents fluency that you don't know
858 Me: sure
859 SA: although you could probably figure out from the
860 context cause that one's pretty easy
861 Me: yeah [but there are other ones]
862 SA: [but there are others] yeah (.) and i think
863 that's probably what prevents um: (.) fluency
864 Me: ok (-) um: (.) when do you have the feeling that
865 you've learned something;
866 SA: um::
867 Me: like how do you notice;
868 SA: well cause um: i usually try to like (-) um: (-)
869 like i go online (.) and i'll go into like a like a
870 chat room
871 Me: mm-hm
872 SA: of the other person's language and i'll just
873 basically see whether how much i need to use that
874 altavista babelfish translation
875 Me: ((laughs)) yeah
876 SA: and um: if i don't need to use that that much then
877 i feel like i've learned something ((laughs))
878 Me: okay
879 SA: but that's my ((laughs))
880 Me: yep no okay that's [your] measuring way of
881 measuring it
882 SA: [yeah] yeah
883 Me: ok so you notice it when you go to communicate and
884 you you don't have as many problems as before,

885 SA: or if i'm reading something or if i'm rea'
886 Me: mm-hm
887 SA: =like even going ahead in the textbook if i'm
888 reading something (.) .h that's ahead of the
889 textbook and i still know what it's saying then i
890 st' i feel like i've learned something
891 Me: okay (.) do you learn german differently than other
892 foreign languages you've learned or is it a similar
893 process-
894 SA: i think it's the same um: (.) i think (.) i have i
895 haven't really had that much experience with german
896 but um: (-) it's (-) .h um: i probably learn it (.)
897 generally kind of consistently because it's rather
898 easy but (.) like it's not like uh: other uh: the
899 more harder language where you kinda have to f'
900 you're forced to learn it differently because (.)
901 they're just (.) so out there
902 Me: [like what language]
903 SA: [and so different] like um:
904 Me: is harder [for you]
905 SA: [like if] you were to learn chinese like
906 it's just it's there's NO similarities to english
907 but german's pretty similar
908 Me: mm-hm
909 SA: so: learning german is kind of like is kind of like
910 uh: (.) it's not (.) SUCH a difficulty to learn
911 you're not really you don't really have to like
912 struggle a lot with it (.) like you do in other
913 languages
914 Me: [right]
915 SA: [and] the: the spelling is pretty uniform so
916 Me: mm-hm
917 SA: um: (.) but uh: (.) it's kinda like (.) forming a
918 sentence in german isn't too much different than
919 forming a sentence in english because the lots of
920 the sound of it is a lot the same
921 Me: mm-hm
922 SA: and it's pretty easy to easy to pick up on (.) um:
923 how you should form a sentence in german (.) i
924 think
925 Me: [yeah]
926 SA: [just] because it's so similar like (-) .hh EVEN
927 (-) words that aren't connected in english i would
928 say to german like they sound a l' really english
929 Me: ok
930 SA: that could just be me ((laughs))
931 Me: (laughs))

932 SA: it just german sounds [really english to me]
933 Me: [i had that too when i some
934 words]
935 SA: yeah they're like there were just like sentences
936 they would come out with you know and i'm like oh
937 my god that sounds just like english
938 Me: yeah
939 SA: even though it's not english
940 Me: yeah
941 SA: it's it's really interesting that's what i like
942 about german
943 Me: cool
944 SA: which is really cool too because have you ever
945 have you ever like looked in gaelic irish gaelic?
946 Me: mm-mm
947 SA: irish gaelic i tried that and um the spelling is
948 killer
949 Me: yeah
950 SA: right it's terrible spelling [(laughs)] and you
951 can never learn it but
952 Me: [oh:]
953 SA: like wOrd for wOrd you can literally with irish
954 gaelic translate it into english
955 Me: mm-hm
956 SA: it like i can't explain it but (.) like the grammar
957 i don't know they say i' they say it's so:
958 different from the english but to me it's exactly
959 like english
960 Me: mm-hm
961 SA: you know it's really interesting to y' (.) there's
962 just like there's this website and um and like TO
963 GO like that's the only other language i've ever
964 seen although i i haven't studied most languages
965 that actually uses two different words for to and
966 go
967 Me: ok
968 SA: you know like english does rather than like aller
969 Me: [right right right]
970 SA: [you know]
971 Me: yeah
972 SA: and so it's really exact translation
973 Me: so it's [similar]
974 SA: [and (.) yeah] (.) i don't know how i got
975 into gaelic ((laughs))
976 Me: ((laughs)) that's okay um: i just this is the last
977 question (.) and this is kind of a fun one
978 [(laughs)]

979 SA: [okay]
980 Me: what words would you use to describe the GERMAN
981 language,
982 SA: oh:
983 Me: ((laughs))
984 SA: it's guttural
985 Me: guttural?
986 SA: i just love that it just sounds wonderful (.) yeah
987 cause there's they talk from like right here i
988 think
989 Me: yeah [that's your']
990 SA: [and um:]
991 Me: it's just that everybody's perception is different
992 but that [that's] cool yeah
993 SA: [yeah] yeah and uh: (.) it sounds (.)
994 attitude
995 Me: ((laughs))
996 SA: you know you know that's how it comes off when you
997 think that they're like you know and it just seems
998 that everything they say has like an emphasis
999 Me: yeah
1000 SA: it just ((sighs)) (.) i've really only heard it in
1001 movies ((laughs))
1002 Me: ((laughs)) [yeah]
1003 SA: [i haven't] really hard anybody talking
1004 yet but uh usually when you go to a movie and you
1005 hear german they've got like there's this persona
1006 Me: hopefully it's not like the nazi war movies where
1007 like all you hear is screaming people [((laughs))]
1008 SA: [((laughs))]
1009 (-) yeah]
1010 Me: ((laughs)) well i mean it's a hollywood thing i
1011 guess but ((laughs)) [that's funny]
1012 SA: [but it generally] german
1013 sounds like it has a lot of personality to it it'
1014 (.) um: it doesn't sound bland;
1015 Me: no
1016 SA: and uh: ((coughs)) is that the kind of thing that
1017 you're looking for [on that?]
1018 Me: [yeah no] that's good i'm
1019 looking for whatever you wanna say on that
1020 ((laughs)) i think it's cool
1021 SA: it's just really great the way it sounds
1022 Me: yeah (.) um what about words describing germanY ha
1023 ha
1024 SA: germanY?
1025 Me: i kno' maybe if you've never been there fine but

1026 just what you're perception is
1027 SA: um: you kind of think of um: (.) i kind of think of
1028 kind of like (.) ((coughs)) (-- kind of like a (.)
1029 not farmer but kind of like rustic
1030 Me: ok
1031 SA: is kinda like the impression that i have for it (.)
1032 um: just kinda like (.) manliness you know and
1033 burly and
1034 Me: ((laughs))
1035 SA: um: like even the women you know it's kinda like
1036 the idea that i have of germany i don't know why
1037 and i'm sure it's absolutely not true but like if i
1038 was to ever have a stereotype of germany i would
1039 think of like burly people who eat lots of sausages
1040 and y' and you know cause sausages are such a manly
1041 thing to eat right?
1042 Me: ((still laughing)) yeah [meat and potatoes
1043 ((laughs))]
1044 SA: [and that's probably what's
1045 yeah (.)] exactly
1046 so it kinda really (.) bumps up why i might think
1047 that you know germans are like these burly rustic
1048 manly people because they're always eating sausages
1049 and like meat and
1050 Me: ((laughs)) yeah and they kind of hammer that in
1051 your head in vorsprung too for whatever reason
1052 SA: yeah
1053 Me: =they go all oh:: it's a stereotype but then they
1054 make you talk about it forever and it makes you
1055 [feel like it's real and then you just get angered
1056 at it cause it's not real but (.) it's funny]
1057 SA: [<<laughing> yeah (.) exactly yeah] [and then]
1058 Me: [pretty]
1059 SA: =of course there's um: (-) you see it completely
1060 like if you actually looked at a picture of germany
1061 it's like like a brothers grimm fairy tale you know
1062 it's so [pretty] and um: (.) fantastical i guess
1063 you might wanna say and it's completely different
1064 Me: yeah
1065 SA: but
1066 Me: or like heidelberg and [mannheim]
1067 SA: [yeah] [yeah]
1068 Me: [i guess] you don't
1069 really
1070 SA: well we saw a little f' of uh: a few of pictures
1071 cause we looked at the: website
1072 Me: mm-hm

1072 SA: and did some stuff and they're just you know it's
1073 really pretty and um it's the opposite of you what
1074 you would think like when you think of like german
1075 scenery it's completely opposed to the german
1076 people
1078 Me: ((laughs)) yeah or the perception of german people
1079 that you have [((laughs))]
1080 SA: [yeah ()] the german (.) the
1081 perception of german people yeah
1082 Me: ((laughs)) now does that play a role in your
1083 learning german? or is that just sort of like
1084 SA: yeah definitely because it's so much fun to like
1085 put yourself into like the place of uh: .h somebody
1086 who's german (.) and has this guttural kind of way
1087 of talking that's kinda like uh: you know?
1088 Me: yeah
1089 SA: you know kind of arnold schwartzenegger, .h and it
1090 makes it a lot more fun to think of yourself AS
1091 that type of person having fun being that kind of
1092 person (.) i don't know ((laughs))
1093 Me: ((laughs)) that's awesome
1094 SA: well (.) [it is fun] ((laughs))
1095 Me: [sweet] ok (.) that's it then
1096 SA: ok
1097 Me: thank you very much for your time
1098 SA: no problem

Interview 3

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

January 20th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 9 minutes 53 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semi-structured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: alright (.) so (.) this is: the last interview (.)
02 and: um: (.) i would like to: (.) find out what you
03 perceive your learning curve is over time (.) and:
04 um: (.) what i'm gonna get you do is draw that on a
05 piece of paper (.) and um: explain (.) you know the
06 bumps and the curves in the road and that type of
07 thing (.) .hh and i have an example here (.) of
08 mine ((laughs))
09 SA: ok
10 Me: .hh um: just so that you have an idea of what what
11 i mean (.) um this is when i was in spain (.) um: i

12 stayed in spain for one month doing a language
13 course and so this is how i perceived what i (.)
14 what my learning curve was like (.) .h so i'd
15 already taken 101 20 whatever two years of spanish
16 so when i came i was already you know somewhere (.)
17 with a decent knowledge
18 SA: mm-hm
19 Me: so i started myself here and my (.) um: (.) my
20 learning of course increased sort of slowly because
21 there was (.) there was no jump in knowledge you
22 know i had already had a base so i was sort of
23 slowly [learning] stuff
24 SA: [mm-hm]
25 Me: and just being in the country culture (.) increased
26 naturally (.) so this is just you know (.)
27 <<laughing> what i think happened> (.) and um: (.)
28 then at the end we had a a big exam and so i (.)
29 um: (-) studied a lot (.) and felt that i really
30 you know nailed a lot of (.) um: (.) concepts and
31 so i felt that i made a big jump in my learning (.)
32 and so then in the end i had left with having
33 gained you know a decent amount of spanish
34 SA: mm-hm
35 Me: so that's (.) what i (.) perceived it to be (.) so:
36 SA: ok so (.) my learning curve (.) of um:
37 Me: german 101
38 SA: german 101 ok
39 Me: from beginning semester to end of semester (.) and
40 how you perceive that
41 SA: are you planning on teaching german?
42 Me: in like my life? ((laughs))
43 SA: yeah
44 Me: <<laughing> um:> (.) um: yeah
45 SA: it just it just seems that um: (.) you're
46 interested in like (.) like how people learn maybe
47 because you want to (.) teach
48 Me: yep no for sure (.) definitely a practical side of
49 it yep
50 SA: ok ((draws))
51 (18)
52 SA: .hh ok so: (--), hh (.) when i started i was at
53 rock bottom ((laughs))
54 Me: that's fine yep
55 SA: well i knew guten tag
56 Me: ((laughs)) well i mean when you start a beginner
57 course you're supposed to not know anything [right
58 so]

59 SA: [yeah
60 ((laughs))]
61 Me: ((laughs))
62 (3)
63 SA: um:
64 (3)
65 what i'm gonna do is i'm gonna divide it into
66 months cause i think that'll help me
67 Me: ok
68 (7)
69 SA: to october (-) to n' (.) oh that's kinda () oh
70 well to november (.) OH (.) well there's a little
71 bit cause now i'm in german 102 (.) so (.) that
72 little bit i'll have as the extra one
73 Me: perfect (-) who's your teacher
74 SA: um i'm actually doing it distance ed
75 Me: oh you are [oh that's so interesting]
76 SA: [which i thought] i would like but i
77 really don't
78 Me: oh really
79 SA: because i j' well it's not because of the distance
80 ed (-) it's just because um: (-) i find that
81 without being in the classroom the tekbook the
82 textbook is useless and isn't very (.) like it's
83 just so bleh:: you know i don't really like the
84 textbook (.) it doesn't seem to be kinda like
85 chronol' chronological
86 Me: mm-hm
87 SA: it seems to go all over the place (.) and um: also
88 just um: distance ed courses and it's not just
89 german cause i'm taking another one i'm also takin
90 french that way (.) i just (-) i find it so hard to
91 find exactly what they want you to do because
92 they'll put over here that this is due a certain
93 day and then like on some other webpage they'll say
94 you also have to participate in this just (.) you
95 have to like (.) be on top of so much stuff
96 Me: yeah i can imagine
97 SA: which isn't really language learning but just (-) i
98 don't like it
99 Me: m' maybe mis' just unorganization
100 SA: yeah
101 Me: disorganized (.) yeah
102 SA: um: november (-) december (--) ok we'll stop at
103 december
104 Me: mm-hm
105 SA: because that's when it stopped

106 Me: mm-hm
107 SA: and then this will be (.) february
108 Me: k
109 SA: ((coughs)) so there's gonna be a little break cause
110 i didn't do anything in december
111 Me: ((laughs)) yeah
112 SA: kind of slow: at the s' beginning because we mostly
113 did um:
114 (3)
115 like (-) my name is so there wasn't much learning
116 in that beginning part
117 (4)
118 and then what did we do (.) and then kind of
119 (5)
120 faster as it went up
121 Me: mm-hm
122 SA: cause it was kind of h' (--) things but (-) in
123 between (.) i would say it was like a straight (.)
124 cause it all it was all like (-) grammar
125 Me: mm-hm
126 SA: then kinda (.) blah:: again cause it was (.) lots
127 of vocab here
128 Me: right
129 SA: and it was more mostly stuff like chair table so it
130 didn't really feel like you were doing a whole lot
131 Me: mm-hm
132 SA: and then i'll go higher towards the end and then
133 even higher for exam time (.) just like you did
134 Me: mm-hm
135 SA: um hh,
136 (7)
137 blah::
138 Me: ((laughs))
139 SA: ((laughs))
140 (4)
141 this is like the first chapter of number four is
142 mostly (.) it's got a lot of stuff that we already
143 did there's like (-) um: (-) bike riding and stuff
144 like that
145 Me: mm-hm
146 SA: and (-) they just taught you some more imperative
147 forms (-) which (.) you know (.) read it once you
148 don't really need to read it again so there's not
149 much learning there (.) i'll put up explanations
150 Me: mm-hm
151 (22)
152 Me: does the midterm factor in there at all (--) or do

153 you remember how
154 SA: i never even (.) pai' i never even rem' (.)
155 remembered that (-) um:
156 Me: well i mean but was it? like was it a big increa'
157 did you study a lot for that or did you find it um:
158 SA: well i just (---) the day before i just reread the
159 bo' the first couple chapters but (.) i gu' i' i
160 guess it probably like it's part of the steep part
161 because um kinda what i'd forgotten a little bit by
162 not using (.) um just reminded me to do it so i'll
163 keep it in that steep area
164 Me: ok
165 (7)
166 SA: there wasn't a lot of memorization for the midterm
167 (-) so i didn't have to do that but
168 Me: what about the speaking test (-) how would you've
169 SA: um: (.) i didn't do too well on the speaking test
170 the one of the people that we were with (-) um: (.)
171 i was with in my group well i got eighty (.)
172 <<laughing> but i mean like so> but our speaking
173 test kinda sucked because um the person was injured
174 (.) and so: she was stuck in toronto for a couple
175 days so we didn't have a lot of time to work on it
176 (-) so it was kind of (.) i don't really
177 <<laughing> think about that speaking test> cause
178 it was a (.) [disaster]
179 Me: [so you don't] think the: (-)
180 preparations you made for that was any type of (-)
181 jump in learning for you?
182 SA: well it would've been um: cause when i was like
183 cause i originally wrote the original one (---) and
184 um: (---) it was really complex cause i wanted to
185 like you know go out there and like be daring and
186 like try and do big sentences but the people i was
187 with they kinda cut all the complex stuff out and
188 just made it really simple
189 Me: mm-hm
190 SA: and so that way there wasn't really learning cause
191 it was all like (.) just basic phrases so
192 Me: k
193 SA: not really
194 (3)
195 SA: what was november
196 (5)
197 um: (.) vocab mostly lots of vocab (---) and then
198 towards the end preparation for (-) exam (--) and
199 (.) more complex grammar (--) with like um: (---)

200 i don't remember i never remember what the grammar
201 stuffs are called so (.) i'll just put complex
202 grammar
203 Me: <<laughing> that's ok>
204 SA: they're like put it into this tense and all that
205 i'm like <<laughing> what tense though> (.)
206 <<whispering> give me an example>
207 Me: ((laughs))
208 SA: um: (---) reviewish stuff
209 (11)
210 SA: there
211 Me: good
212 (5)
213 um:: (.) let's see do you (.) can you draw also a
214 (.) um:: (.) ((coughs)) a line of your motivation
215 throughout (.) so on the same axis (.) how you feel
216 that your motivation (-) played a role
217 SA: stee:p at the beginning
218 Me: mm-hm
219 SA: and then sorta (.) sorta dwindling off i tend to do
220 that
221 Me: mm-hm
222 SA: and then perhaps stee:p again just something else
223 caught my interest probably like the (-) i don't
224 know like like cause originally like i started off
225 like oo:: new language new culture la la la right
226 Me: mm-hm
227 SA: and so i'm really excited and then i'm kinda like
228 yeah: i'm in class and now i just work <<laughing>
229 [you know]>
230 Me: [yeah yeah]
231 SA: so i kinda like (.) get bored of it
232 Me: sure
233 SA: and then maybe i'll you know i'll watch a movie or
234 something and it (.) has people talking german and
235 i'll go like OH: that sounds really good and i'll
236 get excited again
237 Me: mm-hm
238 SA: so it just kinda goes like that
239 Me: right
240 SA: i never really lose interest but (.) just kind of
241 (-) blah (.) that's a just a general thing
242 Me: ok so it's (.) constantly going up with a couple
243 sort of plateaus
244 SA: yeah (-) pretty much
245 Me: alright (.) good (-) alright well that's a good
246 explanation and like i said (--) j' didn't need a

247 long interview today so that's good
248 SA: oh that's it? ((laughs))
249 Me: that is it (.) for today i have a lot of
250 information from everybody so
251 SA: i got to display my artistic merit though
252 ((laughs))
253 Me: that's right (.) today was an a very artsy-fartsy
254 day (.) ((laughs)) ok (.) thank you
255 SA: you're welcome

Interview #1, Student B

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

November 24th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 33 minutes 11 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semistructured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: is it on hello ok good ((laughs)) (-) cool (.) so
02 basically (-) try not to talk too quietly cause
03 SB: o:k
04 Me: i mean it's (-) it picks it up but you know it's a
05 little bit
06 SB: yeah i [()] so that's ok
07 Me: [too far away]
08 Me: that's good OK (-) um so yeah i just wanted to ask
09 you some questions about um: (.) german so far and
10 (-) your experiences as I told you so um: what do
11 you think so far of the language lessons like the
12 german 101 language lessons (.) how do you enjoy
13 them
14 SB: um: i like it i like it because i like learning
15 other languages like i think that's really cool so
16 i enjoy it (.) it's (.) a little bit slow paced for
17 me just because; (.) um: (.) when i was younger
18 like my: (.) my dad my grandparents were german and
19 my dad is german like he was born in canada but
20 [that kinda thing (.) so:]
21 Me: [right right right (.) heard it at home]
22 SB: yeah when i was younger (.) well i went to german
23 school when i was younger
24 Me: [OH: ok]
25 SB: [but like] we were part of a german club and i did
26 like german dancing and [everything]
27 Me: [where::] in kitchen' in
28 kitchener?

29 SB: in leamington i'm from leamington
30 Me: where is that exactly?
31 SB: uh: forty-five minutes from: (.) windsor? like you
32 know point [pelee?]
33 Me: [OH::] yes yeah yeah ok (.) the most
34 southern point of ontario,
35 SB: yeah that's right
36 Me: cool oh i didn't know that there was a german (.)
37 community there
38 SB: oh yeah [so it's everywhere] so i did all that
39 Me: [oh huh interesting]
40 yeah cause uh often times the the german
41 communities are in towns although kitchener doesn't
42 really stand true to that but (.) like lEAmington
43 doesn't sound german
44 SB: [no (.) no it doesn't]
45 Me: [do you know what I mean so] (.) not that it hAs to
46 sound german but you wouldn't know from the name
47 [basically] (.) that's interesting
48 SB: [no]
49 Me: so um: (-) what do you enjoy specifically about (-)
50 the clAss like the (--) i mean obviously you're you
51 have a reason to learn german you're you are german
52 SB: yeah
53 Me: you're sort of motivated that way too (.) but i
54 mean when you're in the class like what things do
55 you specifically enjoy about german class
56 SB: um: (-) i like um i like the grammar <<laughing>
57 because> i find it easier so it's like easier for
58 me to do
59 Me: ok that's interesting ((laughs))
60 SB: um: well like (.) i i find that like once you've
61 learned one course it's kind of (.) .h they all
62 kind of or like one language kind of (-) like
63 interacts with the other like (-) with (.) um verb
64 conjugation because i did french all the way
65 through high school and then even first year
66 Me: mm-hm
67 SB: like it's (.) i can look at it and be like ok well
68 you drop this ending and you add this and this is
69 how it conjugates whereas like other people in my
70 class will be like (-) oh my gosh i don't get it i
71 don't understand what's going ON i don't know
72 what's going ON and like i find that easier,
73 Me: ok
74 SB: it's just
75 Me: so (.) learning already having then one foreign

76 language you find that that you can draw on those
77 [experiences? to]
78 SB: [YEAH exActly]
79 Me: alright that's good (.) um: so you enjoy the
80 learning the grammar because it seems easy
81 SB: yeah
82 Me: what else do you can you think of anything
83 specifically that [stands out]
84 SB: [i would like to be more fluent]
85 speaking but it's so it's hard for me even with
86 french and like everything it's hard for me to (.)
87 speak fluently i always end up like translating it
88 in my head and thEn saying it
89 Me: right (.) [the age] old problem
90 SB: [and so] yeah so that's what i find
91 difficult so i'm not a huge fan of that just
92 because
93 Me: so you're nervous about speaking
94 SB: YEAH (.) i am
95 Me: yeah (.) well that's normal i think i mean most
96 people .hh um:: (--) do you find that you i can't
97 remember exactly what you wrote on your
98 questionnaire (.) do you find that you um: (--)
99 would ra' that you would learn grammar at the same
100 time as speaking or one one first one second like
101 learn all the grammar and then learn how to speak
102 once you've got that knowledge or at the same time
103 so you build together like what would you
104 SB: um:
105 Me: do you remember (.) what you put (.) i don't know
106 SB: i think i probably put putting it together
107 Me: putting it together,
108 SB: yeah because like i have that (-) because ok even
109 like i'm drawing from french just because [i'm
110 better at that]
111 Me: [no no no
112 that's perfect]
113 SB: um: (.) but like with french like i've got a lot of
114 grammar background,
115 Me: yeah
116 SB: but now it's speaking it and i like even in high
117 school it wasn't (-) like we were we were pushed to
118 speak it but we weren't pushed THAT much to speak
119 it [because the teachers were still]
120 Me: [were you] regular french not extended or do you
121 SB: um: i was i was in regular no i never did immersion
122 i was just in public school

123 Me: ok
124 SB: and um: (.) like the teachers like (.) they they
125 tried to make you speak it but they were a lot more
126 like (-) willing to explain it in english
127 Me: ok so it was a an instance where (.) there wasn't a
128 lot of motivation from the teachers then,
129 SB: well not just that but i think even (-) like (-) it
130 was like a one hour class a day right
131 Me: right
132 SB: so you're not really put in the environment where
133 you're forced to speak it like
134 Me: mm-hm
135 SB: as if i like i'd if i went like somewhere and i was
136 in the community and i had to speak it for like a
137 month and i ha' didn't have the option of being
138 like ok i don't understand it can you help me
139 Me: right
140 SB: so i think that would help (-) more but i think you
141 have to learn the grammar to be able to
142 Me: of course
143 SB: speak it (.) [so it has] to be kind of a [together]
144 thing
145 Me: [yeah:] [yeah] um:
146 (.) so (-) if you um: (.) in' would you say that
147 you're experiences with french is um: (-) when you
148 talk about how how good you are at french or your
149 proficiency in french is it better than on the
150 reading and writing and understanding (.) than the
151 speaking?
152 SB: um: (.) yes like it's easier like i can read
153 something and then see the words and like figure it
154 out from there even [from]
155 Me: [yeah]
156 SB: like pi' picking different words but then like
157 speaking wise listening to it (.) s' like it goes
158 really quickly
159 Me: mm-hm
160 SB: and it's hard to like to pick out the words
161 Me: ok
162 SB: for me so it's easier for me to read it
163 Me: right (.) why do you think that is why do you think
164 uh: (.) uh: (.) you know the speaking seems to be
165 the last sort of (--) GOAL you know like why is
166 that the hardest thing
167 SB: i think it's just cause you have to start you have
168 to start (-) s' speaking not thinking it
169 translating it and then speaking it [and it' (-)]

170 exactly like]
171 Me: [right too
172 technical that way (.) yeah]
173 SB: ev' like ok i haven't taken french since first year
174 and i'm in third year so:: (.) for me (.) now (.) i
175 ge' (.) like it's starting to come even though i
176 haven't been taking it but it just like i think it
177 like settles in more
178 Me: sure
179 SB: i don't know i think that's what it is just the
180 fact that like it's hard to translate it and (.)
181 you have to take your time too
182 Me: mm-hm (.) what about uh: being afraid of making
183 mistakes does that affect you,
184 SB: um:: (-) y::es i think so
185 Me: yeah
186 SB: just because i don't (-) like y' nobody wants to be
187 like UM::; i don't know what i'm talking about
188 Me: right right right
189 SB: but um:: (--).h i get nervous when i'm in (-) a
190 situation where i'm nOt (-) really sure of it
191 Me: yeah
192 SB: and then that (.) that like makes you like feel
193 like oh my gosh what am i saying blah blah blah (.)
194 so like like speaking english or whatever i could
195 get up and like talk about anything i know
196 Me: mm-hm
197 SB: and i don't have a problem like that but like i was
198 in band and like when i had to play a solo i was
199 nervous because
200 Me: mm-hm
201 SB: i didn't feel as comfortable (.) with it
202 Me: right because you had to express yourself in front
203 of everybody
204 SB: yeah and because (.) like when you don't feel that
205 comfortable with what you're talking about,
206 Me: mm-hm
207 SB: and then add on that it's in a different language
208 ((laughs)) it doesn't help
209 Me: sure yeah ok (.) is there anything you (.) DON'T
210 enjoy about languages' lessons uh in the past or
211 now or something in class (.) that DEmotivates you
212 from learning?
213 SB: um: i don't know if it would be DEmotivates me from
214 learning it more like (.) i don't
215 Me: or even just sort of makes you feel frustrated?
216 SB: um:: (-) i don't really enjoy the labs

217 Me: no ok (.) th' no that's interesting to know cause
218 SB: because um: like (.) ↓like today i skipped it
219 Me: [(laughs)] that's ok]
220 SB: [but um:] (.) we what they were doing was (.) just
221 going on the internet and looking up like (.) like
222 the one day in class we went on the internet and
223 looked up ikea
224 Me: yeah
225 SB: and like i've got a course load that's heavy and
226 i'm like why am i spending an hour sitting here
227 looking at [an ikea website] like it's pointless to
228 me
229 Me: [so it seems] seems like a wa' waste of
230 time
231 SB: a waste of time exactly so
232 Me: [but]
233 SB: [and i] don't really see how it's helping me
234 looking at ikea websites or [like that kinda thing]
235 Me: [right so you don't]
236 yeah is that a general idea for most (.) web
237 activities? or is it just that o' specific one that
238 bothered you like is it um: (--) like just trying
239 to see ah' uh in the lab component there's you know
240 (.) uh: th' the workbook and the whatever (-) the
241 lab manuals right and then there's what else is
242 there there's lab tests and quizzes and all those
243 things right
244 SB: mm-hm
245 Me: um: i' wh' what about like (.) like what do you see
246 that's good in the lab is there something that you
247 can: um: (-) [is there,]
248 SB: [yeah there] definitely is like i mean
249 um: (.) the ONE day we ended up looking at pictures
250 and we went through (.) and like there was
251 vocabulary given to us from like an instance where
252 (.) where it wouldn't have been in the book and
253 it's kinda like a wedding vocabulary you know what
254 i mean so learning things like that is great and
255 even going through like the listening like when we
256 do the listening quizzes or we do the the listening
257 and trying to figure it out
258 Me: mm-hm
259 SB: that helps me (.) but (.) um: (--) there are other
260 there are other activities where it's like this is
261 pointless
262 Me: is it do you think it's more context based like is
263 it more like oh: i don't really care about going

264 shopping for furniture in german or english or or
 265 whatever (.) or do you think it' like (.) do you
 266 think if it meets (.) what your interested in it's
 267 more like (.) uh: if you did a web activity on
 268 traveling let's say (.) would that be more
 269 interesting than (.) a web activity on ikea
 270 shopping,
 271 SB: i think
 272 Me: or is it a context thing or is it (.) just the idea
 273 of being at a computer and and or what what is your
 274 SB: well like (-) like i mean (.) t' today (.) like any
 275 student can go on the internet and find anything
 276 they want right
 277 Me: mm-hm
 278 SB: so like learning to go to different websites that
 279 are german websites i understand like the point of
 280 the activity was to show you that there are
 281 websites you know german websites y' where you can
 282 get this stuff yada yada
 283 Me: mm-hm
 284 SB: but it felt more as if it was like a teaching (-)
 285 you how to use the internet and like how to go to
 286 different [websites] and (-) [go through them?]
 287 Me: [ok] [the wrong focus]
 288 SB: where it was like this this is pointless to me like
 289 and i know there are other instances where we'll go
 290 to um: (.) a website (.) that's like a german CITY
 291 and you can look at it and look at the different
 292 things it offers and that to me (-) goes back more
 293 to the culture which is (.) like i enjoy looking at
 294 that (.) but just (.) things like that i just (.)
 295 don't find useful
 296 Me: right right ok that's interesting um:
 297 (9.85)
 298 do you find that the uh: (-) the textbook (.) um:
 299 vorsprung is it uh: (.) the the lab section that
 300 you go through the actual materials they provide do
 301 you find them helpful?
 302 SB: yep definitely like i could definitely read the
 303 textbook and and (.) and know what what's happening
 304 Me: ok (.) and in the lab? (.) the: workbook part?
 305 SB: um we haven't really used the workbook that much in
 306 lab it's more like just things that are assigned
 307 during class and i find it really helpful too
 308 because i think repetition is what really (.) makes
 309 you understand [it (.) and writing it out]
 310 Me: [right right] ok yep (.) um: (.)

311 back to the textbook in general you said it's you
312 find it helpful
313 SB: yep
314 Me: what do you like about the textbook (.) like what
315 (.) specifically stands out
316 SB: i like that it's i like the way it's set up i like
317 that it goes through (.) um: (.) the different
318 things we learned like i mean vocabulary it'll give
319 you that and it'll give you (.) activities to learn
320 the vocabulary and it gives you a lot of um: (.)
321 questions that aren't (.) aren't that difficult (.)
322 but make you write out like the german words which
323 help you (.) LEARN them
324 Me: mm-hm
325 SB: and i really like the fact that (.) um: with
326 grammar it like it isn't the easiest to learn and
327 with that textbook (.) it (.) it's really well at
328 explaining it
329 Me: [ok so you like the explanations in the book]
330 SB: [like it does a really good job] yep
331 Me: =yep
332 um do you um: (-) find that the explanations from
333 the teacher (-) um: (.) as opposed to those from
334 the book (.) which one would you prefer
335 SB: i think the teacher really (.) does um: base her
336 lessons on the book
337 Me: mm-hm
338 SB: and she does say to read the book before she go'
339 before you come to class so that [you] understand
340 it
341 Me: [yeah]
342 SB: and then she's she more provides um: a quick like
343 lesson through it
344 Me: ok
345 SB: and most of the most of what we've been taught has
346 been taken pretty much directly from the textbook
347 Me: ok and do you like that,
348 SB: yep
349 Me: ok (.) and does she ever (.) go beyond it to
350 explain a concept that that does it clear up when
351 she does that or do you strictly rely on the book
352 usually
353 SB: well if (.) like i mean (.) um: (.) other people in
354 my class have more difficulties and if they do sh'
355 they will ask and she will explain it like she'll
356 go
357 Me: [go over it]

358 SB: [she's] yeah she's gone over it SO many like some
359 things some people weren't understanding she's gone
360 over nUmerous times to help you and she'll give you
361 extra work to help you do it and like mark it and
362 that kinda thing
363 Me: mm-hm
364 SB: so: (.) um: (.) for me (.) i do find it helpful (.)
365 i can pretty much understand it from the textbook
366 (.) but (.) in class (.) it does help clear up
367 anything that's
368 Me: mm-hm
369 SB: not (.) perfect ()
370 Me: so (.) how much does the teacher's (-) explanations
371 of that affect you then (.) do you think do you
372 think um: (.)if the teacher didn't explain anything
373 (.) that it would be enough from the book or do you
374 find that it's a (.) necessary complement to the
375 book
376 SB: um: in some instances it's a necessary complement
377 and in other ones (.) uh i think as it gets (.) as
378 we go like as you learn more it's getting more
379 challenging and then it is getting (.) more helpful
380 with the teacher explaining it
381 Me: right so if the teacher (.) say the teacher didn't
382 go beyond the book explanations like she just
383 reviewed what you had already known (.) would or or
384 what you'd read even if you (.) uh: understood it
385 or maybe more or less depending on what topic it
386 was (.) do you think that you would still be able
387 to learn the concepts without the extra added
388 teacher explanations or even the reworded teacher
389 explanations or do you think that um: (.) it's
390 sort of something that you could learn on your (.)
391 in your own way anyway (.) do you know what i mean
392 is the teacher explanation that different from the
393 book or does it
394 SB: no and i don't think it's as much the teacher's
395 explanation as it is (.) um: (.) like going through
396 problems (.) afterwards or like questions
397 afterwards (.) where (.) l' like when we did
398 nominative nomintative or accusative case when she
399 goes through it and she says ok this is the answer
400 to this or this is what you fill in here (.) THAT
401 helps me understand it more than her reread'
402 because the
403 Me: [ok]
404 SB: [textbook] is really clear

405 Me: right
 406 SB: and it (.) it pretty much (.) lays out (.) how to
 407 do it but it's more like the problems afterwards
 408 because it's different like reading it and saying
 409 ok i understand it and then applying it
 410 Me: right yeah ok so (.) you find it (.) that the
 411 teacher helps you the most at the sort of end the
 412 process when you're working on [the]
 413 SB: [yeah]
 414 on the application making sure that [i'm doing it
 415 correctly (-) yep]
 416 Me: [so she
 417 reinforces the explanation] and then you see the
 418 connection (-) ok that makes sense um: (.) uh:: do
 419 you enjoy (.) the class meetings um:: (-) more
 420 than say on your own like at home? (.) or um like
 421 what do you prefer do you prefer sort of your own
 422 independent sort of looking at the textbook and
 423 going through this (.) like how you say she asks
 424 you to read it beforehand (.) or do you prefer this
 425 sort of class environment where you sit there and
 426 and the teacher sa' explains stuff like what do you
 427 SB: um: i prefer the more independent because i feel
 428 like (.) um: (.) well in any class when: there's:
 429 people that understand it and then people that
 430 don't and then you have to read like go over and
 431 over it (.) and the people that do understand it
 432 get bored and the people that don't (.) you know
 433 it's helping them [which] is good
 434 Me: [mm-hm]
 435 SB: so (.) for me (.) um: (.) generally i do kind of
 436 have a little bit of a background (.) with learning
 437 languages and with german so for me (.) i tend to
 438 get (.) kinda bored
 439 Me: ok
 440 SB: and it's kinda repetitious
 441 Me: right so is this the whole i' factor where the
 442 teacher sometimes isn't or seems a little boring
 443 cause she's going a little too slow for you? is
 444 that [where that comes in (-) yeah]
 445 SB: [yeah that that kinda thing]
 446 Me: ok um: (-) so d' do you enjoy studying at home
 447 alone because you (.) you can then uh: govern your
 448 own like how much time you spend on it?
 449 SB: yeah
 450 Me: is that more what it is or is it just because do
 451 you find that you enjoy (-) learning sort of from a

452 book more or in a classroom like what does that
 453 affect that (.) uh: decision as well or are you
 454 more of a sort of a class visual learner or like a
 455 book reading learner
 456 SB: um: i am a little bit m' (.) uh: it depends (-) i
 457 think i like it learning it at home more because i
 458 can go (.) at my own pace,
 459 Me: mm-hm
 460 SB: whereas i don't feel like (.) i'm (.) waiting
 461 around
 462 Me: right (.) right (.) ok so: um:
 463 SB: but i do like the classes just because (.) i think
 464 th' they are n' they are somewhat necessary because
 465 of the exposure to the actual (.) like li' hearing
 466 (.) german spoken
 467 Me: right ok (.) so: um: (.) so in in essence then you
 468 take certain advantages or you like certain things
 469 in each one [and] it complements each other type
 470 thing
 471 SB: [yep] exactly
 472 Me: um: (-) but the lab ((laughs)) you don't like
 473 because (.) it's (.) sort of in e' it's it's not
 474 learning to you it's more a um (.) doing other
 475 things that seem waste of time sometimes
 476 SB: yeah like it's not that i dislike the lab it's just
 477 that um:: (-) there are times where i'm like oh ok
 478 i have other things i really need to do that are
 479 more important [than] this ((laughs))
 480 Me: [right] yeah (-) ok (.) so:: (-) so
 481 you've s'you've taken french classes have you taken
 482 any other (.) classes,
 483 SB: like um:
 484 Me: any language classes i mean like in a classroom?
 485 SB: no
 486 Me: no ok so what do you h' are your french experiences
 487 in class like been pretty good or: um: (-) i mean
 488 what have they been like
 489 SB: um: (-) i really enjoyed speaking french and that's
 490 why i took it all through high school and it got
 491 (.) um: i did take first year and in first year i
 492 was in 192 which is um: (.) a more of an advanced
 493 course i guess,
 494 Me: right
 495 SB: and (.) um: (--) it got to the point where i needed
 496 to devote more time to it than i (.) could? (.)
 497 which is why i stopped taking it
 498 Me: right (.) ok

499 SB: but i would like to: (.) like i would like to learn
 500 it uh i i at this point i would like to be fl' (.)
 501 able to: speak fluently in it more than i'm
 502 concerned about the grammar as much anymore cause i
 503 figure i've (.) i like i feel like i've learned
 504 most of the basics (.) and now (.) i would rather
 505 (.) work on the speaking aspect
 506 Me: mm-hm
 507 SB: so like i've been looking into things like going to
 508 quebec or doing that kind of thing where like
 509 you're immersed into it and i'm forced to speak it
 510 Me: yeah that's kinda the next step i guess eh UM: (--)
 511 is there a certain thing that uh: (.) oh no).= i
 512 missed one question do you speak any languages
 513 outside of the classroom other than (.) like have
 514 you ever (.) ok let's say not necessarily that (.)
 515 well your your heritage is german obviously so um:
 516 (.) that includes already includes german but (.)
 517 .hh i mean have you ever learned another language
 518 not necessarily learned but (.) but even started
 519 learning like a language (.) from just like your
 520 own do it yourself book or or or uh: (.) i don't
 521 know looking on the internet or or (.) friends that
 522 you have taught you nothing else, ok
 523 SB: mm: (.) [well]
 524 Me: [it's just] (.) it's interesting to know
 525 sometimes what people
 526 SB: my roommate is portuguese and she speaks portuguese
 527 Me: right
 528 SB: so like i've heard her speaking and then she'll
 529 teach me like rANdom words [but it's nothing like]
 530 Me: [right] that you feel
 531 that you have any (.) sort of
 532 SB: yeah NO: like i couldn't sit in the room and like
 533 have a conversation any (.) no (.) or even
 534 understand it (.) nowhere near that
 535 Me: cool (.) um:: (-) what kind of activities do you
 536 like in a in a language class?
 537 SB: .hh um
 538 Me: like what do you expect when you go to class that
 539 that will that should make you interested (.) you
 540 know activities that you do in class or
 541 SB: um
 542 (3)
 543 uh:: (.) like (---) i don't know really (.) um
 544 Me: do you: (-) um: (-) do you like going to a class
 545 and then the the teacher teaches and (.) and you

546 know you just sort of pay attention? (-) or do you
547 prefer that plus a mix of like (.) go and do it
548 yourself type of work where the teacher will assign
549 something and you work on it together and then take
550 it up, (.) like
551 SB: yeah i do like that i like the whole um: (.)
552 working on an activity and then taking it up
553 because .hh (.)i feel like you can you can think
554 you understand something and then be completely off
555 base and then (.) unless somebody's there to be
556 like ok no thAt's not correct and this is the way
557 you do (.) it you wouldn't know?
558 Me: mm-hm
559 SB: and so i get i like i find that helps me a lot with
560 learning grammar and that kind of thing
561 [vocabulary]
562 Me: [and] and then does that do you like group work
563 then?
564 SB: um: (.) it depends on what kind of group work it is
565 like (-) um: we do have group work where we've
566 worked on like (-) um: (---) writing down like
567 recently like last week i think it was we wrote
568 down things you can do in different cities and you
569 worked in a group in doing that and i liked that
570 like it's not bad but
571 Me: mm-hm
572 SB: i don't know if i'd say i like look forward to
573 going to class to do that
574 Me: =no yeah (.) um: but i mean more um: (-) like you
575 have the speaking test coming up so is it is it
576 something like um: (--) that you would not want to
577 do if you have to work with a partner or do you do
578 you (.) do you like the idea that you could work
579 together and each give something (.) or do you feel
580 like sort of pulled down by having a partner;
581 SB: oh no not i don't feel pulled down at all by having
582 a partner um: (-) i don't mind it like i'm pretty
583 easy going with the whole class stuff like i like
584 doing work on my own but i don't mind
585 Me: right
586 SB: working in a group either
587 Me: ok so (.) um: (.) you're not (.) you don't feel
588 that if you're in a group (-) you don't feel
589 burdened by sort of uh: (.) either being like you
590 know the worst or the best and you feel like you
591 have to do more or or do you get stressed out about
592 frustrated by group work do you know how people

593 some people just hate group work
594 SB: yeah because they they just wanna take over and do
595 it themselves and [it's easier]
596 Me: [yeah or they] (--) they some
597 people like group work because they think that it
598 means they'll get a good mark cause someone else
599 will do it you KNOW
600 SB: yeah
601 Me: there's all these sort of aspects of a group that
602 is really [interesting]
603 SB: [um (-) no] i don't really feel that way
604 Me: cause you're saying like you feel like you (.) you
605 (.) you do well in the class like
606 SB: yeah
607 Me: =um: (-) and (-) uh: (-) feel you know sometimes
608 like it's going too slow and so th' obviously you
609 must feel confident (.) in your (.) in so far how
610 you're doing in class
611 SB: yeah
612 Me: and so do you (.) you don't find that group work
613 with anybody who could be you know joe schmoe who
614 never comes to class or (.) you don't feel that
615 that's (.) necessarily a negative thing for you,
616 SB: um: (-) not so much negative just (-) because (.)
617 even in group (-) well it depends on what group
618 work i mean
619 Me: sure
620 SB: with our speaking test (.) um: (--) if we' (.) you
621 are gonna again get the same mark but (--) each
622 individual person is gonna perform differently,
623 Me: yeah
624 SB: and you kinda get marked on that (.) so i'm not so
625 much worried about that if it was (--) if it if it
626 wAs the (.) the kind of um: group work where (.)
627 you're handing in say like a project or something
628 and i was with somebody who didn't really wanna do
629 anything (-) i would be the type of person that
630 ended up taking over and just doing it myself
631 ((laughs))
632 Me: obviously yeah ok (-) UM and uh:: (-) the s' (.)
633 the speaking test environment then for you it's
634 like (.) not bad it's (.) your gon' you'll like you
635 feel confident about it and you're not worried
636 about a group work situation in that sense
637 SB: no not so much
638 Me: ok (.) cool (.) yeah cause i mean there's always
639 people that stIll will feel (-) i wish i could do

640 it by myself or (.)

641 SB: yeah

642 Me: do you know what i mean

643 SB: yeah

644 Me: there's always different types of people (.) with

645 different ideas (-) um::: (--) is there activities

646 in the class that you don't like then like i' i

647 mean you say you said ok some group work could be

648 bad (-) but is there something that the that

649 happened in in the past right now in any language

650 course you've taken where you're like (.) other

651 than the lab (-) specifically in a lecture i would

652 think type of environment where you kinda like ugh

653 this is silly or why are we doing this

654 SB: um (-) i haven't (-) yet ((laughs))

655 Me: ok so you so far pretty much it's it works you just

656 like if i understand you right you just sometimes

657 get a little bored when people have to explain

658 things a million times

659 SB: yeah or like when we uh it can be really

660 repetitious and it's good in a way because it goes

661 over it and you end up learning it and y' you know

662 you'll understand it because of it but then af'

663 like it it gets repetitious sometimes where you're

664 like O:K: let's move on

665 Me: ok (-) that's cool (-) ok now when you uh:: go to

666 (.) you know study for a test or something like

667 that (.) how do you do how what do you do to

668 memorize grammar concepts (-) like what do you have

669 a specific uh:: strategy that you (-) use to um:

670 (.) <<laughing> remember things?> like what do you

671 do

672 SB: um::

673 Me: how do you study

674 SB: ((laughs)) that's a good question [how do i study]

675 Me: [it's a hard one

676 to answer sometimes]

677 SB: um:: (-) like i know for me (.) the:: (--) like i'

678 uh when it comes to vocabulary (.) i'll say it to

679 myself and like say ok this is this this is this

680 and like just kind of repeat it or even write it

681 out to get the spelling

682 Me: ok

683 SB: like (-) write it out three times and that's the

684 amount that's supposed to be able to (.) make you

685 remember it the best ((smiles))

686 Me: ((laughs))

687 SB: and then: (.) um: (-) for things like remembering
688 like accusative case or nominative case or that
689 kinda thing i'll just go over the chart
690 Me: ok
691 SB: and most of it you can find patterns and i always
692 look for patterns in between it and say like with
693 (.) um:: (.) regular (--) present tense verbs like
694 i'll just remember the endings (--) [and] you know
695 Me: [right] do you
696 find that it's the kinda thing that you (-) um: (.)
697 sort of (-) it's a long process because: like (.)
698 when you go to study for a language test (-) you've
699 done it a lot in class already so do you find that
700 you already have some stuff memorized and [that
701 it's not (.) ok]
702 SB: [exactly
703 yeah] and so like (.) even when we do work out of
704 the textbook and you could just fill in the blank
705 (.) i prefer to write it out
706 Me: mm-hm
707 SB: so that like i'm writing it out (.) and like (.)
708 instead of just being like ok fill in the blank
709 really quickly or like (.) matching the words
710 together i'd rather write it out
711 Me: right so that you can
712 SB: so [i can remember it and]
713 Me: [for you writing it out makes] (.) equals
714 memorization
715 SB: yeah it works better for me
716 Me: ok do are you a cue card person for vocab or are
717 you more of a (.) just write it all out
718 SB: i'll just write it all out
719 Me: ok (.) um:: do you find that with vocabulary do you
720 (--) like GENDER (.) you know you have to memorize
721 the gender (.) like how (.) is there a certain like
722 strategy you use to memorize gender of words that
723 have no way of making sense
724 SB: um::
725 Me: or do you (.) like ok i guess the question is do
726 you (.) memorize (.) nouns with the gender right
727 away? or do you have problems with that and so then
728 you try and make some sort of connection between
729 them
730 SB: yeah i did that um: we did gender for (.) like i'm
731 using all specific instances this is ok right
732 Me: yeah that's fine ((laughs))
733 SB: ok um: we did gender for (.) like a classroom

734 setting where like you're talking about like a desk
735 or a chair or that kinda thing
736 Me: mm-hm
737 SB: and i ended up (.) um:: (-) looking for patterns
738 and i learned (.) like i saw that most of the words
739 or the words that end in e (.) are usually feminine
740 and like those kinda things and then there's like a
741 couple that dOn't end in e that are also feminine
742 and then i remember i'd like remember the masculine
743 ones and any other ones are neuter so like (.) i
744 just try and (.) do that kinda thing like look for
745 patterns and then memorize it
746 Me: ok so you look for patterns and then if there are
747 pa' aren't patterns do you i' if i understand you
748 group them by [masculine]
749 SB: [yeah] yeah that's how i did it this
750 time yep ((laughs))
751 Me: ok yeah (.) that's (.) i think that's pretty common
752 actually (-) so: um: do you find it harder to learn
753 grammar concepts or vocabulary
754 SB: [um:]
755 Me: [like what] sticks in your mind easier
756 SB: neither one is too: (-) difficult like i (.) i find
757 like with grammar as (.) when you understand the
758 concept (.) it's not that hard to (.) use it (.)
759 like it's just understanding the concept
760 Me: yeah
761 SB: which is more and then i mean there's not much to
762 understand in grammar like you memorize the
763 different cases and
764 Me: mm-hm
765 SB: if you understand it you should be okay to go
766 Me: mm-hm
767 SB: and then with vocabulary it's (.) once you've
768 written out the words it's ok i think i do have a
769 problem more with um: (-) like (.) whether it's
770 masculine feminine that kinda thing and that is
771 more difficult (.) and so i'd like t' like that is
772 what i'd have to memorize more
773 Me: right (.) ok so the: vocab memorization is som' (.)
774 like (.) getting the gender connected [is
775 sometimes] a little difficult issue
776 SB: [yeah] a
777 little bit more difficult
778 Me: do you think that (.) did do you have the same
779 problem with french?
780 SB: um: (-) remembering back (.) pro::' (.) yeah yeah i

781 do even now like i'll forget which is which
782 Me: mm-hm
783 SB: but i think with french it's not so much memorizing
784 it as (-) when you've he' (.) like cause i did take
785 it for four years when you hear the word you kind
786 of (.) automatically (-) just (.) like you hear the
787 word with it's (.) with it's [um: (-) gender]
788 Me: [and you you kind of]
789 (.)you start to once you've taken a language
790 awhile you start to know these endings that are
791 always feminine or
792 SB: yeah
793 Me: and it's the same in german too like (-) once you
794 learn any language past a certain point [you can
795 feel words (.) much better]
796 SB: [yeah it's
797 it all kinda (.) comes together]
798 Me: yeah exactly (.) um::: (-) so (-) when you're
799 studying for a test (--) um: (.) or a well i guess
800 the midterm is the biggest test you guys have had
801 eh
802 SB: mm-hm
803 Me: um: (--) do you study from (-) like do you use the
804 book primarily? (.) do you search for other sources
805 or does the book (-) do it for you does that is
806 that enough for you to get it
807 SB: i use my notes
808 Me: ok
809 SB: like i've taken i'll take notes from the (.) [the
810 textbook]
811 Me: [so
812 you take notes in class,]
813 SB: and in class yeah like when it's written down on
814 the board like i'll take notes (.) and then i study
815 from my notes and what i do is go through and then
816 write out like the c' the like different concepts
817 or like the different basics (.) and then study
818 from that
819 Me: ok that's good to know (-) um::: (-) i think you've
820 (4)
821 oh (.) going back to the group work and independent
822 work (-) um: (-) do you work (--) just in GENERAL
823 do you think you work better in group work or in or
824 independently
825 SB: i think i work better independently
826 Me: and why (.) do you think that
827 SB: um::: (-) because i don't think anybody else can

828 really help you understand or learn something (.)
 829 you kinda have to learn it on your own (.) to
 830 really understand it cause nobody else can make you
 831 l' understand it
 832 Me: mm-hm (-) now if you ok well if you apply that to
 833 the group work like do you think that (.) when
 834 cause you said you don't mind working in a group
 835 SB: mm-hm
 836 Me: if everybody's if they're doing their work (.) um::
 837 (.) do you do you think you ar' (.) you really
 838 don't think you can learn something from the peers?
 839 like do you (.) do you think that they (-) can
 840 actually: uh:: (---) um: () (--) like when
 841 you say you can't learn something from them what do
 842 you like do you mean like a co' a concept, like
 843 what do you mean
 844 SB: i think (.) um: (-) you can't really learn the
 845 concept (.) afterwards working in a group or
 846 discussing it can help you understand it better
 847 Me: mm-hm
 848 SB: because like i know in my in say like my science
 849 courses (.) once i've un' once i've learned it (-)
 850 discussing it with somebody and going over it (.)
 851 and talking about it (.) does help me more
 852 Me: so then it's in there,
 853 SB: yeah
 854 Me: ok (.) SO: because i've had people say like i don't
 855 like learning in groups because you know or i don't
 856 like working in groups because (.) uh:: (.) i:
 857 think i know already more than most people than in
 858 my group usually (.) and i feel (.) like it's
 859 pulling me down in a way right which you said that
 860 doesn't affect you too much
 861 SB: no
 862 Me: um: but then there's also s' like sort of (---) you
 863 know like that it sounds kind like if you say if
 864 you say i don't think it you learn something it
 865 almost sounds like it it could be like that because
 866 you know if you say you don't learn something (.)
 867 in a group (.) then that might mean that maybe you
 868 ARE the more advanced person in the group and that
 869 (.) but you still don't MIND working in the group
 870 [is that do you think that applies to you?]
 871 SB: [yeah no (.) UM:::] it's not so much that i dOn't
 872 feel i learn something it's just i don't feel that
 873 it helps me that m' much to learn it
 874 Me: ok so you could learn better on your own anyway (.)

875 like you think
876 SB: y::eah
877 Me: generally, ((laughs))
878 SB: generally (.) i [think so]
879 Me: [it's kinda (.) yeah] it's hard to
880 think back and cause you're not a' aware of maybe
881 of of wh' what you're learning anyway maybe (.)
882 when you're in a group cause
883 SB: well like i know like (.) like if we worked in a
884 group for (---) like ok (--) um:: (.) if we were
885 learning say like a case and what t: (.) like what
886 to apply to which
887 Me: mm-hm
888 SB: you (.) i like i would have to understand that
889 concept before i could go in a group and like
890 discuss it
891 Me: ok (.) yeah
892 SB: but then after like if i understood the concept
893 then i could discuss it and it would like things
894 that maybe i didn't understand or didn't get
895 completely would be cleared up but i think i need
896 that i need that [basic]
897 Me: [the base]
898 SB: to do that
899 Me: i guess the uh the thing i: (-) uh: (-) that
900 probably needs to be defined more is what we're
901 def' defining as learning
902 SB: [yeah]
903 Me: [because] um like (.) in a group work uh: (.) i
904 guess (.) you're probably i what i get from you is
905 you mean when you say learning right now you're
906 meaning like
907 SB: what i'm doing in class
908 Me: right like specifically teacher student like or
909 even you and book like learning it's going in
910 concept wise (.) but i mean uh:: (-) if we go
911 broader on that term like you know learning as in
912 like (.) uh:: (-) you know the vocabulary gets ce'
913 cemented into your head if you're talking in a
914 group um: in german (.) or: you're actually even
915 just practicing speaking at all right making
916 yourfe' self feel comfortable (.) does that that
917 has (.) in that sense it counts toward learning
918 right cause it's like
919 SB: yeah well in that [sense if i was]
920 Me: [in that sense yeah]
921 SB: like having a conversation with someone (.)

922 definitely it would help me learn better in a group
923 because i would be (.) like i'm sure there's
924 there's words they would under' they would know
925 that i wouldn't and learning that way would de'
926 would like (.) completely help me
927 Me: now if you're in a class (.) does your does your
928 teacher ever split you guys up into groups and say
929 (.) you know (.) create (-) a dialogue or or or do
930 this exercise together or whatever
931 SB: yeah
932 Me: =that happens? now do you find it um: (.) that that
933 helps because (.) you can be like teacher? like or
934 do you think um: (.) it's just the same as if you
935 were gonna go home and do it on your own .h (-) as
936 (.) sitting with a friend or your next door
937 neighbour here and an' doing it in class like what
938 do you think
939 SB: uh: i don't think i think the only real difference
940 for me in that instance would be (.) um taking it
941 up afterwards
942 Me: right so having the immediate feedback
943 SB: yep
944 Me: yeah (.) ok (--) um::: (-) so uh um you're doing
945 are you doing well in german so far like you feel
946 confident about your marks and everything so far?
947 (-) and what motivated you (.) to take german was
948 it jUst the family background or was there
949 something else too that
950 SB: um i do like taking languages [and:::]
951 Me: [yeah] y' you said
952 you did well in languages in your questionnaire i
953 think
954 SB: yeah
955 Me: yep
956 SB: um: (.) i' like i like being able to speak other
957 languages i think that's a really cool concept and
958 i think that it it it'll benefit me in the long run
959 for sure
960 Me: mm-hm
961 SB: um: (-) it is my background and that's why i did
962 take german because
963 Me: right
964 SB: like i am proud of my heritage
965 Me: yep
966 SB: and i do (.) like i even i have relatives over in
967 germany like [that are elderly]
968 Me: [where are they from?]

969 SB: i don't even know (-) no ((laughs)) but they are
970 like they are ol' they're a lot older and so i
971 would like to go there one day and i'd like to be
972 able to speak with them
973 Me: yeah
974 SB: if i get the chance
975 Me: yeah ((laughs))
976 SB: and so that's what did motivate me to get that and
977 also um:: (--) because i was planning on it pulling
978 up my (.) grade average ((laughs))
979 Me: yeah so well because you already said you think you
980 (.) generally you've had good results in language
981 classes (.) .h and um so (-) it's a good thing to
982 take right'
983 SB: [it's it's like i said i'm hoping to pull up my
984 marks so]
985 Me: [well i mean anything that comes easy to you]
986 SB: exactly
987 Me: usually you do well in right so (.) well you would
988 hope ((laughs)) ok well i think that's it (.) do
989 you have anything else that i that you're thinking
990 of that i didn't ask or
991 SB: uh i don't think so ((laughs))
992 Me: ((laughs)) ok

Interview 2

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

December 14th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 19 minutes 27 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semi-structured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: oh well we'll just use it like this and if it
02 starts to scream at us we'll (.) turn it down (.)
03 OK (--) um (--) so: basically today i just (.)
04 wanted to ask you a few more questions based on the
05 last one, (.) just to go like (-) a little more
06 detailed i guess,
07 SB: [ok]
08 Me: [and] so th' the first sort of round of questions
09 and then the second round are (.) just (.) gonna be
10 you'll see they'll be a little bit different but
11 they're (.) more GENeral than (.) cause i wanna go
12 in depth first i guess more than the last (.) the
13 last stuff that we were talking about (-)

14 ((laughs)) (-) um:: (---) weird microphone (---) ok
15 (-) so i'll just go right into it ((laughs))
16 SB: ok
17 Me: um:: (.) so the last time you had mentioned that
18 you um: don't really like the lab (.) that was like
19 one point you made that it was like not your
20 favourite part [of the class]
21 SB: [yeah]
22 Me: um: (.) so: (.) i just wanted to know (.) when
23 you're doing a listening comprehension activity (.)
24 like (.) if you're doing um: (.) um: (.) like a lab
25 test and there's you know a a listening
26 comprehension part involved or whatever any type of
27 c' activity (.) how do you like what are the
28 processes that you go through to succeed
29 successfully finish the question at hand like what
30 what goes through your mind or what do you do
31 physically like
32 SB: like when i hear [(.) that,]
33 Me: [yeah like just] go through step
34 by step what you go (.) do
35 SB: ok like on our lab (-) test or our last like our
36 final like the one worth fifteen percent
37 Me: yep
38 SB: we had to listen to a paragraph (.) and it was like
39 an interview between two people and she described
40 her family members
41 Me: mm-hm
42 SB: and so what i did was (.) um: (.) just listen for
43 like general key (.) key words that i knew and then
44 (.) like that helps me piece the sentence together
45 if there aren't words that i specifically know,
46 (--) so i use that so like when i'm listening to
47 her i'll just try and (.) like (-) see i'm at the
48 point still where like (.) i translate it in my
49 head you know like i listen to these words and i
50 like try and make the sentence in english in my
51 head and so that's (.) how i do that
52 Me: do you (.) ok and when you read a text (.) do you
53 translate as you go (.) [as well]
54 SB: [yep]
55 Me: ok so it's not just reading you do that also when
56 you're listening you think about it in (.) in
57 english as she (.) says stuff out loud
58 SB: yep
59 Me: do you find that goes to fast, (.) for you to
60 translate, (.) like that,

61 SB: um:: (.) sometimes but because we get it read over
62 more than once (-) like the things that i miss the
63 first time i pick up the second time
64 Me: mm-hm
65 SB: and just like keep side notes on it
66 Me: ok so you take notes as you go
67 SB: mm-hm
68 Me: ok so then yeah so ((coughs)) as a process you
69 listen to it the first time?
70 SB: mm-hm
71 Me: try and get what you can (.) but do you write notes
72 first and then fill it in?
73 SB: um it depends (.) it depends how long it is like if
74 it's a l' like the one we did on our lab test was
75 long like it talked about i think like ten
76 different people so i i like i and we had to write
77 it down so it it wasn't as much keeping notes it
78 was more like i was writing ans' answering the
79 question as it went along
80 Me: mm-hm
81 SB: but if it's just a shorter thing (-) like once i
82 once i translate it and i understand the sentences'
83 (-) then i can look at that sentence and know what
84 it means or like look at the words and know what
85 they mean
86 Me: ok (-) ok (---) um:: and then when you if you're
87 reading a ger' text in german and then you know you
88 have to answer questions at the bottom or whatever
89 ((coughs)) do you take notes when you do that?
90 SB: while i'm reading?
91 Me: yeah
92 SB: no
93 Me: so you don't you wouldn't write like above a word
94 (-) [kitchen or]
95 SB: [OH if if] i don't know the word and like i
96 have to look it up then i would do that
97 Me: k but what if it was an exam and there's no
98 dictionaries and what not
99 SB: um (.) and i was reading it and i was answering the
100 question? (.) .h i would answer the questions as i
101 read it
102 Me: ok so you'd look for (.) parallels as you go
103 SB: so like i would pre read the questions and know
104 what the questions are and then i would read
105 through the sentence and do it that way
106 Me: ok so you first would look at the questions and
107 then [instead of]

108 SB: [and then start reading it]
109 Me: understanding the text and then
110 SB: yep
111 Me: ok (.) um:: (--) ok in grammar you also said you
112 learn it really quickly (.) and understand it (.)
113 um what do what do you think are (.) like can you
114 describe the processes that go on in your mind when
115 you're learning a grammatical concept can you (.)
116 like what's how do you how would you best describe
117 this process this (.) understanding and learning
118 (.) specific concepts in class
119 SB: i try and make patterns out of it
120 Me: mm-hm
121 SB: so like i'll i'll look for different patterns and
122 so: (.) um if we're learning say like a verb
123 translation (.) then (.) i'll look for specific
124 endings and then i'll memorize (.) like ich goes
125 with e and this and this and this and this one and
126 then i'll memorize that pattern (.) so that i can
127 just apply it later (.) and same with um (.) like
128 learning the
129 (4)
130 the articles for the words (.) i'll look for
131 patterns so like most of the (.) words that end in
132 e (.) is are feminine (.) so i'll look for that
133 pattern and then like (.) i'll just try and
134 memorize the ones that don't fit it
135 Me: mm-hm (-) ok so the sort of (-) um (-) bunch of
136 weird cases where they're not matching [in a
137 pattern]
138 SB: [yeah]
139 Me: um:
140 (8)
141 ok um: (---) you also said that you write stuff out
142 (--) like when you're learning vocab or you write
143 it out in [class] as well
144 SB: [yeah]
145 Me: um what does the what for y' what does that do for
146 you like what (-) how does that fit into the
147 process of your learning
148 SB: it helps it helps me memorize it because (-) like
149 it's (.) better (.) for me i (.) i wr' like in all
150 of my course i write everything out
151 Me: mm-hm
152 SB: like i'll go through my (.) my course notes and
153 i'll rewrite everything (.) and that helps me learn
154 it better than (.) reading because i find a lot of

155 times when i read it i just read it
156 Me: mm-hm
157 SB: but i'm not actually learning it
158 Me: mm-hm
159 SB: whereas when i write it out (.) it'll help me like
160 (.) learn it better and then i'll i'll read it
161 later
162 Me: mm-hm
163 SB: but it'll be my own words
164 Me: so in essence you're reading and writing it out
165 SB: yep
166 Me: and do you speak it out loud as well (.) when you
167 write when you're writing it out
168 SB: um::
169 Me: or is it more of a just a writing ()
170 SB: i do s' like i'll s' i'll say it as i'm writing it
171 Me: mm-hm
172 SB: but (.) i won't like sit there and (.) sometimes i
173 do it it all depends (.) i don't know
174 Me: just on the (.) topic or whatever
175 SB: yeah
176 Me: ok (.) um: (.) you just answered my other question
177 which was how do you learn vocabulary (.)
178 ((laughs)) like what processes ar' need to happen
179 (.) for vocabulary to be learned so
180 SB: i'll write it out
181 Me: =writing [it out (.) that's a big thing (.) ok]
182 SB: [and read it over (.) yeah]
183 Me: ok um:: (.) so that was basically it i just wanted
184 to have more (-) details on how things happen uh
185 from that we talked about last time (.) ok um: (.)
186 what characteristics (-) do you think someone has
187 to bring with them in order to successfully learn
188 german like WHAT characteristics do you think the
189 students should have in order to learn a foreign
190 language (.) like just key words that pop in your
191 head
192 SB: um persistence (--) um (--) wow i don't (.) i'm not
193 sure ((laughs))
194 Me: that's ok you can think about it like i i just (.)
195 you know there like (.) peop' everyone thinks
196 different things like what's important to ha' to
197 (.) sort of a quality that you need to have
198 SB: i think everyone (.) could learn a different
199 language if they just (-) it's not so much even
200 apply themselves (.) they just have to: (.) y' you
201 have to work at it like no matter what you do

202 because
203 Me: so persistence is [like a] big huge factor for that
204 SB: [yeah] exactly because you're not
205 just gonna pick it up overnight you actually have
206 to (.) try
207 Me: mm-hm
208 SB: and like it's not it's not just like one thing
209 where you have to learn it it's (.) you have to
210 learn how to like pronounce and you have to know
211 how to do that and i' you just have to practice
212 Me: mm-hm (--) are there like any other characteristics
213 like if if everybody was persistent would everybody
214 learn it? (.) like are there other factors? (.) do
215 y' do you think, (.) or is that all there is
216 basically
217 SB: um: i think you do have to have like an (.)
218 aptitude for it because (.) some people just (.)
219 like no matter i' sa' like i think that's in
220 everything though because (.) i know (-) my best
221 friend she did like in high school we did physics
222 together and no matter what i did to make her
223 understand (.) like the concepts (-) they just she
224 just didn't get them
225 Me: mm-hm
226 SB: like no matter what i did like (.) i took out a
227 slinky to show her how waves move and she just
228 could not pick it up whereas like (.) french for
229 her she did an immersion course (.) and she went to
230 quebec for a month and she did like (.) a GREAT job
231 (.) whereas i don't think i could do something like
232 that
233 Me: mm-hm
234 SB: and she: (.) i think (.) she just learns (.) learns
235 like (.) language and (.) like she's an english
236 major and she (.) like she writes phenomenal essays
237 and she does that so much better (.) than i do (.)
238 whereas like the science courses that i take (.)
239 sh' are way over her head and she looks at me and
240 says wow like (.) i can't believe you take that
241 whereas (.) for me i'm like (.) i couldn't do what
242 you do either
243 Me: mm-hm
244 SB: so i think everybody's like prone to being better
245 at different things,
246 Me: mm-hm (-) so: if (.) in order to succeed at a
247 language (-) you have to s' have an aptitude and be
248 persistent at the same time

249 SB: mm-hm
250 Me: to (-) succeed as in like become fluent perhaps
251 like
252 SB: yeah
253 Me: th' those would be two important characteristics
254 for someone who was looking to really (--) become
255 fluent
256 SB: yeah i think so and i think they have to (-) i
257 think that (.) that's the big step to becoming
258 fluent is that you have to kind of (-) it's easy to
259 sit (.) in a german class for an hour (.) and do
260 simple sentences and then come out of it and speak
261 english the rest of the time (.) but to become
262 really fluent i think you have to be in the
263 atmosphere
264 Me: mm-hm (.) ok (--) what about um: (-) well do you
265 have those characteristics that you've just said
266 (.) are necessary (.) do you think you have those
267 SB: y' i think i'm pretty well rounded so i think that
268 i can take like i can take (.) arts courses and do
269 alright in them (-) i do better at science courses
270 but i can take arts courses and do better at them
271 and like this language course for me (.) it' it's
272 (.) my highest mark (-) so it
273 Me: so you have an aptitude obviously
274 SB: yeah and well it's basic right now too [like]
275 Me: [sure]
276 SB: once it gets
277 Me: once it gets into detail
278 SB: more advanced (.) i don't know if it'd be my
279 highest mark (.) which is why i like (.) i don't
280 take french anymore just because (.) i wanna learn
281 it (.) but it's not my highest mark cause i can't
282 devote as much time as i want to to learn it
283 Me: mm-hm (-) um: (.) are there then on the flip side
284 are there negative characteristics, um or what what
285 ARE there WHAT negative characteristics are there
286 (.) for (.) if someone in like is it taking a you
287 know beginner german class and (.) isn't succeeding
288 (.) what what what would hinder someone like what
289 (.) i mean obviously if they weren't good at
290 languages and if they didn't try (.) but are there
291 is there something else that could block you from
292 (-) getting a good mark in the class,
293 SB: see i don't know like for me i would say (.) that
294 (--) i think sometimes people think too much about
295 it

296 Me: mm-hm

297 SB: like they (.) they (-) they think too much about a
 298 concept and then they just get confused (.) whereas
 299 (-) but everybody has different learning styles too

300 Me: mm-hm

301 SB: so i think it all depends on your learning style
 302 and the way you can (.) pick things up because (-)
 303 german isn't like learning a language isn't really
 304 a memorizing thing it's more of a you have to
 305 understand the concepts and apply them, (.) whereas
 306 some people are better at (-) like memorizing facts
 307 (.) that (-) help them

308 Me: mm-hm

309 SB: and you can't really do that with a language

310 Me: um: (-) when you're learning a foreign language do
 311 you have a certain goal in mind, (.) like (.) is it
 312 always sort of (.) just to pass the course or is it
 313 like oh i wanna be fluent (.) like what is your

314 SB: my like th' the reason i take (.) language courses
 315 (-) is becau' like i don't take all of them and i
 316 wouldn't go and take something like spanish 101 or
 317 like something like that because the reason i took
 318 german is because it's my heritage and i would like
 319 to one day be able to speak it (.) and the reason i
 320 took french is because (.) i like being able to
 321 speak a different language like i'm not (.) like
 322 yes it helps that it (.) it's boosting up my (.)
 323 gpa but at the same time like i'm not just taking
 324 it so it does that i (.) which is why i'm taking
 325 like the 102 course (.) whereas if i was just
 326 taking language courses so that my grade would go
 327 up i would stick to 101s

328 Me: right

329 SB: and just do (.) do 101 courses

330 Me: do 101 (.) um do you feel that there's expectations
 331 (.) when you're learning a foreign language do you
 332 think that other expecta' OTHERS expectations play
 333 a role in your learning like parents (.) the school
 334 like society like (.) [for you]

335 SB: [um:] (.) not so much (.)
 336 like i to' when i came home (.) <<laughing i was>
 337 (.) saying words that i learned to my dad (.) and
 338 he told me he's really im' like really happy that i
 339 di' i took this initiative and took the course (.)
 340 but i mean that's my choice too like he (--) i
 341 don't know like in a in a way i like taking it
 342 because it makes like my family proud and that

343 kinda thing but (.) i i am doing it for me you know
344 Me: mm-hm (.) ok (-) um::
345 (6)
346 you've learned french (-) or you took french (.)
347 um:: (.) do you learn german differently than you
348 learned french or other foreign languages or do you
349 find that it's like a similar thing
350 SB: i i really find it's a similar thing because (.)
351 when i (.) like i've almost associated being in
352 this building with speaking a different language
353 Me: ((laughs))
354 SB: because this is like where i [like]
355 Me: [the language
356 building] ((laughs))
357 SB: this is the only (.) this is the only (.) um: (.)
358 building i've been in to take language courses like
359 i took french in this building and i took german in
360 this building and i hon' i get into a mindset when
361 i speak (-) when i (.) when i come to s' (-) to
362 like a language course
363 Me: yeah
364 SB: it's weird because (-) like the fir' even the first
365 day in in german even though i havn't taken french
366 in like two years
367 Me: mm-hm
368 SB: like i was b' i wanted to say (.) to like answer in
369 french just
370 Me: right
371 SB: knowing that i was (.) speaking and even now like
372 (.) i'll mix up the the two like languages
373 sometimes when i wanna say something or i'll like
374 try and say something in german but automatically
375 go to french just because (.) it's (.) and i think
376 too for me when i was in the course i wasn't (.) i
377 wasn't as able to (.) to just say things as i am
378 now like i think it took some time for everything
379 to just to like settle in
380 Me: mm-hm
381 SB: and now i feel like (.) even more even though i
382 haven't taken any courses (.) i feel like i could
383 speak (.) more (--) more fluently than translating
384 it say
385 Me: mm-hm s'
386 SB: =which is weird
387 Me: so you think that it's because you've had this sort
388 of time for it to (--) i don't know sink in or
389 whatever

390 SB: [yeah i don't know it's weird]
391 Me: [and that it just seems] to work better that way
392 now
393 SB: yeah
394 Me: ok cause it's been like [a couple years or]
395 SB: [it's been awhile] yeah
396 Me: ((coughs)) so you don't find that it's like
397 diminished at all
398 SB: well yeah there are words that i'm losing that i'm
399 like oh i need to start doing something because i'm
400 gonna lose my french altogether (.) but then there
401 are other things that i'm just like yeah i can
402 answer that question in french
403 Me: mm-hm (-) cool (-) um:: (.) so for you s' learning
404 a language (.) so far from what your experiences is
405 very s' like it's similar to learning a different
406 language that you've already learned like with
407 german (.) you find parallels between
408 SB: yeah (.) like a lot of parallels like with the verb
409 conjugations with (-) um:: (--) like (-) the
410 articles like they're they're all similar and like
411 french for a female article mostly ends in e
412 Me: mm-hm
413 SB: german mostly ends in e
414 Me: mm-hm
415 SB: like and then verb conjugations like (.) they all
416 have [different endings]
417 Me: [they have some structures]
418 SB: there's structure
419 Me: so it's (.) um:: (-) the process of learning german
420 is similar to the process of learning french
421 SB: yeah
422 Me: like gr' from the grammar and everything
423 SB: yeah
424 Me: ok (.) um:: (--) when do you have a feeling like
425 the feeling that you've (.) like or the knowledge
426 that you've learned something like do you notice?
427 (-) when you realize that you've learned a concept
428 and you can apply it now? (.) is there a moment
429 like an aha moment like
430 SB: if it's something i'm really working on and (.) i
431 i'm not understanding it not understanding it and
432 then it'll just click?
433 Me: mm-hm
434 SB: yeah but then generally (-) generally it's more (-)
435 um: (-) at least in this beginner course it's been
436 (-) kind of (.) simple for me (.) so i'll just like

437 read it and be like ok i understand and then apply
438 it and there are there are like definitely
439 questions i get wrong or things i get wrong (.) but
440 um: (-) i'll go back afterwards (.) and go over it
441 and it'll make sense after
442 Me: so it's not a thing where: (.) in this class where
443 you've found you've had a lot of (.) problems
444 understanding
445 SB: yeah no i really haven't
446 Me: yeah (.) ok (-) um well when so when do you notice
447 though that you've learned something like when is
448 it while you're (.) in class while you're (.)
449 working on on something or just when you're walking
450 down the street like do you remember, (.) when you
451 specifically remember (.) or uh feel a difference
452 in having learned something (.) in the language,
453 SB: not really
454 Me: not really [there's no]
455 SB: [no there's no] one like ↑woo i get it
456 Me: yeah yeah (.) so it just changes (.) um: ((coughs))
457 (---) ok well i have one more question
458 SB: ok
459 Me: so:: (-) ba' you have german heritage
460 SB: yeah
461 Me: what ((laughs)) this is interesting i just do this
462 because i think (.) everybody has a different
463 opinion on this but what words would you use to
464 describe the german language (.) i've had a fu'
465 couple funny different ones
466 SB: it's a harsher language
467 Me: ok
468 SB: like it's it it's harsher just with like the way
469 they pronounce things
470 Me: mm-hm
471 SB: um:: (.) i like it like (.) i like
472 (5)
473 like i've i've done the oktoberfest thing and i've
474 done like the rosewell thing and like all the other
475 like german heritage things and i i like the
476 language (.) mainly because it it is my heritage
477 you know
478 Me: right
479 SB: so
480 Me: so [harsh (-) any other words to describe it]
481 SB: [i don't know (.) it is (.) it's a harsher] (.)
482 uh:: (-) .hh i don't know (-) um:: ((laughs)) (--)
483 it think a lot of the a lot of the words in german

484 have found there way into the english language
485 Me: mm-hm
486 SB: for sure like (.) k' kaputz
487 Me: yeah
488 SB: like so many people say that and it means broken in
489 german so (.) i don't know if i'd pick words to
490 describe it though
491 Me: yeah but harsh you think harsh
492 SB: yeah
493 Me: um: what about germany have you ever been to
494 germany?
495 SB: no
496 Me: ok what (.) in your mind what words would you use
497 to describe germany as a country
498 SB: um: (-) germany as a country or germany like as in
499 like the people and everything else
500 Me: well anything the culture the people the ()
501 SB: see i see the culture as more um: (-) like LOUD and
502 fun and (.) you know when you picture them you
503 picture them with lederhosen and a (.) a mug of
504 beer and
505 Me: yeah
506 SB: um: (--) yeah that's what i see them as and then
507 like hanna was saying that (--) like (.) um: (-)
508 time is very important to them and being punctual
509 is very important (.) and i look back on the way my
510 grandparents were
511 Me: mm-hm
512 SB: and i can totally see it because even when we'd go
513 out like make reservations and go out for supper
514 with them we always had to be five minutes early
515 Me: mm-hm
516 SB: like you were never late it was always early and my
517 dad always stresses out about being late and he's
518 always like COME ON COME ON and he's the one
519 sitting in the car waiting for the rest of us to
520 get there
521 Me: ((laughs))
522 SB: so i see like (.) that that that definitely like
523 makes sense to me now as why they're like that i'm
524 like what is the big deal about being FIVE minutes
525 late and they're like NO you have to be on time
526 Me: mm-hm
527 SB: and then when hanna was saying that like when she
528 was there that's that's a big thing for them like
529 (.) buses need to be on time everything needs to be
530 on time punctuality is very important and i see

27 time (.) it was a gradual increase cause (.) you
 28 know i i already knew a lot of concepts so it
 29 wasn't [a (.)]
 30 SB: [yeah]
 31 Me: big jump (.) so as i went (-) you know i kind of
 32 went along with the class and learned along and
 33 from being in the culture it was going up for sure
 34 right cause i was speaking a lot
 35 SB: mm-hm
 36 Me: and then: (-) at the end of the exam you know we a'
 37 (.) everybody was studying hardcOre so: i had a
 38 huge jump (-) and um: (.) and o' of course over
 39 time i was (.) making a lot of progress with
 40 speaking and so then i say i left (.) having gained
 41 a lot of ability (.) um: with a major jump from
 42 studying and then the exam and then DONE (-) that's
 43 my example (.) so
 44 SB: ok
 45 Me: um: (.) if you could (-) do something similar
 46 SB: oh i have to draw it?
 47 Me: you have to draw it and [explain] it as you go
 48 SB: [oh]
 49 Me: it's very (.) interactive
 50 SB: oh i thought i got (.) just got to (.) talk about
 51 it
 52 Me: no you c' if you can draw it to th' what you (.)
 53 you know just what you perceive it might of been
 54 like (.) and then explain why you're (-) why you've
 55 written it like that that'd be great
 56 SB: ok (-) um: (---) well: (-) i (-) because i have
 57 taken some german before (-) um: (-) i (.) like
 58 some of the concepts were the same so (.) .h it
 59 wasn't (.) it wasn't as gradual it was more like
 60 (.) i learned some new concepts: (.) but then there
 61 was like other ones where i already knew them so
 62 Me: mm-hm
 63 SB: oh like this:: (---) but then (.) ,hh as it got
 64 towards the (-) towards the end (.) um: (-) we s'
 65 (-) like so:: (.) like numbers i already knew how
 66 to count i already knew (.) um: (-) how to
 67 translate sein (.) the to be (.) verb
 68 Me: ok
 69 SB: i already knew (-) um: (.) the alphabet (--) and
 70 like just (-) gen (.) like (.) some (.) little
 71 words (.) and so: (.) uh: but once we got past that
 72 and we were doing more of like the pronouns and
 73 that kinda thing (.) it was more new to me

74 Me: ok

75 SB: so that was more of a gradual increase (-) and
76 then: (-) um: (--) towards the end: i should say
77 that (.) it went up a lot (-) for my exam but i
78 didn't study that much because i had another exam
79 .hh so:: it was more like (.) even (.) but now that
80 i'm in (.) german (-) um 102 (.) again and i'm
81 taking it distance ed it's (.) it's increasing
82 again

83 Me: ok

84 SB: is that (.) is that ok?

85 Me: that's excellent so (.) um: (.) now your family's
86 german so you must have started out (.) not right
87 at the bottom sort of do you know what i mean?

88 SB: yeah

89 Me: so is that why this is here?

90 SB: <<whispering> yeah>

91 Me: so this is accounting for your sort of knowing it
92 from (.) family=

93 SB: =and from taking (.) uh like i took german school
94 when i was little

95 Me: OH:: how cute [((laughs))]

96 SB: [yeah (.) i know it was really cute]

97 Me: ok good (-) so th' y' (.) so you had little bumps
98 of learning along the way [but] a general increase
99 you would say

100 SB: [yeah] mm-hm

101 Me: but probably not th' an increase that say someone
102 who had never seen german would have had

103 SB: yeah

104 Me: [ok]

105 SB: [that's] what i'd say because (.) i did have some
106 (--) knowledge of it before like when i was younger
107 i did german school for probably like (.) four
108 years

109 Me: [gotcha]

110 SB: [but my] teacher was like (-) HORRible she was the
111 kinda teacher that (-) every week was something new
112 cause we only went for (.) we did an hour of
113 learning and a half an hour of singing

114 Me: [aw:: ((laughs))]

115 SB: [and ((laughs))] so (.) and so i knew german um:
116 (.) songs too (.) but (.) she (.) the way she did
117 it was like (.) she just volunteered so it wasn't
118 like she was a real teacher and it was like (-)
119 every week was something new and it was like all
120 over the place [so]

121 Me: [yeah]
122 SB: one now that i have more structure everything kinda
123 falls into place and it makes so much more sense
124 (.) but (-) when there was no structure it was just
125 like (.) random bits of information
126 Me: a little bit chaotic eh
127 SB: yeah (.) [yeah]
128 Me: [ok] that's good um: (.) what about
129 midterm (--) is that in there or was [that again]
130 SB: [oh] maybe we
131 should talk about midterm (-) UM:=
132 Me: =do you remember ((laughs))
133 SB: oh gosh
134 Me: how you studied for that if was it similar to the
135 exam or did you have more motivation then (.) [to
136 study]
137 SB: [um:
138 (.)] i don't think i did a huge jump with the
139 midterm just because um: most of the s'
140 information covered before the midterm was
141 something i had already (.) somewhat (.) learned
142 Me: true
143 SB: so: (-) for my midterm um: (.) i didn't study very
144 much at all but i kept up with the class like
145 throughout the whole thing
146 Me: mm-hm
147 SB: so: (-) um: (.) when it came to the midterm i did
148 really well but i didn't do (-) a large amount of
149 studying
150 Me: ok
151 SB: but it's just because i (-) i (.) [knew: some of
152 it]
153 Me: [you felt
154 comfortable]
155 SB: and i felt comfortable exactly (.) so: (.) yeah
156 Me: k (-) and what about (.) something like (.)
157 different (.) in a different testing situation like
158 the speaking test (.) where (.) you would practice
159 with a friend did you feel (.) a jump in learning
160 there?
161 SB: um: (.) when we did the speaking tests like at the
162 end?
163 Me: mm-hm
164 SB: .hh um: ,hh i would say (.) y' y:es (.) because (.)
165 um: (-) i like we (.) we ended up using stuff that
166 was from chapters (.) that we hadn't covered yet so
167 i learned stuff there (.) but um: because it was

168 memorizing it was more (.) i don't know if i
169 learned it so much as i just (.) memorized it
170 Me: right
171 SB: but (.) i know (.) now that these are the chapters
172 that i'm gonna cover (.) in german 102, (.) when it
173 comes to do that (.) i do have some knowledge
174 Me: right
175 SB: of it (.) so (.) i think thAt will come out more
176 (.) if like if we continue () thAt kinda thing
177 (.) and i did it for 102 (.) i think it would be
178 (.) more of a jump than than (.) now
179 Me: right (.) because there's more material
180 SB: yeah
181 Me: ((laughs)) how do you find it so far (.) 102
182 SB: um:
183 Me: harder? (-) have you noticed?=
184 SB: =it is harder because it's more (.) like (.) i'
185 it's gone (.) from the part of like explaining it
186 in english (.) now it's like explaining it in like
187 simple german terms where it's like (.) OK well now
188 i have to remember everything i learned in 101 (.)
189 but (.) it's not bad so far
190 Me: mm-hm
191 SB: [i don't know]
192 Me: [still manageable?]
193 SB: yeah still manageable (-) it's hard to motivate
194 myself to sit there and DO it but
195 Me: mm-hm (.) distance ed is sometimes
196 SB: yeah (.) but it's not bad
197 Me: that's good
198 SB: so far
199 Me: ok <<faster> um well the last thing then> is uh: if
200 you could also draw (.) on the same axis a
201 motivation line of: (.) cause you were saying for
202 motivation wise like for the exam cause you had
203 another exam so you were
204 SB: yeah
205 Me: sort of splitting off your (.) you know who you
206 were which you were studying for and what not
207 SB: yeah
208 Me: so do you think you could draw a motivation line
209 (.) um:: (---) accurately somehow [((laughs))]
210 SB: [ok so:::] i voted
211 (-) k so im gonna say: (.) from the beginning (-)
212 like i was (-) pre:tty motivated to do it (-) but
213 then when it got towards exams
214 Me: ((laughs))

215 SB: kinda leveled off
 216 Me: mm-hm
 217 SB: and so: and then like (.) definitely towards the
 218 end it was
 219 Me: tapering
 220 SB: yeah declining just because it's like [the end of
 221 exams and it's christmas]
 222 Me: [christmas
 223 (.) ((laughs))]
 224 SB: and i'm ready to be dOne yeah (-)
 225 Me: ok so you you started off (-) pretty movitated and
 226 it just k' increased?
 227 SB: yeah (.) like i'm still am motivated to do it
 228 mainly because um: (-) m' like my dad speaks it and
 229 like my relatives speak it (.) and i have that
 230 motivation to learn it because it's my (-) heritage
 231 Me: mm-hm
 232 SB: and because like one day i would like to go to
 233 germany and be able to s' (-) meet relatives and
 234 (-) converse with them and not be like um:: so::
 235 (.) i do have motivation to do it which is why i'm
 236 (.) still in distance ed and (.) you know [(.)
 237 doing]
 238 Me: [good]
 239 SB: the work
 240 Me: that's good
 241 SB: so it's not bad
 242 Me: excellent (.) ok (.) so: yeah (.) that's about it
 243 SB: ok
 244 Me: a very simple one

Interview #1, Student C

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

November 24th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 27 minutes 22 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semistructured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: alright (-) so: (-) yes (-) you are taking german
 02 101 ((laughs))
 03 SC: yes
 04 Me: how are you enjoying it so far
 05 SC: uh: it's alright (-) sometimes (-) it's a little
 06 (-) well it's a language course (.) like i'd rather
 07 just take give me the structure the grammar and the

08 (.) like a verb chart
09 Me: right
10 SC: and let me go
11 Me: ok
12 SC: but other than that it's pretty good
13 Me: so sometimes you find it sorta slow or
14 SC: yes
15 Me: ok (.) cause you wrote in your thing that um: you
16 pick up concepts really quick (.) is that (.) [was
17 that that was you that wrote that right] yeah,
18 SC: [i
19 tend to yes]
20 Me: um: (.) and the grammar concepts not (.) not a big
21 problem for you
22 SC: no
23 Me: so: um: (.) like is that true also for vocabulary
24 or is thAt a different story
25 SC: i can usually remember vocabulary (.) very quickly
26 Me: and um:: (--) what do you ,h not enjoy specifically
27 then like in class that would maybe bore you
28 frustrate you
29 SC: i guess the activities some of the activities like
30 (4)
31 Me: [can you] think of any ((laughs))
32 SC: [just] like writing things on (--) like just
33 writing simple sentences that don't really mean
34 anything just practice really some k' sometimes
35 boring
36 Me: right so it's not authentic like doesn't actually
37 apply to any situation that you might actually be
38 in
39 SC: exactly
40 Me: ok i understand that (.) um: (.) is there what is
41 there (.) what parts of the course do you a:'
42 actually enjoy what specific things that you do in
43 class that
44 SC: well i like that i i (.) you actually have to speak
45 the language
46 Me: mm-hm
47 SC: it's not just reading and thinking
48 Me: right
49 SC: you actually have to (.) say it
50 Me: yep (-) is there um: (-) um: (-) like you said
51 you're good you like grammar and that you're good
52 at that is it is it then come from um: looking at
53 the book (.) or is it in class that you enjoy (.)
54 doing that or is it all of the above like in terms

55 of learning grammar stuff
56 SC: anywhere
57 Me: [anywhere]
58 SC: [it's not just]
59 Me: you don't think it's con' like in terms of one
60 context or another it you
61 SC: well usually if i read it it's easier
62 Me: so you've already grasped the concept by the time
63 it comes to class maybe if you have to read it in
64 advance or
65 SC: yeah
66 Me: yeah (.) now have you um (.) taken (.) i can't
67 remember you've taken french (.) is that right
68 SC: french and spanish
69 Me: oh and spanish ok cool (.) so um: is that was that
70 in high school was that in
71 SC: high school yes
72 Me: for both of them
73 SC: yep
74 Me: were you in french immersion or:
75 SC: no
76 Me: no ok so just core french
77 SC: i just i actually just have twelve u
78 Me: OH (.) really,
79 SC: yeah
80 Me: how does thAt happen
81 SC: my (.) the teacher liked me
82 Me: and she just let you in (-) and how come you didn't
83 take it up till (--) [like did you take it]
84 SC: [i didn't]
85 Me: in public school? or
86 SC: well we had it in public school i had it in grade
87 nine and then i didn't take it until (.) grade
88 twelve
89 Me: till grade twelve and th' you you had to talk to
90 the teacher to get [into]
91 SC: [yeah]
92 Me: the course or whatever (.) ok do you take (.) any
93 languages other than german right now
94 SC: not right now
95 Me: are you in first year
96 SC: yes
97 Me: ok what are you studying
98 SC: uh: computer science
99 Me: ok so (-) you just wanted an elective (.) did you
100 have to take an elective or:
101 SC: we have two electives yes

102 Me: ok s' like did you have to take a language arts
103 credit or was it just your choice that you
104 SC: my choice
105 Me: and what motivated you to choose taking german
106 SC: uh: (-) it's fairly it's a big language that i like
107 it's spok' well spoken
108 Me: mm-hm
109 SC: and i don't didn't have any background in it
110 Me: so you don't have any background in german ok
111 that's interesting too (.) um: yeah cause i that's
112 why i wasn't sure about your name cause it could be
113 pronounced like kiel in german (.) um maybe you've
114 already known that i don't know (.) but um:
115 ((laughs))
116 SC: that's what people usually call me
117 Me: oh really (.) in german class or just
118 SC: no everywhere
119 Me: everywhere (.) and nobody calls you kyle
120 SC: not usually
121 Me: <<laughing> that's funny> (-) um: ok so you have no
122 german background so you're motivated to take it
123 just because it's a popular language in the world
124 SC: yes and i had no ability to speak it before
125 Me: yeah and you seem interested in languages cause w'
126 (.) are is w' were you the one that wrote something
127 about the internet and you learned spanish on the
128 internet (.) ok so and something about basque too
129 (.) what was that
130 SC: oh it's just a weird language
131 Me: yeah i know i know i know what language it is but
132 how did you come to decide on that
133 SC: i think i just saw it somewhere and
134 Me: [yeah]
135 SC: [it was weird] (.) [so i looked into it]
136 Me: [so you just] (-) became
137 interested in that (.) did you learn about that
138 would would you have learned about (.) about these
139 languages in spanish class that you would have
140 heard about
141 SC: no
142 Me: no?
143 SC: =i (.) pretty much could speak spanish before i
144 took it in high school
145 Me: OH ok how was that
146 SC: it was alright
147 Me: no but i mean like HOW did you
148 SC: oh just (.) internet (.) music

149 Me: you picked it up from that only?
150 SC: pretty much
151 Me: =wow that's pretty cool (-) so you aren't taking
152 spanish right now though
153 SC: no
154 Me: would you plan on
155 SC: i was going to take it next term but they didn't
156 (.) i couldn't (.) because they don't offer the
157 first part of it
158 Me: ah (.) oh yeah that's they should the co-op co-op
159 thing they should do that (.) cool but you would
160 you would take it again you like it
161 SC: yes
162 Me: so you've had good experiences with spanish
163 SC: yes
164 Me: and french you have have sort of sporadic
165 experiences cause you kind of took a break but [you
166 like it]
167 SC: [i'm
168 taking it] next term again
169 Me: oh are you so that's good so you (.) clearly you
170 enjoy language learning ((laughs)) (--) um
171 (4)
172 so do you en' do you enjoy you've said that it
173 sometimes it's slow class (.) um do you enjoy class
174 meetings (.) um (.) mOre or less than on your own
175 at home (.) that type of thing what do you find is
176 SC: i'd rather do stuff at home
177 Me: you'd rather do independent sort of
178 SC: yeah next next term i'm taking them both or the
179 second part of german and french distance ed
180 Me: oh you're so you've done that on purpose to switch
181 to distance ed
182 SC: yes
183 Me: even though the german is available in class form
184 but [you'd rather]
185 SC: [well i don't know] if i could fit it into the
186 schedule i have
187 Me: ok so was it more of a schedule issue or like em
188 (.) a more of a (.) i think i'm a good independent
189 learner issue
190 SC: kinda both i didn't feel like switching around my
191 whole schedule to make it fit where i wanted so i
192 was just like eh
193 Me: yeah you know you can learn it on your [own so]
194 SC: [yes]
195 Me: ok now um are you um: (.) are you worried you might

196 not get the same um: (.) speaking (-) practice?
197 [how do you feel about that]
198 SC: [a little worried] (.) cause i know my spoken (-)
199 my spoken french and spanish isn't nearly as good
200 as my written
201 Me: ok (--) and um (.) do you find that (---) em (--)
202 when you're in class is that to you one of the
203 major benefits of being in a classroom (.) learning
204 a language?
205 SC: yes speaking and hearing it spoken
206 Me: ok so those are those are the two things you (.)
207 which you've already mentioned one .hh that you
208 really uh feel that benefits your language learning
209 is from in a classroom whereas if i understand you
210 correctly if you're going to learn grammar or or
211 just sort of look it over you you like the
212 independent way of being alone and being able [to
213 look at it]
214 SC: [yes
215 just looking at it]
216 Me: ok (.) um::
217 (4)
218 now um (.) why do you think you learn better on
219 your own (.) like why do you can you think of any
220 reason why you think your learning style is (-) why
221 do you think it benefits you to learn certain
222 things
223 SC: uh:: (-) just because i learn (.) really easy just
224 by looking at (.) instead of (.) where usually in a
225 classroom setting they go over it and over it
226 Me: so it gets repetitious and you [don't]
227 SC: [yes]
228 Me: need all that
229 SC: and i kinda get bored (.) and zone out
230 Me: ok so did you on your questionnaire did you write
231 that um:: (-) the teacher talks too slow sometimes
232 and you get bored or do you remember what it was
233 SC: um (-) sometimes it's too slow
234 Me: like goes too slow and you get bored
235 SC: yeah
236 Me: that type of thing (.) do you find that it's um:
237 (-) challenging enough for you? (.) in the
238 classroom?
239 SC: somet' sometimes
240 Me: [sometimes it does get]
241 SC: [sometimes not]
242 Me: now how does your do you are you doing well in the

243 class like you're
244 SC: yeah [fairly well]
245 Me: [you feel confident] in the [marks]
246 SC: [yes]
247 Me: that you're getting and all that stuff (.) alright
248 cool (.) now we haven't talked about the lab what
249 do you think about the lab (.) portion
250 SC: i like that because then it it does force you to
251 listen and learn how to listen
252 Me: mm-hm
253 SC: which is where one of my weak spots
254 Me: ok
255 SC: but
256 Me: yeah (.) so (.) would you say that that's (.) um
257 (.) a necessary component to the beginner (.)
258 language the lab is that for you been a a plus?
259 SC: yes
260 Me: um: (.) cause there are people that really hate the
261 lab um: (.) different reasons i don't know they (-)
262 you know sometimes they find the activities do'
263 done in there wasting time blah blah blah (.) you
264 do you (.) you do lab tasks you do tests you do
265 listening comprehension you do web activities so
266 you're you know you do this visual you know (.)
267 computer (.) stuff what like do you f' do you find
268 one some things better than others like what what
269 components in the lab do you really enjoy
270 SC: like the au' the audio parts are good (.) the (.)
271 looking at the culture and stuff is (.) not so
272 great
273 Me: so that to you would be the negative part of it
274 SC: yes
275 Me: and so are you are you then saying that you're not
276 really interested in learning about the culture
277 you're more interested in
278 SC: (--) the culture's not bad but i'd rather just
279 learn how to speak the language
280 Me: ok so you're very (.) really wanna just learn the
281 language
282 SC: yes
283 Me: that's the goal of this course for you ok (.) and
284 do you (.) do you um: (.) find (.) then (.) that
285 the book (-) is (-) good or bad because there is a
286 l' a little bit of there you know there's culture
287 in the book and sort of pulled in (.) in you know
288 those little yellow boxes where they say you know
289 (.) how to say hello in different places and and

290 and (.) all these different parts like the anna
291 adler story you know trying to make a context (.)
292 does that interest you?
293 SC: no (.) i find the book way too spread out
294 Me: mm-hm (.) too vague
295 SC: yes
296 Me: um: (.) what's
297 SC: instead of just going to a point they spread it out
298 over a chapter
299 Me: ok (.) yeah (.) do you think uh or what do you
300 think in the book um: (.) is good (.) do you find
301 any benefits to it
302 SC: like you mentioned those little yellow things where
303 they say in different areas they use different
304 words
305 Me: mm-hm
306 SC: that's (.) useful
307 Me: mm-hm
308 SC: um:
309 (4)
310 their like their (.) chapter summaries and stuff
311 where they'll like list out an entire verb chart
312 (.) and such i like that
313 Me: mm-hm (-) do you find the explanations (.) good
314 enough?
315 SC: what do you mean
316 Me: you know like uh:: introducing a concept say like
317 the accusative (-) and of course there's the charts
318 but the actual explanations of (-) grammar concepts
319 do you find them um: extensive enough or do you
320 find do you find that they that for you you've
321 already learned the concept by what they say or do
322 you feel that there's something's missing
323 SC: .hh it's (---) it's alright the way they do it but
324 sometimes i wish they'd give more (.) like more
325 detail
326 Me: yeah (-) um: because um: (.) you know some people
327 think that (-) when you look at vorsprung there's
328 (-) um (.) a LOT in one chapter (.) and so uh (.)
329 you know some people have been saying you know oh::
330 it's (-) um: (-) there it it seems to go so quick
331 you know there's not sort of the concentration on
332 some some issues as i wish there had been or
333 whatever (.) .h but do you find that that for you
334 (.) um: (-) it's enough that you learn it? or do
335 you (.) y' like you said y' you miss you feel that
336 there's some explanations missing but on the whole

337 do you find it that it explains grammar well?
338 SC: um: (-) yes i think it explains grammar well
339 Me: like just for you right because i m' i (-) everyone
340 has a different opinion on that
341 SC: i don't
342 (5)
343 i gotta be honest i don't really read the book that
344 often
345 Me: yeah well no but that's important to know because
346 um (--) do you go to other sources (.) for
347 information sometimes?
348 SC: uh: (.) not usually
349 Me: so you really pick it up quick (.) i'm getting that
350 from you ((laughs))
351 SC: ((laughs))
352 Me: that you in class (--) probably rely on the book
353 for a bit and maybe the teacher goes over it and
354 you do some practices and you've got it in your
355 head
356 SC: yes
357 Me: is that how it works for you? (.) um when you ok
358 well let's (--) going going on to looking at when
359 you go to study for a midterm or test (-) do you
360 need to spend a lot of time do you find that you
361 get away with not studying a lot then
362 SC: yes
363 Me: and: um: is that a a reason why you might be pushed
364 to study languages? (.) like because you know
365 there's not a lot of worked involved like wh' when
366 you look at it that way? [or]
367 SC: [that's] (.) part of it
368 like i can just take a course it's nice and easy
369 not a lot of stress
370 Me: mm-hm
371 SC: but i also (-) do like to learn how to speak them
372 Me: right so you actually do have a vested interest in
373 the outcome (-) but um:: (.) when you're studying
374 if <<laughing> at all> studying grammar concepts do
375 you do you actually study gra' grammar concepts or
376 do you really find that you don't even need to look
377 them over again at home (.) like what if you have
378 [homework say]
379 SC: [i've usually] no i don't need to look them over
380 Me: so like if you have a homework on uh: applying you
381 know the indefinite article in a blank f' and it's
382 uh: you know gender you have to make sure you've
383 got the right gender of the noun you've got to make

384 sure it's in the accusative or nominative (.) you
385 don't even need to look over the charts you already
386 have it memorized or is that something else too
387 SC: i have those memorized
388 Me: you have [them all memorized]
389 SC: [it's just] the remembering what nouns are
390 feminine (.) [masculine]
391 Me: [ok] so is
392 SC: i sometimes need to look back at it
393 Me: right so cause you were saying um:: (-) vocabulary
394 (-) is there's a lists and stuff like that in the
395 textbook (.) do you how do you memorize vocabulary
396 SC: read it (.) a couple times
397 Me: yeah (.) is it and [and all the spelling and
398 everything]
399 SC: [and sometimes i'll write it
400 out]
401 Me: ok so you write it out too
402 SC: occasionally
403 Me: mm-hm when it's [blocking]
404 SC: [when there's] a LOT
405 Me: right (.) right right (.) um: (-) and so you've
406 just mentioned gender which i was going to ask you
407 about uh: do you find that (--) how does that
408 affect like how do you learn that how do you
409 connect that with a word (.) how do you memorize it
410 SC: i just (.) do (.) i guess from studying spanish and
411 french
412 Me: mm-hm
413 SC: it just kind (.) [makes sense]
414 Me: [you're used to memorizing] these
415 things and (.) yeah (-) do you find (.) what's the
416 hardest part of of (.) what's the hard' like you
417 you know it seems to come easy to you and and so
418 () maybe it's not really hard but (.) what would
419 be the hardest thing for you in in in learning a
420 beg' in like a beginner language course what do you
421 think so far the hardest thing to mEmorize or or or
422 understAnd uh: (.) so far
423 SC: uh: (.) lists of like nouns like
424 Me: ok
425 SC: from a classroom setting or something
426 Me: right so all memorizing s' and getting the right
427 spelling and umlauts and capitals of and genders of
428 all those
429 SC: yes
430 Me: is (.) that's the sort of thing that just you just

431 sit down and
432 SC: i would need to go over that a several times
433 Me: right whereas a concept for you (--) DONE (.) no
434 problem
435 SC: yes
436 Me: ok that's interesting (-) um: (-) now (-) does it
437 take you (.) if you sit down and put the effort
438 into memorizing vocabulary and gender and putting
439 it all together with the nouns (.) .h does' would
440 it take you a long time to actually memorize the
441 vocabulary, like if you were studying for the
442 midterm (.) do you need te have a bit of time to
443 study for that stuff so that you have it in your
444 mind or can you sort of cram the night before and
445 s' (.) memorize a list of vocabulary [that's two
446 pages long]
447 SC: [i i cram the
448 night before]
449 Me: ok so you you have no problem doing this sort of
450 short term quick memorize these l' nouns (.) even
451 though it does require you to put in a couple hours
452 or whatever of memorizing it but you (-) you can
453 spew it all out the next day no problem,
454 SC: yes
455 Me: ok cause i know people that sometimes they need
456 weeks (.) they need weeks um:: (--) do you find the
457 explanations from the teacher useful
458 SC: yes
459 Me: does it complement the book or do you rely on
460 teacher explanation (.) more than the book
461 SC: well she (-) she says it so i usually don't look at
462 the book too often
463 Me: ok
464 SC: cause i understand from what she says
465 Me: right
466 SC: but if i if i might be a little not unclear i'll
467 then i'll read the book
468 Me: mm-hm (-) do you think that um:: (--) in class i'
469 if you were to you know learn a concept (.) the
470 teacher would go over it (-) does it help you then
471 in class if you would right away do exercises in
472 groups (.) and then take it up like do you like
473 getting that immediate feedback and does that (---)
474 uh:: (-) help you memorize it' or do you find that
475 it's (.) you don't even really need even to
476 practice that you've already got it
477 SC: i usually don't need to practice but sometimes just

478 (.) maybe a few little of those (.) little
479 questions the fill in the blank stuff
480 Me: right
481 SC: those are (.) sometimes helpful
482 Me: mm-hm (.) like if you're studying for a midterm or
483 something,
484 SC: yes
485 Me: mm-hm (-) um:: (-) now how much does how much does
486 her explanations the teacher's explanations affect
487 (.) how you understand the material like you say
488 you don't really read the book so (.) do you rely
489 then on her explanations for all this knowledge (-)
490 or would you do you think you would be able to
491 understand all the same exact stuff (.) if you only
492 had the book to read
493 SC: i could probably do it just with the book
494 Me: because you know some people don't (.) don't like
495 reading the book some people some people you know
496 are very visual and they want the teacher to write
497 out everything (.) instead of just sticking with
498 the book (.) but then there's people who who like
499 both but had they (.) not had if the teacher didn't
500 explain it in that much detail the book would
501 suffice for them (.) do you think that you're that
502 you're either visual like that you need the teacher
503 to come and sort of slam it in your head or do you
504 think that the book is suffic' sufficient to: your
505 SC: i could the book would have been suspi' sufficient
506 Me: right (-) and you'll probably have to rely on it
507 next term when you do ((laughs)) german 102 online
508 but it's the same book so (.) actually that's an
509 int' another interesting thing you'll you'll
510 probably have already a benefit doing 102 (-) uh:
511 (.) having already had 101 IN the classroom (.)
512 because you've already used the book so much (.)
513 like whether you actually studied from it or not
514 you're doing all the material from the book (.) um:
515 (-) which i'm sure will be interesting for you
516 <<laughing> when you do 102> (-) um: so: in the end
517 (-) you don't use the book much is that what i'm
518 getting from (.) not i don't mean (.) i'm not
519 judging you on [that (.) you don't use the book
520 much]
521 SC: [yep (.) that (.) that's true]
522 Me: so you rely on the teacher's explanations to (.)
523 um: (.) but if (.) if you were forced to have to
524 learn from the book you would be able to understand

525 (.) um: and do you prefer when when in that case
526 you actually are looking at the book (.) comparing
527 to what she tells you (.) do you find that ones
528 better than the other? (.) uh: for you? or are they
529 very very much the same like
530 SC: they're (.) pretty much the same
531 Me: so you find that she really t' pl' uses the book as
532 a base to explain all these things
533 SC: i guess
534 Me: you can't tell
535 SC: no
536 Me: ((laughs)) it's hard to know i guess (--) ok um the
537 last thing i was gonna ask you is about um: (.)
538 group work (.) in class (.) do you like working in
539 groups,
540 SC: i don't dislike it
541 Me: ok so you're kind of indifferent
542 SC: yes
543 Me: um: you have a speaking test coming up right
544 SC: mm-hm
545 Me: how does that type of work how do you enjoy that
546 type of work (.) as opposed to (.) an independent
547 sort of thing that you might do on your own (.)
548 like what do you prefer
549 SC: i usually prefer independent
550 Me: yeah (--) but do you uh: (.) do you find that group
551 work bogs you down, (.) or (.) makes you (--) um:
552 how do i like frustrates you because there's
553 somebody else to sort of (-) wor' you know
554 collaborate with does that (.) or are are do you
555 find that it's it's a great environment to exchange
556 ideas and um learn from each other and practice
557 like what do you see that as sort of a negative or
558 a positive
559 SC: probably usually a negative
560 Me: mm-hm (-) is it because of that reason or can you
561 (.) come up with any other reason why
562 SC: i (.) usually just like to just quick get it over
563 with
564 Me: right (-) on your own time
565 SC: do it on my whenever i want on my own
566 Me: ok i'm getting i'm getting from you that you are
567 very much an independent learner (.) that you um:
568 (---) FIND that you see the necessity in going to
569 class and and learning from the teacher but that
570 (.) sometimes it's boring because if you could
571 learn on your own pace you would be done in

572 probably half the time that they would be taking
573 (.) is that what i
574 SC: [mm-hm]
575 Me: [like] something like that where you tend to
576 understand things quickly (.) and then the rest of
577 the t' things that are getting explained you kind
578 of nod off cause it's not affecting you anymore
579 cause you've understood it already
580 SC: yes
581 Me: would that be accurate (--) um:: (--) in class you
582 know in class when you do um:: (.) if for example
583 the teacher would say ok get into groups of three
584 or whatever (.) you know do this exercise or write
585 this st' write a dialogue and (.) how do you work
586 in those situations how do you (.) what are your
587 sort of s' strategy in getting the job done
588 SC: [i don't know]
589 Me: [(laughs)] like do you find that it's easy to
590 collaborate, (.) and that you can express what you
591 want
592 SC: yeah i'd say that (.) it's usually not too hard
593 Me: does it um: present itself as almost like something
594 you don't really want to do (.) or is it like oh
595 good a break from all this like being lectured at
596 (.) let's work together (.) what kind of situation
597 is that for you
598 SC: well i don't really see it as a break
599 Me: [no]
600 SC: [more as] just (.) kinda like busy work
601 Me: mm-hm (-) and um (-) if you were to get if you were
602 in a group where you felt (-) more (.) i don't want
603 to say superior but (.) like you knew the most in
604 the group or you know you had you felt smarter than
605 the others or you know what i mean sometimes you
606 get a group a couple group uh: members in your
607 group where they might be you know people don't
608 come to class or just don't aren't maybe understand
609 the concepts
610 SC: mm-hm
611 Me: do you find that you you have to take on a lot of
612 the work, (.) or do you just do what's required of
613 you and feel good about that because you know that
614 it's fine (.) like do y' what do you find do you
615 find it a burden when there's people that might be
616 SC: no
617 Me: you don't find it a burden at all
618 SC: no

619 Me: so you just you do' you don't worry about (.) doing
620 other people's work cause you know how in group
621 work sometimes there's people that (--) wanna take
622 over because they're worried th' the the it might
623 co' uh:: (.) compromise the quality of what the
624 group does cause they're with people that they
625 might think is (.) you know are not as: (.) good as
626 them or whatever (.) um: (.) but that doesn't
627 affect you,
628 SC: no
629 Me: alright so you don't mind group work (.) but you
630 prefer independent work because it's time con' it
631 ma' easier on time,
632 SC: yes
633 Me: um: (--) in your questionnaire you were talking you
634 you were very i find you very concise you're like
635 write you know this i i learn grammar concepts
636 quickly it's easy i can memorize stuff one times or
637 twice reading it (.) um: ar' do you find that in
638 general then your learning strategy is just like
639 (.) um:: (.) very (.) uh: (-) like (.) um: (.) you
640 complete things (.) and y' you don't start many
641 things but you complete it complete it complete it
642 and then you've got it kind of memorized (-) like
643 how would you describe your learning style
644 SC: ,hh
645 Me: it's hard to i know it's hard to think about it but
646 SC: um: (-) i don't know i just (---) kind of
647 Me: force you force to think about this ((laughs))
648 SC: well it's sporadic it's just whatever i start
649 reading
650 Me: mm-hm
651 SC: i'll usually (-) figure it out finish reading that
652 Me: yep
653 SC: until later i'll keep reading it until i understand
654 Me: mm-hm (-) um: (-) if you get bored with something
655 do you (.) tend to not be interested in it right
656 away (.) or (.) like are you (-) if someone loses
657 your interest is it like forget it like i can't
658 learn now (.) or is it kind of like (.) uh:: (.)
659 you can get back into it it just needs to be
660 constantly like (.) uh motivating for you
661 SC: i can get back into it
662 Me: ok so it's not um something where like if they lose
663 you you're gone type thing you
664 SC: no
665 Me: it's just a matter of like this is boring now i'm

666 just gonna (-) you know wait until it affects me
667 again or it has to do with something that i'm gonna
668 learn
669 SC: exactly
670 Me: ok um: what else
671 (7)
672 i think that's it (--) what else did you write in
673 your questionnaire (.) i'm trying to remember (--)
674 OH do you (-) did you write that you like to learn
675 grammar first right, (.) and then speak later
676 SC: yes
677 Me: which i think is really interesting because uh::
678 (-) you're putting like the emphasis on the grammar
679 and THEN on the sort of like (.) because i get the
680 opinion that you must be the type of person who (.)
681 uh:: (--) wants to (.) when you want to go to speak
682 a language you want it to be really good like you
683 don't want to make a mistake is that [(.) do you]
684 find that that's true?
685 SC: [yes]
686 Me: so would you be hesitant then to speak without
687 being spoken to, (.) in a class, (.) language lab,
688 SC: very hesitant yes
689 Me: ok so: i mean even if the teacher asks you you
690 you're like you really wanna you know translate in
691 your head are you very methodological about that
692 like do you really (---) translate in your head or
693 do you find that it's not like that or how do you
694 SC: uh: it depends (-) sometimes i have to think about
695 it (-) other times i just (.) don't
696 Me: yep (.) and um:
697 (4)
698 speaking then is sort of a barrier because you want
699 it to be good
700 SC: yes
701 Me: now do you um: (.) have you ever been to france or
702 like anywhere where they speak the languages that
703 you've learned
704 SC: no
705 Me: no ok (-) () um: because you know there's
706 there's there's it' couple different types
707 obviously of people but i mean there's people that
708 will (--) um: (--) nOt understand grammar pretty
709 much have vEry difficult time understanding
710 concepts vEry can't memorize things and gEnders
711 forget it out the window but they don't care
712 they'll speak they make mistakes left right and

713 centre but the main thing is they're practicing
714 their language (.) and i mean (.) and then there's
715 like i'm i'm like you very much like you where i
716 (.) don't want to say something unless it's right
717 you know get really nervous about what people will
718 think of me if i say something wrong (-) um: (.)
719 and um: (-) in class do you find that there's a lot
720 of spoken practice (.) enough that you think that
721 (.) um it helps you feel more comfortable (.) in
722 german class,
723 SC: uh (-) usually (-) like we do answer a lot of stuff
724 in german
725 Me: mm-hm (--) does she speak a lot of german in class,
726 SC: uh: when she's asking like the simple questions yes
727 or the simple commands
728 Me: mm-hm (-) and um: (.) does she make you guys answer
729 a lot of questions then (.) when she's doing that
730 SC: sometimes [it depends on the day]
731 Me: [does she pick on everyone type thing]
732 SC: yeah she'll do that she'll go around the room
733 Me: but does that make you nervous if you're gonna get
734 picked like you don't want to answer or do you feel
735 motivated to (.) try
736 SC: sometimes i don't want to answer
737 Me: because you don't want to sound like you
738 SC: right
739 Me: wrong ((laughs)) (.) ok cool yeah that (.) that's
740 what i figured when i saw your questionnaire i was
741 like oh: i have a feeling this guys one of those
742 people that really doesn't want to be wrong when
743 they speak cause it's true like a lot of people who
744 really like the grammar (-) stay TOO stay almost
745 sometimes TOO close to the grammar because you know
746 it's like this it's like almost like a baby blanket
747 like oh:: i can't be wrong if i just have my
748 grammar book right here you know it's gonna keep me
749 it's gonna get me right where i need to be but (.)
750 and then there's the people who are like i don't
751 understand grammar at all but i'll speak whatever
752 and it's you know it there's lots of mistakes but
753 uh:: (.) but at the same time they're actually
754 practicing which is (.) great it can only help
755 SC: yep
756 Me: it's interesting i think (.) ok is there anything
757 else that you (.) can think of about class that i
758 haven't asked you about
759 SC: about class,

760 Me: or anything about language learning that you wanted
761 to mention
762 SC: um
763 (3)
764 i don't know (.) not really
765 Me: so you've ok so you've got german just started
766 french a few years spanish a few years basque you
767 looked at on the internet is there any other
768 languages that you've sort of come in contact with
769 that interested you
770 SC: yes
771 Me: mm-hm
772 SC: um: creole languages
773 Me: ok
774 SC: like caribbean creole
775 Me: yep
776 SC: jamaican creole
777 Me: i' is that close to french
778 SC: j' jamaican is close to english
779 Me: yeah i know that but
780 SC: haitian guadaloupean that's [french]
781 Me: [french] right (.) yes
782 (-) and (.) that interest came from:
783 SC: uh just (.) they're weird
784 Me: ((laughs)) no but i mean like how did you like was
785 it through french class or was it through internet
786 SC: no music
787 Me: music ok (.) so you get into languages a lot
788 through music right
789 SC: yes
790 Me: how do you find that stuff like do you
791 SC: i just
792 Me: do you just (.) randomly come across it or [do you
793 search for it]
794 SC: [pretty
795 much] i: i just come across it (.) if i like it
796 i'll i get more
797 Me: yeah have you ever listened to german music
798 SC: no
799 Me: no you should ((laughs))
800 SC: ((laughs))
801 Me: there's some funny stuff out there (-) alright cool
802 (.) i think that's it (.) well thank you very much
803 (.) i'll turn this off (.) bye bye

Interview 2

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

December 14th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 13 minutes 59 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semi-structured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: ok um: (-) so you (.) i'll just start with the in
02 depth questions based on the last interview you
03 were saying (.) like self you're self described i
04 would say fast g' like grammar understanding
05 learner (.) pick up grammar really quickly
06 SC: yes
07 Me: in class you said (.) because you don't (.) use the
08 book a lot on your own you tend to have class and
09 that fac' that's enough for you to [learn it]
10 SC: [mm-hm]
11 Me: UM: (.) so can you can you describe
12 sort of the processes that go on in your mind or
13 (.) or (.) even just like how you (-) so con' (.)
14 so quickly like what is the exact processes do you
15 think (.) that enable you to do that so quickly
16 SC: i look at the parts of speech
17 Me: mm-hm
18 SC: like (.) i'll remember how the (.) sentence is
19 structured (.) whether it's subject object verb or
20 (.) [however it works]
21 Me: [ok so you break it down]
22 SC: yes
23 Me: mm-hm
24 SC: and then i just seem to be able to remember
25 Me: ok so you just have that the ability to remember
26 after you break it down (-) ok (.) that's
27 interesting actually you're the first person who
28 said you break it <<laughing> down> ((laughs)) (-)
29 ok (-) and then what about vocabulary (.) that's
30 different right (.) how what are the what are the
31 processes necessary to be able to memorize a word
32 like what do you think your you use or what
33 technique
34 SC: um:
35 Me: more specific detail
36 SC: i think the best way to remember would be to
37 actually know how to use it in a sentence
38 Me: mm-hm

39 SC: then it's (.) much easier to remember
40 Me: so contextual (.) [learning]
41 SC: [yes]
42 Me: and um: (-) d' you said that it's a little harder
43 for you to memorize vocab than to pick up grammar
44 concepts like that takes more effort or whatever
45 SC: well there's more to know for grammar than or for
46 (.) vocab than grammar
47 Me: right and (.) why do you think it is um: (-) ta'
48 that it takes more time is it just the sheer amount
49 of it? or is there another factor [that you think]
50 SC: [i think it's the
51 amount]
52 Me: just the amount? (-) um:
53 (4)
54 so when you learn vocabulary (-) um: (.) do you w'
55 how do you learn it (.) like the exact process is
56 it just memorization (.) plain old the way it is or
57 is there like some technique
58 SC: usually memorization
59 Me: just memorization? ok (.) so directly from the book
60 or whatever
61 SC: mm-hm
62 Me: and you use when you see it in use
63 SC: yeah
64 Me: that helps to [cement]
65 SC: [like if] i'm reading a passage and
66 then i have to look up a word
67 Me: mm-hm
68 SC: i usually remember that fairly easily
69 Me: mm-hm and you can and that helps that it was in
70 like you know a text about a family or i don't know
71 (.) some sort of
72 SC: yeah (.) anything
73 Me: any (.) topic (-) ok (-) um: (.) if you're reading
74 a german (.) text like on the exam or (.) you know
75 (.) say someone gives you a text in german (.) um::
76 (.) what are the what what do you do to
77 sessessfully successfully understand (.) the text
78 like what what is your process of reading (.) how
79 do you [make sense of it]
80 SC: [um:] (--) i usually read it through and
81 hope i understand
82 Me: mm-hm
83 SC: and then i'll read the questions and then if i
84 can't if i don't know the answers i'll (-) rego
85 through the text and look for key words

86 Me: ok (-) now you say you read it through the first
87 time
88 SC: yeah
89 Me: does do you read it through as in like translating
90 read it through or as in (.) pretty much reading it
91 in german and trying to get what you can from it
92 SC: uh (-) kind of both
93 Me: ok so you use sort of (.) you translate where you
94 need to,
95 SC: yes
96 Me: ok (-) cause you know um: (-) some people are word
97 for word translators but do you find that you do
98 word for word translation when you're reading a
99 text,
100 SC: probably not
101 Me: probably not so much (.) k (--) um: (--) i know
102 that you guys haven't done a whOle lot of listening
103 (.) activities in the lab you've been doing some
104 tests there and you do your tests there right and
105 (.) and um: (-) maybe some web activities here and
106 there right (.) um: but on the lab test you had a
107 couple (.) big (-) listening comprehension [texts]
108 if i'm not mistaken
109 SC: [mm-hm]
110 Me: um: (.) so (.) when you're when you hear a text
111 like that you know a pretty long one (.) and you
112 have to answer all these questions what a' what
113 strategies do you use to successfully complete an
114 a' a question like to get
115 SC: um: (--) i just try to remember enough of the
116 questions at a time that when (.) it comes up in
117 the text i can answer them write them down quickly
118 Me: mm-hm (-) because um: usually a teacher reads a
119 text a couple times (.) and um how what do you do
120 during each of those times is there a different
121 strategy, in when you hear it the first time do you
122 do something different than when you hear it the
123 second time
124 SC: no [not really]
125 Me: [or is it just] (.) yeah [so you]
126 SC: [just s'] s' scribble
127 as many answers as you can
128 Me: over both times (.) um: (.) do you find that you
129 get (.) more answers out of the first time or the
130 second time
131 SC: second
132 Me: ok so it's more concrete and you've heard it

133 SC: mm-hm
134 Me: um: (.) would you be the type of person to (.) i
135 don't know if this was the case in the test but um:
136 write (-) notes as you hear stuff'
137 SC: no
138 Me: no so you would just go right to the answer and
139 SC: mm-hm
140 Me: check it off and then as you hear it again if you
141 realize you're wrong (.) that type of thing,
142 SC: yep
143 Me: ok (.) so you wouldn't you wouldn't be like the
144 type of person on a test or a quiz to have little
145 notes on the side and
146 SC: no
147 Me: ok ((laughs)) (--) ok (.) that was the in depth i
148 just wanted to know a little bit more about you're
149 the thoughts on (.) your thoughts on the processes
150 of how you're learning things um:: (---) when uh
151 this is more (.) general (-) learning a foreign
152 language (.) when you hear (.) um::
153 (6)
154 i'm trying to remember i have my (.) this is a (-)
155 different sheet (-) i'll just ask you the next
156 question for now (.) um what characteristics does
157 someone have to bring with them (.) do you think
158 (.) in order to successfully learn a foreign
159 language like what cr' characteristics do people
160 need to have
161 SC: they have to want to learn it
162 Me: want to learn it (.) so persistence?
163 SC: yes (-) and just some kind of interest in it
164 Me: ok [so]
165 SC: [like] they can't just be taking it cause they
166 can or they have to
167 Me: mm-hm
168 SC: they have to actually be interested and learn it
169 Me: ok so interest and desire
170 SC: yes
171 Me: to learn (.) a language (.) do you think that
172 there's any other factor that (.) would influence
173 how somebody would learn a language
174 SC: well just
175 Me: like if everybody was interested in and had the
176 desire do you think they'd ALL learn them? (.)
177 successfully? or is there [other factors]
178 SC: [probably]
179 Me: that might (-) [mostly] that's for you?

180 SC: [well] yeah
181 Me: can you think of any other factors that y' might
182 (.) play a role'
183 SC: well i guess their ability to remember stuff
184 Me: mm-hm (-) ok [so aptitude] maybe
185 SC: [but] yeah
186 Me: for that (-) um: ok (.) alright i have the other
187 question here (.) i for some reason (.) it got
188 deleted off this page (-) um: well first of all
189 just to continue with this question (.) do you have
190 those inter' (.) those characteristics,
191 SC: yes
192 Me: that you've described (.) and so that would
193 describe you personally (.) i guess too
194 SC: yes
195 Me: um:: (-) but what about negative characteristics
196 like do you see negative characteristics in people
197 that come to a class (-) and it blocks them (.)
198 from (.) being successful,
199 SC: uh: (--) laziness that's one in myself
200 Me: ((laughs))
201 SC: um: (---) but sometimes people
202 (3)
203 they just don't seem to (.) concentrate on it
204 Me: mm-hm
205 SC: or they don't see the need to learn a part (.) or
206 they just don't care
207 Me: sure (--) and um: (.) do y' and you've just
208 identified laziness as something you (-) have (.)
209 or ((laughs)) try to fight against maybe when
210 you're st' studying i know everybody has that
211 probably but (.) um:: (---) is that you think (.)
212 hinders you a little in this?
213 SC: oh yeah
214 Me: yeah or a lot ((laughs))
215 SC: ((laughs))
216 Me: ok so that y' it's a negative thing for you in some
217 ways
218 SC: mm-hm
219 Me: ok (.) um: (.) what does it mean to you when you if
220 you hear the term to learn or the sentence or
221 whatever phrase to learn a foreign language (.)
222 when you hear someone say that (.) what are terms
223 that pop into your head associated with learning a
224 foreign language
225 SC: um: (---) i don't know
226 Me: anything at all ((laughs)) like if someone comes up

227 to you and says (.) oh:: you know: i really like
228 learning a foreign language like what (-) what
229 things would you tell them (.) that assoc' that you
230 associate with that th' you know they've never
231 learned a foreign language and you wanna (.) they
232 want help knowing what that means for them (-)
233 ((laughs))
234 (4)
235 SC: i don't know (-) ((laughs))
236 Me: so if someone says to you or if someone says what
237 does it mean to learn a foreign language
238 SC: um: (.) you'd have to be able to speak it
239 Me: ok so speaking
240 SC: yeah
241 Me: i just mean like any term that you associate with
242 learning a foreign language
243 SC: oh (-) speaking reading writing
244 Me: mm-hm
245 SC: understanding
246 Me: mm-hm
247 SC: uh:
248 (4)
249 like proficiency i guess
250 Me: proficiency? (.) ok (.) tho' so those are all
251 pretty technical is there anything else like
252 (3)
253 SC: not that i can think of
254 Me: that comes along with it, (.) no, (---) ok (-) .h
255 um: (---) ((coughs)) (.) when you're learning a
256 foreign language what's the goal you have in mind
257 (-) you know (.) there's the goal of just passing
258 the course or the goal of being fluent like what
259 for you is sort of
260 SC: fluency
261 Me: so you're always got that in the back of your mind,
262 SC: mm-hm
263 Me: ok (-) um: (.) and do you feel that there's
264 expectations from (.) maybe the school society your
265 parents people that you care about (.) to: (.) to
266 go ahead and do take a foreign language or learn a
267 foreign language or be even become fluent,
268 SC: no
269 Me: or is this a personal
270 SC: personal thing
271 Me: ok so it's a personal thing (---) um: and this is
272 an interesting one (.) when do you feel that you've
273 or when do you get the feeling that you've learned

274 something in a language like when do you notice (.)
 275 that it's (-) you know it's sunk in
 276 SC: uh: if i'm (--) reading something
 277 Me: mm-hm
 278 SC: like lo' looking around on the internet and i come
 279 across a page that's in whatever language (.) and i
 280 can understand something from it
 281 Me: mm-hm
 282 SC: that's usually when i think oh: i'm getting good at
 283 this
 284 Me: right and it kinda confirms that (-) and you said
 285 that you listen you listen to the music from
 286 different countries
 287 SC: yes
 288 Me: does you find that that also
 289 SC: yes
 290 Me: so if you hear a line in a song y' that you didn't
 291 maybe understand before but you
 292 SC: mm-hm
 293 Me: you did now or whatever (--) it's interesting (--)
 294 cause no' ((laughs)) it's cool that you listen to
 295 tho' the music music from different countries (-)
 296 cause most people i i doubt would do that
 297 ((laughs))
 298 SC: ((laughs))
 299 Me: it's cool (.) um::: (--) have did you take i can't
 300 remember you took french and spanish right
 301 SC: yes
 302 Me: in schools or in in a classroom setting (.) um: (.)
 303 do you learn german differently from those? what do
 304 you think about [(.) how]
 305 SC: [um:]
 306 Me: you LEARN languages
 307 SC: i probably learn d' german slightly differently
 308 because i did those before (-) so it's a bit easier
 309 to pick up stuff in german
 310 Me: ok (-) so it's faster maybe
 311 SC: yes
 312 Me: uh-huh (-) um::: (-) but do you find that the the
 313 process that you go through when you're learning
 314 german is (.) more similar or more different from
 315 learning like is each language a very different
 316 process of learning or is it
 317 SC: no it's very much the same
 318 Me: ok so you see a lot of (.) similarities (--) ok (.)
 319 um::: (--) ((laughs)) what words do you (.) think
 320 accurately describe the german language

321 SC: ((laughs))
322 Me: ((laughs)) this is fun i always get different
323 answers [for this]
324 SC: [ugly]
325 Me: UGLY <<laughing> ok that's that's the most (.)
326 that's the funniest one i've had>
327 SC: uh: foolish
328 Me: foolish (.) <<laughing> why foolish>
329 SC: <<laughing> cause>
330 Me: ((laughs))
331 SC: pronouns all mean the same thing
332 Me: ok (--) so from a grammatical sense it's foolish
333 ((laughs))
334 SC: that about sums it up ((laughs))
335 Me: <<laughing> ugly and foolish (.) are there any good
336 characteristics> (.) or are those good ((laughs))
337 SC: those aren't too good
338 Me: those aren't [too good no]
339 SC: [um: a good one]
340 Me: well if there are no good ones but i mean you must
341 enjoy like you're taking the course and doing well
342 you must enjoy it (-) what what what's to enjoy
343 about it ((laughs))
344 SC: so (.) it's fairly well spoken
345 Me: ok
346 SC: common ((laughs))
347 Me: so <<laughing> common [would be the]>
348 SC: [it's useful to know]
349 Me: <<laughing> useful is the is the positive way to
350 describe it>
351 SC: <<laughing> yeah>
352 Me: well cause yeah cause i mean i guess it's pretty
353 common for people not to think that it's not pretty
354 sounding
355 SC: ((laughs))
356 Me: um: (.) i personally think it's beautiful when i
357 hear it (.) because when i think once you learned
358 it fluently y' you hear things [a lot differently]
359 SC: [change is a little
360 different]
361 Me: yeah (.) cause when i first obviously b' before i
362 spoke it i probably felt the same thing i can't
363 remember now
364 SC: ((laughs))
365 Me: <<laughing> but> (.) but yeah ok so ugly (.)
366 <<laughing> foolish (.) and common useful>
367 SC: ((laughs))

368 Me: ((laughs)) any other words or is that
369 SC: that's pretty good i think
370 Me: that's pretty good ok ((laughs)) (.) what about
371 germany as a country (.) or pe' the culture the
372 people (.) do you have an a' do you have words that
373 you might (.) pi' like if you were to picture you
374 know society in germany what would you
375 SC: i don't know (.) i don't really know much about the
376 culture
377 Me: yeah well y' i mean even knowing nothing about it
378 or whatever
379 SC: ((laughs)) (-) i don't know
380 Me: it's interesting to see canadian perspective of
381 germany
382 SC: uh: (-) prob it's probably not much different (.)
383 [i wouldn't think]
384 Me: [ok so you don't] (.) yeah (.) you're first
385 impression is that it's probably not that different
386 SC: yeah
387 Me: ok i've heard i've heard like (.) well you know::
388 (-) th' (-) drink a lot of be::er that sorta thing
389 but
390 SC: they do that here though
391 Me: ((laughs)) that's true (.) very true (.) ok (.)
392 cool (.) um:: (.) well that's pretty much it (.) as
393 i was saying it was a b' it's uh shorter (.) um:
394 (4)
395 i don't know why this one question got cut cut out
396 of this
397 SC: ((laughs))
398 Me: that just rememb' reminded me that the last
399 interview you had in here (.) uh: i didn't ask that
400 question and i wanted to
401 SC: ((laughs))
402 Me: now that i see it it's silly oh well (.) make sure
403 i didn't miss anything else

Interview 3

By: Janice McGregor

Research for M.A. Thesis

January 19th, University of Waterloo

Recording length: 6 minutes 03 seconds

Transcribed by: Janice McGregor

Description: Semi-structured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

01 Me: ok

02 (3)

03 Me: so (.) last interview (-) so today um:: (-) i'm (.)

04 i want to: talk about um: (--) basically (.) your

05 learning curve over time (-) in: (-) german 101

06 SC: [right]

07 Me: [because] now you're finished (-) and so: (.) what

08 i want you to do is (-) draw (-) what you think

09 (-) your learning curve was (.) over the semester

10 SC: oh

11 Me: do you know what i mean?

12 (---)

13 SC: [i got (.) alright alright]

14 Me: [i have an example] if you want to see (-) i'll

15 just explain it to you i i (--) ok (---) this is

16 um: (.) an example that i made of my spanish

17 learning (.) ok just i totally (.) made it u' n' i

18 didn't make it up it's real but (.) you know (.) i'

19 it's not necessarily accurate (-) um: (-) so i was

20 in spain for a month doing a language course (.) ok

21 so: for me (.) i had already started with some

22 knowledge cause i had done (-) um: (.) first and

23 second year spanish so (.) to start (.) was not at

24 the very (.) bottom (-) and then (--) ((feedback))

25 turning it down (--) i got better over time slowly

26 and gradually there was no major increase until (.)

27 i was studying for the exam (--) so there was a

28 gradual increase from the beginning (.) from (.)

29 sorry from being in the culture (-) SLOW but

30 gradual increase in my knowledge (.) or what i

31 thought (.) you know my own perception of that (.)

32 and then studying (-) for the final (.) the end (.)

33 which was the exam (.) to pass the language course

34 and (.) so then at the end i had left with (.) you

35 know so much of an increase (.) so that's just an

36 example (-) ((laughs)) (.) so i'd like you to draw

37 your own (.) what you think your learning curve

38 over time was (.) in german 101 (.) you can (.)

39 draw it however you want you don't have to do it

40 that way

41 SC: alright

42 Me: and you don't have to necessarily (.) speak for

43 awhile (.) you can just (.) think about it (.) and

44 then (.) explain it afterwards or if you wanna

45 describe it as you go (.) up to you

46 SC: i'll probably just do it now

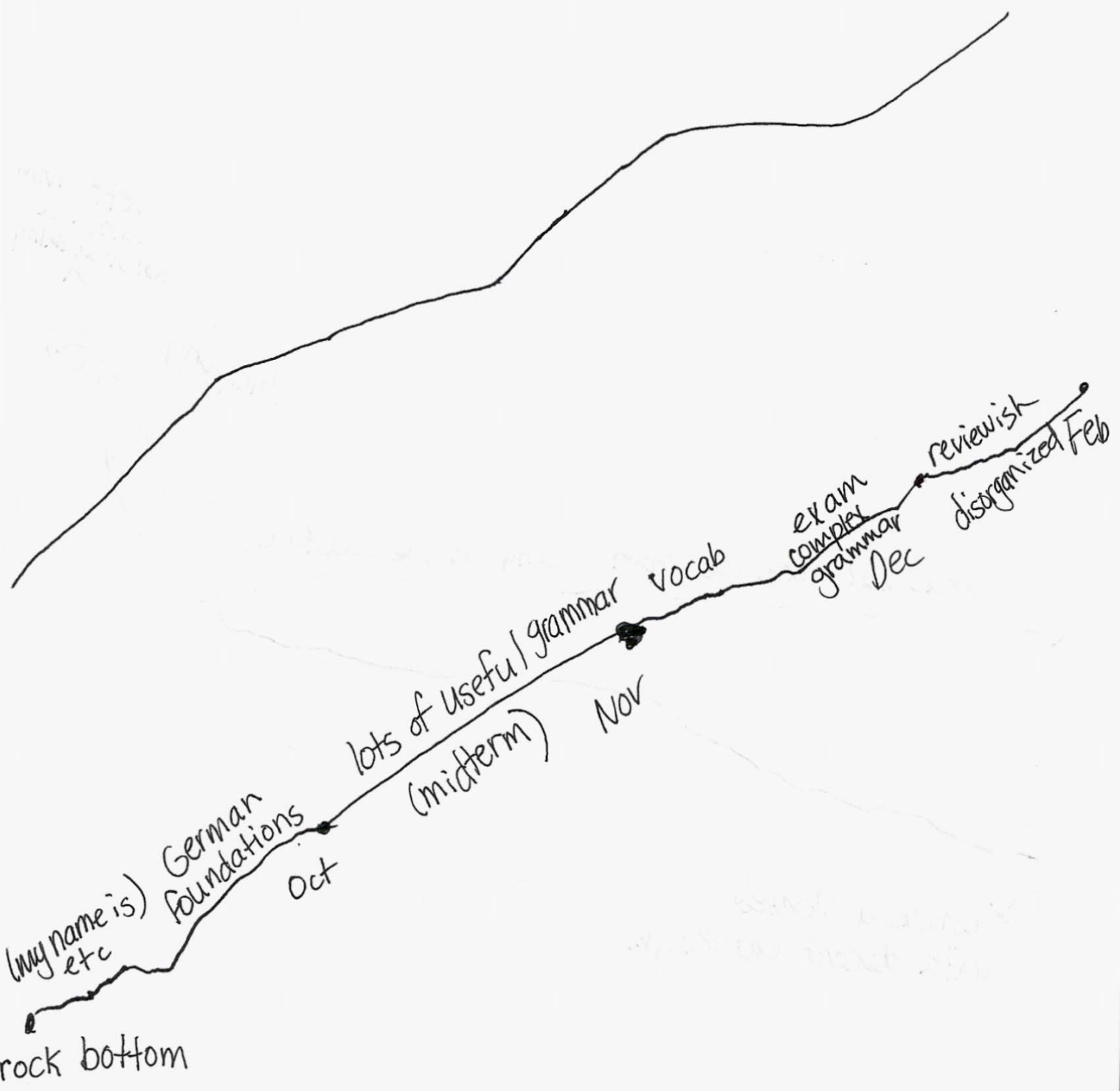
47 Me: ok

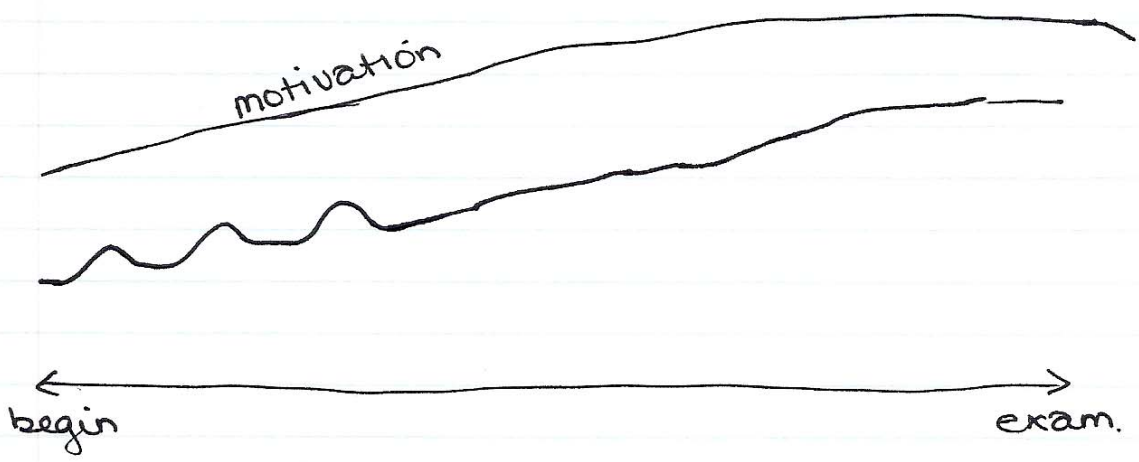
48 SC: cause i don't know it probably (---) at the

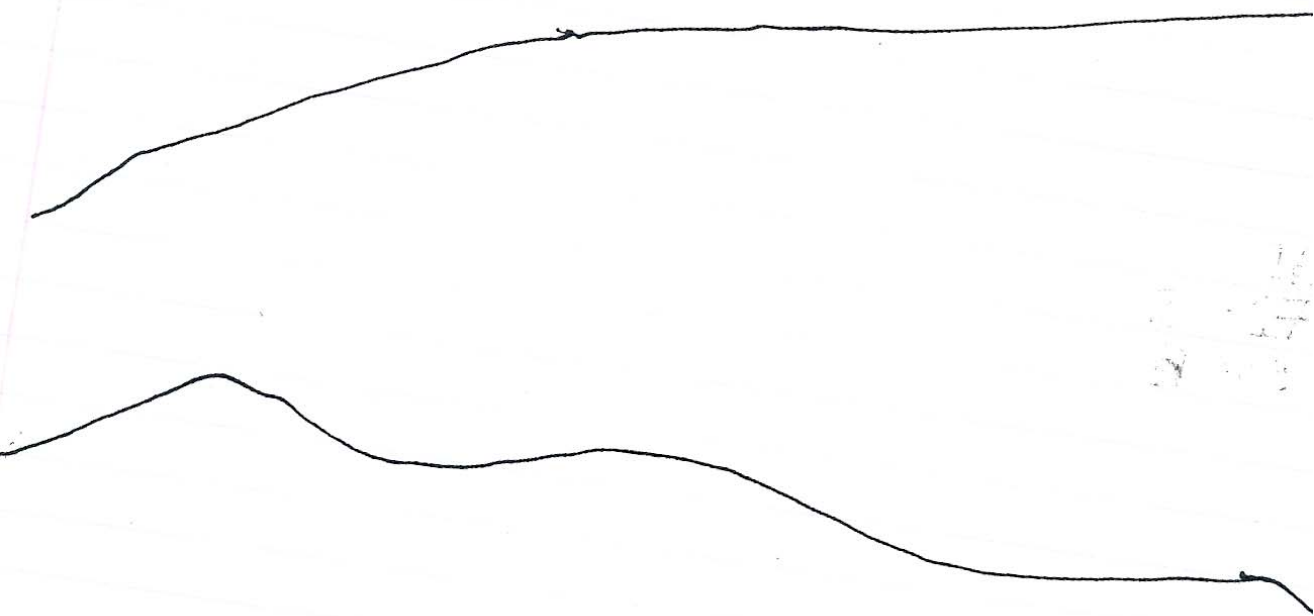
49 beginning of the course there would have been (--)
50 probably a large jump cause i didn't know anything
51 going in
52 Me: right
53 SC: so and then it just probably would have gone less
54 and (.) except for i want it to be less in there
55 (.) for the rest of the course (.) and there wasn't
56 really any big jump after that
57 Me: ok (.) so you started off with nothing (-) had a
58 big jump (-) and then (.) a steady sort of
59 increase?
60 SC: [yes]
61 Me: [ok] what about the exam
62 SC: i gotta be honest i had another exam that day that
63 i was more worried about so i didn't really study
64 at all
65 Me: ok (.) and: midterm?
66 SC: uh:: (.) midterm (.) didn't take much studying for
67 either
68 Me: ok so (.) over the whole time (-) it was a very
69 gradual increase was there NO time uh for example
70 in th' in the class there were many grammar
71 concepts (.) was there any time where (.) one thing
72 was more difficult and you needed to study more or
73 was it sort of a (-) like what do you think (.) can
74 you think of?
75 SC: i pretty much just (--) listened to what they said
76 in class said alright
77 Me: ok
78 SC: i'll remember that
79 Me: (.) hang on i have a
80 (3)
81 what to you was the toughest part of the course (-)
82 if you can pick one thing
83 (6)
84 SC: some of the (-) uh: (-) what are they called (--)
85 prepositions maybe
86 Me: [mm-hm]
87 SC: [in] (-) on (.) those type of things
88 Me: [ok]
89 SC: [cause] german has different ones for different
90 meanings
91 Me: yes that's true ((laughs)) (--) ok (.) so um: (.)
92 but that wasn't necessar' that wasn't actually a
93 lesson taught in german 101 was it?
94 SC: i don't think so
95 Me: ok so that was just your own noticing (.) something

96 that might be advanced for you [or something]
 97 SC: [mm-hm]
 98 Me: ok (.) are you taking german 102 right now
 99 SC: yes
 100 Me: ok (-) how's it going
 101 SC: uh: (.) i haven't really started on it
 102 Me: have you noticed any increase in difficulty yet
 103 SC: [no]
 104 Me: [just] (.) same sort of (.) going along with that
 105 SC: mm-hm
 106 Me: interesting <<laughing> ok>
 107 SC: there's more writing than actual german in this one
 108 (.) cause it's i'm taking it distance ed
 109 Me: OH:: ok (.) ah:: that must be very different then
 110 in terms of (.) just (.) how it's taught (.) cause
 111 you're learning it on your own (.) which i think
 112 you did a lot anyway last semester is that not
 113 right
 114 SC: yeah
 115 Me: k (.) um: (--) before you put that away <<laughing>
 116 one more thing> (-) can you draw me how you would
 117 describe (.) your motivation throughout the course
 118 (.) to: (.) continue with german or (.) or learn
 119 more study slash whatever (--) sort of along the
 120 same axis (.) you know (.) um: with the same idea
 121 SC: probably would have been up and down
 122 Me: ok well draw what you think
 123 SC: i don't know
 124 Me: ((laughs)) it doesn't matter just
 125 SC: ((laughs))
 126 Me: how you feel throughout (.) y' you know this is the
 127 beginning this is the end so
 128 SC: alright (.) then it probably drops every once in a
 129 awhile and goes up
 130 Me: ok
 131 SC: very wavy
 132 Me: and did it end up in the end?
 133 SC: uh::
 134 Me: would you say?
 135 (3)
 136 SC: well probably hm:: (-) maybe not (-) because by the
 137 end (-) actually i would have rather taken spanish
 138 instead of it
 139 Me: ok
 140 SC: but they didn't offer a course i could take this
 141 term
 142 Me: mm-hm (---) now (.) interesting (.) i don't know if

143 if you meant this but you started of with
144 motivation low is that true did you start no just
145 because i mean it' y' if you if i make you think
146 about it really like (.) when you started german
147 101 ((coughs)) would your motivation have been at
148 it's lowest point? (-) or would it have been (.)
149 middle high (.) how do you [remember]
150 SC: [uh::] (---) m' (.)
151 motivation probably would have been (-) medium to
152 low (.) because i didn't (.) know how difficult it
153 would be
154 Me: sure (-) so [you were]
155 SC: [so]
156 Me: you just didn't (.) you weren't sure yet
157 SC: right
158 Me: ok (.) and then (.) basically throughout up and
159 down ups and downs of motivation depending on (.)
160 .h was it more depending on (.) the topic (.) a' uh
161 as in the content of the um: (.) the stOryline sort
162 of the context of the course (.) or more (.)
163 grammar wise what you found motivating
164 SC: it would have been that and grammar wise
165 Me: so everything and taken into account
166 SC: yep
167 Me: ok (-) very good (.) ok that's it i: wanted to keep
168 this very short today because i: uh: (.) have a LOT
169 of information from everybody (.) so it's good (.)
170 and i just wanted to have a final th' (.) you know
171 thought on what (.) what uh: (.) what your
172 perception of the learning curve was like (.) so
173 thank you







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