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 Grundgesamteinheit ... 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 Vorraussetzungen. (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
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”
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”
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 warden 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

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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).
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”
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 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 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 a 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,
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 except 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 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 to 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.
Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101

1. Name: [Blank]

2. Age: 26

3. Sex: ☐ F  ☐ M

4. What is your mother tongue? ☑ English  ☐ French  ☐ Other: [Blank]

4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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): [Blank]
6. What qualifies do you feel describe you as a language learner (pick all that apply):

- [ ] I seem to have an aptitude for learning languages.
- [ ] I 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 it’s 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

4. What is your mother tongue? ☑ English ☐ French ☐ Other: _________________

4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classes Taken</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) French</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) German</td>
<td>fair</td>
<td>semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Knobbed: very important

2. Important

3. 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: 14

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classes Taken</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) Spanish</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>1HS class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) French</td>
<td>fair</td>
<td>HS class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) German</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td></td>
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5. Other languages spoken (learned outside of a classroom setting):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>Music, internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basque</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>Music, internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many dialects</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classes Taken</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) French</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>71 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) German</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 heredige
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 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:

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):

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

very important [ ] important [x] 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): _______________________

104
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 I 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: __________

3. Sex: □ F □ M

4. What is your mother tongue? □ English □ French □ Other: ____________________________

5. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classes Taken</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) French</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) German</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

   Very important □
   Important □
   Not so important □

8. 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 very well in 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? It's interesting to see how proficiency progresses.
Language Learning Questionnaire - German 101

1. Name: 

2. Age: 18

3. Sex: ☑ F ☐ M

4. What is your mother tongue? ☑ English ☐ French ☐ Other: 

4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>POOR</td>
<td>friends looking up random words/phrases in translator before going to Ecuador</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
- [ ] 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 seemed easy to understand and I did well in those classes.

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

- [x] 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 years 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: 

3. Sex: □ F □ M

4. What is your mother tongue? □ English □ French □ Other: 

4. Languages learned in a classroom setting (put in order of competence - include German):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classes Taken</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) French</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) German</td>
<td>Poor - Fair</td>
<td>one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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: [124605]

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

☐ Yes
☐ Sometimes
☐ No

Why? [124605]
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):  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classes Taken</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) German</td>
<td>fair</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent - good - fair - poor)</th>
<th>How did you learn it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>urdu</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>grew up in Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Classes Taken</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
<th>For how long?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i) English</td>
<td>excellent</td>
<td>15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) French</td>
<td>good</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii) German</td>
<td>poor</td>
<td>2 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Overall Proficiency (excellent – good – fair – poor)</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant A</th>
<th>Participant B</th>
<th>Participant C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likes German 101 (very high mark)</td>
<td>Likes German 101 so far (doing well)</td>
<td>Course is OK (doing fairly well)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 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 thinking, 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 |
Progress is easy to see (not in classroom i.e. covers just the basics)
- can also **move ahead** faster on your own
- but **no one to correct mistakes**
- mostly just **reading** and **writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinks grammar is really important, and has done lots in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>has strong grammar base</strong>, good at it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Latin = base grammar knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- reads it once and she’s fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- likes to learn some grammar first before vocab, but not completely separated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likes grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- likes learning grammar and learning to speak at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- with grammar, once you understand the concepts it’s not hard at all</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- grammar is very easy in book and in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- likes to learn grammar first, then learn to speak later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- wants to know a lot so that he doesn’t make errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- writes out vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- repeats it, says it to self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- writes everything out 3X (she says that’s “supposed to be able to make your remember it the best” in jest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- also says “writing it out (…) equals memorization”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- goes over charts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- finds patterns, remembers endings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- he can remember vocab usually pretty quickly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genders – very hard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- words have little reason to be a gender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genders – hard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- learns patterns gender is hardest to learn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- when you think it’s F it’s N or M, etc.
- memorizes with nouns of same gender
- groups nouns to memorize by rote

### Textbook
- does not stand on own, needs class
  - 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

### Likes Vorsprung
- repetition in the book makes you understand it
- vocab and activities are good
- explains tough grammar stuff well

### Vorsprung
- 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

### Relies on book explanations
- 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

### Teachers explanations
- 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

### Learns mostly from class, i.e. teacher
- 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

### Group work, not fond of it
- negative situation unless a tutor
- feels is one of the best students in most

### Group work (it’s ok)
- it’s ok, depends
- doesn’t mind working in group
- does not feel

### Group work (doesn’t dislike)
- prefers independent
- only reason it’s negative is **time**
| groups | - group work takes her “down a step”, constantly staying behind | - 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 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| - prefers to do work at his own pace, on his own time
- group work not a burden though |

### Speaking Test
- dreads it
- can’t memorize well
- rather do it on her own

### Language skills – they are important
- 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

### Speaking important, still have to have grammar though
- her reading/writing is better than speaking/listening she says
- hard to pick out words while listening
- when studying, studies by reading (from notes)

### 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

### Thinks she learns better independently

### Lab – pretty good
- culture stuff in lab is interesting (pictures, visuals)
- websites in German sometimes maybe too challenging

### Lab – dislikes greatly
- sees it mostly as a waste of time, has a heavy courselead
- doesn’t see how it helps
- only thing that’s good is looking at

### Lab – likes lab
- forces you to learn to listen (a weakness he says)
- finds lab component necessary
- only thing is, doesn’t like culture
cases, learning their vocab - other activities pointless (IKEA activity) - not useful parts (negative) - would rather just learn to speak (implies that it’s possible without knowing culture)

Reading difficult texts is motivating and scary - makes her excited and feel like it’s impossible at the same time

When speaking, fixes answers in mind first so it’s right
- afraid to speak on the spot
- making a mistake = low intelligence

Speaking – hard
- 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

Speaking
- a very hesitant speaker
- sometimes translates in head before speaking
- lots of speaking practice in class

Still prefers independent book learning Learning languages will benefit in the long run
- proud of heritage

Table C2

Interview Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant A</th>
<th>Participant B</th>
<th>Participant C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processes when learning German grammar</td>
<td>Processes when learning German grammar</td>
<td>Learning grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- compare cases, sentence structure</td>
<td>- makes patters</td>
<td>- looks at parts of speech, sub. verb. etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- learns by comparison</td>
<td>- verbs i.e. patterns of endings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- position in a sentence makes it obvious what case</td>
<td>- memorizes ones that don’t fit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- visualizes placement in sentence</td>
<td>- writing out helps to memorize more than reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- learning grammar is “an automatic thing”</td>
<td>- writes out in her own words</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- subconsciously can see the difference in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Processes when learning German vocab**:  
- especially verbs are difficult, many ways to use a verb, one might be wrong  
- tenses of verbs and meanings both hard to learn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocab</th>
<th>Vocab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- also writes it out</td>
<td>- best way to learn vocab is to actually know how to use it in a sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- contextual</td>
<td>- vocab harder, “more to know” than grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- learns it by memorization but helps seeing them in use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When *reading* a text in German…**:  
- does a word for word translation in head, easiest for her  
- doesn’t learn by repetition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Reading texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- translates in head word for word</td>
<td>- reads, tries to understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- answers questions as they come</td>
<td>- then reads questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pre reads questions first then reads text and answers questions as she goes along</td>
<td>- if doesn’t know answer, re-reads text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- translates in head word for word usually</td>
<td>- translates sometimes, first read in German though, not always word for word</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**When doing a *listening* comp. German text**:  
- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Listening comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- listens for key words</td>
<td>- tries to remember enough of the questions at a time so he can write down the answers fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pieces sentences together (from what she doesn’t understand)</td>
<td>- gets more from second listening usually, he says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- translates in head word for word usually</td>
<td>- doesn’t jot down notes on the side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- keeps side notes</td>
<td>- once translated, it’s much easier</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and last part, she can infer the middle part jots notes only when it’s part of the answer..fills in as much as possible 1 st time, then rest in the 2 nd time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When studying, emphasizes learning vocabulary (and gender of words), and also grammar rules that are similar to others, hence confusing</th>
<th>Studying – (from interview #1 – reads her own notes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes understands grammar rules but application is harder, i.e. accusative where does the “n” change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| When studying, does not do listening practice  
- if you study by reading, listening and writing “falls into place” | |
| Reading gives longer correct examples – not writing..you could write it wrong | |
| Words terms when hears “learning a foreign language”  
- 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 | Words that come to mind when hears “learning a foreign language”  
- speaking  
- reading, writing  
- understanding  
- so, proficiency (all technical stuff!) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What characteristics should LLEarners have</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- not be cynical or judgmental</td>
<td>- persistence</td>
<td>- persistence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- open-minded</td>
<td>- aptitude</td>
<td>- some kind of interest/desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- not people who waste time, only take langs if you want to be there</td>
<td>- for fluency, you have to be in the atmosphere</td>
<td>- ability to remember stuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- determination</td>
<td>Negative ones?</td>
<td>Negative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- base knowledge of grammar</td>
<td>- when people think too much about concepts and they get confused</td>
<td>- laziness (sees in himself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- learning a language “isn’t really a memorizing things”</td>
<td>- not seeing the need to learn a part</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal when learning German?</th>
<th>Goal?</th>
<th>Goal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- to be able to conduct a conversation</td>
<td>Being able to speak it</td>
<td>Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expectations from Society?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No outside expectations, but Dad happy she’s learning it which she likes</td>
<td>No expectations from outside, personal reasons for taking course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What keeps you from fluency:</th>
<th>What keeps you from fluency:</th>
<th>When you know you’ve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- no books that are written as far as fluency possible? Probably not</td>
<td>- not going to the country/place where language is spoken</td>
<td>When you know you’ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- she’s says idioms prevent fluency (she says that’s about 50% of the conversation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- don’t see idioms in textbooks</td>
<td></td>
<td>When you know you’ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- going to the country only thing that can get you fluent</td>
<td></td>
<td>When you know you’ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 50% of lang can’t be translated properly</td>
<td></td>
<td>When you know you’ve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unless a book on all idioms comes out, achieving fluency by books can’t be done</td>
<td></td>
<td>When you know you’ve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learned something:
- in chatrooms, can communicate better (see how much she uses Babelfish)

learned something:
- finds the class too simple so far, no big “aha” moments

learned something
- feels he’s learned something if reading something online and can understand more
  - or from music

Learn German different from other languages?
- same
- probably learns it consistently, because it’s not crazy different i.e. Chinese

Learns German similar to French
- sometimes wants to answer in French
  - sees parallels, especially with verb conjugations

Learns German slightly differently because he’s already learned 2 languages
- now it’s easier
  - sees the similarities in how he learns them though

Things in German sound very english to her

Words to describe German
- guttural
- attitude
- everything has an emphasis
- only really heard it in movies

Words to describe German
- harsh
  - it’s influence on English

Words to describe German
- ugly
- foolish
- well-spoken
- useful to know

Describe Germany:
- rustic, manliness, burly (even women), eating sausages
- and then in opposition stuff like Grimm brothers fairy tales, pretty landscape

Germany:
- loud and fun
  - Lederhosen & beer
  - punctuality

Germany is:
- very similar to here

---

**Table C3**

**Interview Three**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant A</th>
<th>Participant B</th>
<th>Participant C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking Ger 102 distance ed</td>
<td>Taking Ger 102 distance ed</td>
<td>Taking Ger 102 because of independence and scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- not as good as she thought, because she finds the textbook useless</td>
<td>- finds it harder, explanations are now in German only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Curve</td>
<td>Learning Curve</td>
<td>Learning Curve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- drew a very detailed</td>
<td>- curve is not</td>
<td>- very few details, not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
curve, little notes all along it
- 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”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation line</th>
<th>Motivation line</th>
<th>Motivation line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- steep at the beginning, then dwindling off (says she tends to do that)</td>
<td>- beginning, pretty motivated</td>
<td>- again, very reluctant to draw it, wanted to explain it instead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- she sees her motivation generally increasing, with a few plateaus</td>
<td>- towards exams, leveled off</td>
<td>- he says, probably would have been up and down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- declining even, because of Christmas holiday, little desire to study</td>
<td>- line drops every once in awhile, then goes up again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- overall still motivated to learn German though</td>
<td>- in the end, doesn’t end up because he thinks he would have rather taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- wants to be able to communicate with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relatives in Germany</td>
<td>Spanish instead in the beginning, motivation was medium to low because he didn’t know how difficult it would be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D
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.

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

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 ML.110.)

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.

For reference at the UW Porter Library:

Recommended as a good reference (available at the UW Bookstore):

* Vorsprung by Lovik, Guy and Chavez (Student Text + Arbeitsbuch/workbook + Interactive CD)
* Vorsprung Correction Key
* English Grammar for Students of German by Zorach and Melin

Assignments and Grade Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section Grade (15%)</th>
<th>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.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term (20%)</td>
<td>The mid-term will be an one-hour in-class exam that tests your abilities in writing and reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab (20%)</td>
<td>The lab grade has two components: 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%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Test (15%)</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final (30%)</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 #71. Student Grievance.
## Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>section 1</th>
<th>section 2</th>
<th>section 3</th>
<th>section 4</th>
<th>section 5</th>
<th>section 6</th>
<th>section</th>
<th>ALL SECTIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab test</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 14</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 14</td>
<td>Thursday, November 16</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 14</td>
<td>Thursday, November 16</td>
<td>Thursday, November 16</td>
<td>Monday, October 31st, 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking test</td>
<td>ALL SECTIONS</td>
<td>during week of November 28 - December 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>ALL SECTIONS</td>
<td>during final exam period (December 8 - 22, 2005)</td>
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## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week starting ...</th>
<th>Introduction and chapter 1 (no lab class)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 19</td>
<td>Chapter 1 and lab task 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>Chapter 1 and lab task 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 3</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>Chapter 2 and lab task 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 17</td>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>Chapter 2 and lab task 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Mid-term and Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 7</td>
<td>Chapter 3 and lab task 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 14</td>
<td>Chapter 3 and Lab test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 28</td>
<td>Speaking test and review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lectures end</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Examination period</th>
<th>Final</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(December 8 - 22, 2005)</td>
<td>Final</td>
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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!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Office Hours</th>
<th>Teaching Assistants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Janet Janzen/Janice McGregor</td>
<td>Janet: office. Janice: <a href="mailto:janice06@hotmail.com">janice06@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dr. Barbara Schmenk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bschmenk@uwaterloo.ca">bschmenk@uwaterloo.ca</a> 888 4567 x2148 ML306</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td>by appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>coordinator of all sections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sabine Mürbeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hanna Lin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:e4lin@uwaterloo.ca">e4lin@uwaterloo.ca</a></td>
<td>tba</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ferdinand Dachs</td>
<td>tba ML 305</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ferdinand Dachs</td>
<td>tba ML 305</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Anne Löchte</td>
<td>tba ML 2</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Norma Chapple/Mark Wilkinson</td>
<td>Norma: <a href="mailto:norma_j.chapple@hotmail.com">norma_j.chapple@hotmail.com</a> office: Mark:</td>
<td>tba</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

138
Me: =mm-hm
SA: =i don’t go into a class setting
Me: ok
SA: but um (.). what i like about it is that you can
hear somebody (.). and listen to (.). the way they
TALK (.), and there’s um there’s lots of repetition
whereas like in book learning it just (.). you know
they basically just present this concept to you
Me: [yeah]
SA: [=they] go over a couple of um like practice
scenarios but they don’t really try and like firm
it into your head
Me: sure
SA: but like when you’re in a class setting it just
like it (.). it’s constantly coming up and you’re
constantly u:sing it like .hh even like a month
down the line (--) excuse me, like you find that
(--) something from like the first day of class has
just come up (.). so
Me: mm-hm
SA: that’s what i really like about it too it’s it
doesn’t just go over a concept and then forget
about it
Me: [it’s]
SA: [builds] yeah and hanna goes (--) um (-) really
like at a pretty good pace, like she doesn’t go too
slow (.). um (.). but she doesn’t go to fast either
Me: ok
SA: so (.). i really like how she paces it
Me: ok (-). cool (.). is there anything you DON’T enjoy
(-) um is there any aspect of it, i mean you have
you have obviously .h three lectures a week (.). and
one lab so um (-) is there something within thOse
classes that (.). that stands out as something that
you can say that for you doesn’t work or-
SA: probably just like the pacing is really good
like she goes over a couple things (-) but um (--)sometimes it feels like um (---) like you g’ (.).
like sometimes it feels like you go into class and
(--) .hh um: (-) it just you know <<snapping> bam
bam bam> small things that you’re learning and
doesn’t feel like you’re really getting anywhere?
Me: ok so
SA: that’s kinda like (-). just (-). like i can say =i’ve
taken german for three months but <<laughing> and i
know that i know some stuff> but it doesn’t feel
like there’s really been a whole lot accomplished
because it’s soo (.)) beginner;
Me: right
SA: =so i can’t like actually use it really (.)) in any
kind of (.)) way except (-) wie heißen sie
[((laughs))]
Me: [yeah: yeah:]
SA: you know
Me: ok so it co’ so if if i understand you correctly
you’re trying to say that it’s frustrating
sometimes because it’s just like small building
blocks at this point’
SA: yeah
Me: ok so (-) you know i guess (-) uh: (-) did you
expEct (.)) it to be more?
SA: .h um (-) i (.)) think (.)) i might have did i think
that was probably it has to do with book learning
the difference between book learning like (-) they
really shove a whole bunch on you at once and they
go like they go through it so fast .h like it’s
really easy to see all the progress you’ve been
making (.)) whereas in the classroom um: (-) .h they
go they just kinda (.)) do the basics and there’s
not a lot of readings
Me: ok
SA: and they just [you know] a b c kinda thing
Me: [so for you]
right (.)) so for you um (-) when you say um it’s
(-) you don’t feel like you’ve got a lot (.)) to (.))
say does that fo’ for you mean that uh: speaking
SA: yeah [like] i couldn’t say much
Me: [should]
ok so: (.)) you would like to be able to communicate
by the end of this course this is a you know this
is for you uh what you expected when you first came
in that you would be able to .h um: on a basic
level (.)) communicate and you don’t feel that
that’s it’s you feel it’s really slow going [to
that]
SA: [yeah]
Me: =ok
SA: =yeah just like i (c ) i mean the grammar’s there
and we’ve got a lot of grammar done which is really
important (.)) and it’s just that the vocabulary’s
not so much
Me: ok so y’ the vocabulary (.)) worry about that
because you want to be able to communicate
SA: yeah
Me: um and y’ you were talking about book learning now 
what do you mean by that do you mean like a 
distance ed course or you mean just on your own 
( .) you know buying a beginner intro to spanish or 
[that type of thing?]
SA: [yeah that kind of stuff mostly yeah i don’t think 
i’ve ever (. ) taken a distance ed course except (-) 
[online]
Me: [cause] that would be different [on’ again] from 
just you and a book obviously i guess 
SA: [yeah]
=yyeah
Me: um: (. ) so when you when you would have have you do 
you have an example of a book that or a language 
you’ve (-) [tried to learn] from a book; 
SA: [um:]
yeah, um:: i did la:tin
SA: i still have a latin book i have two books on 
french (. ) i have one on spanish (. ) one on 
esperanto and
Me: =oh esperanto
SA: <<laughing> yeah>
Me: =Latin-
SA: i still have a latin book i have two books on 
Me: french (. ) i have one on spanish (. ) one on 
esperanto and
SA: <<laughing> yeah>
Me: <<laughing> yeah>
SA: <<whisper> oh] latin’s killer>
Me: they’re not [spoken right]
SA: [god] [<<laughing> yeah>]
Me: [i mean] they’re (. ) well 
especially esperanto is another case entirely but 
latin (. ) uh: obviously um (. ) very grammatic (. ) 
[grammatical]
SA: [yeah] <<sighing> oh god> [((laughs))]
Me: [yeah] [and you and you would 
need] YEAH so like (-) well i think all textbooks 
in latin are are focused on reading comprehension 
and and and (. ) understanding
SA: yeah
Me: written texts
SA: yeah latin’s so easy to comprehend when you read it
but y’ y’ can’t really put anything down like you
couldn’t formulate a sentence [cause it’s] always
like th’ like the declensions
Me: [yeah]
SA: [you know]
Me: [exactly] now do you find that that helps for this
course that you’ve already got an idea of (-) or do
you feel that you have an idea of um: (-) you know
(-) um (. ) subject direct object d’ did that help
in latin [too]
SA: [yeah]
Me: did you know that before latin or [was it ( )
bl’ blurry]
SA: [well i had an
(. ) idea] but it really kind of firmed everything
Me: ok
SA: [like because it’s:]
Me: [so that must help]
SA: yeah it concentrates so much in latin on that kind
of stuff (. ) it really like (-) like you hAve to
know it and
Me: =yeah
SA: you hAve to learn it
Me: yeah
[so;]
SA: [and also;] sorry
Me: no no keep going go ((laughs))
SA: <<smiling> one thing too is um when you get
something as tricky as latin>
Me: yeah
SA: .h and then you come to german you’re like oh. this
is <<whispering> nothing> <<laughing> you know>
Me: RIGHT and then you have the people that have only
taken maybe french and
SA: [yeah]
Me: [um] (-) it IS hard for them
SA: yeah:
Me: =and rightly so because they haven’t seen these
complex structures before;
SA: yeah it could be worse [((laughs))]
Me: [yeah but it’s interesting]
that you come from sort of (. ) a more complex uh:
structure like learning latin a more complex um
grammar and the you come to german and so you think
that the grammar perhaps so far [seems much easier]
SA: [so:: much easier]
Me: [yeah]
SA: [yeah] it’s like that and german and then
Me: which giv’ which actually i would think coming into
this course gives you a completely different
( ) like uh mindset on how the language is
SA: yeah
Me: so it it maybe that that would also probably do you
think that would affect how you see german, like
SA: yeah
Me: or how it motivates you in german,
SA: [yeah]
Me: [because it] (-) if you were if you go to study (.)
for german (. ) do you find that you’re already
thinking oh this isn’t hard
SA: <laughing> yeah
Me: yeah, ok
SA: it’s just, yeah; ((laughs))
Me: so that kind of a barrier isn’t there for you
SA: yeah
Me: you have that [uh openness about it]
SA: [yeah y’ you go into]
it thinking that it’s gonna be easy because nothing
could possibly get that hard [you know]
Me: [right right right]
yeah as bad as uh (. ) latin i know i took latin so
i i understand i g’ when i took latin it it cleared
up german grammar for me right away (. ) personally
( .) so i ( .) can understand um (-) now you have
done a lot of independent learning then (. ) you’ve
done a lot of book (learning) you said .hh so do
you enjoy the classroom setting more than
independent or ( ) do you see?
SA: =;probably not [no]
Me: [no?]
SA: i think i (.) the classroom classroom learning has
it’s uses but um (-) like i like being able to (.)
to look ahead (. ) and you know like like you could
like you could have this book on spanish and you
could be on the fourth chapter (. ) but you could
always go ahead to the other chapters and (-) in
textbooks everything’s not as self explanatory as
in books where you learn because they’re expecting
that you’re in a classroom and doing everything
Me: [right]
SA: [so there’s] a lot bigger of a (.) like a knowledge
gap
Me: [ok]
SA: [and]
so you can’t really look ahead (.) you can’t [go]
you are] then dependent on the class in a way
SA: =yeah
Me: =yeah
SA: =basically like i couldn’t take my textbook and
feel really that if i was to read my textbook i
would (. when i’m finished come out with like
really good knowledge of german like i cOUld with
like a (-)
Me: [there would be]
SA: [let’s learn german book]
Me: right there would be gaps
SA: yeah
Me: in the learning
um:: (-) what do you (-) so th’ what do you take uh
from since you say l’ you work well independently
that must be obvious because you’ve done all this
stuff before (. um:: and you enjoy it at home
studying on your own (. do you uh: find what
things specifically in a classroom do you think are
what you really take from what help your german the
most you know or what uh: is it just because of the
textbook or is there other sort of aspects in the
classroom that that you don’t that you that you
realize sort of now taking the instead of being in
a book learning situation that you would uh: see as
an advantage as opposed to being independent; or
are [there any ((laughs))]
SA: [<<h> probably yeah> ((smiles))]
that it kind of gives a little bit more of a visual
base,
Me: ok
SA: because um:: (. you cou’ there’s a lot more
pictures in textbooks you know
Me: [sure]
SA: [so you] can go with that there’s a lot more
creativity in textbooks it’s not just text (. you
know and like one two three answer these questions
there’s like comics in the vorsprung [(       )]
Me: [of course]
SA: and also [um::]
Me: [anna adler]
SA: yeah ((laughs))
Me: ((laughs))
there’s more room to make mistakes in the classroom and mistakes kinda like once you make the mistake you’ll remember it [a lot longer]

Me: [sure]

SA: =but (. ) because it’s it’s more traumatizing i guess you could say in a classroom to make those mistakes and .h when you’re on your own there’s no it’s like oh:: that’s too bad i didn’t get that one but who cares no big deal right so it doesn’t like cement in your mind the same way it does in the classroom

Me: ok (. ) yeah i can see that (. ) .h um what about working with others (. ) in the classroom does that does that provide (. ) for you is that an advantage? [does it is it indifferent? you don’t like it? ok] SA: [mm:: it get’s on my nerves yeah: no:] i don’t really like it

Me: so y’ you would prefer then if if you have to work in a group is that a for you do you automatically see that as a negative situation or or SA: yeah pretty negative unless the people like if i was working like with a tutor

Me: ok SA: i would probably think that is more positive but generally like not wanting to SOUND conceited or anything (. ) im generally the highest person in the group and i don’t really like to (. ) to step DOWN and like you know have to like nOt go ahead and then because i have to go backwards and remain with these people

Me: right SA: like i don’t mind helping like but (. ) there’s so much like group work [in the classroom]

Me: [you feel ahead of the game,]

SA: yeah (. ) and it feels like you can’t really get farther because you’re constantly having to stay behind som’ sometimes

Me: and you (-) do you feel that you might have to then take over a lot of the work

SA: yeah

Me: in a group

SA: [yeah]

Me: [which is] frustrating?

SA: yeah generally i go into group works expecting that i’ll probably do most of the work

Me: mm-hmm

SA: and i think lots of people have the same
expectation they just think oh you know she’s you
know she’s pretty good at this you know
Me: [mm-hmm]
SA: [she’ll probably] do most of it for us
Me: so you don’t feel that you essentially you don’t
feel that you learn or take a lot from other
people’s knowledge of german in [this situation]
SA: [no]
Me: ok so your independent learning is
SA: mm-hm
Me: sort of
SA: and it could yeah it could be just because i’m so
used to um:: (-) just reading the books and doing
it on my own
Me: right
SA: that like once you do that for years and years and
years it’s pretty hard to to go go back
Me: what about the speaking test that’s coming up
SA: oh::: [((laughs))]
Me: [is that a is that] for you something that
you that you kind of dread in a way [like?]
SA: [yup] i do
dread it [((laughs))]
Me: [yeah? ok] [i can see that]
SA: [i generally can’t] memorize
things that well
Me: ok but i mean in terms of the group work is [that
is that] a difficult thing to do?
SA: [oh:::
yeah] i’d rather do it by myself
Me: yeah
SA: yeah i just i don’t
Me: but do you understand why it’s part of the course,
(.). i mean
SA: yeah (.). yeah (.). like just interaction i guess
mostly (.). um: (.). being able to hold a
correspondence and just (-) you know the cause like
you can’t you can’t expect to learn a language and
then not use it and not go into like a situation
where you have to like be on the the the ball and
Me: right (.). [right right]
SA: [be thinking a lot so]
Me: now because you saying you know you’ve done reading
books and courses and and all that do you find for
you um: when you learn a language you put more
emphasis on the actual understanding of the reading
of a text as opposed to listening and and speaking?
SA: yeah
Me: yeah and does that would you rather have that
knowledge or would you rather have the
comprehensive knowledge? or would you (. .) what to
you is the most important skill when you-
SA: well to me i think the most important skill is the
speaking (. .) which is the one i am the worst at
((laughs)
Me: well i i that’s [true for a lot of people it takes]
SA: [<<<sighing> yeah>]
Me: that’s i think it’s takes the longest to [get]
SA: [<<<sigh
ing>> yeah>]
Me: but i mean because there are people that there that
take you know (. .) there are specific courses out
there that are um: for reading (. .) purposes only
you know people let’s say archeology who wanna
learn written to read you know and understand you
know certain [academic texts]
SA: [hieroglyphs ((smiling))] i have two
book textbooks on hieroglyphs
Me: right so [yeah see]
SA: [yeah]
Me: well i mean and latin of course um isn’t usually
grounded towards <<<laughing> speaking>
SA: yeah
Me: but i mean um is that the same for german or would
you actually honestly say i i do want to learn how
to speak it um: (. .) as well [just as well as
everything else]
SA: [yeah] yeah because
like the main motivation for me like when i wanna
learn a language is because um i’m kind of
attracted to the idea of knowing a language that
nobody else knows you know which is why i liked
latin and which is why i got the hieroglyphs right
because nobody else knows it
Me: sure
SA: which is why i’m so attracted to esperanto because
it’s you know it’s mysterious [you know?]
Me: [yes yes the unknown]
SA: yeah but it’s it’s not really worth much if you
can’t (. .) like (. .) if you can’t (-) USE it [like]
Me: [ok] so
it is a comprehensive thing for you [it’s not] just
( . .)
SA: [yeah] like
with the reading and the like that that really helps because from there like that’s the part that i’m (.) i’m the best at so

Me: right
SA: like that’s where i basically have to start from
Me: mm-hm
SA: so if i didn’t have that i would probably be nowhere
Me: cool ok um:: let’s see what else do i have here um (.) have you you said this you don’t you haven’t taken many courses in languages did you take french in school?
SA: yeah [i took]
Me: [ok]
SA: french that was about the only one
Me: so fren’ this is your second course language course
SA: =yeah
Me: you’ve done only other things by the book
SA: .h oh i did do: some language but i don’t think that really counts
Me: oh: that’s (.) i mean it’s different
SA: yeah
Me: it’s just different because you’re not learning grammar it’s
SA: yeah just
Me: it’s english ((laughs))
SA: [yeah]
Me: [but yeah]
but that’s still it’s still probably benefi’ like it somehow probably affects how you see things differently and when you’re learning a language
SA: yeah
Me: um: (-) do you (.). um: (-) kay so we’ve talked about the activities in class (.).h group work you don’t specifically find to be the most beneficial for you (.). you said um: what about any other activities in like lab activities, (.). do you like the lab? [what is your feeling;]
SA: [well i actually] find that in th’ that we haven’t done that much during lab she usually uses that ( ) time to do tests
Me: okay
SA: s:o i couldn’t really give an opinion on the labs
Me: have you done lab activities where you do a wEb search or a wEb [based]
SA: [um: we] just did that today
Me: ok and how did you think of that
SA: um she turned it into a test ((laughs))
Me: <<<laughing> oh did she? ha ha ok (.) well i mean
but the idea of it y’ you can see like it was it
a group work or an independent work;
SA: it was it was an independent and we got to look up
heidelberg and um
Me: does that interest
SA: yeah
Me: yeah
SA: yeah i like to look at the pictures ((laughs))
Me: right yeah ok
SA: <<<laughing> so> i didn’t really understand what it
was talking about cause it was way to far ahead of
me but
Me: but that could be a benefit couldn’t it?
SA: yeah
Me: do you like that do you like how it’s uh always a
step ahead,
SA: um
Me: even though [it’s like]
SA: [i think possibly] that’s that was TOO
much ahead
Me: ok
SA: cause: i could probably get one word in (.) ten
Me: ok
SA: right,
Me: [so fell behind a bit]
SA: [but um] it it kinda like when you think that
you’re getting up there it kinda puts everything
into place you know this is where i am (.) .h not
too far but at least I got you know stAdt over here
that means city <<laughing> you know>
Me: right right so you pick out words
SA: yeah
Me: do you find that that’s motivating? or not
motivating
SA: um,
Me: in in a si’ in a situation where there’s (.) words
you don’t know (. ) but you do find yourself
somewhere in there what do you find does that mo’
demotivate or motivate;
SA: it’s kind of moti’vating and intimidating at the
same time
Me: ok
SA: like (. ) [like]
Me: [it’s a] scary motivation, ((laughs))
SA: yeah ((laughs)) yeah you s’ you want to cause you
want to go oh::: i want to be able to understand
this: and i wanted to be completely fluent right,
but the same time you’re like i’m never gonna learn
this
Me: so it can have those SET[backs]
SA: [yeah]
Me: yeah (. ) alright um:: (-) . h when you (. ) learn (. )
graham concepts or or go to memorize things (. )
how do you do that how do you how do you study for
things like that;
SA: um: i don’t (-) grammar tends to be my stronger
point (. ) so [like]
SA: [takes a] little time (. ) to do it
Me: um:: (-) not really usually i can just i like if i
just go over it (. ) like VOCAbulary for me is
that’s the part i have to memorize
Me: sure
SA: um but the grammar like generally once i read it
once i’ll get the feeling for it and from then on i
can do it (. ) but vocabulary (. ) um i find is the
trickiest (. ) um:: (--) i don’t really have a lot
of <laughing> strategies for memorizing it except
(. ) memorizing it by rote you know> um stadt city
stadt city stadt city and then maybe i’ll try and
think of a picture of it in my head or something
but (. ) i don’t know a lot of little tricks that
people do
Me: right (. ) so for you it’s a matter of (. ) um: just
going it ov’ over and over it again and again and
just trying to
SA: mm-hm
Me: ok
SA: and i try and like um: (. ) something that like in
french class um: something that she does is uh: in
the textbook (. ) they have um:: (-) they have like
after like a story they put like little thing about
a city that they do (. ) um: they have the
vocabulary and after that they have like stuff like
um: THIS means the same thing as THIS and or: fill
in the blank with the word which really helps
because then you use it right [but if]
SA: you just have a list of words (. ) and you don’t use
it i (. ) i have a hard time learning that
Me: right so you need a you find that you need a
context?
SA: yeah
Me: to apply it to?
SA: mm-hm
Me: and that works for you;
SA: especially the verbs
Me: [yeah]
SA: [(       )] like they’ll give you a verb but:
because verbs generally mean more than one thing i
don’t usually know where to put them, (-) and so i
prefer have verbs in a context
Me: ok (. ) right (-) um: ( . ) so (-) that’s vocabulary
(. ) so vocabulary for you is more difficult and it
takes you it’ you need a context to apply and blah
blah blah
SA: [mm-hm]
Me: [do you think] that (-) there should be more
emphasis on learning vocab in this course then?
because it’s difficult for you?
SA: um,
Me: or do find that it’s good it’s just one of those
things that you just have to do yourself and:
SA: well i think like ju’ the fact that we spend so
much time on grammar is a really good help because
it means that once we get into the vocabulary .h
(. ) we’ll be able to use it right away,
Me: right
SA: um (. ) i would like to have a little bit of a’ more
vocabulary but (. ) um: ( . ) it’s not it’s not really
such a thing i i think the grammar is better
Me: ok so do you then think uh:: it’s a good thing to
learn grammar and (. ) you know language use at the
same time i mean or uh would you rather learn gl’
grammar explicitly and then start using the
language more-
SA: um: i think at the same time
Me: mm-hm
SA: [uh]
Me: [as] a speaker if you go to speak do you do you
feel confident even if you don’t know something is
exactly right to say it or do you want to fix it in
your mind first
SA: i i usually have to fix it in my mind yeah i can’t
i can’t really (. ) speaking is my worst i can
usually like i can usually write it really quickly
on paper but when [i speak] it i have to go over it
in my mind
Me: [sure]
Me: ok um (. ) i always find it interesting because it
it was the same for me (.) that um: i would be so 
afraid to and it sounds like the same to SAY 
something (.) um: even though i KNEW (.) certain 
things and i and i was very good at at stringing 
words together and grammar and all the written and 
\text{th’} you know understanding and it was no problem 
\text{.hh} i always find it interesting that um: people 
have trouble (.) or or this sort of block where 
they they’re SURE that you know they’re not 
confident enough to say (.) thIs and and even if 
\text{it’s wrong} they or even if \text{it’s right} they they 
they’re SURE that \text{it’s still not} 
\text{SA: [it’s just way out there]} 
\text{Me: [they shouldn’t do it]} yeah ((laughs)) and i always 
wonder why that is you know because \text{it’s ( )} 
\text{there’s some sort of psychological barrier in a way} 
\text{that they [just can’t]} 
\text{SA: [yeah]} 
\text{Me: get past it} 
\text{SA: it might be the i think it might be (.) like when} 
normally when you see a person who’s speaking and 
they make a mistake you kind of get this 
psychological idea that they’re they’re not very 
bright (.) because \text{[the language is kind of]} 
\text{Me: [so it’s a societal thing too]} 
\text{SA: yeah it’s associated with intelligence maybe (.)} 
maybe just that you’re afraid of making a language 
error (.) like when you see someone who says like 
ain’t no doubt about it right you’re like that 
\text{person’s not very smart even though they could be} 
\text{like (.) PhD} 
\text{Me: [right]} 
\text{SA: [you know] but just because they speak that way’} 
\text{(.) and maybe:: it has something to do with that} 
that you think that you’ll look (.) you know that 
you’ll look (.) not so smart to other people 
\text{Me: yeah because uh: so in our (.) basically what} 
you’re saying in our society we always associate 
how people speak with their intelligence 
\text{SA: mm-hm} 
\text{Me: and so (.) um people in the class if y’ they know} 
that you’re getting a good mark (.) and y’ you 
\text{don’t want to put yourself out there and then have} 
\text{them look at you differently right [by saying]} 
\text{SA: [yeah]} 
\text{Me: and especially the teacher right because they knOw} 
you’re doing well and and what not
Me: and so that’s make’s you nervous

SA: mm-hm

Me: yeah that’s how i felt too [i understand]

SA: [yeah]

Me: um and genders (.). uh there’s something that latin also has ((laughs)) what do you think about about memorizing genders,

SA: [um:] i don’t think much about it quite honestly

Me: [or or]

SA: ((laughs)) i can’t say i’m a fan ((laughs))

Me: yeah so that’s uh up there with uh like you know you have to learn with the nouns all the genders is that [also] an issue context related issue because it’s d’ difficult to

SA: yeah yeah because they don’t generally have like a reason to be that gender um: (.) and normally like there are lots of words that you think sound like it should be like masculine gender like not like not that you go like you know (-) boy:: is masculine right but because just the way the word sounds,

Me: right the ending or something

SA: yeah like pe’ they’re always like just listen to it like (.). but it still ((laughter)) doesn’t sound like it i i still think it should be the other way [you know]

Me: [right yeah yeah]

SA: and and it’s generally the opposite and (.) so yeah do you have a way to memorize the gender with the word or do you just try to memorize it as one group you don’t try to be like oh you know the desk that seems like a male object [or something like that]

SA: [<<laughing> yeah>] um (.). i try and um (-) um sort of uh: (-) kinda put it together with other words of the same gender

Me: ok

SA: like once i know some [things,] a certain gender i’ll go like

Me: [ok so you group them]

SA: yeah i’ll kinda go like ooh and this has to do with like table in german is like male and boy is male (---) i don’t actually know how to say boy in german ((laughs))

Me: junge

SA: <<laughing> oh there you go>

Me: <<laughing> that’s ok>
SA: we haven’t learned that one yet
Me: no no yeah: you’ve only learned like family parts uh [of the family]
SA: [yeah] 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
Me: =so you try to make a context out of them and [and]
SA: [yeah]
Me: connect them by like certain (.). bridges ge’ bridging gaps and [stuff like that]
SA: [mm-hm otherwise there’d] just be no way <<laughing> i don’t think>
Me: right (.). um (.). the textbook (.). vorsprung (.). do you think it’s a good book in your opinion
SA: [hmmm]
Me: [or (.).] what do you think about the book ((laughs));
SA: i think probably as a textbook it’s pretty good but i think that it kind of is pretty bare (.). like it doesn’t seem very detailed like
Me: mm-hm (.). what do you think’s missing in it’ [that if it’s bare]
SA: [((sighs))) explanations [((laughs))]
Me: [explanations, ok so]
SA: yeah they put in a whole bunch of new words and never explain them (.). and they just assume that you get it and then it’s such a pain in the butt to go to the .h to the dictionary and look it up
Me: ok
SA: and um i they kind of gloss over everything really quickly i think
Me: [i agree ((chuckles))]
SA: [like all::] they’ll give you this concept and here’s two examples and move on
Me: sure
SA: and um wh’ you have to pack like that’s a pretty full course in in that book so you can kinda see why they would do it but (.). it just doesn’t seem like like on it’s own it’s very strong
Me: mm-hm
SA: i don’t think
Me: no on it’s well i guess it’s not meant to be on it’s own [(.). too]
SA: [no it’s supposed to go with the class]
Me: do you find the explanations i’ when you go to study do you find that you’re relying more on the
book explanations or the teacher explanations
SA: always the book (.) i don’t usually pay attention
to the teacher’s explanations
Me: ok do you ever:: uh:: (.) in class then you know
when when something’s being s’ discussed a certain
concept .h does the teach’ and the teacher would
uh: probably explain it more or or go into more
detail use examples does that cement it better?
SA: yeah (.) yeah so yeah like basically like i’ll look
at the book (.). and generally like like we’ll
all be in class and she’ll go over like a grammar
thing (.). and um: i’ll just listen and i’ll get my
feel for it and you can you know so that way
intuitively you should know what’s coming and what
it should sound like right and then just read the
book and that should kind of put everything in
place
Me: right ok so you always go back to the book to sort
of cement after the explanation was sort of um
explained maybe a bit more in class,
SA: mm-hm
Me: ok so you do take you do use the book a lot then
you um: don’t go to other sources for explanations
you’re really
SA: yeah just the book
Me: using the book explanations? ok um: (--) what was i
gonna ask (---) how much um: when the teacher you
say in class your teacher explains how much does
that affect your understanding of the material does
that make a significant contribution (.). um: or is
it really more relying on the book in the end;
SA: i think in the end i could probably do without the
entire lecture and class i would think
Me: ok
SA: um: even when i study like i never take any notes
in class even when i study um: but often by the
time we get to the end of the chapter i don’t
really remember what we did in class anyway,
Me: mm-hm
SA: but because i read it from the book (.). um i’m i’m
fine when i get to the test
Me: ok
SA: um: (--) i’m okay enough with languages that i can i
can look at an example and i can probably go from
there and i’d be fine in other situations (.).
probably other students like could not because they
don’t have like some people just aren’t good at
languages and they couldn’t do that which is i
think probably the textbook is weaker for them
really for me i mean for me it’s fine but i’m kind
of looking from the point of somebody who naturally
wasn’t very good at languages
Me: [right]
SA: [MATH] you know like <<laughing>> i couldn’t do
math i mean>
Me: ((laughs)) so you think in general that (. ) with or
without the teacher’s explanation you would learn
it anyway
SA: yeah
Me: you would get it
SA: and if i didn’t i would just go online
Me: right so you have your ways of independently
finding the answer
SA: yeah
Me: if you couldn’t remember the teacher’s thing but
usually you wouldn’t need another source
SA: yeah
Me: you’d be ok (. ) ok um: (. ) so: i’ve already asked
you that question um: (. ) um: i’m trying to
remember what you wrote on the questionnaire um: in
terms of how you say or you think of yourself as a
language learner um: and u’ in the past were your
experiences with french good or bad; [i can’t
remember]
SA: [um it was
pretty good] i actually wasn’t too good at it um:
in the very beginning (. ) um: and then i don’t know
like i was like nine or so somebody gave me like my
grandparents gave me the book’ NO YEAH i i went to
her house i went to my grandma’s house and i saw
the book on french and um: she was like and by that
point i had already been doing spanish cause my
aunt had a spanish book
Me: ok
SA: and [um:]
Me: [reading the book]
SA: yeah
Me: yeah
SA: and um: and when i saw the book i was like oh: you
know: i’m in french class and because (. ) up until
grade three i had really bad french teachers and
once i hit grade four and i had changed to a
different school um: (. ) the teacher there uh she
was just talking words i just didn’t i had never
heard before every oth’ everybody else seemed to know what she was talking about so i was really behind and so i went to i went to my grandma’s house um: that summer like in grade four i was just (.). i got through grade four

Me: right

SA: but um: i was just kinda baffled for the first couple of months before i got into the swing of things and i managed to find my grandma’s book and i just read it and from there like

Me: it was clear

SA: yeah you know (.). i didn’t (.). i think like people would go oh you’re so good at french and it’s because you’re family is french isn’t

Me: ((chuckles))

SA: because my family is french [and]

Me: [ok]

SA: but they never spoke french to me they speak french with each other but never to me ((laughs))

Me: right right

SA: i mean [and um]

Me: [so you] attribute that to the book

SA: yeah i mean i’ll just say yeah it’ cause my family’s french cause i’m not gonna tell people no i just i read a book ((laughs))

Me: [yeah yeah ((laughs))]   

SA: [you know] <<laughing> who reads books on french> but um: but yeah i mean if that french book is really what gAve me and it probably is what (-) cemented like um: like my language learning (.).

SA: things cause i did spanish um: probably when i was even a little bit younger than that but: um: (-) it was: more of like a vocabulary thing rather than a grammatical thing (.). at first cause at that point i didn’t know what grammar was so

Me: right

SA: just kinda like [learning the words]

Me: [learning words]

SA: and but (.). when i read the french book i just started out with all the grammar’ and i got the idea for grammar,

Me: sure

SA: and so: when you learn young enough it go it goes into your head enough and so from I think that’s probably like the impetus for (.). just being good at language learning

Me: ok so um: ever since then you’ve had sort of this
the light switched on or [type thing?]
SA: [yeah:]
Me: yeah so you’ve been open to it and and understanding it pretty easily by the sounds of things anyway if i’m not mistaken (. now you said um i’ just on your questionnaire i think it was you that said um: that (-) you do well in class but that you especially attribute it to the fact that you really want to learn and you really .h um: uh: you know take the effort and and you notice other people that don’t and but you really feel that .h um: for you it’s it’s a great attribute of your learning that you really have this motivation there to um: independently learn everything (. um: does that once again coming back to the whole in this group situation i mean in a class where where you’ve learned other languages without anybody around right’ (. um: do you find that which situation do you prefer now now that you’re sort of back into the classroom with languages; SA: um Me: or can you say yet do you know, ((laughs)) SA: mm: (---) probably i don’t Me: you don’t know yet? SA: no (. i don’t really have en’ i don’t think i have enough experience Me: mm:
SA: like i’ve i’ve been thinking that um (. like if i was like i can’t take german two next semester because it conflicts with another class that i have to take Me: right SA: but i wanted to and i’m thinking that like once this class is over, like and you get into n’ part two of it i think that’s where like i’ll really start to think see things pick up, and i think that the classroom learning would be a lot more you know (-) som’ a lot less negative for me, Me: mm-hm SA: so i gu’ i would think that i probably couldn’t make that decision until i had that experience Me: right ok so but you wouldn’t mind learning from a book again SA: oh no Me: [you do it all the time] SA: [it’s still my preference] Me: ok so in generally in general you find that you
learn well anyway so it’s y’ you’ve noticed that there are differences though in the classroom which you’ve said already but probably that either way you will learn it

SA: yeah

Me: is that what i’m understanding, cool um: what about um: do you guys watch videos at all (..) in the lab?

SA: um: (..) not in german we do in french

Me: ok well what do you uh: what do you does that are you f’ d’ you when you cause you said in the classroom you’re getting this visual (..) thing where in the book you don’t get this as much you get more written explanations and what not (..) does that benefit you the visual?

SA: um:

Me: cause you were talking about heidelberg and mannheim and all that [pictures]

SA: [yeah] the visual the visual does help i don’t like i don’t think it actually um: (..) i don’t think i actually learn anything from it but it kind of ups the motivation a bit because you think i could go to you know i could go to heidelberg and see all this stuff and talk to the people and if you didn’t see a picture of heidelberg you probably wouldn’t be that interested in doing it

Me: =that’s true yeah (-) so the visual is a neat aspect that you don’t get in a book but you’re still gonna learn it without it is that what you’re saying,

SA: i would still i’d still go online and maybe go onto like um like wikipedia and look up some pictures of heidelberg anyway just [to see] what it looks like

Me: [right] that’s awesome yeah no i i’m getting that you’re a very motivated learner i definitely can see that

SA: well in certain things

Me: well at least in this uh: topic uh area

SA: yeah i couldn’t say that across the board and there are some classes i kinda slack off in because i don’t really enjoy it but

Me: so when you like something you don’t need external push you can go on your own and do it

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 tense but the
38 Me: the cases,
SA: yeah the cases like with the the one case (. ) whose
name i can’t remember wh’ which i cAn use
((laughs)) [anyway]
Me: [accusative maybe?]
SA: yeah maybe yeah probably that um where you have to
have the n at the end?
Me: mm-hm
SA: um prob’ i think what happens is i generally like
um: like you learn you learn it one way
Me: mm-hm
SA: (. ) h and um: then the teacher introduces another
way to you (. ) and i think i probably learn by
comparison,
Me: ok
SA: like um i know how to do it the other way (. ) and
then i have to kinda take a look at the difference
in between the situations? of where you use it?
Me: mm-hm
SA: and um: (. ) so: i would compare the difference to
like the cont’ not the context but uh: (-) like in
one in (. ) one situation um: : (-) like it’s a lot
different to say that i AM: you know something then
to say (. ) you know i gAve you something like
Me: mm-hm
SA: one of them ha’ like they’re just completely
different things like there’s like one to do with
BEING something
Me: right
SA: and the other one to do with it has nothing to do
like there’s really no connection
Me: ok
SA: so i kinda like just compare it to like the
different situations and: (. ) kinda like different
i don’t know like psychological concepts of (. ) of
why maybe you would change it,
Me: right
SA: even though that’s probably not the reason but i
just try and think of stuff like that to help um
re’ um: to remember better?
Me: ok so you use like the context of each case
SA: yeah
Me: how the person would be in this ins’ sentence
technically?
SA: =yeah [( )]
Me: [or the object whatever]
SA: yeah like the relation of what they’re talking
about and how they change like how like the
sentence is structured is different (.) because of
the relation to the object i guess maybe you [could
say? (.) and um::]
Me: [yeah
yeah hm that makes sense]
SA: i like from there you kind of once you go over it a
couple times you can kinda get the feeling of like
a natural instinct of what kind of case it would be
because you know like you’ve thought about the con’
like not not the context but you know the situation
Me: yep
SA: well it’s the same thing ((laughs))
Me: yeah no that makes sense um:
SA: but i think that’s probably how i learn stuff like
grammar
Me: ok so that makes you fast able to qui’ pick it up
faster maybe then
SA: [probably]
Me: [um: um:] if you did s’ a different way you think,
SA: yeah
Me: well that’s the easiest for you i guess
SA: yeah it’s not like a thinking thing like it’s just
something (.) like an automatic thing,
Me: mm-hm
SA: you know that you don’t i don’t really think about,
Me: mm-hm
SA: but um: (.) i guess subconsciously i guess like (.)
i can see the difference in my minds
Me: mm-hm
SA: and i think that’s probably
Me: [ok]
SA: [because] y’ can cause like as long as you can see
the differences between the situation .h it’s clear
that they’re really far apart so you don’t mix them
up,
Me: right. (.) ok (.) so that’s how you would
differentiate
SA: yeah
Me: and make things (.) correct or do things correctly
ok um:: (.) and if i remember correctly you also
said you were (.) very fast grammar learner
attributing to that um:: and vocabulary was a
little harder it took more time
SA: mm-hm
Me: um: so what processes then do you think need to
happen in order for vocabulary to be (.) .h learned
SA: i think you definitely it’s um: like ((laughs)) (-)
like all the teachers i guess say you just need to use it i can like like if they give you a word because you’re just like (. ) especially verbs they’re so different so many different ways that you can use a verb (. ) and one of them might be wrong (. ) like like they’ll they’ll give you a word and they’ll say you know this means um: (. ) you know (. ) becoming (. ) and they’ll just say becoming but if you look in the like the thesaurus there’s a whole bunch of different definitions of becoming .h but what they don’t tell you is this is only if it’s one of them

Me: right
SA: so you kinda have to be able see it um: in different situations before you can really use it (. ) and um that’s just for understanding but also for memorization for me as well
Me: mm-hm
SA: i can’t really memorize it unless i’ve heard it somewhere before
Me: so um: whereas grammar you can feel it quicker like or exam’ with your example with the cases you can feel [inherently where things go]
SA: [mm-hm yeah it’s like an inner thing] yeah because you don’t have to memorize it you just have to sort of (. ) you just have to sort of kind of like um (. ) soak it in
Me: right
SA: like it’s like even if you don’t remember any of the verbs like the words for the verbs’ (. ) inside like you still know how they would feel and if they give you a verb you can kind of put it into place
Me: ok (-) um: (. ) ok when you’re reading something in german like a text (. ) what what do you think about in your mind to understand the text
SA: [um i gener’]
Me: [what do the steps]
SA: i generally um: ( (coughs)) it’s bad but i generally try and do word for word translation in my head
Me: mm-hm
SA: like um: like if i was to read a text in german um: (-) i would ha’ like in my head i would just g’ like i th’ it’d say like guten tAg and i would i would think to myself HELLO you know,
Me: mm-hm
SA: and i would just you know in my head i’d just do it
word for word because i think that’s the easiest way,
Me: mm-hm
SA: i’m generally not very good at um: (. ) you know (. ) just reading the language and NOT thinking of it (. ) in english,
Me: ok
SA: and i generally ha’ (. ) i generally don’t learn words by like just hearing it over and over again,
Me: mm-hm
SA: i’ll s’ i’ll never i’ll never figure <<laughing> it out> i have to actually have somebody tell me this is what it means
Me: ok (. ) ok so it’s (. ) pretty much always a (. ) word you read one word [at a time]
SA:           [yeah]
Me: and and then [sort of make sense of a sentence]
SA: [yeah and i’ in my head] i like i can do it like (. ) um: (. ) it’s not like a slow process but just like as i’m reading it i’m still like (. ) i see it in german but i’m thinking about it in like (. ) [in] its english context
Me:          [ok] ok so you start slow and build it all together
SA: mm-hm
Me: .hh um:: (. ) and in the lab i know you said that you guys haven’t done a whole lot of um: listening stuff in the lab or whatever i don’t know you have your quizzes there or something
SA: mm-hm
Me: .hh but um: (-) if you were doing when you were ever doing a listening comprehension activity (. ) um:: (. ) what do you how do you succeed through those like what are the steps you go through then in in order to come (. ) to finish an exercise or something like that
SA: um:
Me: =can you describe the process of that
SA: can you give me an example of a listening activity just so i know what [type you’re] looking at
Me:           [have you] ok well have you done for example the: lab manual section in the: workbook? do you know how there’s lab manual (. ) chapter one to three or whatever,
SA: ((laughs))
Me: ((laughs)) in vorsprung
SA: um::
Me: you know how you have the green workbook
SA: yeah (-) [so the exercises?]
Me: [there’s like] yeah like the ones where
you’re in the lab and you put on the earphones and
you go [to the]
SA: [no we don’t] do those
Me: =you don’t do those ok
SA: =no () no we do them .hh () um we do them like on
our own
Me: yes
SA: but um: without listening like generally they’re
just homework exercises fill in the blanks
Me: so the first half of the book you do only
SA: yeah i don’t [think we’ve gone into the second]
Me: [ok cause the second half] has the the
lab where you need the [listening]
SA: [yeah]
Me: ok well well for example then maybe you can
remember doing the lab test
SA: yeah
Me: where the teacher would read out some texts
SA: mm-hm
Me: or a text () alright whatever () and you were to
find the details () so eh’ you know answer the
questions [based] on the text
SA: [yeah]
Me: =so what what what d’ what do you do when you hear
and you know you have to complete this exercise so
what are the steps you take to k’ successfully
complete that exercise’
SA: =ok um: (--) well i would hear it and: (.) usually
it works different for me for like when i read it i
translate it into english but when i hear it i
don’t generally need to do that
Me: ok
SA: um: so: it k’ it’s kinda like um () so that
( ) kinda completely ruled out because i
generally () when people say like () gehen sie an
die tafel or <<laughing> whatever> you know i don’t
i’ like it’s just like a (-) it’s kinda like
english you don’t really think about what people
are saying you [just] know that that’s what they’re
saying
Me: [ok] yeah
SA: um: () but like when you’re reading you have even
in english you have to think about what you’re
reading because (-) i don’t know i guess it
requires more attention,
Me: right
SA: and um: so: from there i would just um: (-) .h uh
like just after listening (. um it requires like
for that it does require a lot of attention
Me: mm-hm
SA: and so um: (. um it’s easy to
actually miss stuff that’s important,
Me: yeah
SA: and: (. so (-) it’s kinda like a dissection
<br>laughing> you know>
Me: ok
SA: like a word for word dissection what did she say
here what did she say here
Me: yeah
SA: um because sometimes um when you’re listening to
that closely everything se’ sorta seems to (. for
me anyway it sorta seems to (-) blur into each
other and (. um (-) there’s like s’ the longer
like paragraphs because there’s so many more um:
like there are more a lot more detail than just
simple sentences,
Me: mm-hm
SA: um there’s often a lot of um like words that you
don’t know in there that kinda th’ like kinda
threw you off,
Me: sure
SA: just a little bit (. um even though you can kinda
get around them (. and so it’s kinda like picking
out um: (. yeah i did get this (. and this is
what i heard (. and i missed this entire gap
Me: right
SA: but i heard the first part and i heard the last
part so i can kind of (. like (. formulate what
the middle might have been? you’re not sure?
Me: ok so you can infer based on
SA: yeah and so there’s a lot of um: (. yeah
inferences i guess (. in that
Me: mm-hm
SA: um: <<whispering> what was the question again?><
Me: just how (. what you do like d’ when so when she
would be reading the text out (. also f’ like what
so you’ve said y’ you listen to it and try to you
know figure out what’s going on
SA: yeah
Me: but in terms of like do you do anything else while
you’re listening?
SA: um what do you mean by anything else
Me: like some people you know jot notes down [like in
english even]
SA: [oh::] um:
generally we have to like i don’t know if i would
do that naturally but because um: usually when
she’s reading a paragraph or when anybody’s reading
a paragraph it requires you to be writing something
down,
Me: right
SA: um so i wouldn’t know if i would do that naturally
cause i’ve never
Me: ok so you’re usually doing it because that’s the
answer
SA: yeah
Me: but uh’ d’ does she would she have read it out
twice three time maybe
SA: yeah she definitely does that all the time
Me: ok so you would just try and answer it as you go
each time? and you wouldn’t take one time to sort
of take notes and then fill in?
SA: i no i yeah i would answer it um like i would do as
much as i can that first time,
Me: ok
SA: and the times after that would be: um: like getting
what i may have missed or i didn’t have time to
write down but by the time i’d go t around to
writing it down i forgotten what she’d said in the
first place
Me: mm-hm
SA: and i would just catch up on that
Me: ok um:: (-) i guess that’s pretty much what i (.)
meant um: last question uh: (. ) of this section
what do you think you put the most emphasis on when
you’re studying what to you do you pick up first to
study thinking ah: i really need to get this part
of (. ) it ((laughs))
SA: mm: (-) well i generally go for like the
meaningless vocabulary like the stuff that you like
that you like you don’t use like um the food
Me: mm-hm
SA: like that one i just pour over because (. ) like i
always forget the names for the food because i i
don’t go to home and go hey mom can I have
[some you know german chick’ word for chicken]
Me: [((laughs)) yeah]
SA: but and you don’t use that in class either so
there’s basically if y’ if i don’t study that um
that part of the vocabulary i know i’ll forget it
because there’s not any chance that i’m gonna get
to do that in class really maybe one day we’ll go
over a little bit
Me: mm-hm
SA: um: and she’ll just go over the words you know get
the pronunciation (.) but the next day um: (.) you
know the words start to mean a little bit less
Me: mm-hm
SA: and so that’s where i s’ focus the most on (.). and
then i focus on parts of the grammar that look the
same as other parts of the grammar’ (-) like there
are some grammar rules that are almost the exact
same as other grammar rules,
Me: mm-hm
SA: and i always focus on them just to make sure i do
have it clear in my head that they’re different
Me: ok
SA: and um: because um: lots of times like you
understand the grammar rules but when you like have
to write a sentence,
Me: mm-hm
SA: um: --) you just you just like you don’t have
that feeling yet because you haven’t used it enough
Me: mm-hm
SA: and so it’s still the kinda it’s still thinking
about it’ (.). and so i just have you just have to
kinda (.). like with the cases because there’s only
like small differences in when you put n here and
when you put n here .h you have to make sure like
and put it into sentences and just make that sure
you do get the difference
Me: right
SA: um: (.). because it’s such a (.). you know such a
tiny difference
Me: but it’s wrong if you don’t
SA: yeah
Me: =yeah
SA: =and um: --) um: like when you have like the words
for unsere and stuff like that
Me: mm-hm
SA: um those two like they’re all really similar so i
kinda focus on that just to make sure because
especially in test time you’re kinda self doubting
Me: yeah
SA: and you’re like ok i know this is this but do i
really know or am i just thinking that i know
Me: mm-hm
SA: so (.)) i kinda (.)) obsess about that in making sure
that i DO know ((laughs)) you know
Me: yeah ok .
SA: so when you’re studying like
right now probably for the <<laughing> final> (.))
which is coming up (.)) what do you put the
most emphasis on (.)) of these skills writing (.)
like wri’ like being able to write being able to
read a text being able to listen to a text i know
this probably doesn’t apply for this but just
generally when you study for things or being able
to s’ to speak well like what do you think are the
most important when you study to you like (-) wha’
what does that wha’ what does your studying reflect
the import’ like how do you rank those-
SA: um: if i could i’d probably i’d probably choose::
to study to speak well it’s hard to study for that,
Me: mm:
SA: unless you know somebody who speaks that language
and i don’t,
Me: right
SA: um so that’s kind of generally cut out;
Me: ok
SA: from my studying especially because it’s so little
cause i’m never gonna like i’m never gonna see that
on the exam anyway?
Me: ok
SA: um we did have a speaking test but it was it was
more of a writing and then memorizing
Me: mm:
SA: so it wasn’t really speaking there was a little bit
of speaking cause um the one the one uh german
german lady came in and asked some questions but um
they were really easy questions so it didn’t
require a lot of speaking ability
Me: ok
SA: um maybe it was more like what’s your favourite
colour and then
Me: sure
SA: you would just answer your favourite colour right
because you just you had already written that
already so many times it was already memorized
Me: [ok]
SA: [so] you didn’t need to think about actually
speaking it
Me: mm-hm
and so that kinda just leaves um writing and reading and what was the other one?

Me: listening

SA: listening um: listening i generally um: (.) don’t really pay attention to either because um:mm-hm i find that if you study the reading (. ) listening and writing kind of falls into place

Me: ok

SA: um: (-) i don’t know if that’s the same for everybody like lot’ that’s just because .h (-) you know that’s how i learn for myself but i know that lots of people have an easier time um like listening and speaking whereas i’m the opposite but like generally if i read something um: ( .) by reading something is how i tEnd to like (. ) pick up (. ) um:mm-hm like the intuitive kind of grammar rules, mm-hm

Me: mm-hm

SA: like .h (. ) um: like if somebody just said to me hh, this is the nominative nominative case and didn’t give me like .h an example of a sentence that showed the nominative case i probably wouldn’t understand what they were talking about .h like the difference so they would just have to say yes you know i have a book and then i go oh: ok so like reading gives longer correct examples mm-hm

Me: mm-hm

SA: um rather if you’re writing you don’t know if you’re actually writing it properly but if you’re reading it (. ) chances are you’re reading it from like somebody who DOES know what they’re talking about mm-hm

Me: mm-hm

SA: and um: you can kinda (. ) learn that way ok

Me: ok

SA: just cause it (. ) you can see it in action i guess

Me: so when you study you’re aiming for written and re’ (. ) re’ uh: writing and reading comprehension mostly because that’s what mostly comes into play in this course

SA: mm-hm

Me: so it’s just it cOmes basically or the um priorities are for the exam because that’s what yeah

Me: [yeah --) you study ( .)]

SA: [yeah definitely i i go for the exam] because i like the listening and .h speaking but i like the grades better ((laughs))
Me: yeah ok (.). well (-) uh ok so a couple other things
um: (.). when i say when you hear people say to
learn learning a foreign language or to learn a
foreign language (.).h what are some key things
that pop into your head about that [or terms]
SA: [oh::: oh ok]
Me: ((laughs))
SA: don’t you think just learning a foreign language
and then it makes you just feel happy
Me: ok
SA: um:: what do you mean by key terms
Me: well anything that just comes into your mind when
you hear just people talking about learning a
foreign language like what (.). terms as in words
basically [like what]
SA: [ok]
Me: nothing technical i mean i (.). so like happy th’
happiness ((laughs))
SA: ((laughs))
Me: [<<laughing> one of them>]
SA: [happiness definitely is happiness]
Me: and like i mean uh negative positive right anything
anything that that goes along [with the process of
learning]
SA: [ok ok so] not like
um: ok so anything
Me: yep
SA: ok even like learning stuff
Me: yep
SA: ok probably like um: (--) um: (--) oh my gosh
((laughs))
Me: ((laughs))
SA: i have ideas in my head but i’m trying to think of
words for them (--) um: (--) ((sighs)) what’s the
word i’m trying to think of i knOw it
Me: ((laughs))
SA: i knOw it (.). it’s ((sighs)) it’s the one i haven’t
read anything about it in a long time which is why
i forget the term for it but i generally think of
um: (.). not bilingualism but um: like you know when
people study like children who have um: like (.)
two languages?
Me: uh-huh
SA: and they’re studying like the difficulties and that
they might have?
Me: mm-hm
SA: um i generally think of that term but i can’t
member what that term is at this moment (-) um:
Me: ((laughs))
SA: oh no ((sighs)) [i read a lot about it too]
Me: [well bilingual’ (. ) child bilingualism like]
SA: yeah (. ) yeah just that
Me: i mean that’s good enough probably [(. ) to describe
what you mean]
SA: [yeah that’s it]
yeah i generally think of that and how like um: (. )
they kind of play off each other like each language
plays off each other’ (. ) and: then i think about
um: (-) i think a lot about um: (. ) like the
psychological stuff that goes along with language
learning,
Me: mm-hm
SA: like um: (-) like um: (. ) verbal ability
Me: yep
SA: and stuff (--)
Me: ((laughs)) that’s ok
SA: [um:]
Me: [i like] anything at all you know i mean
SA: yeah:
Me: if someone came up to you and was like oh: i’m
thinking about taking a foreign language or why why
should i or like what (. ) what do you think about
them you know like [or]
SA: [i think great,] [you know]
Me: [[(laughs)]]
what would be difficult [or if] somebody was asking
you
SA: difficult;
Me: =or a couple things like
SA: like frustration (. ) i would think of that word
Me: yeah
SA: just as like a des’ description of something that
you would feel while doing it
Me: sure makes sense
SA: and them um: (. ) PAYoff
Me: payoff that’s a good one
SA: yeah and um: just um: (. ) like PRIDE
Me: mm-hm
SA: you know in being able to do something like that
Me: mm-hm
SA: and then um: i would think along the lines of um:
Me: travel,
SA: you know and just how you could benefit from that,
Me: mm-hm
SA: and um: is that kinda what you’re going for?
Me: that’s yeah that’s good i like that [((laughs))]
SA: [ok] just stuff along those lines i would probably .hh likemost of
what i what i think about like language learning
Me: mm-hm
SA: is generally about you know how good it makes you
feel ((laughs))
Me: YEAH confidence boosting and that sort of thing
SA: yeah
Me: ok (.) and being different
SA: [yeah and being different]
Me: [i you seem to think] from your last interview you
liked learning languages because uh
SA: =yeah
Me: especially more obscure ones with your esperanto
[book] and what not
SA: [yeah] yeah [stuff]
Me: [right’]
SA: that are like mysterious and it just c’ adds [it
to
to]
Me: [the unknown]
SA: yeah like an element you know?
Me: sure
SA: =of you know not danger but of like ((laughs))
Me: ((laughs))
SA: you know well
Me: mystery
SA: yeah mystery
Me: yeah (.) the unknown
SA: yep (.) definitely the unknown
Me: ok um: (-) once again more general what
characteristics do you think people or somebody
would bring with them would have to bring with them
in order to successfully learn german or a foreign
language like what are some characteristics that
people need to have to be successful
SA: um: (.) well they would have to uh: (.) not be (-)
like (.) cynical
Me: ok
SA: not cynical but (.) judgmental you know they would
have to you know cause generally i don’t know like
i get i’m one of the types to get really offended

<<laughing> like>

Me: yeah

SA: um: ((laughs)) at the fact that you know (.). um:

(.) i don’t know like in uh: (.). in frEnch you know

(.) you know a man a husband you know is like a

husband but a wOman is a still just like a wOman

you know

Me: mm-hm

SA: like a wife is a woman like they don’t really

change the names until modern times

Me: ok

SA: you know kinda sexism in language you know

Me: mm-hm

SA: that really turns me off [i’m just]

Me: [so people should be open

minded maybe?]

SA: =yeah and like there’s lots of cultural things that

pop up when you uh: (.). when you learn languages

and you have to be kinda (.). you know let it go

((laughs))

Me: right right

SA: but um: it’s generally not offensive stuff so

except for the sexism i just don’t like that

Me: yep

SA: and um: they would have to uh: (.). you know lots of

people just kinda like they’re like oh: you know

this is just a fad you know well they don’t think

it’s just a fad but they think WOW GREAT i wanna

learn GERman and they’re like oh: wow: you know

it’s kinda hard (.). maybe i’ll just stop going to

classes (.). and um lots of people would do that and

they would have to not be like that and (-) if

you’re gonna be like that like lots of people like

that i just you know don’t bother;

Me: mm-hm

SA: like NOT because we don’t want you there but just

(.) why waste your time if you’re not doing it for

a good reason;

Me: right

SA: um you mi’ as well just a wait until you’re ready

to do it instead of wasting your own time (.). and

then disappointing me and making me sad and angry

with YOU because

Me: ((laughs))

SA: i’m like why aren’t you liking this (.). but um: (-)

and they would have to uh: (.). you wouldn’t have to
go in and have lots of knowledge of grammar. um i guess maybe for a class you would have to

Me: mm-hm

SA: like y’ (. you need to know have more abilities for grammar for taking a class but if you’re just gonna go to the country (. h and learn by picking it up (. that’s a better way for people to do it who don’t have (. grammar ability

Me: mm-hm

SA: cause people t’ tend to be able to do that really easily even not easily but a lot quicker even if they don’t (. um: (. naturally pick up on languages

Me: mm-hm

SA: so: um: (. you probably wanna read up on grammar before you came into a class (. just to make it easier because if they c’ like the teachers don’t have time to sit down to you because when you’re learning a language you in like formally in a classroom you sort of need to have an idea of nouns and verbs (. and:

Me: [what the subject is]

SA: [indirect objects] exactly but: um: (. if you don’t know that (. the teachers not gonna have time to explain it to you just so that way you can move on (. and so you should probably read a book and kind of refresh yourself on that before you go before you go into the class and

Me: mm-hm

SA: you know and have to learn it while you’re in class while you’re already trying to learn how to do it in GERman

Me: right

SA: because it there are some differences between the languages and um: (-) so definitely like not even a book like you don’t have to read a book but like i’m sure you can get like one of those little like things from wal-mart where they give you those big plastic rectangular sheets

Me: mm-hm

SA: and just goes over the basic [like] even in english

Me: [yep] mm-hm

SA: and they could just basically do that (. hh, and I think that would h’ (. like (. that would push somebody a l0ng way into making a language learning class a lot easier because (. um: (. i’ l’ like in language classes even when they do explain what
nouns are they didn’t they generally don’t do it
(.) um: in a way that you can understand’
Me: mm-hm
SA: because they they uh: (.) they change it to suit
the language that they’re in’ (.) and but you can’t
relate to that because you don’t know the language
yet
Me: right
SA: so you had to do it like from an english context
Me: ok
SA: and do it from there
Me: so open minded (.) det’ like consistent [or
determined to] (.) finish and do well
SA: and determined yeah] yeah
Me: um: (.) AND what was the last one that you just
said um:
SA: um:
Me: =what’s a good word to describe it
SA: [refresher course is (.) yeah BASE knowledge of
grammar yeah]
Me: [well a base base knowledge (-) or something yeah
ok
SA: yeah ((coughs))
Me: um:: (--) ok when you lear’ when you’re learning a
foreign language do you have a s’ specific goal in
mind? or is it more just the fun of it process;
SA: um: generally um: my specific goal would probably
be to be able to conduct a conversation
Me: ok
SA: [like it’s no’]
Me: [so you don’t] want to be like super amazing you
[just] wanna be able to
SA: [no] well i would like to be super amazing but i’m
realistic ((laughs))
Me: [sure of course] ((laughs))
SA: i would love to i’ve never reached that kind of
super amazingness in any languages so i’m like by
now i’m pretty like down to earth on how far i’m
ACTually gonna get (.)
Me: what d’[what]
SA: [so]
Me: do you think keeps you from being super amazing
what’s the [missing component]
SA: [well] (--) well a’ like a’ when when
people write books about a language which is
generally as far as you’re ever gonna go in l’ um:
(-) um they generally stop at a certain point
that’s before fluency (.) like it doesn’t get any
harder once you get to like nobody ever writes a
book that seems to finish off fluency right,
Me: right
SA: =[they just h,]
Me: =[do you think it’s possible?]
SA: it’s (.) probably not
Me: yeah
SA: um unless they really because generally what
prevents fluency (.) is um: like: (.) like (.)
idioms and
Me: [yeah]
SA: [you know] sayings and all that that you REALLY
need because like fifty percent of conversation
like is like (.)
Me: not authentic [((laughs))]
SA: [yeah] it’s not it’s not formal stuff
that you get in (. in the textbook
Me: mm-hm
SA: like so you need to be able to know that and so:
(. i think the only thing that could REALLY (.) h,
get you fluent (. is um: (. being able to go to
this:: (. to a maybe not even to the country but
to spend a lot of time people (. who speak that
language
Me: mm-hm
SA: so that way you could pick up on all those things
Me: yep
SA: .h um: (. because like even like (. like somebody
might not even understand what they were what i was
saying if i say pick up on
Me: right
SA: because that is generally not something that you
would (. that they would put into a textbook
Me: yep
SA: because they would say learn: or you know just
[something] more
Me: [sure] (. simple
SA: yeah and um: (. but like like i said like fifty
percent of your language that you speak (. is: (.)
like (. sayings and
Me: mm-hm
SA: stuff that can’t be translated (. properly and (.)
[so you can’t get fluent]
Me: [so it’s important to]
SA: yeah
Me: so you think a book can’t do that then
SA: mm-hm yeah so you couldn’t not unless the book was
based (. ) on teaching you (. ) um: (. ) like if you
if you were to find like if you were like as high
as like you get to fren’ in french and you knew all
the grammar and you knew a LOT of vocabulary you
don’t need to know it all (. ) um: (. ) and somebody
wrote like this big book about like every single
possible like saying that somebody could say like
not even just like um: (. ) the po’ that’s the pot
calling the kettle black right but (. ) just even
smaller like little things like i’m going to go
hang out with my friends
Me: mm-hm
SA: um: just stuff that like even that wouldn’t go into
like a book of sayings
Me: mm-hm
SA: um: but it’s just such a common thing to hear
Me: yep
SA: it just prevents fluency that you don’t know
Me: sure
SA: although you could probably figure out from the
context cause that one’s pretty easy
Me: yeah [but there are other ones]
SA: [but there are others] yeah (. ) and i think
that’s probably what prevents um: (. ) fluency
Me: ok (-) um: (. ) when do you have the feeling that
you’ve learned something;
SA: um::
Me: like how do you notice;
SA: well cause um: i usually try to like (-) um: (-)
like i go online (. ) and i’ll go into like a like a
chat room
Me: mm-hm
SA: of the other person’s language and i’ll just
basically see whether how much i need to use that
altavista babelfish translation
Me: ((laughs)) yeah
SA: and um: if i don’t need to use that that much then
i feel like i’ve learned something ((laughs))
Me: okay
SA: but that’s my ((laughs))
Me: yep no okay that’s [your] measuring way of
measuring it
SA: [yeah] yeah
Me: ok so you notice it when you go to communicate and
you don’t have as many problems as before,
SA: or if i’m reading something or if i’m rea’
Me: mm-hm
SA: =like even going ahead in the textbook if i’m
reading something (.).h that’s ahead of the
textbook and i still know what it’s saying then i
st’ i feel like i’ve learned something
Me: okay (.). do you learn german differently than other
foreign languages you’ve learned or is it a similar
process-
SA: i think it’s the same um: (.). i think (.). i have i
haven’t really had that much experience with german
but um: (-) it’s (-).h um: i probably learn it (.).
generally kind of consistently because it’s rather
easy but (.). like it’s not like uh: other uh: the
more harder language where you kinda have to f’
you’re forced to learn it differently because (.).
they’re just (.). so out there
Me: [like what language]
SA: [and so different] like um:
Me: is harder [for you]
SA: [like if] you were to learn chinese like
it’s just it’s there’s NO similarities to english
but german’s pretty similar
Me: mm-hm
SA: so: learning german is kind of like is kind of like
uh: (.). it’s not (.). SUCH a difficulty to learn
you’re not really you don’t really have to like
struggle a lot with it (.). like you do in other
languages
Me: [right]
SA: [and] the: the spelling is pretty uniform so
Me: mm-hm
SA: um: (.). but uh: (.). it’s kinda like (.). forming a
sentence in german isn’t too much different than
forming a sentence in english because the lots of
the sound of it is a lot the same
Me: mm-hm
SA: and it’s pretty easy to easy to pick up on (.). um:
how you should form a sentence in german (.). i
think
Me: [yeah]
SA: [just] because it’s so similar like (-).h EVEN
(--) words that aren’t connected in english i would
say to german like they sound a l’ really english
Me: ok
SA: that could just be me ((laughs))
Me: (laughs))
SA: it just german sounds [really english to me]
Me: [i had that too when i some
words]
SA: yeah they’re like there were just like sentences
they would come out with you know and i’m like oh
my god that sounds just like english
Me: yeah
SA: even though it’s not english
Me: yeah
SA: it’s it’s really interesting that’s what i like
about german
Me: cool
SA: which is really cool too because have you ever
have you ever like looked in gaelic irish gaelic?
Me: mm-mm
SA: irish gaelic i tried that and um the spelling is
killer
Me: yeah
SA: right it’s terrible spelling [((laughs))] and you
can never learn it but
Me: [oh:]
SA: like w0rd for w0rd you can literally with irish
gaelic translate it into english
Me: mm-hm
SA: it like i can’t explain it but (.). like the grammar
i don’t know they say i’ they say it’s so:
different from the english but to me it’s exactly
like english
Me: mm-hm
SA: you know it’s really interesting to y’ (.). there’s
just like there’s this website and um and like TO
GO like that’s the only other language i’ve ever
seen although i i haven’t studied most languages
that actually uses two different words for to and
Me: ok
SA: you know like english does rather than like aller
Me: [right right right]
SA: [you know]
Me: yeah
SA: and so it’s really exact translation
Me: so it’s [similar]
SA: [and (.). yeah] (.). i don’t know how i got
into gaelic [((laughs))]
Me: [((laughs))]
that’s okay um: i just this is the last
question (.). and this is kind of a fun one
[[(laughs))]}
SA: [okay]
Me: what words would you use to describe the GERMAN language,
SA: oh:
Me: ((laughs))
SA: it’s guttural?
SA: i just love that it just sounds wonderful (.). yeah cause there’s they talk from like right here i think
Me: yeah [that’s your’]
SA: [and um:]
SA: it’s just that everybody’s perception is different but that [that’s] cool yeah
SA: [yeah] yeah and uh: (.). it sounds (.)
Me: it’s just that everybody’s perception is different but that’s cool yeah
SA: [yeah] yeah and uh: (.). it sounds (.)
Me: ((laughs))
SA: you know you know that’s how it comes off when you think that they’re like you know and it just seems that everything they say has like an emphasis
Me: yeah
SA: i haven’t] really hard anybody talking yet but uh usually when you go to a movie and you hear german they’ve got like there’s this persona
Me: hopefully it’s not like the nazi war movies where like all you hear is screaming people [(laughs)]
SA: [((laughs))]
Me: ((laughs)) well i mean it’s a hollywood thing i guess but ((laughs)) [that’s funny]
SA: [but it generally] german sounds like it has a lot of personality to it it’ (.). um: it doesn’t sound bland;
Me: no
SA: and uh: ((coughs)) is that the kind of thing that you’re looking for [on that?]
Me: [yeah no] that’s good i’m looking for whatever you wanna say on that ((laughs)) i think it’s cool
SA: it’s just really great the way it sounds
SA: oh (.). um what about words describing germanY ha ha
SA: germanY?
SA: germanY?
SA: germanY?
Me: i kno’ maybe if you’ve never been there fine but
just what you’re perception is

SA: um: you kind of think of um: (.) i kind of think of
kind of like (.) ((coughs)) (--) kind of like a (.)
not farmer but kind of like rustic
Me: ok
SA: is kinda like the impression that i have for it (.)
um: just kinda like (.). mAnliness you know and
bUrly and
Me: ((laughs))
SA: um: like even the women you know it’s kinda like
the idea that i have of germany i don’t know why
and i’m sure it’s absolutely not true but like if i
was to ever have a stereotype of germany i would
think of like burly people who eat lots of sausages
and y’ and you know cause sausages are such a manly
thing to eat right?
Me: ((still laughing)) yeah [meat and potatoes
((laughs))]
[and that’s probably what’s
yeah (.)] exactly
so it kinda really (.). bumps up why i might think
that you know germans are like these burly rustic
manly people because they’re always eating sausages
and like meat and
Me: ((laughs)) yeah and they kind of hammer that in
your head in vorsprung too for whatever reason
SA: yeah
Me: =they go all oh:: it’s a stereotype but then they
make you talk about it forever and it makes you
[feel like it’s real and then you just get angered
[at it cause it’s not real but (.) it’s funny]
SA: [<<laughing> yeah (.). exactly yeah>] [and then]
Me: [pretty]
SA: =of course there’s um: (-) you see it completely
like if you actually looked at a picture of germany
it’s like a brothers grimm fairy tale you know
it’s so [pretty] and um: (.). fantastical i guess
you might wanna say and it’s completely different
Me: yeah
SA: but
Me: or like heidelberg and [mannheim]
SA: [yeah] [yeah]
Me: [i guess] you don’t
really
SA: well we saw a little f’ of uh: a few of pictures
cause we looked at the: website
Me: mm-hm
SA: and did some stuff and they’re just you know it’s really pretty and um it’s the opposite of you what you would think like when you think of like german scenery it’s completely opposed to the german people

Me: (((laughs))) yeah or the perception of german people that you have [((laughs))]

SA: [yeah ( )] the german (.) the perception of german people yeah

Me: (((laughs))) now does that play a role in your learning german? or is that just sort of like yeah definitely because it’s so much fun to like put yourself into like the place of uh: .h somebody who’s german (.) and has this guttural kind of way of talking that’s kinda like uh: you know?

Me: ((laughs)) now does that play a role in your learning german? or is that just sort of like yeah definitely because it’s so much fun to like put yourself into like the place of uh: .h somebody who’s german (.) and has this guttural kind of way of talking that’s kinda like uh: you know?

Me: yeah

SA: you know kind of arnold schwartzenegger, .h and it makes it a lot more fun to think of yourself AS that type of person having fun being that kind of person (.) i don’t know ((laughs))

Me: ((laughs)) that’s awesome

SA: well (. ) [it is fun] ((laughs))

Me: [sweet] ok (. ) that’s it then

SA: ok

Me: thank you very much for your time

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

Me: alright (.) so (.) this is: the last interview (.) and: um: (. ) i would like to: (. ) find out what you perceive your learning curve is over time (.) and: um: (. ) what i’m gonna get you do is draw that on a piece of paper (. ) and um: explain (. ) you know the bumps and the curves in the road and that type of thing (. ) .hh and i have an example here (. ) of mine ((laughs))

SA: ok

Me: .hh um: just so that you have an idea of what what i mean (. ) um this is when i was in spain (. ) um: i
stayed in Spain for one month doing a language
course and so this is how I perceived what I (.).
what my learning curve was like (.). So I’d
already taken 101 20 whatever two years of Spanish
so when I came I was already you know somewhere (.).
with a decent knowledge

SA: mm-hm
Me: so I started myself here and my (.). Um: (.).
my
learning of course increased sort of slowly because
there was (.). There was no jump in knowledge you
know I had already had a base so I was sort of
slowly [learning] stuff

SA: [mm-hm]
Me: and just being in the country culture (.). Increased
naturally (.). So this is just you know (.).

<<laughing>> what I think happened (.). And um: (.).
then at the end we had a a big exam and so I (.).
Um: (-) studied a lot (.). And felt that I really
you know nailed a lot of (.). Um: (.). Concepts and
so I felt that I made a big jump in my learning (.).
and so then in the end I had left with having

gained you know a decent amount of Spanish

SA: mm-hm
Me: so that’s (.). What I (.). Perceived it to be (.). So:

SA: ok so (.). My learning curve (.). Of um:
Me: German 101
SA: German 101 ok
Me: from beginning semester to end of semester (.).
and

how you perceive that

SA: are you planning on teaching German?
Me: in like my life? ((laughs))
SA: yeah
Me: <<laughing>> um: (.). Um: yeah
SA: it just it just seems that um: (.). You’re
interested in like (.). Like how people learn maybe
because you want to (.). Teach

Me: yep no for sure (.). Definitely a practical side of
it yep

SA: ok ((draws))

(18)
SA: .hh ok so: (--), hh (.). When I started I was at
rock bottom ((laughs))
Me: that’s fine yep
SA: well I knew guten tag

Me: ((laughs)) well I mean when you start a beginner
course you’re supposed to not know anything [right
so]
SA: ((laughs))

Me: ((laughs))

SA: um:

what i’m gonna do is i’m gonna divide it into months cause i think that’ll help me

Me: ok

SA: to october (-) to n’ (. ) oh that’s kinda ( ) oh well to november (. ) OH (. ) well there’s a little bit cause now i’m in german 102 (. ) so (. ) that little bit i’ll have as the extra one

Me: perfect (-) who’s your teacher

SA: um i’m actually doing it distance ed

Me: oh you are [oh that’s so interesting]

SA: [which i thought] i would like but i really don’t

Me: oh really

SA: because i j’ well it’s not because of the distance ed (-) it’s just because um: (-) i find that without being in the classroom the textbook the textbook is useless and isn’t very (. ) like it’s just so bleh:: you know i don’t really like the textbook (. ) it doesn’t seem to be kinda like chronol’ chronological

Me: mm-hm

SA: it seems to go all over the place (. ) and um: also just um: distance ed courses and it’s not just german cause i’m taking another one i’m also takin french that way (. ) i just (-) i find it so hard to find exactly what they want you to do because they’ll put over here that this is due a certain day and then like on some other webpage they’ll say you also have to participate in this just (. ) you have to like (. ) be on top of so much stuff

Me: yeah i can imagine

SA: which isn’t really language learning but just (-) i don’t like it

Me: m’ maybe mis’ just unorganization

SA: yeah

Me: disorganized (. ) yeah

SA: um: november (-) december (--) ok we’ll stop at december

Me: mm-hm

SA: because that’s when it stopped
SA: and then this will be (.) february

Me: k

SA: ((coughs)) so there’s gonna be a little break cause
i didn’t do anything in december

Me: ((laughs)) yeah

SA: kind of slow: at the s’ beginning because we mostly
did um:

like (-) my name is so there wasn’t much learning
in that beginning part

and then what did we do (.) and then kind of
faster as it went up

SA: cause it was kind of h’ (--) things but (-) in
between (.). i would say it was like a straight (.).
cause it all it was all like (-) grammar

SA: then kinda (.) blah:: again cause it was (.) lots
of vocab here

Me: right

SA: and it was more mostly stuff like chair table so it
didn’t really feel like you were doing a whOle lot

SA: and then i’ll go h:igher towards the end and then
even higher for exam time (.) just like you did

SA: um hh,

Me: ((laughs))

SA: ((laughs))

Me: mm-hm

SA: and (-) they just taught you some more imperative
forms (-) which (.). you know (.). read it once you
don’t really need to read it again so there’s not
much learning there (.). i’ll put up explanations

Me: mm-hm

SA: does the midterm factor in there at all (--) or do
you remember how
SA: i never even (.) pai’ i never even rem’ (.)
remembered that (-) um:
Me: well i mean but was it? like was it a big increa’
did you study a lot for that or did you find it um:
SA: well i just (---) the day before i just reread the
bo’ the first couple chapters but (.). i gu’ i’ i
guess it probably like it’s part of the steep part
because um kinda what i’d forgotten a little bit by
not using (.). um just reminded me to do it so i’ll
keep it in that steep area
Me: ok
SA: there wasn’t a lot of memorization for the midterm
(-) so i didn’t have to do that but
Me: what about the speaking test (-) how would you’ve
SA: um: (.). i didn’t do too well on the speaking test
the one of the people that we were with (-) um: (.).
i was with in my group well i got eighty (.).
<<laughing> but i mean like so> but our speaking
test kinda sucked because um the person was injured
(.). and so: she was stuck in toronto for a couple
days so we didn’t have a lot of time to work on it
(-) so it was kind of (.). i don’t really
<<laughing> think about that speaking test> cause
it was a (.). [disaster]
Me: [so you don’t] think the: (-)
preparations you made for that was any type of (-)
jump in learning for you?
SA: well it would’ve been um: cause when i was like
cause i originally wrote the original one (---) and
um: (---) it was really complex cause i wanted to
like you know go out there and like be daring and
like try and do big sentences but the people i was
with they kinda cut all the complex stuff out and
just made it really simple
Me: mm-hm
SA: and so that way there wasn’t really learning cause
it was all like (.). just basic phrases so
Me: k
SA: not really
(3)
SA: what was november
(5)
 um: (.). vocab mostly lots of vocab (---) and then
towards the end preparation for (-) exam (---) and
(.). more complex grammar (--) with like um: (---)
i don’t remember i never remember what the grammar stuffs are called so (. ) i’ll just put complex grammar

Me: <<laughing> that’s ok>

SA: they’re like put it into this tense and all that

i’m like <<laughing> what tense though> (. )

<<whispering> give me an example>

Me: ((laughs))

SA: um: (---) reviewish stuff

(11)

SA: there

Me: good

(5)

um:: (. ) let’s see do you (. ) can you draw also a (. ) um:: (. ) ((coughs)) a line of your motivation throughout (. ) so on the same axis (. ) how you feel that your motivation (-) played a role

SA: stee:p at the beginning

Me: mm-hm

SA: and then sorta (. ) sorta dwindling off i tend to do that

Me: mm-hm

SA: and then perhaps stee:p again just something else caught my interest probably like the (-) i don’t know like like originally like i started off like oo:: new language new culture la la la right

Me: mm-hm

SA: and so i’m really excited and then i’m kinda like yeah: i’m in class and now i just work <<laughing> [you know]> Me: [yeah yeah]

SA: so i kinda like (. ) get bored of it

Me: sure

SA: and then maybe i’ll you know i’ll watch a movie or something and it (. ) has people talking german and i’ll go like OH: that sounds really good and i’ll get excited again

Me: mm-hm

SA: so it just kinda goes like that

Me: right

SA: i never really lose interest but (. ) just kind of (-) blah (. ) that’s a just a general thing

Me: ok so it’s (. ) constantly going up with a couple sort of plateaus

SA: yeah (-) pretty much

Me: alright (. ) good (-) alright well that’s a good explanation and like i said (--) j’ didn’t need a
Me: is it on hello ok good ((laughs)) (-) cool (.). so basically (-) try not to talk too quietly cause SB: o:k 04 Me: i mean it’s (-) it picks it up but you know it’s a little bit 05 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 you some questions about um: (.). german so far and (-) your experiences as I told you so um: what do you think so far of the language lessons like the 09 german 101 language lessons (.). how do you enjoy them 13 SB: um: i like it i like it because i like learning other languages like i think that’s really cool so i enjoy it (.). it’s (.). a little bit slow paced for me just because; (.). um: (.). when i was younger like my: (.). my dad my grandparents were german and my dad is german like he was born in canada but [that kinda thing (.). so:] 20 Me: [right right right (.). heard it at home] 21 SB: yeah when i was younger (.). well i went to german school when i was younger 23 Me: [OH: ok] 24 SB: [but like] we were part of a german club and i did like german dancing and [everything] 27 Me: [where::] in kitchen’ in kitchener?
SB: in leamington i’m from leamington
Me: where is that exactly?
SB: uh: forty-five minutes from: (. ) windsor? like you
know point [pelee?]
Me: [OH::] yes yeah yeah ok (. ) the most
southern point of ontario,
SB: yeah that’s right
Me: cool oh i didn’t know that there was a german (. )
community there
SB: oh yeah [so it’s everywhere] so i did all that
Me: [oh huh interesting]
yeah cause uh often times the the german
communities are in towns although kitchener doesn’t
really stand true to that but (. ) like lEAmington
doesn’t sound german
SB: [no (. ) no it doesn’t]
Me: [do you know what I mean so] (. ) not that it hAs to
sound german but you wouldn’t know from the name
[basically] (. ) that’s interesting
SB: [no]
Me: so um: (-) what do you enjoy specifically about (-)
the clAss like the (--i mean obviously you’re you
have a reason to learn german you’re you are german
SB: yeah
Me: you’re sort of motivated that way too (. ) but i
mean when you’re in the class like what things do
you specifically enjoy about german class
SB: um: (-) i like um i like the grammar <<laughing>
because> i find it easier so it’s like easier for
me to do
Me: ok that’s interesting ((laughs))
SB: um: well like (. ) i i find that like once you’ve
learned one course it’s kind of (. ) h they all
kind of or like one language kind of (-) like
interacts with the other like (-) with (. ) um verb
conjugation because i did french all the way
through high school and then even first year
Me: mm-hm
 SB: like it’s (. ) i can look at it and be like ok well
you drop this ending and you add this and this is
how it conjugates whereas like other people in my
class will be like (-) oh my gosh i don’t get it i
don’t understand what’s going ON i don’t know
what’s going ON and like i find that easier,
Me: ok
SB: it’s just
Me: so (. ) learning already having then one foreign
language you find that you can draw on those experiences?

SB: [YEAH exActly]

Me: alright that’s good (.) um: so you enjoy the learning the grammar because it seems easy

SB: yeah

Me: what else do you can you think of anything specifically that [stands out]

SB: [i would like to be more fluent] speaking but it’s so it’s hard for me even with french and like everything it’s hard for me to (.).

Me: right (.)[the age] old problem

SB: [and so] yeah so that’s what i find difficult so i’m not a huge fan of that just because

Me: so you’re nervous about speaking

SB: YEAH (.). i am

Me: yeah (.). well that’s normal i think i mean most people .hh um:: (--.) do you find that you i can’t remember exactly what you wrote on your questionnaire (.). do you find that you um: (--.) would ra’ that you would learn grammar at the same time as speaking or one one first one second like learn all the grammar and then learn how to speak once you’ve got that knowledge or at the same time so you build together like what would you

SB: um:

Me: do you remember (.). what you put (.). i don’t know

SB: i think i probably put putting it together

Me: putting it together,

SB: yeah because like i have that (-) because ok even like i’m drawing from french just because [i’m better at that]

Me: [no no no that’s perfect]

SB: um: (.). but like with french like i’ve got a lot of grammar background,

Me: yeah

SB: but now it’s speaking it and i like even in high school it wasn’t (-) like we were we were pushed to speak it but we weren’t pushed THAT much to speak it [because the teachers were still]

Me: [were you] regular french not extended or do you

SB: um: i was i was in regular no i never did immersion i was just in public school
Me: ok
SB: and um: (. ) like the teachers like (. ) they they tried to make you speak it but they were a lot more like (-) willing to explain it in english
Me: ok so it was a an instance where (. ) there wasn’t a lot of motivation from the teachers then,
SB: well not just that but i think even (-) like (-) it was like a one hour class a day right
Me: right
SB: so you’re not really put in the environment where you’re forced to speak it like
Me: mm-hm
SB: as if i like i’d if i went like somewhere and i was in the community and i had to speak it for like a month and i ha’ didn’t have the option of being like ok i don’t understand it can you help me
Me: right
SB: so i think that would help (-) more but i think you have to learn the grammar to be able to
Me: of course
SB: speak it (. ) [so it has] to be kind of a [together] thing
Me: [yeah:] [yeah] um: (. ) so (-) if you um: (. ) in’ would you say that you’re experiences with french is um: (-) when you talk about how how good you are at french or your proficiency in french is it better than on the reading and writing and understanding (. ) than the speaking?
SB: um: (. ) yes like it’s easier like i can read something and then see the words and like figure it out from there even [from]
Me: [yeah]
SB: like pi’ picking different words but then like speaking wise listening to it (. ) s’ like it goes really quickly
Me: mm-hm
SB: and it’s hard to like to pick out the words
Me: ok
SB: for me so it’s easier for me to read it
Me: right (. ) why do you think that is why do you think uh: (. ) uh: (. ) you know the speaking seems to be the last sort of (--) GOAL you know like why is that the hardest thing
SB: i think it’s just cause you have to start you have to start (-) s’ speaking not thinking it 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 (. )
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
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
situation where i’m nOt (-) really sure of it
191 Me: yeah
192 SB: and then that (. ) that like makes you like feel
like oh my gosh what am i saying blah blah blah (. )
so like like speaking english or whatever i could
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
in band and like when i had to play a solo i was
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
of everybody
204 SB: yeah and because (. ) like when you don’t feel that
comfortable with what you’re talking about,
206 Me: mm-hm
207 SB: and then add on that it’s in a different langauge
((laughs)) it doesn’t help
209 Me: sure yeah ok (. ) is there anything you (. ) DON’T
enjoy about languages’ lessons uh in the past or
now or something in class (. ) that DEMotivates you
from learning?
213 SB: um: i don’t know if it would be DEMotivates me from
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
Me: no ok (. ) th’ no that’s interesting to know cause
SB: because um: like (. ) i like today i skipped it
Me: [((laughs)) that’s ok]
SB: [but um:] (. ) we what they were doing was (. ) just
going on the internet and looking up like (. ) like
the one day in class we went on the internet and
looked up ike
Me: yeah
SB: and like i’ve got a course load that’s heavy and
i’m like why am i spending an hour sitting here
looking at [an ike website] like it’s pointless to
me
Me: [((laughs)) that’s ok] seems like a wa’ waste of
time
SB: a waste of time exactly so
Me: [but]
SB: [and i] don’t really see how it’s helping me
looking at ike websites or [like that kinda thing]
Me: [right so you don’t]
yeah is that a general idea for most (. ) web
activities? or is it just that o’ specific one that
bothered you like is it um: (--) like just trying
to see ah’ uh in the lab component there’s you know
(. ) uh: th’ the workbook and the whatever (--) the
lab manuals right and then there’s what else is
there there’s lab tests and quizzes and all those
things right
SB: mm-hm
Me: um: i’ wh’ what about like (. ) like what do you see
that’s good in the lab is there something that you
can: um: (--) [is there,]
SB: [yeah there] definitely is like i mean
um: (. ) the ONE day we ended up looking at pictures
and we went through (. ) and like there was
vocabulary given to us from like an instance where
(.) where it wouldn’t have been in the book and
it’s kinda like a wedding vocabulary you know what
i mean so learning things like that is great and
even going through like the listening like when we
do the listening quizzes or we do the the listening
and trying to figure it out
SB: mm-hm
Me: mm-hm
SB: that helps me (. ) but (. ) um: (--) there are other
there are other activities where it’s like this is
pointless
Me: is it do you think it’s more context based like is
it more like oh: i don’t really care about going
shopping for furniture in german or english or or whatever (.). or do you think it’ like (.). do you think if it meets (.). what your interested in it’s more like (.). uh: if you did a web activity on traveling let’s say (.). would that be more interesting than (.). a web activity on ikea shopping,

SB: i think

Me: or is it a context thing or is it (.). just the idea of being at a computer and and or what what is your

SB: well like (-) like i mean (.). t’ today (.). like any student can go on the internet and find anything they want right

Me: mm-hm

SB: so like learning to go to different websites that are german websites i understand like the point of the activity was to show you that there are websites you know german websites y’ where you can get this stuff yada yada

Me: mm-hm

SB: but it felt more as if it was like a teaching (-) you how to use the internet and like how to go to different [websites] and (-) [go through them?]

Me: [ok] [the wrong focus]

SB: where it was like this this is pointless to me like and i know there are other instances where we’ll go to um: (.). a website (.). that’s like a german CITY and you can look at it and look at the different things it offers and that to me (-) goes back more to the culture which is (.). like i enjoy looking at that (.). but just (.). things like that i just (.).

don’t find useful

Me: right right ok that’s interesting um:

(9.85)

do you find that the uh: (-) the textbook (.). um:
vorsprung is it uh: (.). the the lab section that you go through the actual materials they provide do you find them helpful?

SB: yep definitely like i could definitely read the textbook and and (.). and know what what’s happening

Me: ok (.). and in the lab? (.). the: workbook part?

SB: um we haven’t really used the workbook that much in lab it’s more like just things that are assigned during class and i find it really helpful too because i think repetition is what really (.). makes you understand [it (.). and writing it out]

Me: [right right] ok yep (.). um: (.)
back to the textbook in general you said it’s you find it helpful
SB: yep
Me: what do you like about the textbook (..) like what (..) specifically stands out
SB: i like that it’s i like the way it’s set up i like that it goes through (..) um: (..) the different things we learned like i mean vocabulary it’ll give you that and it’ll give you (..) activities to learn the vocabulary and it gives you a lot of um: (..) questions that aren’t (..) aren’t that difficult (..) but make you write out like the german words which help you (..) LEARN them
Me: mm-hm
SB: and i really like the fact that (..) um: with grammar it like it isn’t the easiest to learn and with that textbook (..) it (..) it’s really well at explaining it
Me: [ok so you like the explanations in the book] SB: [like it does a really good job] yep
Me: =yep
um do you um: (-) find that the explanations from the teacher (-) um: (..) as opposed to those from the book (..) which one would you prefer
SB: i think the teacher really (..) does um: base her lessons on the book
Me: mm-hm
SB: and she does say to read the book before she go’ before you come to class so that [you] understand it
Me: [yeah]
SB: and then she’s she more provides um: a quick like lesson through it
Me: ok
SB: and most of the most of what we’ve been taught has been taken pretty much directly from the textbook
Me: ok and do you like that,
SB: yep
Me: ok (..) and does she ever (..) go beyond it to explain a concept that that does it clear up when she does that or do you strictly rely on the book usually
SB: well if (..) like i mean (..) um: (..) other people in my class have more difficulties and if they do sh’ they will ask and she will explain it like she’ll go
Me: [go over it]
SB: [she’s] yeah she’s gone over it SO many like some
things some people weren’t understanding she’s gone
over nUmerous times to help you and she’ll give you
extra work to help you do it and like mark it and
that kinda thing
Me: mm-hm
SB: so: (.). um: (.). for me (.). i do find it helpful (.).
i can pretty much understand it from the textbook
(.) but (.). in class (.). it does help clear up
anything that’s
Me: mm-hm
SB: not (.). perfect (.).
Me: so (.). how much does the teacher’s (-) explanations
of that affect you then (.). do you think do you
think um: (.). if the teacher didn’t explain anything
(.). that it would be enough from the book or do you
find that it’s a (.). necessary complement to the
book
SB: um: in some instances it’s a necessary complement
and in other ones (.). uh i think as it gets (.). as
we go like as you learn more it’s getting more
challenging and then it is getting (.). more helpful
with the teacher explaining it
Me: right so if the teacher (.). say the teacher didn’t
go beyond the book explanations like she just
reviewed what you had already known (.). would or or
what you’d read even if you (.). uh: understood it
or maybe more or less depending on what topic it
was (.). do you think that you would still be able
to learn the concepts without the extra added
teacher explanations or even the reworded teacher
explanations or do you think that um: (.). it’s
sort of something that you could learn on your (.). in
your own way anyway (.). do you know what i mean
is the teacher explanation that different from the
book or does it
SB: no and i don’t think it’s as much the teacher’s
explanation as it is (.). um: (.). like going through
problems (.). afterwards or like questions
afterwards (.). where (.). l’ like when we did
nominative nomintative or accusative case when she
goes through it and she says ok this is the answer
to this or this is what you fill in here (.). THAT
helps me understand it more than her reread’
Me: [ok]
SB: [textbook] is really clear
Me: right
SB: and it (. ) it pretty much (. ) lays out (. ) how to
do it but it’s more like the problems afterwards
because it’s different like reading it and saying
ok i understand it and then applying it
Me: right yeah ok so (. ) you find it (. ) that the
teacher helps you the most at the sort of end the
process when you’re working on [the]
SB: on the application making sure that [i’m doing it
correctly (-) yep]
Me: [so she
reinforces the explanation] and then you see the
connection (-) ok that makes sense um: (. ) uh:: do
you enjoy (. ) the class meetings um:: (-) more
than say on your own like at home? (. ) or um like
what do you prefer do you prefer sort of your own
independent sort of looking at the textbook and
going through this (. ) like how you say she asks
you to read it beforehand (. ) or do you prefer this
sort of class environment where you sit there and
and the teacher sa’ explains stuff like what do you
SB: um: i prefer the more independent because i feel
like (. ) um: (. ) well in any class when: there’s:
people that understand it and then people that
don’t and then you have to read like go over and
over it (. ) and the people that do understand it
get bored and the people that don’t (. ) you know
it’s helping them [which] is good
Me: [mm-hm]
SB: so (. ) for me (. ) um: (. ) generally i do kind of
have a little bit of a background (. ) with learning
languages and with german so for me (. ) i tend to
get (. ) kinda bored
Me: ok
SB: and it’s kinda repetitious
Me: right so is this the whole i’ factor where the
teacher sometimes isn’t or seems a little boring
cause she’s going a little too slow for you? is
that [where that comes in (-) yeah]
SB: [yeah that that kinda thing]
Me: ok um: (-) so d’ you enjoy studying at home
alone because you (. ) you can then uh: govern your
own like how much time you spend on it?
SB: yeah
Me: is that more what it is or is it just because do
you find that you enjoy (-) learning sort of from a
book more or in a classroom like what does that affect that (.) uh: decision as well or are you more of a sort of a class visual learner or like a book reading learner

SB: um: i am a little bit m' (.) uh: it depends (-) i think i like it learning it at home more because i can go (.) at my own pace,

Me: mm-hm

SB: whereas i don’t feel like (.) i’m (.) waiting around

Me: right (.). right (.). ok so: um:

SB: but i do like the classes just because (.) i think th’ they are n’ they are somewhat necessary because of the exposure to the actual (.) like li’ hearing (.). german spoken

Me: right ok (.). so: um: (.). so in in essence then you take certain advantages or you like certain things in each one [and] it complements each other type thing

SB: [yep] exactly

Me: um: (-) but the lab ((laughs)) you don’t like because (.) it’s (.). sort of in e’ it’s it’s not learning to you it’s more a um (.). doing other things that seem waste of time sometimes

SB: yeah like it’s not that i dislike the lab it’s just that um:: (-) there are times where i’m like oh ok i have other things i really need to do that are more important [than] this ((laughs))

Me: [right] yeah (-) ok (.). so:: (-) so you’ve s’you’ve taken french classes have you taken any other (.). classes,

SB: like um:

Me: any language classes i mean like in a classroom?

SB: no

Me: no ok so what do you h’ are your french experiences in class like been pretty good or: um: (-) i mean what have they been like

SB: um: (-) i really enjoyed speaking french and that’s why i took it all through high school and it got (.). um: i did take first year and in first year i was in 192 which is um: (.). a more of an advanced course i guess,

Me: right

SB: and (.). um: (--) it got to the point where i needed to devote more time to it than i (.) could? (.)

Me: right (.). ok
SB: but i would like to: (.) like i would like to learn
it uh i i at this point i would like to be fl’ (.)
able to: speak fluently in it more than i’m
concerned about the grammar as much anymore cause i
figure i’ve (.) i like i feel like i’ve learned
most of the basics (.) and now (.) i would rather
(. ) work on the speaking aspect
Me: mm-hm
SB: so like i’ve been looking into things like going to
quebec or doing that kind of thing where like
you’re immersed into it and i’m forced to speak it
Me: yeah that’s kinda the next step i guess eh UM: (--) is there a certain thing that uh: (.) oh no ).= i
missed one question do you speak any languages
outside of the classroom other than (.) like have
you ever (.) ok let’s say not necessarily that (.)
well your your heritage is german obviously so um:
(. ) that includes already includes german but (.)
.hh i mean have you ever learned another language
not necessarily learned but (. ) but even started
learning like a language (. ) from just like your
own do it yourself book or or or uh: (.) i don’t
know looking on the internet or or ( .) friends that
you have taught you nothing else, ok
SB: mm: ( .) [well]
Me: [it’s just] ( . ) it’s interesting to know
sometimes what people
SB: my roommate is portuguese and she speaks portuguese
Me: right
SB: so like i’ve heard her speaking and then she’ll
teach me like rAndom words [but it’s nothing like]
Me: [right] that you feel
that you have any (. ) sort of
SB: yeah NO: like i couldn’t sit in the room and like
have a conversation any (. ) no (. ) or even
understand it (. ) nowhere near that
Me: cool (. ) um:: (-) what kind of activities do you
like in a in a language class?
SB: .hh um
Me: like what do you expect when you go to class that
that will that should make you interested (. ) you
know activities that you do in class or
SB: um
(3)
Me: do you: (-) um: (-) do you like going to a class
and then the the teacher teaches and (. ) and you
know you just sort of pay attention? (-) or do you prefer that plus a mix of like (.). go and do it yourself type of work where the teacher will assign something and you work on it together and then take it up, (.). like

SB: yeah i do like that i like the whole um: (.).
working on an activity and then taking it up because .hh (.).i feel like you can you can think you understand something and then be completely off base and then (.). unless somebody’s there to be like ok no that’s not correct and this is the way you do (.). it you wouldn’t know?

Me: mm-hm
SB: and so i get i like i find that helps me a lot with learning grammar and that kind of thing [vocabulary]

Me: [and] and then does that do you like group work then?
SB: um: (.). it depends on what kind of group work it is like (-) um: we do have group work where we’ve worked on like (-) um: (---) writing down like recently like last week i think it was we wrote down things you can do in different cities and you worked in a group in doing that and i liked that like it’s not bad but

Me: mm-hm
SB: i don’t know if i’d say i like look forward to going to class to do that

Me: =no yeah (.). um: but i mean more um: (-) like you have the speaking test coming up so is it is it something like um: (--) that you would not want to do if you have to work with a partner or do you do you (.). do you like the idea that you could work together and each give something (.). or do you feel like sort of pulled down by having a partner;

SB: oh no not i don’t feel pulled down at all by having a partner um: (-) i don’t mind it like i’m pretty easy going with the whole class stuff like i like doing work on my own but i don’t mind

Me: right
SB: working in a group either

Me: ok so (.). um: (.). you’re not (.). you don’t feel that if you’re in a group (-) you don’t feel burdened by sort of uh: (.). either being like you know the worst or the best and you feel like you have to do more or or do you get stressed out about frustrated by group work do you know how people
some people just hate group work
SB: yeah because they they just wanna take over and do it themselves and [it’s easier]
Me: [yeah or they] (--) they some people like group work because they think that it means they’ll get a good mark cause someone else will do it you KNOW
SB: yeah
Me: there’s all these sort of aspects of a group that is really [interesting]
SB: [um (-) no] i don’t really feel that way
Me: cause you’re saying like you feel like you (.). you (.). you do well in the class like
SB: yeah
Me: =um: (-) and (-) uh: (-) feel you know sometimes like it’s going too slow and so th’ obviously you must feel confident (.). in your (.). in so far how you’re doing in class
SB: um: (-) not so much (-) because (.). work i mean
Me: and so do you (.). you don’t find that group work with anybody who could be you know joe schmoe who never comes to class or (.). you don’t feel that that’s (.). necessarily a negative thing for you,
SB: um: (-) not so much negative just (-) because (.).
even in group (-) well it depends on what group work i mean
Me: sure
SB: with our speaking test (.). um: (--) if we’ (.). you are gonna again get the same mark but (--) each individual person is gonna perform differently,
Me: yeah
SB: and you kinda get marked on that (.). so i’m not so much worried about that if it was (--) if it if it wAs the (.). the kind of um: group work where (.).
you’re handing in say like a project or something and i was with somebody who didn’t really wanna do anything (-) i would be the type of person that ended up taking over and just doing it myself ((laughs))
Me: obviously yeah ok (-) UM and uh:: (--) the s’ (.). the speaking test environment then for you it’s like (.). not bad it’s (.). your gon’ you’ll like you feel confident about it and you’re not worried about a group work situation in that sense
SB: no not so much
Me: ok (.). cool (.). yeah cause i mean there’s always people that stIll will feel (-) i wish i could do
it by myself or (.).
SB: yeah
Me: do you know what i mean
SB: yeah
Me: there’s always different types of people (.). with
different ideas (-) um::: (--) is there activities
in the class that you don’t like then like i’ i
mean you say you said ok some group work could be
bad (-) but is there something that the that
happened in in the past right now in any language
course you’ve taken where you’re like (.). other
than the lab (-) specifically in a lecture i would
think type of environment where you kinda like ugh
this is silly or why are we doing this
SB: um (-) i haven’t (-) yet ((laughs))
Me: ok so you so far pretty much it’s it works you just
like if i understand you right you just sometimes
get a little bored when people have to explain
things a million times
SB: yeah or like when we uh it can be really
repetitious and it’s good in a way because it goes
over it and you end up learning it and y’ you know
you’ll understand it because of it but then af’
like it it gets repetitious sometimes where you’re
like O:K: let’s move on
Me: ok (-) that’s cool (-) ok now when you uh:: go to (.).
I know study for a test or something like
that (.). how do you do how what do you do to
memorize grammar concepts (-) like what do you have
a specific uh::: strategy that you (-) use to um:
(.). <<laughing> remember things?> like what do you
do
SB: um::
Me: how do you study
SB: ((laughs)) that’s a good question [how do i study]
Me: [it’s a hard one
to answer sometimes]
SB: um::: (-) like i know for me (.). the:: (--) like i’
uh when it comes to vocabulary (.). i’ll say it to
myself and like say ok this is this this this is this
and like just kind of repeat it or even write it
out to get the spelling
Me: ok
SB: like (-) write it out three times and that’s the
amount that’s supposed to be able to (.). make you
remember it the best ((smiles))
Me: ((laughs))
and then: (.) um: (-) for things like remembering like accusative case or nominative case or that kinda thing i’ll just go over the chart

Me: ok

SB: and most of it you can find patterns and i always look for patterns in between it and say like with (.). um: (.). regular (--). present tense verbs like i’ll just remember the endings (--). [and] you know [right] do you find that it’s the kinda thing that you (-) um: (.). sort of (-) it’s a long process because: like (.). when you go to study for a language test (-) you’ve done it a lot in class already so do you find that you already have some stuff memorized and [that] it’s not (.). ok

SB: yeah] and so like (.). even when we do work out of the textbook and you could just fill in the blank (.). i prefer to write it out

Me: mm-hm

SB: so that like i’m writing it out (.). and like (.). instead of just being like ok fill in the blank really quickly or like (.). matching the words together i’d rather write it out

Me: right so that you can

SB: so [i can remember it and]

Me: [for you writing it out makes] (.). equals memorization

SB: yeah it works better for me

Me: ok do are you a cue card person for vocab or are you more of a (.). just write it all out

SB: i’ll just write it all out

Me: ok (.). um: do you find that with vocabulary do you (--). like GENder (.). you know you have to memorize the gender (.). like how (.). is there a certain like strategy you use to memorize gender of words that have no way of making sense

SB: um:

Me: or do you (.). like ok i guess the question is do you (.). memorize (.). nouns with the gender right away? or do you have problems with that and so then you try and make some sort of connection between them

SB: yeah i did that um: we did gender for (.). like i’m using all specific instances this is ok right

Me: yeah that’s fine ((laughs))

SB: ok um: we did gender for (.). like a classroom
setting where like you’re talking about like a desk or a chair or that kinda thing
Me: mm-hm
SB: and i ended up (.) um:: (-) looking for patterns and i learned (.) like i saw that most of the words or the words that end in e (.) are usually feminine and like those kinda things and then there’s like a couple that do’n’t end in e that are also feminine and then i remember i’d like remember the masculine ones and any other ones are neuter so like (.) i just try and (..) do that kinda thing like look for patterns and then memorize it
Me: ok so you look for patterns and then if there are pa’ aren’t patterns do you i’ if i understand you group them by [masculine]
SB: [yeah] yeah that’s how i did it this time yep ((laughs))
Me: ok yeah (.) that’s (.) i think that’s pretty common actually (-) so: um: do you find it harder to learn grammar concepts or vocabulary
SB: [um:]
Me: [like what] sticks in your mind easier
SB: neither one is too: (-) difficult like i (.). i find like with grammar as (.) when you understand the concept (.) it’s not that hard to (.). use it (.).
Me: yeah
SB: which is more and then i mean there’s not much to understand in grammar like you memorize the different cases and
Me: mm-hm
SB: if you understand it you should be okay to go
Me: mm-hm
SB: and then with vocabulary it’s (.) once you’ve written out the words it’s ok i think i do have a problem more with um: (-) like (.) whether it’s masculine feminine that kinda thing and that is more difficult (.) and so i’d like t’ like that is what i’d have to memorize more
Me: right (.) ok so the: vocab memorization is som’ (.) like (.) getting the gender connected [is sometimes] a little difficult issue
SB: [yeah] a little bit more difficult
Me: do you think that (.) did do you have the same problem with french?
SB: um: (-) remembering back (.) pro::’ (.) yeah yeah i
do even now like i’ll forget which is which
Me: mm-hm
SB: but i think with french it’s not so much memorizing it as (-) when you’ve he’ (.).
like cause i did take it for four years when you hear the word you kind of (.).
automatically (-) just (.). like you hear the word with it’s (.). with it’s [um: (-) gender]
Me: [and you you kind of (.). you start to once you’ve taken a language awhile you start to know these endings that are always feminine or]
SB: yeah
Me: and it’s the same in german too like (-) once you learn any language past a certain point [you can feel words (.). much better]
SB: yeah it’s all kinda (.). comes together]
Me: yeah exactly (.). um::: (-) so (-) when you’re studying for a test (-) um: (.). or a well i guess the midterm is the biggest test you guys have had eh
SB: mm-hm
Me: um: (-) do you study from (-) like do you use the book primarily? (.). do you search for other sources or does the book (-) do it for you does that is that enough for you to get it
SB: i use my notes
Me: ok
SB: like i’ve taken i’ll take notes from the (.). [the textbook]
Me: [so you take notes in class,]
SB: and in class yeah like when it’s written down on the board like i’ll take notes (.). and then i study from my notes and what i do is go through and then write out like the c’ the like different concepts or like the different basics (.). and then study from that
Me: ok that’s good to know (-) um::: (-) i think you’ve (4) oh (.). going back to the group work and independent work (-) um: (-) do you work (-) just in GENeral do you think you work better in group work or in or independently
SB: i think i work better independently
Me: and why (.). do you think that
SB: um::: (-) because i don’t think anybody else can
really help you understand or learn something (.)
you kinda have to learn it on your own (. to
really understand it cause nobody else can make you
l’ understand it
Me: mm-hm (-) now if you ok well if you apply that to
the group work like do you think that (. when
cause you said you don’t mind working in a group
SB: mm-hm
Me: if everybody’s if they’re doing their work (. um::
(.) do you do you think you ar’ (. you really
don’t think you can learn something from the peers?
like do you (. do you think that they (-) can
actually: uh:: (-(-) um: ( ) (--( like when
you say you can’t learn something from them what do
you like do you mean like a co’ a concept, like
what do you mean
SB: i think (. um: (-) you can’t really learn the
concept (. afterwards working in a group or
discussing it can help you understand it better
SB: mm-hm
Me: mm-hm
SB: because like i know in my in say like my science
courses (. once i’ve un’ once i’ve learned it (-)
discussing it with somebody and going over it (.)
and talking about it (. does help me more
Me: so then it’s in there,
SB: yeah
Me: ok (. SO: because i’ve had people say like i don’t
like learning in groups because you know or i don’t
like working in groups because (. uh:: (. i:
think i know already more than most people than in
my group usually (. and i feel (. like it’s
pulling me down in a way right which you said that
doesn’t affect you too much
SB: no
Me: um: but then there’s also s’ like sort of (---) you
know like that it sounds kind like if you say if
you say i don’t think it you learn something it
almost sounds like it it could be like that because
you know if you say you don’t learn something (.)
in a group (. then that might mean that maybe you
ARE the more advanced person in the group and that
(. but you still don’t MIND working in the group
[is that do you think that applies to you?]
SB: [yeah no (. UM::] it’s not so much that i dOn’t
feel i learn something it’s just i don’t feel that
it helps me that m’ much to learn it
Me: ok so you could learn better on your own anyway (.)
Me: generally, ((laughs))
SB: generally (.). i [think so]

Me: [it’s kinda (.). yeah] it’s hard to
think back and cause you’re not a’ aware of maybe
of of wh’ what you’re learning anyway maybe (.)
when you’re in a group cause

SB: well like i know like (.). like if we worked in a
group for (---) like ok (--) um: (.). if we were
learning say like a case and what t: (.). like what
to apply to which

Me: mm-hm

SB: you (.). i like i would have to understand that
concept before i could go in a group and like
discuss it

Me: ok (.). yeah

SB: but then after like if i understood the concept
then i could discuss it and it would like things
that maybe i didn’t understand or didn’t get
completely would be cleared up but i think i need
that i need that [basic]

Me: [the base]

SB: to do that

Me: i guess the uh the thing i: (-) uh: (-) that
probably needs to be defined more is what we’re
def’ defining as learning

SB: [yeah]

Me: [because] um like (.). in a group work uh: (.). i
guess (.). you’re probably i what i get from you is
you mean when you say learning right now you’re
meaning like

SB: what i’m doing in class

Me: right like specifically teacher student like or
even you and book like learning it’s going in
concept wise (.). but i mean uh:: (-) if we go
broader on that term like you know learning as in
like (.). uh:: (-) you know the vocabulary gets ce’
cemented into your head if you’re talking in a
group um: in german (.). or: you’re actually even
just practicing speaking at all right making
yourfe’ self feel comfortable (.). does that that
has (.). in that sense it counts toward learning
right cause it’s like

SB: yeah well in that [sense if i was]

Me: [in that sense yeah]

SB: like having a conversation with someone (.).
Me: definitely it would help me learn better in a group because i would be (.) like i’m sure there’s there’s words they would under’ they would know that i wouldn’t and learning that way would de’ would like (.) completely help me Me: now if you’re in a class (.). does your does your teacher ever split you guys up into groups and say (.). you know (.). create (-) a dialogue or or or or do this exercise together or whatever SB: yeah Me: =that happens? now do you find it um: (.). that that helps because (.). you can be like teacher? like or do you think um: (.). it’s just the same as if you were gonna go home and do it on your own .h (-) as (.) sitting with a friend or your next door neighbour here and an’ doing it in class like what do you think SB: uh: i don’t think i think the only real difference for me in that instance would be (.). um taking it up afterwards Me: right so having the immediate feedback SB: yep Me: yeah (.). ok (--) um::: (-) so uh um you’re doing are you doing well in german so far like you feel confident about your marks and everything so far? (-) and what motivated you (.). to take german was it just the family background or was there something else too that SB: um i do like taking languages [and::] Me: [yeah] y’ you said you did well in languages in your questionnaire i think SB: yeah Me: yep SB: um: (.). i’ like i like being able to speak other languages i think that’s a really cool concept and i think that it it’ll benefit me in the long run for sure Me: mm-hm SB: um: (--) it is my background and that’s why i did take german because Me: right SB: like i am proud of my heritage Me: yep SB: and i do (.). like i even i have relatives over in germany like [that are elderly] Me: [where are they from?]
SB: i don’t even know (-) no ((laughs)) but they are
like they are ol’ they’re a lot older and so i
would like to go there one day and i’d like to be
able to speak with them
Me: yeah
SB: if i get the chance
Me: yeah ((laughs))
SB: and so that’s what did motivate me to get that and
also um:: (--) because i was planning on it pulling
up my (. ) grade average ((laughs))
Me: yeah so well because you already said you think you
( . ) generally you’ve had good results in language
classes (. ) .h and um so (-) it’s a good thing to
take right’
SB: [it’s it’s like i said i’m hoping to pull up my
marks so]
Me: [well i mean anything that comes easy to you]
SB: exactly
Me: usually you do well in right so (. ) well you would
hope ((laughs)) ok well i think that’s it (. ) do
you have anything else that i that you’re thinking
of that i didn’t ask or
SB: uh i don’t think so ((laughs))
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

Me: oh well we’ll just use it like this and if it
starts to scream at us we’ll (. ) turn it down (. )
OK (--) um (--) so: basically today i just (. )
wanted to ask you a few more questions based on the
last one, ( . ) just to go like (-) a little more
detailed i guess,
SB: [ok]
Me: [and] so th’ the first sort of round of questions
and then the second round are (. ) just (. ) gonna be
you’ll see they’ll be a little bit different but
they’re (. ) more GENeral than (. ) cause i wanna go
in depth first i guess more than the last (. ) the
last stuff that we were talking about (-)
((laughs)) (-) um:: (---) weird microphone (---) ok
(-) so i’ll just go right into it ((laughs))

SB: ok
Me: um:: (. ) so the last time you had mentioned that
you um: don’t really like the lab (. ) that was like
one point you made that it was like not your
favourite part [of the class]
SB: [yeah]
Me: um: (. ) so: (. ) i just wanted to know (. ) when
you’re doing a listening comprehension activity (. )
like (. ) if you’re doing um: (. ) um: (. ) like a lab
test and there’s you know a a listening
comprehension part involved or whatever any type of
c’ activity (. ) how do you like what are the
processes that you go through to succeed
successfully finish the question at hand like what
what goes through your mind or what do you do
physically like
SB: like when i hear [( . ) that,]
Me: [yeah like just] go through step
by step what you go ( . ) do
SB: ok like on our lab (-) test or our last like our
final like the one worth fifteen percent
Me: yep
SB: we had to listen to a paragraph (. ) and it was like
an interview between two people and she described
her family members
Me: mm-hm
SB: and so what i did was (. ) um: (. ) just listen for
like general key (. ) key words that i knew and then
(. ) like that helps me piece the sentence together
if there aren’t words that i specifically know,
(-- ) so i use that so like when i’m listening to
her i’ll just try and (. ) like (-) see i’m at the
point still where like (. ) i translate it in my
head you know like i listen to these words and i
like try and make the sentence in english in my
head and so that’s ( . ) how i do that
Me: do you (. ) ok and when you read a text (. ) do you
translate as you go (. ) [as well]
SB: [yep]
Me: ok so it’s not just reading you do that also when
you’re listening you think about it in (. ) in
english as she (. ) says stuff out loud
SB: yep
Me: do you find that goes to fast, (. ) for you to
translate, (. ) like that,
SB: um:: (.) sometimes but because we get it read over
more than once (-) like the things that i miss the
first time i pick up the second time
Me: mm-hm
SB: and just like keep side notes on it
Me: ok so you take notes as you go
SB: mm-hm
Me: ok so then yeah so ((coughs)) as a process you
listen to it the first time?
SB: mm-hm
Me: try and get what you can (.). but do you write notes
first and then fill it in?
SB: um it depends (.). it depends how long it is like if
it’s a l’ like the one we did on our lab test was
long like it talked about i think like ten
different people so i i like i and we had to write
it down so it it wasn’t as much keeping notes it
was more like i was writing ans’ answering the
question as it went along
Me: mm-hm
SB: but if it’s just a shorter thing (-) like once i
once i translate it and i understand the sentences’
(-) then i can look at that sentence and know what
it means or like look at the words and know what
they mean
Me: ok (-) ok (---) um:: and then when you if you’re
reading a ger’ text in german and then you know you
have to answer questions at the bottom or whatever
((coughs)) do you take notes when you do that?
SB: while i’m reading?
Me: yeah
SB: no
Me: so you don’t you wouldn’t write like above a word
(-) [kitchen or]
SB: [OH if if] i don’t know the word and like i
have to look it up then i would do that
Me: k but what if it was an exam and there’s no
dictionaries and what not
SB: um (.). and i was reading it and i was answering the
question? (.). h i would answer the questions as i
read it
Me: ok so you’d look for (.). parallels as you go
SB: so like i would pre read the questions and know
what the questions are and then i would read
through the sentence and do it that way
Me: ok so you first would look at the questions and
then [instead of]
SB: [and then start reading it]
Me: understanding the text and then
SB: yep
Me: ok (. ) um:: (--) ok in grammar you also said you
learn it really quickly (. ) and understand it (. )
SB: um what do what do you think are (. ) like can you
describe the processes that go on in your mind when
you’re learning a grammatical concept can you (. )
like what’s how do you how would you best describe
this process this (. ) understanding and learning
SB: (. ) specific concepts in class
SB: i try and make patterns out of it
Me: mm-hm
SB: so like i’ll i’ll look for different patterns and
so: (. ) um if we’re learning say like a verb
translation (. ) then (. ) i’ll look for specific
endings and then i’ll memorize (. ) like ich goes
with e and this and this and this and this one and
then i’ll memorize that pattern (. ) so that i can
just apply it later (. ) and same with um (. ) like
learning the
SB: (4)
Me: mm-hm
SB: the articles for the words (. ) i’ll look for
patterns so like most of the (. ) words that end in
e (. ) is are feminine (. ) so i’ll look for that
pattern and then like (. ) i’ll just try and
memorize the ones that don’t fit it
SB: mm-hm (--) ok so the sort of (--) um (--) bunch of
weird cases where they’re not matching [in a
pattern]
SB: [yeah]
Me: um:
SB: (8)
Me: ok um: (---) you also said that you write stuff out
(--) like when you’re learning vocab or you write
it out in [class] as well
SB: [yeah]
Me: um what does the what for y’ what does that do for
you like what (--) how does that fit into the
process of your learning
SB: it helps it helps me memorize it because (--) like
it’s (. ) better (. ) for me i (. ) i wr’ like in all
of my course i write everything out
SB: mm-hm
SB: like i’ll go through my (. ) my course notes and
i’ll rewrite everything (. ) and that helps me learn
it better than (. ) reading because i find a lot of
times when I read it I just read it
Me: mm-hm
SB: but I’m not actually learning it
Me: mm-hm
SB: whereas when I write it out (...) it’ll help me like
   (...) learn it better and then I’ll I’ll read it
   later
Me: mm-hm
SB: but it’ll be my own words
Me: so in essence you’re reading and writing it out
SB: yep
Me: and do you speak it out loud as well (...) when you
   write when you’re writing it out
SB: um::
Me: or is it more of a just a writing (...)
SB: I do s’ like I’ll s’ I’ll say it as I’m writing it
Me: mm-hm
SB: but (...) I won’t like sit there and (...) sometimes I
   do it it all depends (...) I don’t know
Me: just on the (...) topic or whatever
SB: yeah
Me: ok (...) um: (...) you just answered my other question
   which was how do you learn vocabulary (...)
   ((laughs)) like what processes ar’ need to happen
   (...) for vocabulary to be learned so
SB: I’ll write it out
Me: =writing [it out (...) that’s a big thing (...) ok]
SB: [and read it over (...) yeah]
Me: ok um:: (...) so that was basically it I just wanted
   to have more (...) details on how things happen uh
   from that we talked about last time (...) ok um: (...)  
   what characteristics (...) do you think someone has
   to bring with them in order to successfully learn
   German like WHAT characteristics do you think the
   students should have in order to learn a foreign
   language (...) like just key words that pop in your
   head
SB: um persistence (...) um (...) wow I don’t (...) I’m not
   sure ((laughs))
Me: that’s ok you can think about it like i i just (...)  
   you know there like (...) peop’ everyone thinks
   different things like what’s important to ha’ to
   (...) sort of a quality that you need to have
SB: I think everyone (...) could learn a different
   language if they just (...) it’s not so much even
   apply themselves (...) they just have to: (...) y’ you
   have to work at it like no matter what you do
because
Me: so persistence is [like a] big huge factor for that
SB: [yeah] exactly because you’re not just gonna pick it up overnight you actually have to (.).
Me: mm-hm
SB: and like it’s not it’s not just like one thing where you have to learn it it’s (.) you have to learn how to like pronounce and you have to know how to do that and i’ you just have to practice Me: mm-hm (---) are there like any other characteristics like if if everybody was persistent would everybody learn it? (.) like are there other factors? (.) do y’ do you think, (.) or is that all there is basically
SB: um: i think you do have to have like an (.) aptitude for it because (.) some people just (.) like no matter i’ sa’ like i think that’s in everything though because (.) i know (-) my best friend she did like in high school we did physics together and no matter what i did to make her understand (.) like the concepts (-) they just she just didn’t get them Me: mm-hm
SB: like no matter what i did like (.) i took out a slinky to show her how waves move and she just could not pick it up whereas like (.) french for her she did an immersion course (.) and she went to quebec for a month and she did like (.) a GREAT job (.) whereas i don’t think i could do something like that Me: mm-hm
SB: and she: (.) i think (.) she just learns (.) learns like (.) language and (.) like she’s an english major and she (.) like she writes phenomenal essays and she does that so much better (.) than i do (.) whereas like the science courses that i take (.) sh’ are way over her head and she looks at me and says wow like (.) i can’t believe you take that whereas (.) for me i’m like (.) i couldn’t do what you do either Me: mm-hm
SB: so i think everybody’s like prone to being better at different things,
Me: mm-hm (-) so: if (.) in order to succeed at a language (--) you have to s’ have an aptitude and be 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
Me: mm-hm
SB: like they (.) they (-) they think too much about a

concept and then they just get confused (.) whereas
(-) but everybody has different learning styles too
Me: mm-hm
SB: so i think it all depends on your learning style
and the way you can (. ) pick things up because (-)
german isn’t like learning a language isn’t really
a memorizing thing it’s more of a you have to
understand the concepts and apply them, (.) whereas
some people are better at (-) like memorizing facts
() that (-) help them
Me: mm-hm
SB: and you can’t really do that with a language
Me: um: (-) when you’re learning a foreign language do
you have a certain goal in mind, (.) like (.) is it
always sort of (. ) just to pass the course or is it
like oh i wanna be fluent (.) like what is your
SB: my like th’ the reason i take (.) language courses
(-) is becau’ like i don’t take all of them and i
wouldn’t go and take something like spanish 101 or
like something like that because the reason i took
german is because it’s my heritage and i would like
to one day be able to speak it (.) and the reason i
took french is because (.) i lIke being able to
speak a different language like i’m not (.) like
yes it helps that it (.) it’s boosting up my (.)
gpa but at the same time like i’m not just taking
it so it does that i (.) which is why i’m taking
like the 102 course (.) whereas if i was just
taking language courses so that my grade would go
up i would stick to 101s
Me: right
SB: and just do (. ) do 101 courses
Me: do 101 (. ) um do you feel that there’s expectations
() when you’re learning a foreign language do you
think that other expecta’ OTHers expectations play
a role in your learning like parents (.) the school
like society like (.) [for you]
SB: [um:] (.) not so much (.)
like i to’ when i came home (. ) <<laughing i was>
(.) saying words that i learned to my dad (.) and
he told me he’s really im’ like really happy that i
di’ i took this initiative and took the course (. )
but i mean that’s my choice too like he (--) i
don’t know like in a in a way i like taking it
because it makes like my family proud and that
kinda thing but (. . .) i i am doing it for me you know
Me: mm-hm (. . .) ok (-) um::
(6)
you’ve learned french (-) or you took french (. . .)
um: (. . .) do you learn german differently than you
learned french or other foreign languages or do you
find that it’s like a similar thing
SB: i i really find it’s a similar thing because (. . .)
when i (. . .) like i’ve almost associated being in
this building with speaking a different language
Me: ((laughs))
SB: because this is like where i [like]
Me: [the language
building] ((laughs))
SB: this is the only (. . .) this is the only (. . .) um: (. . .)
building i’ve been in to take language courses like
i took french in this building and i took german in
this building and i hon’ i get into a mindset when
i speak (-) when i (. . .) when i come to s’ (-) to
like a language course
Me: yeah
SB: it’s weird because (-) like the fir’ even the first
day in in german even though i havn’t taken french
in like two years
Me: mm-hm
SB: like i was b’ i wanted to say (. . .) to like answer in
french just
Me: right
SB: knowing that i was (. . .) speaking and even now like
(. . .) i’ll mix up the the two like languages
sometimes when i wanna say something or i’ll like
try and say something in german but automatically
go to french just because (. . .) it’s (. . .) and i think
too for me when i was in the course i wasn’t (. . .) i
wasn’t as able to (. . .) to just say things as i am
now like i think it took some time for everything
to just to like settle in
Me: mm-hm
SB: and now i feel like (. . .) even more even though i
haven’t taken any courses (. . .) i feel like i could
speak (. . .) more (--) more fluently than translating
it say
Me: mm-hm s’
SB: =which is weird
Me: so you think that it’s because you’ve had this sort
of time for it to (--) i don’t know sink in or
whatever
SB: [yeah i don’t know it’s weird]
Me: [and that it just seems] to work better that way
   now
SB: yeah
Me: ok cause it’s been like [a couple years or]
SB: [it’s been awhile] yeah
Me: ((coughs)) so you don’t find that it’s like
   diminished at all
SB: well yeah there are words that i’m losing that i’m
   like oh i need to start doing something because i’m
   gonna lose my french altogether (.) but then there
   are other things that i’m just like yeah i can
   answer that question in french
Me: mm-hm (-) cool (-) um:: (. ) so for you s’ learning
   a language (. ) so far from what your experiences is
   very s’ like it’s similar to learning a different
   language that you’ve already learned like with
   german (.) you find parallels between
SB: yeah (.) like a lot of parallels like with the verb
   conjugations with (-) um:: (--) like (-) the
   articles like they’re they’re all similar and like
   french for a female article mostly ends in e
Me: mm-hm
SB: german mostly ends in e
Me: mm-hm
SB: like and then verb conjugations like (. ) they all
   have [different endings]
Me: [they have some structures]
SB: there’s structure
Me: so it’s (. ) um:: (--) the process of learning german
   is similar to the process of learning french
SB: yeah
Me: like gr’ from the grammar and everything
SB: yeah
Me: ok (. ) um:: (--) when do you have a feeling like
   the feeling that you’ve (. ) like or the knowledge
   that you’ve learned something like do you notice?
   (--) when you realize that you’ve learned a concept
   and you can apply it now? (. ) is there a moment
   like an aha moment like
SB: if it’s something i’m really working on and (. ) i
   i’m not understanding it not understanding it and
   then it’ll just click?
Me: mm-hm
SB: yeah but then generally (-) generally it’s more (-)
   um: (-) at least in this beginner course it’s been
   (-) kind of (. ) simple for me (. ) so i’ll just like
read it and be like ok i understand and then apply
it and there are there are like definitely
questions i get wrong or things i get wrong (.) but
um: (-) i’ll go back afterwards (.) and go over it
and it’ll make sense after
Me: so it’s not a thing where: (.) in this class where
you’ve found you’ve had a lot of (. ) problems
understanding
SB: yeah no i really haven’t
Me: yeah (.) ok (-) um well when do you notice
though that you’ve learned something like when is
it while you’re (.) in class while you’re (.)
working on on something or just when you’re walking
down the street like do you remember, (.) when you
specifically remember (.) or uh feel a difference
in having learned something (.) in the language,
SB: not really
Me: not really [there’s no]
SB: [no there’s no] one like ;woo i get it
Me: yeah yeah (.) so it just changes (.) um: ((coughs))
(---) ok well i have one more question
SB: ok
Me: so:: (-) ba’ you have german heritage
SB: yeah
Me: what ((laughs)) this is interesting i just do this
because i think (.) everybody has a different
opinion on this but what words would you use to
describe the german language (.) i’ve had a fu’
couple funny different ones
SB: it’s a harsher language
Me: ok
SB: like it’s it it’s harsher just with like the way
they pronounce things
Me: mm-hm
SB: um:: (. ) i like it like (. ) i like
(5)
like i’ve i’ve done the oktoberfest thing and i’ve
done like the roswell thing and like all the other
like german heritage things and i i like the
language (. ) mainly because it it is my heritage
you know
Me: right
SB: so
Me: so [harsh (-) any other words to describe it]
SB: [i don’t know (. ) it is (. ) it’s a harsher] (.)
uh:: (-) .hh i don’t know (-) um:: ((laughs)) (--)
have found their way into the English language
Me: mm-hm
SB: for sure like (.) k’ kaputz
Me: yeah
SB: like so many people say that and it means broken in
German so (.) i don’t know if i’d pick words to
describe it though
Me: yeah but harsh you think harsh
SB: yeah
Me: um: what about Germany have you ever been to
Germany?
SB: no
Me: ok what (.) in your mind what words would you use
to describe Germany as a country
SB: um: (-) Germany as a country or Germany like as in
like the people and everything else
Me: well anything the culture the people the (    )
SB: see i see the culture as more um: (-) like LOUD and
fun and (.) you know when you picture them you
picture them with lederhosen and a (.) a mug of
beer and
Me: yeah
SB: um: (--) yeah that’s what i see them as and then
like Hanna was saying that (--) like (.) um: (-)
time is very important to them and being punctual
is very important (.). and i look back on the way my
grandparents were
Me: mm-hm
SB: and i can totally see it because even when we’d go
out like make reservations and go out for supper
with them we always had to be five minutes early
Me: mm-hm
SB: like you were never late it was always early and my
dad always stresses out about being late and he’s
always like COME ON COME ON and he’s the one
sitting in the car waiting for the rest of us to
get there
Me: ((laughs))
SB: so i see like (.). that that that definitely like
makes sense to me now as why they’re like that i’m
like what is the big deal about being FIVE minutes
late and they’re like NO you have to be on time
Me: mm-hm
SB: and then when Hanna was saying that like when she
was there that’s that’s a big thing for them like
(.) buses need to be on time everything needs to be
on time punctuality is very important and i see
that with my with my family
Me: mm-hm
SB: for sure so: i guess that’s another thing you can
say about (..) german: people and germany [but]
Me:
SB: yeah i just see it i see it as somewhere i’d really
like to go and somewhere that would probably be (.).
really fun: (..) welcoming
Me: yep (..) cool (..) ok that’s it (..) for today
SB: that’s all the questions?
Me: yep

Interview 3
By: Janice McGregor
Research for M.A. Thesis
January 19th, University of Waterloo
Recording length: 7 minutes 50 seconds
Transcribed by: Janice McGregor
Description: Semi-structured discussion between graduate
student and undergraduate student

Me: ok (-) last interview ((laughs)) (-) alright (.)
today i (.) would like to (.) um: hear what you
think your learning curve (-) from german 101 over
the whole semester was (..) so what you think (.).
your um: specific ups and downs and (..) when you
learned more when you learned less (-) perception
wise from you (..) ok (..) i have an example
SB: ok (..) [cause]
Me: [i]
SB: i’m like oh MAN
Me: yeah i know it’s it’s kind of like (..) uh it
doesn’t mean you have to do this exact thing but
(-) for an example this is um: my (-) ((laughs))
what i perceive to be my learning of spanish while
i was in spain for a month doing a language course
ok i just picked a random time, (-) i was in spain
for a month and i did a course and at the end there
was an exam so (..) similar type of situation, (.).
so this was the beginning (-) so i started off
already having done in in wa’ in (-) university i
did (..) spanish one oh (..) like (..) first second
year spanish (..) so when i started the language
course i wasn’t starting from the beginning right
so i started here (..) let’s just say (-)
<<laughing> so> this is my idea so then i gradually
over time because i wasn’t learning for the first
time (. ) it was a gradual increase cause (. ) you
know i i already knew a lot of concepts so it
wasn’t [a ( . )]
SB: [yeah]
Me: big jump (. ) so as i went (-) you know i kind of
went along with the class and learned along and
from being in the culture it was going up for sure
right cause i was speaking a lot
SB: mm-hm
Me: and then: (-) at the end of the exam you know we a’
(. ) everybody was studying hardcOre so: i had a
huge jump (-) and um: (. ) and o’ of course over
time i was (. ) making a lot of progress with
speaking and so then i say i left (. ) having gained
a lot of ability (. ) um: with a major jump from
studying and then the exam and then DONE (-) that’s
my example (. ) so
SB: ok
Me: um: (. ) if you could (-) do something similar
SB: oh i have to draw it?
Me: you have to draw it and [explain] it as you go
SB: [oh]
Me: it’s very (. ) interactive
SB: oh i thought i got (. ) just got to (. ) talk about
it
Me: no you c’ if you can draw it to th’ what you (. )
you know just what you perceive it might of been
like (. ) and then explain why you’re (-) why you’ve
written it like that that’d be great
SB: ok (-) um: (---) well: (-) i (-) because i have
taken some german before (-) um: (-) i (. ) like
some of the concepts were the same so (. ) h it
wasn’t (. ) it wasn’t as gradual it was more like
(. ) i learned some new concepts: (. ) but then there
was like other ones where i already knew them so
Me: mm-hm
SB: oh like this:: (---) but then (. ) ,hh as it got
towards the (-) towards the end (. ) um: (-) we s’
(-) like so:: (. ) like numbers i already knew how
to count i already knew (. ) um: (-) how to
translate sein (. ) the to be (. ) verb
Me: ok
SB: i already knew (-) um: (. ) the alphabet (--) and
like just (-) gen (. ) like (. ) some (. ) little
words (. ) and so: (. ) uh: but once we got past that
and we were doing more of like the pronouns and
that kinda thing (. ) it was more new to me
Me: ok
SB: so that was more of a gradual increase (-) and then: (-) um: (--) towards the end: i should say that (. ) it went up a lot (-) for my exam but i didn’t study that much because i had another exam . hh so:: it was more like (. ) even (. ) but now that i’m in (. ) german (-) um 102 (. ) again and i’m taking it distance ed it’s (. ) it’s increasing again
Me: ok
SB: is that (. ) is that ok?
Me: that’s excellent so (. ) um: (. ) now your family’s german so you must have started out (. ) not right at the bottom sort of do you know what i mean?
SB: yeah
Me: so is that why this is here?
SB: <<whispering> yeah>
Me: so this is accounting for your sort of knowing it from (. ) family=
SB: =and from taking (. ) uh like i took german school when i was little
Me: OH:: how cute [((laughs))] [yeah (. ) i know it was really cute]
SB: [yeah] mm-hm
Me: ok good (-) so th’ y’ (. ) so you had little bumps of learning along the way [but] a general increase you would say
SB: [yeah] mm-hm
Me: but probably not th’ an increase that say someone who had never seen german would have had
SB: yeah
Me: [ok]
SB: [that’s] what i’d say because (. ) i did have some (-- ) knowledge of it before like when i was younger i did german school for probably like (. ) four years
Me: [gotcha]
SB: [but my] teacher was like (-) HORRible she was the kinda teacher that (-) every week was something new cause we only went for (. ) we did an hour of learning and a half an hour of singing
Me: [aw:: ((laughs))] [and ((laughs))] so (. ) and so i knew german um: (. ) songs too (. ) but (. ) she (. ) the way she did it was like (. ) she just volunteered so it wasn’t like she was a real teacher and it was like (-) every week was something new and it was like all over the place [so]
Me: [yeah]
SB: one now that i have more structure everything kinda
    falls into place and it makes so much more sense
    (.) but (-) when there was no structure it was just
    like (.) random bits of information
Me: a little bit chaotic eh
SB: yeah (.) [yeah]
Me: [ok] that’s good um: (.) what about
    midterm (--) is that in there or was [that again]
SB: [oh] maybe we
Me: =do you remember (laughs)
SB: oh gosh
Me: how you studied for that if was it similar to the
    exam or did you have more motivation then (.) [to
    study]
SB: [um: (.)] i don’t think i did a huge jump with the
    midterm just because um: most of the s’
    information covered before the midterm was
    something i had already (.) somewhat (.) learned
Me: true
SB: so: (-) for my midterm um: (.) i didn’t study very
    much at all but i kept up with the class like
    throughout the whole thing
Me: mm-hm
SB: so: (-) um: (.) when it came to the midterm i did
    really well but i didn’t do (-) a large amount of
    studying
Me: ok
SB: but it’s just because i (-) i (.) [knew: some of
    it]
Me: [you felt
SB: and i felt comfortable exactly (.) so: (.) yeah
Me: k (-) and what about (.) something like (.)
    different (.) in a different testing situation like
    the speaking test (.) where (.) you would practice
    with a friend did you feel (.) a jump in learning
    there?
SB: um: (.) when we did the speaking tests like at the
    end?
Me: mm-hm
SB: .hh um: ,hh i would say (.) y’ y:es (.) because (.)
    um: (-) i like we (.) we ended up using stuff that
    was from chapters (.) that we hadn’t covered yet so
    i learned stuff there (.) but um: because it was
memorizing it was more (.) i don’t know if i
learned it so much as i just (.) memorized it
Me: right
SB: but (.) i know (.) now that these are the chapters
that i’m gonna cover (.) in german 102, (.) when it
comes to do that (.) i do have some knowledge
Me: right
SB: of it (.) so (.) i think thAt will come out more
(.) if like if we continue ( ) thAt kinda thing
(.) and i did it for 102 (.) i think it would be
(.) more of a jump than than (.) now
Me: right (.) because there’s more material
SB: yeah
Me: ((laughs)) how do you find it so far (.) 102
SB: um:
Me: harder? (-) have you noticed?=
SB: =it is harder because it’s more (.) like (.) i’
it’s gone (.) from the part of like explaining it
in english (.) now it’s like explaining it in like
simple german terms where it’s like (.) OK well now
i have to remember everything i learned in 101 (.)
but (.) it’s not bad so far
Me: mm-hm
SB: [i don’t know]
Me: [still manageable?]
SB: yeah still manageable (-) it’s hard to motivate
myself to sit there and DO it but
Me: mm-hm (.). distance ed is sometimes
SB: yeah (.). but it’s not bad
Me: that’s good
SB: so far
Me: ok <<faster> um well the last thing then> is uh: if
you could also draw (.) on the same axis a
motivation line of: (.) cause you were saying for
motivation wise like for the exam cause you had
another exam so you were
SB: yeah
Me: sort of splitting off your (.) you know who you
were which you were studying for and what not
SB: yeah
Me: so do you think you could draw a motivation line
(.) um:: (---) accurately somehow [((laughs))]
SB: [ok so:::] i voted
(-) k so im gonna say: (.) from the beginning (-)
like i was (-) pre:ttty motivated to do it (-) but
then when it got towards exams
Me: ((laughs))
SB: kinda leveled off
Me: mm-hm
SB: and so: and then like (.) definitely towards the end it was
Me: tapering
SB: yeah declining just because it’s like [the end of exams and it’s christmas]
Me:                                       [christmas
SB: and i’m ready to be done yeah (-)
Me: ok so you you started off (-) pretty motivated and it just k’ increased?
SB: yeah (.) like i’m still am motivated to do it mainly because um: (-) m’ like my dad speaks it and like my relatives speak it (.) and i have that motivation to learn it because it’s my (-) heritage
Me: mm-hm
SB: and because like one day i would like to go to germany and be able to s’ (-) meet relatives and (-) converse with them and not be like um:: so:: (.i do have motivation to do it which is why i’m (. still in distance ed and (. you know [(.)
Me: [good]
SB: the work
Me: that’s good
SB: so it’s not bad
Me: excellent (.o so: yeah (.) that’s about it
SB: ok
Me: a very simple one

Interview #1, Student C
By: Janice McGregor
Research for M.A. Thesis
November 24\textsuperscript{th}, University of Waterloo
Recording length: 27 minutes 22 seconds
Transcribed by: Janice McGregor
Description: Semistructured discussion between graduate student and undergraduate student

Me: alright (-) so: (-) yes (-) you are taking german
101 ((laughs))
SC: yes
Me: how are you enjoying it so far
SC: uh: it’s alright (-) sometimes (-) it’s a little (-) well it’s a language course (.) like i’d rather just take give me the structure the grammar and the
Me: ok (.) cause you wrote in your thing that um: you
pick up concepts really quick (.) is that (.) [was
that that was you that wrote that right] yeah,
Me: [co] and the grammar concepts not (.) not a big
problem for you
SC: no
Me: so: um: (.) like is that true also for vocabulary
or is that a different story
SC: i can usually remember vocabulary (.) very quickly
Me: and um:: (--) what do you ,h not enjoy specifically
then like in class that would maybe bore you
frustrate you
SC: i guess the activities some of the activities like
(4)
Me: [can you] think of any ((laughs))
SC: [just] like writing things on (--) like just
writing simple sentences that don’t really mean
anything just practice really some k’ sometimes
boring
Me: right so it’s not authentic like doesn’t actually
apply to any situation that you might actually be
in
SC: exactly
Me: ok i understand that (.) um: (.) is there what is
there (. ) what parts of the course do you a:’
actually enjoy what specific things that you do in
class that
SC: well i like that i i (. ) you actually have to speak
the language
Me: mm-hm
SC: it’s not just reading and thinking
Me: right
SC: you actually have to (. ) say it
Me: yep (-) is there um: (-) um: (-) like you said
you’re good you like grammar and that you’re good
at that is it is it then come from um: looking at
the book (. ) or is it in class that you enjoy (. )
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
Me: ok s’ like did you have to take a language arts credit or was it just your choice that you
SC: my choice
Me: and what motivated you to choose taking german
SC: uh: (-) it’s fairly it’s a big language that i like
it’s spok’ well spoken
Me: mm-hm
SC: and i don’t didn’t have any background in it
Me: so you don’t have any background in german ok
that’s interesting too (.). um: yeah cause i that’s
why i wasn’t sure about your name cause it could be
pronounced like kiel in german (.). um maybe you’ve
already known that i don’t know (.). but um:
((laughs))
SC: that’s what people usually call me
Me: oh really (.). in german class or just
SC: no everywhere
Me: everywhere (.). and nobody calls you kyle
SC: not usually
Me: <<laughing> that’s funny> (-) um: ok so you have no
german background so you’re motivated to take it
just because it’s a popular language in the world
SC: yes and i had no ability to speak it before
Me: yeah and you seem interested in languages cause w’
(.). are is w’ were you the one that wrote something
about the internet and you learned spanish on the
internet (.). ok so and something about basque too
(.). what was that
SC: oh it’s just a weird language
Me: yeah i know i know i know what language it is but
how did you come to decide on that
SC: i think i just saw it somewhere and
Me: [yeah]
SC: [it was weird] (.). [so i looked into it]
Me: [so you just] (-) became
interested in that (.). did you learn about that
would would you have learned about (.). about these
languages in spanish class that you would have
heard about
SC: no
Me: no?
SC: =i (.). pretty much could speak spanish before i
took it in high school
Me: OH ok how was that
SC: it was alright
Me: no but i mean like HOW did you
SC: oh just (.). internet (.). music
Me: you picked it up from that only?

SC: pretty much

Me: =wow that’s pretty cool (-) so you aren’t taking spanish right now though

SC: no

Me: would you plan on

SC: i was going to take it next term but they didn’t (.). i couldn’t (.). because they don’t offer the first part of it

Me: ah (.). oh yeah that’s they should the co-op co-op thing they should do that (.). cool but you would you would take it again you like it

SC: yes

Me: so you’ve had good experiences with spanish

SC: yes

Me: and french you have have sort of sporadic experiences cause you kind of took a break but [you like it]

SC: [i’m taking it] next term again

Me: oh are you so that’s good so you (.). clearly you enjoy language learning ((laughs)) (--.) um (4)

so do you en’ do you enjoy you’ve said that it sometimes it’s slow class (.). um do you enjoy class meetings (.). um (.). m0re or less than on your own at home (.). that type of thing what do you find is

SC: i’d rather do stuff at home

Me: you’d rather do independent sort of

SC: yeah next next term i’m taking them both or the second part of german and french distance ed

Me: oh you’re so you’ve done that on purpose to switch to distance ed

SC: yes

Me: even though the german is available in class form but [you’d rather]

SC: [well i don’t know] if i could fit it into the schedule i have

Me: ok so was it more of a schedule issue or like em (.). a more of a (.). i think i’m a good independent learner issue

SC: kinda both i didn’t feel like switching around my whole schedule to make it fit where i wanted so i was just like eh

Me: yeah you know you can learn it on your [own so]

SC: [yes]

Me: ok now um are you um: (.). are you worried you might
not get the same um: (. ) speaking (-) practice?  
[how do you feel about that]  
a little worried] (. ) cause i know my spoken (-)  
my spoken french and spanish isn’t nearly as good  
as my written  
do you find that (---) em (-)  
when you’re in class is that to you one of the  
major benefits of being in a classroom (. ) learning  
a language?  
yes speaking and hearing it spoken  
ok so those are those are the two things you (. )  
which you’ve already mentioned one .hh that you  
really uh feel that benefits your language learning  
is from in a classroom whereas if i understand you  
correctly if you’re going to learn grammar or or  
just sort of look it over you you like the  
independent way of being alone and being able [to  
look at it]  
just looking at it]  
ok (. ) um::  
now um (. ) why do you think you learn better on  
your own (. ) like why do you can you think of any  
reason why you think your learning style is (-) why  
do you think it benefits you to learn certain  
things  
(-) just because i learn (. ) really easy just  
by looking at (. ) instead of (. ) where usually in a  
classroom setting they go over it and over it  
so it gets repetitious and you [don’t]  
[yes]  
need all that  
and i kinda get bored (. ) and zone out  
did you on your questionnaire did you write  
that um:: (-) the teacher talks too slow sometimes  
and you get bored or do you remember what it was  
sometimes it’s too slow  
like goes too slow and you get bored  
yeah  
that type of thing (. ) do you find that it’s um:  
(-) challenging enough for you? (. ) in the  
classroom?  
somet’ sometimes  
sometimes it does get]  
sometimes not]  
now how does your do you are you doing well in the
class like you’re
SC: yeah [fairly well]
Me: [you feel confident] in the [marks]
SC: [yes]
Me: that you’re getting and all that stuff (.)
cool (.): now we haven’t talked about the lab what
do you think about the lab (.): portion
SC: i like that because then it it does force you to
listen and learn how to listen
Me: mm-hm
SC: which is where one of my weak spots
Me: ok
SC: but
Me: yeah (.): so (.): would you say that that’s (.): um
(.): a necessary component to the beginner (.): language the lab is that for you been a a plus?
SC: yes
Me: um: (.): cause there are people that really hate the
lab um: (.): different reasons i don’t know they (-)
you know sometimes they find the activities do’
done in there wasting time blah blah blah (.): you
do you (.): you do lab tasks you do tests you do
listening comprehension you do web activities so
you’re you know you do this visual you know (.)
computer (.): stuff what like do you f’ do you find
one somes things better than others like what what
components in the lab do you really enjoy
SC: like the au’ the audio parts are good (.): the (.)
looking at the culture and stuff is (.): not so
great
Me: so that to you would be the negative part of it
SC: yes
Me: and so are you are you then saying that you’re not
really interested in learning about the culture
you’re more interested in
SC: (--) the culture’s not bad but i’d rather just
learn how to speak the language
Me: ok so you’re very (.): really wanna just learn the
language
SC: yes
Me: that’s the goal of this course for you ok (.): and
do you (.): do you um: (.): find (.): then (.): that
the book (-): is (-): good or bad because there is a
l’ a little bit of there you know there’s culture
in the book and sort of pulled in (.): in you know
those little yellow boxes where they say you know
(.): how to say hello in different places and and
and all these different parts like the anna
adler story you know trying to make a context
does that interest you?
SC: no i find the book way too spread out
Me: mm-hm too vague
SC: yes
Me: um what’s
SC: instead of just going to a point they spread it out
over a chapter
Me: ok yeah do you think uh or what do you
think in the book um is good do you find
any benefits to it
SC: like you mentioned those little yellow things where
they say in different areas they use different
words
Me: mm-hm
SC: that’s useful
Me: mm-hm
SC: um
(4)
their like their chapter summaries and stuff
where they’ll list out an entire verb chart
and such i like that
Me: mm-hm do you find the explanations
enough?
SC: what do you mean
Me: you know like introducing a concept say like
the accusative and of course there’s the charts
but the actual explanations of grammar concepts
do you find them extensive enough or do you
find do you find that they that for you’ve
already learned the concept by what they say or do
you feel that there’s something’s missing
SC: hh it’s alright the way they do it but
sometimes i wish they’d give more like more
detail
Me: yeah um because you know some people
think that when you look at vorsprung there’s
a LOT in one chapter and so uh you
know some people have been saying you know oh:
it’s um there it seems to go so quick
you know there’s not sort of the concentration on
some some issues as i wish there had been or
whatever um but do you find that that for you
(um) it’s enough that you learn it? or do
you y’ like you said you miss you feel that
there’s some explanations missing but on the whole
do you find it that it explains grammar well?
SC: um: (-) yes i think it explains grammar well
Me: like just for you right because i m’ i (-) everyone
has a different opinion on that
SC: i don’t
i gotta be honest i don’t really read the book that
often
Me: yeah well no but that’s important to know because
um (-- do you go to other sources (. ) for
information sometimes?
SC: uh: (.) not usually
Me: so you really pick it up quick (. ) i’m getting that
from you ((laughs))
SC: ((laughs))
Me: that you in class -- probably rely on the book
for a bit and maybe the teacher goes over it and
you do some practices and you’ve got it in your
head
SC: yes
Me: is that how it works for you? (.) um when you ok
well let’s (-- going going on to looking at when
you go to study for a midterm or test (-) do you
need to spend a lot of time do you find that you
get away with not studying a lot then
SC: yes
Me: and: um: is that a a reason why you might be pushed
to study languages? (. ) like because you know
there’s not a lot of worked involved like wh’ when
you look at it that way? [or]
SC: [that’s] (.) part of it
like i can just take a course it’s nice and easy
not a lot of stress
Me: mm-hm
SC: but i also (-) do like to learn how to speak them
Me: right so you actually do have a vested interest in
the outcome (-) but um:: (. ) when you’re studying
if <<laughing>> at all> studying grammar concepts do
you do you actually study gra’ grammar concepts or
do you really find that you don’t even need to look
them over again at home (. ) like what if you have
[homework say]
SC: [i’ve usually] no i don’t need to look them over
Me: so like if you have a homework on uh: applying you
know the indefinite article in a blank f’ and it’s
uh: you know gender you have to make sure you’ve
got the right gender of the noun you’ve got to make
sure it’s in the accusative or nominative (.) you
don’t even need to look over the charts you already
have it memorized or is that something else too
SC: i have those memorized
Me: you have [them all memorized]
SC: [it’s just] the remembering what nouns are
feminine (.) [masculine]
Me: [ok] so is
SC: i sometimes need to look back at it
Me: right so cause you were saying um:: (-) vocabulary
(-) is there’s a lists and stuff like that in the
textbook (.). do you how do you memorize vocabulary
SC: read it (.). a couple times
Me: yeah (.). is it and [and all the spelling and
everything]
SC: [and sometimes i’ll write it out]
Me: ok so you write it out too
SC: occasionally
Me: mm-hm when it’s [blocking]
SC: [when there’s] a LOT
Me: right (.). right right (.). um: (-) and so you’ve
just mentioned gender which i was going to ask you
about uh: do you find that (--) how does that
affect like how do you learn that how do you
connect that with a word (.). how do you memorize it
SC: i just (.). do (.). i guess from studying spanish and
french
Me: mm-hm
SC: it just kind (.). [makes sense]
Me: [you’re used to memorizing] these
things and (.). yeah (-) do you find (.). what’s the
hardest part of of (.). what’s the hard’ like you
know it seems to come easy to you and and so
( ) maybe it’s not really hard but (.). what would
be the hardest thing for you in in learning a
beg’ in like a beginner language course what do you
think so far the hardest thing to mEmorize or or or
understand uh: (.). so far
SC: uh: (.). lists of like nouns like
Me: ok
SC: from a classroom setting or something
Me: right so all memorizing s’ and getting the right
spelling and umlauts and capitals of and genders of
all those
SC: yes
Me: is (.). that’s the sort of thing that just you just
sit down and
SC: i would need to go over that a several times
Me: right whereas a concept for you (--)) DONE (.) no
problem
SC: yes
Me: ok that’s interesting (-) um: (-) now (-) does it
take you (.) if you sit down and put the effort
into memorizing vocabulary and gender and putting
it all together with the nouns (.) .h does’ would
it take you a long time to actually memorize the
vocabulary, like if you were studying for the
midterm (.) do you need te have a bit of time to
study for that stuff so that you have it in your
mind or can you sort of cram the night before and
s’ (.) memorize a list of vocabulary [that’s two
pages long]
[i i cram the
night before]
Me: ok so you you have no problem doing this sort of
short term quick memorize these l’ nouns (.) even
though it does require you to put in a couple hours
or whatever of memorizing it but you (-) you can
spew it all out the next day no problem,
SC: yes
Me: ok cause i know people that sometimes they need
weeks (.)) they need weeks um:: (--) do you find the
explanations from the teacher useful
SC: yes
Me: does it complement the book or do you rely on
teacher explanation (.)) more than the book
SC: well she (-) she says it so i usually don’t look at
the book too often
Me: ok
SC: cause i understand from what she says
Me: right
SC: but if i if i might be a little not unclear i’ll
then i’ll read the book
Me: mm-hm (-) do you think that um:: (--) in class i’
if you were to you know learn a concept (.) the
teacher would go over it (-) does it help you then
in class if you would right away do exercises in
groups (.) and then take it up like do you like
getting that immediate feedback and does that (---)
uh:: (-) help you memorize it’ or do you find that
it’s (.)) you don’t even really need even to
practice that you’ve already got it
SC: i usually don’t need to practice but sometimes just
(.). maybe a few little of those (.). little
questions the fill in the blank stuff
Me: right
SC: those are (.). sometimes helpful
Me: mm-hm (.). like if you’re studying for a midterm or
something,
SC: yes
Me: mm-hm (-) um:: (-) now how much does how much does
her explanations the teacher’s explanations affect
(.). how you understand the material like you say
you don’t really read the book so (.). do you rely
then on her explanations for all this knowledge (-)
or would you do you think you would be able to
understand all the same exact stuff (.). if you only
had the book to read
SC: i could probably do it just with the book
Me: because you know some people don’t (.). don’t like
reading the book some people some people you know
are very visual and they want the teacher to write
out everything (.). instead of just sticking with
the book (.). but then there’s people who who like
both but had they (.). not had if the teacher didn’t
explain it in that much detail the book would
suffice for them (.). do you think that you’re that
you’re either visual like that you need the teacher
to come and sort of slam it in your head or do you
think that the book is suffic’ sufficient to: your
SC: i could the book would have been suspi’ sufficient
Me: right (-) and you’ll probably have to rely on it
next term when you do ((laughs)) german 102 online
but it’s the same book so (.). actually that’s an
int’ another interesting thing you’ll you’ll
probably have already a benefit doing 102 (-) uh:
(.). having already had 101 IN the classroom (.)
because you’ve already used the book so much (.)
like whether you actually studied from it or not
you’re doing all the material from the book (.). um:
(-). which i’m sure will be interesting for you
<<laughing> when you do 102> (-) um: so: in the end
(-). you don’t use the book much is that what i’m
getting from (.). not i don’t mean (.). i’m not
judging you on [that (.). you don’t use the book
much]
SC: [yep (.). that (.). that’s true]
Me: so you rely on the teacher’s explanations to (.)
um: (.). but if (.). if you were forced to have to
learn from the book you would be able to understand
(. um: and do you prefer when in that case you actually are looking at the book (. comparing to what she tells you (. do you find that ones better than the other? (. uh: for you? or are they very very much the same like
SC: they're (. pretty much the same
Me: so you find that she really t' pl' uses the book as a base to explain all these things
SC: i guess
Me: you can't tell
SC: no
Me: ((laughs)) it's hard to know i guess (--) ok um the last thing i was gonna ask you is about um: (. group work (. in class (. do you like working in groups,
SC: i don't dislike it
Me: ok so you're kind of indifferent
SC: yes
Me: um: you have a speaking test coming up right
SC: mm-hm
Me: how does that type of work how do you enjoy that type of work (. as opposed to (. an independent sort of thing that you might do on your own (. like what do you prefer
SC: i usually prefer independent
Me: yeah (--) but do you uh: (. do you find that group work bogs you down, (. or (. makes you (--) um: how do i like frustrates you because there's somebody else to sort of (-) wor' you know collaborate with does that (. or are are do you find that it's it's a great environment to exchange ideas and um learn from each other and practice like what do you see that as sort of a negative or a positive
SC: probably usually a negative
Me: mm-hm (-) is it because of that reason or can you (. come up with any other reason why
SC: i (. usually just like to just quick get it over with
Me: right (-) on your own time
SC: do it on my whenever i want on my own
Me: ok i'm getting i'm getting from you that you are very much an independent learner (. that you um: (---) FIND that you see the necessity in going to class and and learning from the teacher but that (. sometimes it's boring because if you could learn on your own pace you would be done in
probably half the time that they would be taking (.). is that what i
SC: [mm-hm]
Me: [like] something like that where you tend to
understand things quickly (.). and then the rest of
the t’ things that are getting explained you kind
of nod off cause it’s not affecting you anymore
cause you’ve understood it already
SC: yes
Me: would that be accurate (--). um:: (--) in class you
know in class when you do um:: (.). if for example
the teacher would say ok get into groups of three
or whatever (.). you know do this exercise or write
this st’ write a dialogue and (.). how do you work
in those situations how do you (.). what are your
sort of s’ strategy in getting the job done
SC: [i don’t know]
Me: [[(laughs)]] like do you find that it’s easy to
collaborate, (.). and that you can express what you
want
SC: yeah i’d say that (.). it’s usually not too hard
Me: does it um: present itself as almost like something
you don’t really want to do (.). or is it like oh
good a break from all this like being lectured at
(.). let’s work together (.). what kind of situation
is that for you
SC: well i don’t really see it as a break
Me: [no]
SC: [more as] just (.). kinda like busy work
Me: mm-hm (-) and um (-) if you were to get if you were
in a group where you felt (-) more (.). i don’t want
to say superior but (.). like you knew the most in
the group or you know you had you felt smarter than
the others or you know what i mean sometimes you
get a group a couple group uh: members in your
group where they might be you know people don’t
come to class or just don’t aren’t maybe understand
the concepts
SC: mm-hm
Me: do you find that you you have to take on a lot of
the work, (.). or do you just do what’s required of
you and feel good about that because you know that
it’s fine (.). like do y’ what do you find do you
find it a burden when there’s people that might be
SC: no
Me: you don’t find it a burden at all
SC: no
Me: so you just you do' you don’t worry about (..) doing other people’s work cause you know how in group work sometimes there’s people that -- wanna take over because they're worried th' the the it might co' uh:: (..) compromise the quality of what the group does cause they’re with people that they might think is (..) you know are not as: (..) good as them or whatever (..) um: (..) but that doesn’t affect you,
SC: no
Me: alright so you don’t mind group work (..) but you prefer independent work because it’s time con’ it ma’ easier on time,
SC: yes
Me: um: (-- in your questionnaire you were talking you you were very i find you very concise you’re like write you know this i i learn grammar concepts quickly it’s easy i can memorize stuff one times or twice reading it (..) um: ar’ do you find that in general then your learning strategy is just like (..) um: (..) very (..) uh: (-) like (..) um: (..) you complete things (..) and y’ you don’t start many things but you complete it complete it complete it and then you’ve got it kind of memorized (-) like how would you describe your learning style
SC: ,hh
Me: it’s hard to i know it’s hard to think about it but SC: um: (-) i don’t know i just (---) kind of Me: force you force to think about this ((laughs))
SC: well it’s sporadic it’s just whatever i start reading
Me: mm-hm
SC: i’ll usually (-) figure it out finish reading that
Me: yep
SC: until later i’ll keep reading it until i understand
Me: mm-hm (-) um: (-) if you get bored with something do you (..) tend to not be interested in it right away (..) or (..) like are you (-) if someone loses your interest is it like forget it like i can’t learn now (..) or is it kind of like (..) uh:: (..) you can get back into it it just needs to be constantly like (..) uh motivating for you
SC: i can get back into it
Me: ok so it’s not um something where like if they lose you you’re gone type thing you
SC: no
Me: it’s just a matter of like this is boring now i’m
just gonna (-) you know wait until it affects me
again or it has to do with something that i’m gonna
learn
SC: exactly
Me: ok um: what else
(7)
i think that’s it (--) what else did you write in
your questionnaire (.) i’m trying to remember (---)
OH do you (-) did you write that you like to learn
grammar first right, (.) and then speak later
SC: yes
Me: which i think is really interesting because uh::
(--) you’re putting like the emphasis on the grammar
and THEN on the sort of like (.) because i get the
opinion that you must be the type of person who (.)
uh:: (--) wants to (.) when you want to go to speak
a language you want it to be really good like you
don’t want to make a mistake is that [(.)] do you
find that that’s true?
SC: [yes]
Me: so would you be hesitant then to speak without
being spoken to, (.) in a class, (.) language lab,
SC: very hesitant yes
Me: ok so: i mean even if the teacher asks you you
you’re like you really wanna you know translate in
your head are you very methodological about that
like do you really (---) translate in your head or
do you find that it’s not like that or how do you
SC: uh: it depends (-) sometimes i have to think about
it (-) other times i just (.) don’t
Me: yep (.) and um:
(4)
speaking then is sort of a barrier because you want
it to be good
SC: yes
Me: now do you um: (.) have you ever been to france or
like anywhere where they speak the languages that
you’ve learned
SC: no
Me: no ok (-) ( ) um: because you know there’s
there’s there’s it’ couple different types
obviously of people but i mean there’s people that
will (--) um: (--) nOt understand grammar pretty
much have vEry difficult time understanding
concepts vEry can’t memorize things and gEnders
forget it out the window but they don’t care
they’ll speak they make mistakes left right and
centre but the main thing is they’re practicing
their language (.) and i mean (.) and then there’s
like i’m i’m like you very much like you where i
(.) don’t want to say something unless it’s right
you know get really nervous about what people will
think of me if i say something wrong (--) um: (.)
and um: (--) in class do you find that there’s a lot
of spoken practice (.) enough that you think that
(--) um it helps you feel more comfortable (.) in
german class,
SC: uh (--) usually (--) like we do answer a lot of stuff
in german
Me: mm-hm (--) does she speak a lot of german in class,
SC: uh: when she’s asking like the simple questions yes
or the simple commands
Me: mm-hm (--) and um: (.) does she make you guys answer
a lot of questions then (.) when she’s doing that
SC: sometimes [it depends on the day]
Me: [does she pick on everyone type thing]
SC: yeah she’ll do that she’ll go around the room
Me: but does that make you nervous if you’re gonna get
picked like you don’t want to answer or do you feel
motivated to (.) try
SC: sometimes i don’t want to answer
Me: because you don’t want to sound like you
SC: right
Me: wrong ((laughs)) (.) ok cool yeah that (.) that’s
what i figured when i saw your questionnaire i was
like oh: i have a feeling this guys one of those
people that really doesn’t want to be wrong when
they speak cause it’s true like a lot of people who
really like the grammar (--) stay TOO stay almost
sometimes TOO close to the grammar because you know
it’s like this it’s like almost like a baby blanket
like oh:: i can’t be wrong if i just have my
grammar book right here you know it’s gonna keep me
it’s gonna get me right where i need to be but (.)
and then there’s the people who are like i don’t
understand grammar at all but i’ll speak whatever
and it’s you know it there’s lots of mistakes but
uh:: (.) but at the same time they’re actually
practicing which is (.) great it can only help
SC: yep
Me: it’s interesting i think (.) ok is there anything
else that you (.) can think of about class that i
haven’t asked you about
SC: about class,
Me: or anything about language learning that you wanted to mention
SC: um
(3)
i don’t know (.) not really
Me: so you’ve ok so you’ve got german just started
french a few years spanish a few years basque you looked at on the internet is there any other languages that you’ve sort of come in contact with that interested you
SC: yes
Me: mm-hm
SC: um: creole languages
Me: ok
SC: like caribbean creole
Me: yep
SC: jamaican creole
Me: i’ is that close to french
SC: j’ jamaican is close to english
Me: yeah i know that but
SC: haitian guadaloupean that’s [french]
Me: (-) and (. ) that interest came from:
SC: uh just (. ) they’re weird
Me: ((laughs)) no but i mean like how did you like was it through french class or was it through internet
SC: no music
Me: music ok (. ) so you get into languages a lot through music right
SC: yes
Me: how do you find that stuff like do you
SC: i just
Me: do you just (. ) randomly come across it or [do you search for it]
SC: [pretty much] i: i just come across it (. ) if i like it i’ll i get more
Me: yeah have you ever listened to german music
SC: no
Me: no you should ((laughs))
SC: ((laughs))
Me: there’s some funny stuff out there (-) alright cool (. ) i think that’s it (. ) well thank you very much (. ) i’ll turn this off (. ) bye bye
Interview 2
By: Janice McGregor
Research for M.A. Thesis
December 14\textsuperscript{th}, 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 (.i like self you’re self described i
04 would say fast g’ like grammar understanding
05 learner (.i pick up grammar really quickly
06 SC: yes
07 Me: in class you said (.i 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: (.i 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
SC: then it’s (. ) much easier to remember
Me: so contextual (. ) [learning]
SC: [yes]
Me: and um: (-) d’ you said that it’s a little harder
for you to memorize vocab than to pick up grammar
concepts like that takes more effort or whatever
SC: well there’s more to know for grammar than or for
(.) vocab than grammar
Me: right and (. ) why do you think it is um: (-) ta’
that it takes more time is it just the sheer amount
of it? or is there another factor [that you think]
SC: [i think it’s the
amount]
Me: just the amount? (-) um:
(4)
so when you learn vocabulary (-) um: (. ) do you w’
how do you learn it (. ) like the exact process is
it just memorization (. ) plain old the way it is or
is there like some technique
SC: usually memorization
Me: just memorization? ok (. ) so directly from the book
or whatever
SC: mm-hm
Me: and you use when you see it in use
SC: yeah
Me: that helps to [cement]
SC: [like if] i’m reading a passage and
then i have to look up a word
Me: mm-hm
SC: i usually remember that fairly easily
Me: mm-hm and you can and that helps that it was in
like you know a text about a family or i don’t know
(.) some sort of
SC: yeah (. ) anything
Me: any (. ) topic (-) ok (-) um: (. ) if you’re reading
a german (. ) text like on the exam or (. ) you know
(.) say someone gives you a text in german (. ) um::
(.) what are the what what do you do to
sessessfully successfully understand (. ) the text
like what what is your process of reading (. ) how
do you [make sense of it]
SC: [um:] (-) i usually read it through and
hope i understand
Me: mm-hm
SC: and then i’ll read the questions and then if i
can’t if i don’t know the answers i’ll (-) rego
through the text and look for key words
Me: ok (-) now you say you read it through the first time
SC: yeah
Me: does do you read it through as in like translating read it through or as in (. ) pretty much reading it in german and trying to get what you can from it
SC: uh (-) kind of both
Me: ok so you use sort of (. ) you translate where you need to,
SC: yes
Me: ok (-) cause you know um: (-) some people are word for word translators but do you find that you do word for word translation when you’re reading a text,
SC: probably not
Me: probably not so much (. ) k (-- ) um: (-- ) i know that you guys haven’t done a whole lot of listening (. ) activities in the lab you’ve been doing some tests there and you do your tests there right and (. ) and um: (-) maybe some web activities here and there right (. ) um: but on the lab test you had a couple (. ) big (-) listening comprehension [texts] if i’m not mistaken
SC: [mm-hm]
Me: um: (. ) so (. ) when you’re when you hear a text like that you know a pretty long one (. ) and you have to answer all these questions what a’ what strategies do you use to successfully complete an a’ a question like to get
SC: um: (-- ) 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
Me: mm-hm (-) because um: usually a teacher reads a text a couple times (. ) and um how what do you do during each of those times is there a different strategy, in when you hear it the first time do you do something different than when you hear it the second time
SC: no [not really]
Me: [or is it just] (. ) yeah [so you]
SC: [just s’] s’ scribble
Me: as many answers as you can
SC: over both times (. ) um: (. ) do you find that you get (. ) more answers out of the first time or the second time
SC: second
Me: ok so it’s more concrete and you’ve heard it
SC: mm-hm
Me: um: (. ) would you be the type of person to (. ) i

don’t know if this was the case in the test but um:
write (-) notes as you hear stuff’
SC: no
Me: no so you would just go right to the answer and
SC: mm-hm
Me: check it off and then as you hear it again if you
realize you’re wrong (. ) that type of thing,
SC: yep
Me: ok (. ) so you wouldn’t you wouldn’t be like the
type of person on a test or a quiz to have little
notes on the side and
SC: no
Me: ok ((laughs)) (--) ok (. ) that was the in depth i
just wanted to know a little bit more about you’re
the thoughts on (. ) your thoughts on the processes
of how you’re learning things um:: (---) when uh
this is more (. ) general (-) learning a foreign
language (. ) when you hear (. ) um::
(6)
i’m trying to remember i have my (. ) this is a (-)
different sheet (-) i’ll just ask you the next
question for now (. ) um what characteristics does
someone have to bring with them (. ) do you think
( . ) in order to successfully learn a foreign
language like what cr’ characteristics do people
need to have
SC: they have to want to learn it
Me: want to learn it (. ) so persistence?
SC: yes (-) and just some kind of interest in it
Me: ok [so]
SC: [like] they can’t just be taking it cause they
can or they have to
Me: mm-hm
SC: they have to actually be interested and learn it
Me: ok so interest and desire
SC: yes
Me: to learn (. ) a language (. ) do you think that
there’s any other factor that (. ) would influence
how somebody would learn a language
SC: well just
Me: like if everybody was interested in and had the
desire do you think they’d ALL learn them? (. )
successfully? or is there [other factors]
SC: [probably]
Me: that might (-) [mostly] that’s for you?
Me: can you think of any other factors that you might play a role
SC: well I guess their ability to remember stuff
Me: mm-hm (-) ok [so aptitude] maybe
SC: [but] yeah
Me: for that (-) um: ok (. ) alright I have the other question here (. ) I for some reason (. ) it got deleted off this page (-) um: well first of all just to continue with this question (. ) do you have those inter' (. ) those characteristics,
SC: yes
Me: that you've described (. ) and so that would describe you personally (. ) I guess too
SC: yes
Me: um: (-) but what about negative characteristics like do you see negative characteristics in people that come to a class (-) and it blocks them (. ) from (. ) being successful,
SC: uh: (--) laziness that's one in myself
Me: ((laughs))
SC: um: (---) but sometimes people (3)
they just don't seem to (. ) concentrate on it
Me: mm-hm
SC: or they don't see the need to learn a part (. ) or they just don't care
Me: sure (--) and um: (. ) do y' and you've just identified laziness as something you (-) have (. ) or ((laughs)) try to fight against maybe when you're st' studying i know everybody has that probably but (. ) um: (---) is that you think (. ) hinders you a little in this?
SC: oh yeah
Me: yeah or a lot ((laughs))
SC: ((laughs))
Me: ok so that y' it's a negative thing for you in some ways
SC: mm-hm
Me: ok (. ) um: (. ) what does it mean to you when you if you hear the term to learn or the sentence or whatever phrase to learn a foreign language (. ) when you hear someone say that (. ) what are terms that pop into your head associated with learning a foreign language
SC: um: (---) i don't know
Me: anything at all ((laughs)) like if someone comes up
to you and says (.) oh:: you know: i really like
learning a foreign language like what (-) what
things would you tell them (. ) that assoc’ that you
associate with that th’ you know they’ve never
learned a foreign language and you wanna (. ) they
want help knowing what that means for them (-)
((laughs))
(4)
SC: i don’t know (-) ((laughs))
Me: so if someone says to you or if someone says what
does it mean to learn a foreign language
SC: um: (. ) you’d have to be able to speak it
Me: ok so speaking
SC: yeah
Me: i just mean like any term that you associate with
learning a foreign language
SC: oh (-) speaking reading writing
Me: mm-hm
SC: understanding
Me: mm-hm
SC: uh:
(4)
like proficiency i guess
Me: proficiency? ( . ) ok (. ) tho’ so those are all
pretty technical is there anything else like
(3)
SC: not that i can think of
Me: that comes along with it, (. ) no, (---) ok (-) . h
um: (---) ((coughs)) (. ) when you’re learning a
foreign language what’s the goal you have in mind
(-) you know (. ) there’s the goal of just passing
the course or the goal of being fluent like what
for you is sort of
SC: fluency
Me: so you’re always got that in the back of your mind,
SC: mm-hm
Me: ok (-) um: (. ) and do you feel that there’s
expectations from (. ) maybe the school society your
parents that you care about (. ) to: (. ) to
go ahead and do take a foreign language or learn a
foreign language or be even become fluent,
SC: no
Me: or is this a personal
SC: personal thing
Me: ok so it’s a personal thing (---) um: and this is
an interesting one (. ) when do you feel that you’ve
or when do you get the feeling that you’ve learned
something in a language like when do you notice (.)
that it’s (-) you know it’s sunk in
SC: uh: if i’m (-- reading something
Me: mm-hm
SC: like lo’ looking around on the internet and i come
across a page that’s in whatever language (.) and i
can understand something from it
Me: mm-hm
SC: that’s usually when i think oh: i’m getting good at
this
Me: right and it kinda confirms that (-) and you said
that you listen you listen to the music from
different countries
SC: yes
Me: does you find that that also
SC: yes
Me: so if you hear a line in a song y’ that you didn’t
maybe understand before but you
SC: mm-hm
Me: you did now or whatever (-- it’s interesting (--)
cause no’ ((laughs)) it’s cool that you listen to
tho’ the music music from different countries (-)
cause most people i i doubt would do that
((laughs))
SC: ((laughs))
Me: it’s cool (. um::: (-- have did you take i can’t
remember you took french and spanish right
SC: yes
Me: in schools or in in a classroom setting (. um: (.)
do you learn german differently from those? what do
you think about [(. how]
SC: [um:]
Me: you LEARN languages
SC: i probably learn d’ german slightly differently
because i did those before (-) so it’s a bit easier
to pick up stuff in german
Me: ok (-) so it’s faster maybe
SC: yes
Me: uh-huh (-) um::: (-) but do you find that the the
process that you go through when you’re learning
german is (. more similar or more different from
learning like is each language a very different
process of learning or is it
SC: no it’s very much the same
Me: ok so you see a lot of (. similarities (-- ok (.)
um::: (--)) ((laughs)) what words do you (. think
accurately describe the german language
321 SC: ((laughs))
322 Me: ((laughs)) this is fun i always get different answers [for this]
323 SC: [ugly]
324 Me: UGLY <<laughing> ok that’s that’s the most (.)
325 that’s the funniest one i’ve had>
326 SC: uh: foolish
327 Me: foolish (.): <<laughing> why foolish>
328 SC: <<laughing> cause>
329 Me: ((laughs))
330 SC: pronouns all mean the same thing
331 Me: ok (--) so from a grammatical sense it’s foolish
332 ((laughs))
333 SC: that about sums it up ((laughs))
334 Me: <<laughing> ugly and foolish (.): are there any good characteristics> (.): or are those good ((laughs))
335 SC: those aren’t too good
336 Me: those aren’t [too good no]
337 SC: [um: a good one]
338 Me: well if there are no good ones but i mean you must enjoy like you’re taking the course and doing well
339 you must enjoy it (-) what what what’s to enjoy
340 about it ((laughs))
341 SC: so (.): it’s fairly well spoken
342 Me: ok
343 SC: common ((laughs))
344 Me: so <<laughing> common [would be the]>
345 SC: [it’s useful to know]
346 Me: <<laughing> useful is the is the positive way to describe it>
347 SC: <<laughing> yeah>
348 Me: well cause yeah cause i mean i guess it’s pretty common for people not to think that it’s not pretty sounding
349 SC: ((laughs))
350 Me: um: (.): i personally think it’s beautiful when i hear it (.): because when i think once you learned it fluently y’ you hear things [a lot differently]
351 SC: [change is a little different]
352 Me: yeah (.): cause when i first obviously b’ before i spoke it i probably felt the same thing i can’t remember now
353 SC: ((laughs))
354 Me: <<laughing> but> (.): but yeah ok so ugly (.)
355 <<laughing> foolish (.): and common useful>
356 SC: ((laughs))

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Me: ((laughs)) any other words or is that that’s pretty good i think
SC: that’s pretty good ok ((laughs)) (.). what about
germany as a country (.). or pe’ the culture the
people (.). do you have an a’ do you have words that
you might (.). pi’ like if you were to picture you
know society in germany what would you
Me: yeah well y’ i mean even knowing nothing about it
or whatever
SC: ((laughs)) (-) i don’t know
Me: it’s interesting to see canadian perspective of
germany
SC: uh: (-) prob it’s probably not much different (.).
[i wouldn’t think]
Me: [ok so you don’t] (.). yeah (.). you’re first
impression is that it’s probably not that different
SC: yeah
Me: ok i’ve heard i’ve heard like (.). well you know:. (-)
th’ (-) drink a lot of be::er that sorta thing
but
SC: they do that here though
Me: ((laughs)) that’s true (.). very true (.). ok (.).
cool (.). um: (.). well that’s pretty much it (.). as
i was saying it was a b’ it’s uh shorter (.). um:
(4)
i don’t know why this one question got cut cut out
of this
SC: ((laughs))
Me: that just rememb’ reminded me that the last
interview you had in here (.). uh: i didn’t ask that
question and i wanted to
SC: ((laughs))
Me: now that i see it it’s silly oh well (.). make sure
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
Me: so (. ) last interview (-) so today um:: (-) i’m (. )
i want to: talk about um: (-) basically (. ) your
learning curve over time (-) in: (-) german 101
SC: [right]
Me: [because] now you’re finished (-) and so: (. ) what
i want you to do is (-) draw (-) what you think
(-) your learning curve was (. ) over the semester
SC: oh
Me: do you know what i mean?
(--)
SC: [i got (. ) alright alright]
Me: [i have an example] if you want to see (-) i’ll
just explain it to you i i (-) ok (---) this is
um: (. ) an example that i made of my spanish
learning (. ) ok just i totally (. ) made it u’ n’ i
didn’t make it up it’s real but (. ) you know (. ) i’
it’s not necessarily accurate (-) um: (-) so i was
in spain for a month doing a language course (. ) ok
so: for me (. ) i had already started with some
knowledge cause i had done (-) um: (. ) first and
second year spanish so (. ) to start (. ) was not at
the very (. ) bottom (-) and then (--) ((feedback))
turning it down (--) i got better over time slowly
and gradually there was no major increase until (.)
i was studying for the exam (--) so there was a
gradual increase from the beginning (. ) from (. )
sorry from being in the culture (--) SLOW but
gradual increase in my knowledge (. ) or what i
thought (. ) you know my own perception of that (. )
and then studying (--) for the final (. ) the end (. )
which was the exam (. ) to pass the language course
and (. ) so then at the end i had left with (. ) you
know so much of an increase (. ) so that’s just an
example (--) ((laughs)) (. ) so i’d like you to draw
your own (. ) what you think your learning curve
over time was (. ) in german 101 (. ) you can (. )
draw it however you want you don’t have to do it
that way
SC: alright
Me: and you don’t have to necessarily (. ) speak for
awhile (. ) you can just (. ) think about it (. ) and
then (. ) explain it afterwards or if you wanna
describe it as you go (. ) up to you
SC: i’ll probably just do it now
Me: ok
SC: cause i don’t know it probably (---) at the
beginning of the course there would have been (--) probably a large jump cause i didn’t know anything going in

Me: right

SC: so and then it just probably would have gone less and (.) except for i want it to be less in there (.) for the rest of the course (.). and there wasn’t really any big jump after that

Me: ok (.) so you started off with nothing (-) had a big jump (-) and then (.). a steady sort of increase?

SC: [yes]

Me: [ok] what about the exam

SC: i gotta be honest i had another exam that day that i was more worried about so i didn’t really study at all

Me: ok (.) and: midterm?

SC: uh:: (.) midterm (.) didn’t take much studying for either

Me: ok so (.). over the whole time (-) it was a very gradual increase was there NO time uh for example in th’ in the class there were many grammar concepts (.). was there any time where (.). one thing was more difficult and you needed to study more or was it sort of a (-) like what do you think (.). can you think of?

SC: i pretty much just (--) listened to what they said in class said alright

Me: ok

SC: i’ll remember that

Me: (.). hang on i have a (3)

what to you was the toughest part of the course (-)

if you can pick one thing

(6)

SC: some of the (-) uh: (--) what are they called (--) prepositions maybe

Me: [mm-hm]

SC: [in] (-) on (.). those type of things

Me: [ok]

SC: [cause] german has different ones for different meanings

Me: yes that’s true ((laughs)) (--) ok (.). so um: (.). but that wasn’t necessar’ that wasn’t actually a lesson taught in german 101 was it?

SC: i don’t think so

Me: ok so that was just your own noticing (.). something
that might be advanced for you [or something]

Me: ok (.) are you taking german 102 right now
SC: yes
Me: ok (-) how’s it going
SC: uh: (.) i haven’t really started on it
Me: have you noticed any increase in difficulty yet
SC: [no]
Me: [just] (.) same sort of (.) going along with that
SC: mm-hm
Me: interesting <<laughing> ok>
SC: there’s more writing than actual german in this one
Me: OH:: ok (.) ah::: that must be very different then
SC: in terms of (.) just (.) how it’s taught (.) cause
Me: you’re learning it on your own (.) which i think
SC: you did a lot anyway last semester is that not
Me: right
SC: yeah
Me: k (.) um: (--) before you put that away <<laughing>
one more thing> (-) can you draw me how you would
describe (.) your motivation throughout the course
(.). to: (.) continue with german or (.) or learn
more study slash whatever (--) sort of along the
same axis (.) you know (.). um: with the same idea
SC: probably would have been up and down
Me: ok well draw what you think
SC: i don’t know
Me: ((laughs)) it doesn’t matter just
SC: ((laughs))
Me: how you feel throughout (.) y’ you know this is the
beginning this is the end so
SC: alright (.) then it probably drops every once in a
awhile and goes up
Me: ok
SC: very wavy
Me: and did it end up in the end?
SC: uh::
Me: would you say?
(3)
SC: well probably hm::: (-) maybe not (-) because by the
end (-) actually i would have rather tooken spanish
instead of it
Me: ok
SC: but they didn’t offer a course i could take this
Me: mm-hm (---) now (.) interesting (.) i don’t know if
if you meant this but you started off with
motivation low is that true did you start no just
because i mean it’ y’ if you if i make you think
about it really like (.,) when you started german
101 ((coughs)) would your motivation have been at
it’s lowest point? (-) or would it have been (.)
middle high (.,) how do you [remember]
SC:                                  [uh::] (---) m’ (.)
motivation probably would have been (-) medium to
low (.,) because i didn’t (.,) know how difficult it
would be
Me: sure (-) so [you were]
SC:             [so]
Me: you just didn’t (.,) you weren’t sure yet
SC: right
Me: ok (.,) and then (.,) basically throughout up and
down ups and downs of motivation depending on (.)
. h was it more depending on (.,) the topic (.,) a’ uh
as in the content of the um: (.,) the stOryline sort
of the context of the course (.,) or more (.)
grammar wise what you found motivating
SC: it would have been that and grammar wise
Me: so everything and taken into account
SC: yep
Me: ok (-) very good (.,) ok that’s it i: wanted to keep
this very short today because i: uh: (.,) have a LOT
of information from everybody (.,) so it’s good (.)
and i just wanted to have a final th’ (.,) you know
thought on what (.,) what uh: (.,) what your
perception of the learning curve was like (.,) so
thank you
Works Cited


ReCall 13(1), 47-58.


