

ELT-43

The Foreign Language Learning Process

Milestones in ELT

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The British Council was established in 1934 and one of our main aims has always been to promote a wider knowledge of the English language. Over the years we have issued many important publications that have set the agenda for ELT professionals, often in partnership with other organisations and institutions.

As part of our 75th anniversary celebrations, we re-launched a selection of these publications online, and more have now been added in connection with our 80th anniversary. Many of the messages and ideas are just as relevant today as they were when first published. We believe they are also useful historical sources through which colleagues can see how our profession has developed over the years.

The Foreign Language Learning Process

This 1978 publication is a report of a small-scale research project into language learning by adult learners. This was a relatively early attempt to ask learners about the 'strategies and techniques' that they use to learn a language, and the author, GD Pickett, who was at the time Deputy Director of the British Council's English Teaching Information Centre, states that his intention was for the project to be 'a starting off point' which could encourage further research in this area. Pickett presents the invitation letter he sent to around 30 friends and colleagues – 'a far-flung assortment of linguists', though mostly male, British, and in the 30 to 50 age range – to ask for their thoughts on their own experiences in language learning. The report provides insights into how a rather atypical sample of highly educated and cosmopolitan adult learners go about the language learning task, on the basis of the introspective accounts received. Finally, Steven McDonough of Essex University contributes a chapter in which he relates the report to other, existing and future, research.

An Occasional Paper

The Foreign Language Learning Process

ETIC publications



The British Council

ENGLISH TEACHING INFORMATION CENTRE

ETIC Occasional Paper
The Foreign Language Learning Process

ISBN 0 900229 42X

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**Produced in England by The British Council,
Printing and Publishing Department, London
2M/2/78**

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(by G D Pickett except where otherwise stated)

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The Foreign Language Learning Process

The Research Background

For any neophyte entering the language teaching business over the last fifteen years the critical reading must have induced alternate moods of exhilaration and despondency.

On the one hand the increasing number of fertile, brilliant and experienced minds devoting themselves to the subject have poured out ideas and publications for teacher and pupil alike, all designed to make language teaching more effective. On the other, researchers have had to repeat at regular intervals that we are still far from understanding the learning process and that until we do, generalisation about teaching methods must be tentative.

One of the most recent statements of this kind appeared in Language Learning in January 1976 which was devoted to Papers in Second Language Acquisition.

"Most second language curricula have not reflected the process of second language acquisition, simply because until recently virtually nothing was known about the process. Most curriculum materials are based on general learning theory borrowed from behaviourist psychology". (Paper on "Creative Construction in Second Language Learning and Teaching" by Dulay and Burt p.76)

Admittedly this was followed by an optimistic statement to the effect that now we know enough "to suggest the general framework of the process" though Hosenfeld's article The New Student Role in the ACTFL Review of Foreign Language Education 1975 pp 129-167, both demonstrates the truth of this up to a point and yet confirms that "research on learning strategies is in its infancy". The situation has improved since Corder wrote in 1973: "It is as well to admit that at the present time we lack any clear and soundly based picture of the (language) learning process" (Introduction to Applied Linguistics p.109 Penguin). But it is still true that, as Wilkins wrote in concluding a discussion of current research: "None of the types of research that I have discussed are to be rejected. It is simply that it will be a very long time before they will enable us to manipulate language teaching with a confident knowledge of the way in which an individual learns a foreign language" (Linguistics and Language Teaching, Arnold, 1972, p.214).

To a very large extent research into the foreign language learning process has proceeded slowly because research, to be respectable, has to be based on external observation, large samples, and statistically valid results; and in a hotly contested field one cannot be satisfied with less in the long run. Nevertheless, the material of this type of research is extremely intractable to this approach since it is concerned with the inner workings of the human mind (if such a shorthand term is permissible) and hence not subject to direct observation except by the subject. Yet we all speak a mother tongue and many learn foreign languages successfully. We all, to varying degrees, think about ourselves and hence our own introspection is a source of primary data. In some cases this data may be known introspectively in advance of statistically valid research findings and give insights which can then be checked by more orthodox research methods. Hence as Bennett points out: "A theory of second language learning (can) be set up on the basis of what the successful learner must do and what he does do. Undoubtedly much of this is already known", (AVLA Journal Vol 13 No.1 1975). Something similar was the point of departure for Carol Hosenfeld, as she states in her article quoted above: "The author first became aware of learning strategies when she noted that she could observe the techniques she herself used to complete tasks as a student in a beginning Spanish class" and this led her into an investigation by interview to see whether other learners could do the same. The majority can of course, and the more mature, articulate, self-conscious and sophisticated the learner the more revealing are likely to be his introspections.

Whatever the defects of this technique, and I am fully aware of the methodological flaws in subjective anecdotalism, we ignore it at our peril. No student of ancient history would believe everything Herodotus says but if he ignored him completely he would end up knowing very much less about the Ancient World. In the same way, no student of languages can afford to overlook the insights of language learners, whether successful or unsuccessful, for otherwise he is denying himself a mode of knowing about his subject. After all, no less a person than Freud used introspection a great deal and an investigator who condemns himself to using outside observation alone is limiting the pace of his advance. As Chomsky defined the problem in his Review of Skinner's 'Verbal Behavior' (Language Vol 35, 1959 pp 26-58) "anyone who sets himself the problem of analysing the causation of behaviour will (in the absence of independent neuro-physiological evidence) concern himself with the only data

available, namely the record of inputs to the organism and the organism's present response and will try to describe the function specifying the response in the terms of the history of inputs". An external "record of inputs", as any language learner knows, is not the only data available.

Following that article a new cycle in linguistics began. With increasing focus on "the contribution of the organism" ie the learner, it became obvious that, as perhaps many language teachers intuitively felt, a purely behaviourist view of the language learning process was untenable. The retreat from Skinner gathered momentum yet even Chomsky at that time could only foresee a continuance of the indirect approach to the problem: "If the contribution of the organism is complex, the only hope of predicting behaviour even in a gross way will be through a very indirect program of research that begins by studying the detailed character of the behaviour itself and the particular capacities of the organism involved." (op.cit.p.27).

The last decade has seen the widespread though not universal acceptance of such concepts as innate linguistic competence tied to a person's physical and mental development; the notions of deep grammar and semantic structure; the recognition that surface structure is only part of the data. Research into error analysis, creoles, pidgins and inter-language have shown how the organism imposes a coherent transitional system on learned language which relates not so much to the learner's mother tongue as to some internal acquisition programme.

The Stanford Conference of May 1971 on Individualising Foreign Language Instruction (Altman and Politzer) drew further attention to the learner as a contributor to the language learning process though its main concern was with teaching procedures rather than learning.

Despite the increased focus on the learner, however, there is still a great reticence about actually asking the learner what goes on inside of him. As Schumann points out: "The procedure generally used to discover what cognitive processes are involved in second language acquisition is to examine the linguistic product of the learning process and then to intuit backwards about what cognitive operations may have produced the particular forms or sequences which appear." (Language Learning: Papers in Second Language Acquisition, article Getting a More Global Look at the Learner p.22) To the extent that error analysis aims at explaining the cognitive processes of learners it is an example of this procedure.

It would seem equally legitimate, however, to intuit forwards from the learner rather than backwards from the material; and indirect investigation, in Schumann's words, "might be profitably supplemented by more direct assessment of the learners' cognitive operations" (op.cit). Naiman, Frohlich & Todesco saw the problem thus: "Getting at the 'unobservables' in learning a second language is not an easy task... But the difficulty inherent in this kind of investigation should not deter us from trying. In fact, researchers in second language learning are recognizing more and more the need to understand the unobservables underlying the process of second language acquisition." (The Good Second Language Learner TESL TALK 6 [1975] pp.64-5).

Thanks to a clearer articulation of the problem and a growing respect for honest intuition, work along these lines is already in progress and I am indebted to Dr Marjorie Wesche of the Public Service Commission, Ottawa, for drawing my attention to the latest publications (see bibliography). Most of the work is being done in Canada at the Modern Language Centre of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. A key project is the "Effective Language Teaching and Learning Project" being carried out in the Modern Language Centre by Neil Naiman, Maria Frohlich and Angie Todesco and its first stage is described in the above quoted article.

The present paper was conceived and drafted in late 1975 before I had a chance to read this article but it was projected on a modified form of the Canadian researchers' assumption that: "Never before, to our knowledge, have good language learners been asked directly about their language learning experience and specifically about the strategies and techniques they might have employed in learning a second language" (op.cit.p.58).

There was the monograph produced by Izhac Epstein "La pensée et la polyglossie: essai psychologique et didactique" (Lausanne 1915) based, among other things, on introspective data collected from 23 multilingual subjects before the First World War. This was used extensively by Verboj Vildomec in his book Multilingualism (Leyden 1963) which contains in Chapter III valuable introspective data collected by means of a questionnaire circulated amongst the author's multilingual friends and others in Western Europe in 1952. Finally, there was an increasing corpus of material at the University of Essex where students on the MA course in Applied Linguistics can choose, as one of their options, to learn a new language for a term and write an account of their learning processes.

Nevertheless, considering the vast amount of research that had gone into other aspects of language in recent years and the relative neglect accorded to introspective learner accounts, which up to that time had been elicited from a very small number of people, our assumption was still broadly valid and the approach may preserve its air of novelty for a few years yet. But with the studies of Vildomec and the Canadian team the ground has been well broken.

It is hoped that the present paper will, in the first place, bring the issue, and the work of the major researchers, to the attention of the large number of English language teachers and advisers with whom the British Council has contact. In the second place, it will add a few more case histories to the growing body of raw data on which this research depends. Though the paper will not be long enough to print all the accounts in full, they will be available in the archives of the British Council's English Teaching Information Centre for investigators to consult.

The Present Project

Given the state of things in late 1975, it was proposed that I should contact some thirty friends and colleagues for whose linguistic attainments I could personally vouch and invite them to write introspective accounts of their own experience in learning and using languages. It was thought that before the general invitation went out a small group of officers in the British Council's English Teaching Division, who had themselves learnt several languages, should do their own accounts as a pilot project. This was done, the papers were discussed and on the basis of this collective experience the following invitation letter was sent out to a far-flung assortment of linguists (the term 'polyglot' was avoided as being somewhat evocative of shifty dragomans and seedy Conradesque emporia).

GEN/612/6 of 11 August

Dear

The English Teaching Information Centre of the British Council has put me in charge of a project which may interest you and in which I would greatly appreciate your cooperation.

Linguists are increasingly turning their attention to the second or foreign language learning process, about

which very little is known; and clearly, until a great deal more is known, language teaching must necessarily rest on rather shaky foundations. Research into these processes tends to take the form of observation but as many of the processes are not observable except by the learner himself, it would seem that at some stage language learners should be asked to describe what goes on inside of them when they learn and use foreign languages. Such descriptions will provide raw data from which, it is hoped, the path of further investigation can be mapped.

We have decided, therefore, to collect a number of subjective and introspective accounts of their language learning processes from a number of experienced and highly articulate linguists and I would be most grateful if you would consider contributing one of your own. The account would be used to compile an Occasional Paper entitled The Foreign Language Learning Process and may be quoted in full or in part, either anonymously or with full acknowledgement as you desire. The copyright would rest with the British Council and you would receive two complimentary copies of the completed paper.

I fully appreciate that you are very busy and that I can offer no fee but to make the imposition as light as possible, I will be happy to accept contributions in an unstructured form composed in whatever style or mode may be most convenient to you - handwritten, on tape (reel or cassette), typed, etc. Tapes will be transcribed here and returned to you. As to length I would be grateful for something not less than 2000 words (roughly 5 pages of typescript) but as we are interested in concrete detail and illustration you may find that more space is needed and we would naturally welcome longer accounts up to about 8000 words. On the other hand, anything you can manage will be warmly appreciated. What should it consist of? You may be interested to know that in a pilot project recently held contributors described their accounts variously as "an impressionistic ramble", "dis-jointed", "a garbage bag of thoughts" and that the information given was nonetheless extremely valuable. They wrote about how they learnt their various languages, what made them succeed or fail, what went on in their heads as they learnt vocabulary and grammar, the errors and confusions occurring when they used foreign languages and a host of other apparently trivial and highly personal phenomena which all adds up to a very suggestive picture

of how people learn and use languages. If you could supply me with something along the same lines I would be highly satisfied. There is no need for it to be technical or systematic and concrete example in lay language will probably be more valuable than generalisation in technical language. No matter how isolated and freakish a fact may seem, it is worth putting in as it may be part of learners' common experience. In other words, what I am looking for is a spontaneous description of discrete symptoms such as doctors get in their surgeries.

For this reason we have deliberately avoided a questionnaire or any format that would constrain your ability to roam freely over the subject. However, here is a list of prompts that might indicate aspects of your learning processes you might wish to touch on:

Kinaesthetic - and physical factors	Age, sex, time of day, time span of learning. Writing, exotic scripts etc. Oral, aural, visual or other learning. Sound-system acquisition. Forms of practice. A good ear, photographic memory, "gift of the gab" etc.
Attitudinal - Emotional and Personality factors	Empathy, sympathy, antipathy for the language and its speakers and their culture. Motivation (to do a job or acquire knowledge - egocentric or imposed). Adopting a persona for each language. Resistance to a new persona. Embarrassment and inhibition. Display and self-projection. Home and school background (help or obstacle to learning). Anxiety - relaxation, fear or praise as stimuli. Concentration and incidental learning.
The Substance of the Language - and Context of Learning	Languages learned - what order? Does it get easier? Relative difficulty of each language. How presented - intensive, extensive, rules and examples. "Character" of each. Models used - a variety or one? - a book, a teacher, an informant, TV, tape or any combination of these.

Grammar - how acquired?
Vocabulary - how acquired - in isolation,
in context, in a list?
Relation between the two.
Role of teachers and the teaching
situation.
Role of examinations.
Which aspects of language do you find
easiest and most difficult to acquire?
Translation as a learning device.
Educational background eg the effects of
an interest in history and distribution of
languages.

Languages in
Use -

Fluency and loss of it.
Revival of fluency after a gap.
Conscious and unconscious use.
Interference between foreign language.
Interference from mother tongue.
Track jumping and spillover from one
language to another.
Situation evoking language.
Language evoking situation.
Lag between knowing and applying
language .
Application of language before "knowing"
it.
Dreaming in a foreign language.
Recall of latent language.
Translation from and into.
Use of films, radio and other media.
Reading, writing, speaking, under-
standing: separate skills or interrelated
forms of the same thing?
Memory, forgetting, mental blocks, tip-
of-the-tongue effect.
Internal dialogue and imaginary situ-
ations.
Suppressed vocalisation.
Thinking in a language.
Immersion in a language and its effects.

Personal
Learning -
Strategies
and
Phenomena

Anything not suggested by above which
you feel appropriate.

This list may seem formidable but I would not expect every contributor to have something to say on all the topics suggested. Conversely I hope you will feel free to dilate on any phenomena I may have overlooked. If the prompt does not suggest anything to you then please do not try to make it mean something as it may falsify your actual experience. Equally, please do not let your account be influenced by any beliefs you may hold about how languages should be learned as this might distort your recollections of how your languages actually were learned.

I would appreciate it if you would give me the following information at the beginning or end of the account:

1. Name
2. Age: 20 - 30, 30 - 40, over 40
3. Present position/occupation
4. Diplomas/degrees etc held
5. Usable languages, ranging from near-native range and fluency to a comfortable reading knowledge.
6. Other languages to the learning of which you have been exposed.

This information will be available to researchers who may want to examine the original contributions in their full version in our Archives. It will not appear in the Occasional Paper unless you request it and if you so wish it can be deleted from the original when it goes into our Archives.

I should like to be able to send the paper to press in November and I hope this will give you enough time to produce your contribution if you decide to do one. Should you prefer not to contribute I am nonetheless very appreciative of your devoting time to the perusal of this letter and am confident that whatever contributions are received will be extremely valuable. In the meanwhile, I shall be happy to elucidate any points that you may wish to query. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

G D Pickett
Deputy Director
English Teaching Information Centre.

The letter gave a number of hints at the methodology being used but tried to strike a balance between being informative and not giving too much away.

The background thinking was that

1. Even where those invited were predisposed to be cooperative because of personal friendship or professional interest, they were all busy with other things.
2. Therefore they should be offered a way of giving the information in a way pleasant and convenient to themselves. . .
3. . . .and not presented with a questionnaire that would, it was felt,
 - 3.1 look too demanding
 - 3.2 be impersonal
 - 3.3 over-define the range of the survey
 - 3.4 pre-judge the issues which each contributor ought to find worthy of comment.
4. It was as important for the contributors to reveal aspects of language learning we had not foreseen as it was for them to comment on aspects we had foreseen.

In other words, we wanted to keep the contributions as far as possible at the level of 'intimate confessions' and, indeed, at least one of the contributors sensed the resemblance to the confessional because he ended by saying: "And that is all I can remember. Will you give me absolution now?"

On the other hand, we felt that some sort of guidance had to be given otherwise we might not get anything relevant at all. As many of the contributors were not technically concerned with linguistics, we gave some indication of the significance their contribution might have and provided a list of prompts, with the caution that we would not expect each one to evoke a response and we would be happy to have information that went beyond the suggested topics. The main batch of invitations went out on 11 August 1976 and care was taken to keep contributors out of contact with each other until their contribution had been submitted. This was fairly easy as only I knew all the people who had been contacted.

The group was predominantly composed of male British graduates engaged in closely related professions either academic, diplomatic or British Council. Nearly all had English as their mother tongue and were within the 30-50 age range. Hence they had mostly done their schooling and initial language learning in the 50s and 60s, usually by traditional methods. A large proportion of the married contributors had foreign spouses. These similarities were not deliberately sought after and I appreciate that the homogeneity of the group must limit any conclusion that can be drawn from their contributions. However, as the selection was mine it was naturally limited to people roughly of my own generation of whose linguistic abilities I had more or less first-hand knowledge.

The main criterion was, of course, their linguistic ability. They were 'good learners' by any standards though none was a professional interpreter. They were all people for whom language learning was merely an adjunct to their daily lives, albeit an important one, and could therefore reasonably represent the majority of language learners throughout the world who have to learn a language in order to be able to do something else.

Three fluent and usable languages were regarded as the minimum and, as the list of languages each respondent sent in shows, most of them had more than this. In addition to the more usually taught classical and modern European languages, the contributors initially invited could collectively lay claim to a fluent knowledge of Arabic, Persian, Chinese, Swedish, Malay, Thai, Serbo-Croat, Czech, Tibetan, Russian, Danish, Hausa, Swahili, Finnish and Khmer not to mention exposure to and partial knowledge of a bewildering array ranging from Burmese to Luganda, Swahili to Polish, Sanskrit to Welsh. All had paper qualifications in the languages they claimed to know well, usually a degree, Civil Service exam or "A" Level, but frequently had additional languages without the paper qualification. Whatever the basis of their claim to know a language, however, it was corroborated by my first-hand knowledge of their performance or personal integrity, - always the latter and frequently both. It is of course virtually impossible to define what 'knowing a language' consists of and paper qualifications were as likely to undervalue a person's command of his languages as overvalue them. We therefore left each contributor to divide his languages into 'usable' and 'exposure' languages as honesty, modesty and commonsense dictated. In my own experience good linguists, apart from the odd language-collecting bore

one meets occasionally, tend to understate their command because they are always acutely conscious of how much more they really should know. Nevertheless, Vildomec came to quite the opposite conclusion and found that people tend to exaggerate the number of languages they and other people know (op.cit.)

While I am extremely grateful for the accounts sent in in response to this invitation, the response as a whole has been slightly disappointing in volume, since barely 50% of those approached responded including those in the pilot group. However, as I am making no statistical claims on the basis of this survey, - and could not have done so even if I had had 100% response, since the sample even then would have been extremely small, - this is not so important. I take comfort in the fact that proportionately we have had a better response than Vildomec, who got only 61 questionnaires back out of 470 sent out. If any conclusions can be drawn from this it is perhaps that collecting a statistically significant corpus of material is going to be a long job and that people are more willing to do introspective accounts than answer questionnaires.

Nevertheless, the accounts sent in have provided a great deal of positive information and the pattern of response, even in its lacunae, provides some valuable negative evidence which future researchers may find useful.

I found, for example, that the prompts given were rarely followed systematically though all got a mention from at least one contributor. It was certainly surprising to me, in view of the unique opportunities the contributors had had to make comparisons between languages, that only one of them had anything to say directly about the 'character' of languages learnt. This may be related to another negative fact that emerged, namely, that the learners were not influenced in their personal strategies by the character (or 'nature') of the language they were learning. They seemed to tackle each language in the same way insofar as they were in control of the learning process - and on the whole they were. This would suggest that methodology should be based on knowledge of learners not description of language.

But the prompts were not intended to be followed systematically and indeed contributors were encouraged to go beyond them. This indeed produced valuable results. Whereas we gave 48 prompts and several of these were multiple items, we got in return over 100 new items which the learners felt were

worth mentioning. Admittedly some of these were segments or special applications of the broad prompts originally given but, even allowing for this, it was obvious that each learner had something new to add and that we were justified in avoiding a questionnaire and keeping the survey open-ended. The prompts and other aspects touched upon have been plotted on the grid shown at Appendix A. It is hoped that this will help any future researchers who want to compile a questionnaire or investigate any of the phenomena listed.

A further piece of negative evidence that may be useful in developing a methodology of this type of survey is the apparent reasons for not contributing or for phrasing contributions in a particular way. Some of the people invited, though initially enthusiastic about the project, declined to contribute because they were reticent in talking about themselves. Others who did contribute and who no doubt understood they were giving a personal and introspective account, nonetheless found it hard to use the first person singular, as though it were bad manners. They tended to generalize and make prescriptive statements although it was obvious they were only talking about themselves. One even lapsed into the imperative mood! As all the contributors are too intelligent to have misread the purpose of the paper, I have taken these to be disguised personal statements and I hope I have not misread their purpose. However, all this shows that eliciting people's knowledge of themselves, even on a neutral subject like language learning, can be a touchy business. It serves to demonstrate, in fact, that language learning is not a neutral subject but something very personal which touches many aspects of ourselves we like to keep private. From the accounts it appears it can embarrass or terrify us, flatter our pride, indulge our vanity or satisfy a craving for order, logic or a new identity. And if we have this difficulty getting inside the good language learner, how much more difficult is it going to be getting inside the bad language learner?

Finally, before we look at the positive evidence, I should mention that most of the contributors overlooked the fact that we were seeking to find out what goes on inside learners "when they learn and use foreign languages." Just as it is impossible to define what 'knowing a language' consists of so it is impossible to draw a line between learning and using, since we do both at the same time and no matter how good we are, the learning process never stops. Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish introspectively what processes are clearly on the learning side and what on the use side and

contributors tended to concentrate on conscious learning strategies. Possibly the fault was mine in not wording the letter clearly enough. It was hoped, however, that some of the prompts relating to language use such as "track-jumping", "spillover", "situation evoking language" and vice versa, "dreaming", "fluency" and "revival of fluency" might give valuable insights into the status of language as a neural, mental and physical activity once it had become internalised in the advanced learner phase. Vildomec elicited a lot of information of this type, for example, on "interference" (see op.cit. Chapter III paras 14, 15 and 16) but it must be confessed that I was not so successful though what insights there are are extremely valuable. It would be worthwhile someone else taking up these phenomena by themselves, however, and trying to collect more information about them. I do not want to give them undue prominence as most of the information on them in this paper comes from my own contribution to the pilot project. I feel sure, however, that if asked again some of the contributors would record similar experiences. It should be added that information of this type should be as specific and detailed as possible, however long the anecdote, since it is the detail that allows us to isolate and define the phenomenon.

The Main Body of Positive Data

Taking the factors shown on the grid at Appendix A, we can now examine the positive information given.

Prompt 1: Age, sex, time of day, span of learning.

Ten of the contributors had something to say on this head. The most explicit was contributor B who gave the age and time span for each of his languages:

"French at age 10 (lived 3 months with non-English speaking French family). Experienced deep emotional disturbance, rejection of 'things French' but learned the spoken language to a point of communicative competence at peer-group level. . . . Learned GCE 'O' Level German in 6 months (25 hours private lessons at age 17). At age 23-25 learned spoken Khmer. . . . Psychological effects of speechlessness and fumbling for words lasted another 4 years. . . . At age 29 began learning Indonesian. . . . Became proficient in everyday usage in the four modes in about 8 months. . . . In general each new language is easier to learn than the last, though with increasing age it becomes more difficult (perhaps because psychologically less important?) to avoid sounding foreign."

The negative effects of immersion in French at 10 seem to have been of limited duration, since the contributor subsequently married a French woman, but it is interesting that he attributes the difficulties that come with age not to flagging physical and mental powers but to a psychological and motivational factor - decreasing need and ability to adapt, less ego-permeability. Both at 10 and 29 problems of identity seem to be crucial.

Contributor E began Latin at 7 and though already claiming "primitive" French and Modern Greek, dwelt exclusively on non-spoken languages until sent on an eighteen month crash course of advanced Arabic at the age of 27. Nevertheless he remarks that:

"In learning Arabic in my late 20's, under some pressure, I found no difficulty in picking up not only the structure of the language, but also the vocabulary, at the same speed as I might have done with a younger memory but I found that, as soon as I stopped the learning process, and even more so when I left an Arabic environment, it all fell away from my memory at an alarming speed."

Latin and Greek words learnt in childhood kept springing to mind when he was searching for the right Arabic word, which seems to confirm his belief that "If a student starts learning a language at the age of 8 to 10 and continues through secondary school, that seems to me an optimum period for leaving a permanent basis in his mind for that language for the rest of his life". Greek and Latin numerals still interfere with his counting in Arabic, despite the high standard he attained in the latter, and I find it particularly interesting that the influence of non-spoken dead languages can be so powerful as to interfere with the speaking of a living language.

Having started his first language at the age of 11 and his last at 35, contributor F found that learning vocabulary after the age of 25 was the thing that got noticeably harder though even at 35 he was able to learn 30-60 words per night "and found that after the initial winding-up process it was not at all burdensome and the sense of achievement after each test stimulated further learning" though he goes on to say: "The problem was not acquiring the vocabulary but keeping it and I found that after three or four days I began to lose what I had learnt". This echoes the findings of contributor E above, who was a classmate on the same Arabic course.

Contributor G tried to teach herself German at 8 and French at 10 but the process was vitiated by wrong generalisations about the new language: "If I learned a word in French that began with the same letter as it did in English I thought I could form French translations of all the English words that rhymed with it simply by altering the first letter eg tower = tour therefore power = pour". This strong power to generalise in a young and presumably naive learner was accompanied by a strong sense of what the new language ought to be like based on the norms of the mother tongue. This "mother tongue chauvinism" will be dealt with below but it is interesting to note that it was present in at least one contributor at an age when children's minds are supposed to be very malleable. The same learner's interest in the Homeric tales at 10, opera at 17 and archaeology at 20 benefited and stimulated her learning of Greek, Italian and French respectively and among the ingredients of her success she gives prominence to "interest in the literature/culture", "intrinsic interest in what the language embodies or symbolizes to me". As these factors must vary with age and maturity it would seem to follow that age is less important than one's mental set towards the task and one's mental growth with it. Indeed, this contributor concluded: "My

attainment so far is modest but from a very slow start I have picked up speed since the age of 21 or so. So much for the atrophy which is supposed to come with age!" (Fortunately she is still under 30).

A revealing gloss on this remark comes from contributor H: "My interest in foreign language learning dates from childhood; I have found that learning foreign languages is a way of growing personally and this too casts the whole task in a very positive light". Like contributor E he felt that an important ingredient in the learning process was appropriate pace: "I need to have rapid variations of pace to suit my type of understanding and may need to go over something in painstaking detail, while other areas I wish to race through because I understand them from analogies". Contributor E, speaking both as a teacher and a learner wrote: "The introduction of a sense of momentum in the early stage of learning a language is also vital; it does not have to be fast, if the student is reasonably young, but there has to be movement (ie appreciation of results) and enjoyment on the part of the student". This momentum was obviously beneficial to contributor J learning Russian in the army - "intensive 6 month course, 5/6 days a week, 6 hours a day plus a couple of hours homework" but it is difficult to draw the line between momentum and pressure. "Every four weeks of our army course there was a test. If you fell below a certain level on it you were straight back to your regiment!" Perhaps they are inseparable, the one guaranteeing the other and both stimulating the attack on new language. Contributor N spoke favourably of the single-minded intensity of his (German) language-learning experience and its short duration and the relative speed with which he learnt Spanish. Both languages have stayed with him and grown through reading.

The more leisurely pace at which contributor L learnt English and French does not seem to have produced more efficient learning, though it was more enjoyable. In learning English, for example, "I started going to evening classes - three hours per week - when I was 12 years old. During the first three years or more I learned English in the traditional way, that is with a teacher and a book . . . This method of learning English was slow but I never found it weary". However, on first exposure to English in England at a Cambridge summer course she found that her English was barely enough for her to keep up: "I found lectures particularly trying and don't think I understood more than a third of what was being said . . . It was an exhausting experience because even though I could not understand it all I was trying very hard to do so all the time".

For six years she learned French from the age of 15 or 16 without going to France or using it outside the classroom. The methods were similar with the ostensibly important difference that the textbooks were entirely in French, though vocabulary learning, translation exercises and memorizing literary passages were an important part of the course. Yet she experienced the same limitations as with English on first exposure to a French milieu, mitigated only by the fact that as it came later, she was psychologically more prepared. Contributor J agreed that age affected language learning: "you lose your tender ear, your snappy memory and your susceptibility to various forms of encouragement as you get older, but increasing wisdom (or worldly wiseness), more sensible study habits and a more purpose-specific reason for learning Lx more than compensate."

Factors of age, whether the learner is young or old, seem to be ambivalent in their effects and are easily offset for good or ill by non-linguistic factors. Pace and momentum do seem positive factors even where they are accompanied by pressure though contributor G said pressure and competition were negative factors for her - except when she was winning! Contributor M made the point that while the older learner has the advantage of getting quicker insights into the language this is offset by failing memory, not to mention physical deterioration when she quotes the case of a fellow student who was reproved by his oculist for trying to learn to read Arabic over the age of 40 since this had apparently caused a 25% deterioration in his eyesight!

Whatever conclusions we may draw about age and the span of learning, no contributor thought the sex of the learner or the time of day when learning takes place to be factors worth mentioning.

Prompt 2: Writing, exotic scripts etc.

Seven contributors had something to say about this and on balance seemed to be evenly divided between those who found exotic scripts a stimulus and those who found them a deterrent. Most however, found that the physical act of writing, whether in a Latin or exotic script, helped to fix language in the mind. Contributor A felt that speaking and writing were basically the same skill but usually evoked by different stimuli. He strongly advocated writing vocabulary on cards or in notebooks and acknowledged the attraction of exotic script as adding interest but found it could dissipate one's effort. Contributor B found the script of Khmer a stumbling block: "the memory-load factor of learning the

alphabet of 72 different letters based on South Indian script hindered vocabulary growth through reading" but it was not the actual writing of it that caused the problem; rather, recognition. In learning Persian and Arabic contributor C felt the non-Latin script a hindrance: "one can get by with a survival kit of spoken sounds . . . but it will take more than mimicry to master the motor skills of reading and writing". Contributor D, because of the primacy he placed on reading, which in turn reinforced motivation and contact with the local culture, naturally thought that "a new script is always worth mastering because without it you are half blind to your environment". When one thinks of the amount of vocabulary and grammar one can acquire effortlessly by simply reading street signs, shop titles, advertisements etc this point is particularly valid and he concludes that "not being able to read local road signs may be dangerous but those who survive develop an 'I can do without it' attitude which is rationalised into resistance to the language and other aspects of the culture" and presumably inhibits further attempts at learning. In learning Russian contributor J found the Cyrillic alphabet a stimulus "mastered in a matter of days, easy because it is so similar, motivating because it is nevertheless different; nice feeling to have a 'new' script under your belt (c.f. my learning of Thai where the motivation for and delight in the mastery of a totally new script was even greater - and took much longer)." Contributor M mentioned the low standard of Arabic printing as a deterrent to reading and she admits "I have always found the very appearance of Arabic books daunting"; but this is not the same thing as writing the script, which in fact she learnt to recognise in a morning but felt "it needed constant revision at the beginning to be able to reproduce the letters for myself. In first writing Arabic guidance was needed less in proceeding from right to left than in learning to step the letters so that the finished script looks like a staircase . . . It's one's handwriting that in this case needs a whole new persona".

It appears that learning a new script is not just acquiring a new skill. If we accept that one's mother tongue handwriting is closely linked to personality it would follow that an excursion into a new script will require some personal adaptation quite apart from the muscular and motor processes involved.

Contributor H demonstrates that for him it is the process of writing rather than any particular script that helps to fix language: "I am convinced that writing the language is one of the principal ways of appropriating it, making oneself master

of those elements. This is particularly so with strange orthographies such as Persian; I take care in forming the word or phrase on paper and saying it as I do so. I am turning this phrase around within me and before me, hearing it and seeing it at the same time. I also do it, however, with languages that use the Roman script, though in those cases to a lesser extent".

Contributor F, however, found that it varied with the language: "For several languages I have religiously kept vocabulary books in my own writing and have felt that writing a word and its meaning out helps to fix words in my own mind. On the other hand, with Spanish I have learnt words almost entirely from lists . . . and from reading. . . No intermediate stage of writing the words out seemed necessary and learning was just as effective, even more".

It is probably not coincidence that contributor H spoke about appropriating language through writing, making it part of oneself and subjecting it to one's personality. Writing seems to be something akin to the old magical practice of making an image or getting someone's name in order to acquire power over him. It is perhaps more important in the earlier stages of learning a language when this power is being built up and the learner is less sure of his ultimate dominance. All the same, Contributor G has a strong inkling that "writing is greatly helped by transfer of other skills, rather than straight tuition in writing". Whether writing should therefore be used to promote the other skills it appears to be a transfer of is debatable, though being also a skill in its own right it presumably can also be transferred!

Prompt 3: Oral, aural, visual or other learning.

While it was possible to infer from some of the accounts whether the contributor learned primarily through the eye or the ear, there were only seven clear statements on the subject.

Contributor B said he had an ear for the music or prosody of a language "ie I have an aesthetic pleasure in listening to languages and therefore am an attentive and assiduous listener" but this was combined with visual learning when it was a question of remembering exceptions to the straightforward grammatical rules: "For exceptions (eg irregular verbs, impermissible collocations etc) I rely on auditory and visual memory ie the way words or phrases stick in the memory with the tone and accent of the voice one has heard

pronouncing them; the position of a word on a page." Contributor F found the visual element in his learning made stronger. . . ."I normally cannot learn by sound alone. I have a good ear and a reasonable talent for imitating accurately but I cannot retain information acquired by ear unless I see it written". Contributor I also claimed to have a good ear but her memory was "predominantly photographic, that is to say, the image I see recalls the sound. For example, a person's name with a very unfamiliar sound pattern will escape me unless I write it down, but having seen it written down, I will remember it and normally remember correctly its pronunciation". From his failure to learn Maghrebi Arabic by 'aural discovery' Contributor N similarly concluded "that my personal learning strategies are biased towards visual decoding."

Contributor H, on the other hand, laid great stress on an aural approach to a new language. "I pay a great deal of attention to very close listening early on in learning a language. I'm convinced that all serious phoneme work must come early and concentrate very heavily on this . . . I also use from early on in learning a language and right up to the intermediate stages the practice of bathing myself in the sound of the language. This is a passive form of listening rather along the lines that we have experienced as children when adults were talking and we were playing on the floor. The language was happening all around us and we were absorbing its qualities and rhythms almost unconsciously. I generally do this for foreign languages by having the radio turned on when I am doing something else". This is analogous to the practice of contributor I, already mentioned as a 'visualiser', who played Serbo-Croat tapes while she was doing something else "so that even if I am not listening to the content, the 'music' of the language is impressing itself on my mind."

Needless to say, the army Russian course attended by contributor J laid great stress on listening since that is what the men were being trained to do but lots of other non-aural techniques were used to attain the required results. This would suggest that the army knew what seems to emerge from these contributions, namely, that though learners may have a preference for aural or visual learning, they usually use both; to try to exclude one mode because the ultimate use of the language would not be in it would have hindered the learning process for some and impoverished it for all.

Contributor M, having learnt French and German at school with book, blackboard and chalk ie mostly visually, considers herself "a late starter in aural learning" with the result that her "ear was poorly attuned to the techniques of taped exercises". But perhaps the implied cause and effect relationship here is illusory since later she says: "As I still can't easily distinguish the sounds myself when Arabs are talking to me I assume I haven't a good ear in the first place. . . . On the other hand I have always found my photographic memory enables me to write [Arabic letter] sin instead of sad where appropriate and to locate in my mind the place of a word on a page or list without necessarily recalling the actual spelling".

It is beyond the powers of this paper to try to resolve a hen and egg question like this. Is a good ear the result or the cause of aural learning? Presumably we can postulate 'a good eye' as the equivalent for the quick visual learner and whether it is cause or result is equally debatable.

Prompt 4: Sound system acquisition

This and the following prompt elicited information that may have already been touched on in the previous section but six contributors made statements which suggest they could conceive of the sound system of the target language as an entity to be grappled with quite apart from their own aural/oral feats.

Contributor A treated the sound system as almost incidental, something that would come to the learner in any case if he followed the visual and cognitive techniques suggested. "Tapes of prepared readings from passages of prose are useful from the early stages to get the hang of pronunciation. Once this stage is over and pronunciation roughly right, leave it off". None of those depressing pronunciation exercises which still leave us far short of perfection, apparently! "Much later, start taping TV and radio programmes and going through the recordings with a teacher", but this mainly for content not sound. Consistent with this relatively delayed approach to the sound system, he tends to favour starting to speak relatively late ie after the grammar and language structure have been mastered and after several hundred words have been learnt by heart and a good deal of the reader covered. "Mind you, this stage can be reached in a month or two and the best thing to do when this stage is reached is to move into a family, preferably one with children, and stay a month."

This approach seems in direct contradiction to the statement of contributor C that "A good ear very often seems more important than a systematic understanding of the mechanics of a language" and one would welcome more illustrative matter upholding either view.

The processes of contributor F seem to be close to those of contributor A since he claims that "unrealised sound" is enough for him to learn in the early stages though it needs to be reinforced by real sound - speaking and listening - later. "Though I can learn living languages with the limited aim of reading and a little writing ie what would be required of a dead language, I do not learn dead languages as easily because the possibility of speaking is removed. It does not seem to matter whether the possibility is realised or not. It is as though imagining the muscular and mental demands of speech facilitates the acquisition of the language as a whole; where these imaginings do not exist, or are weak, as in Latin and Anglo-Saxon, the total impression of the language is also weak". This learner would not, one would assume, have a dead language interfering with a living one as recorded by contributor E above, Latin or Greek preempting Arabic, but the vigour of these unspoken languages in someone who has learnt them well suggests that the realisation of language sounds is not as important as one might think.

Contributor F goes on to say: "I do not need to actually say a word before I can learn it, nor do I find that frequent repetition of a word alone facilitates learning. On the basis of its written form I repeat it over and over in my head and somehow or other 'feel' the movement of the word in my mouth". One might well question whether such latent language is language at all and the only proof is when it ceases to be latent and comes out in practice. Nevertheless, at least one other contributor - G - considered it was possible to 'know' a language without ever having had to realise its sound: "I now regard myself as at pre-threshold level in German ie I have never spoken a word to a German, but I am quite sure I could within a few weeks".

Of course most learners are obliged to learn in precisely this situation and keeping latent language alive is a major concern of the teacher. It would be of interest to know whether it is better to press on and acquire a large amount of latent language (unrealised sound) and then seek opportunities to realise it; or to accept the slower pace demanded by the need to realise the sound system as it is acquired. Earl E Stevick, in his Memory Meaning Method (Rowley, Mass. 1976 p.31)

cites experiments showing that "the requirement of active vocalisation at presentation interferes with effective coding operations" and that "the nonvoiced items in a serial recall task were processed to a deeper level than the voiced items." Hence the latency of language is not an impediment to learning.

Contributor H's emphasis on listening and his highly conscious approach to the sound system of languages was mentioned in the previous section but he is worth quoting further at length for the valuable analysis he gives of his own processes:

"I find it particularly important to listen to unfamiliar consonants; only certain vowels give difficulty, such as the closed back spread lip Japanese sound occurring in the second letter of Fujiyama . . . Although I recognise that stress and intonation patterns are learned extremely early in a child's learning of his mother tongue, I myself find that stress and intonation in learning a foreign language come after phoneme work rather than before. Of course there is a sense in which all are happening together. Nevertheless I do not pay close attention to stress and intonation patterns until I feel I have mastered all the phonemes as far as I can. Then I am convinced that it is necessary to master stress and length features and the pitch variations that form the intonation patterns of the language".

"Listening is paralleled with speaking. One way in which I do this is to repeat stretches of sound, often mere concatenations without my understanding the meaning. This can be done at the same time as I am learning to make strange sounds, particularly since it is necessary to make these sounds in concatenations of speech".

"Before starting to speak a foreign language I very often do loosening up exercises for my jaws, lips and tongue. I am convinced there are different physiological rhythms involved in speaking other languages and that the muscles need to learn habitually to take up different sets of positions in French for example than in English".

"Early on in learning a language I try to find a model in the form of a speaker, a native speaker of that language. My intention is to speak more or less as he does. I therefore listen very hard to the way he uses that language and try to imitate his rhythms and style and speak - in short all the features that characterise his speech. I find that it is necessary for the model to be of the same sex, and on the whole to have a similar background to my own".

"Most of my productive practice, however, occurs in talking with myself . . . To achieve fluency in oral production, I learn certain short texts by heart".

Though several of the contributors might, if asked again, identify here techniques which they themselves use and experiences which they have undergone, contributor H seems exceptionally sophisticated and systematic in his approach to foreign sound systems. The majority of contributors gave it scant mention and several stressed 'mimicry', which will be dealt with below but which implies an effortless and almost unconscious acquisition of the sound system.

Contributor F, like contributor H, found consonants more of a focus in sound system acquisition than vowels but actually enjoyed difficult sounds: "I find the difficulty and remoteness of sounds a stimulus to learning languages, not a deterrent as might be expected. Hence I find Russian or Arabic more interesting phonologically than Spanish or Persian. But the interest seems to reside principally in the consonants not in the vowels. There seems to be a critical ratio of consonants to vowels beyond which learning becomes more difficult eg Russian word for "view" - vzglyad - is acceptable but vsledstvye "on account of" - is a hard word". Contributor M, on the other hand, found the remoteness of sounds off-putting. With German she was agreeably surprised "to discover that some speech, because of its proximity to English sounds, was actually intelligible from the start [as opposed to French]. . . . This is a great advantage because it removes any subconscious resistance to absorbing a new language. Not only that, the spelling is consistent and the intonation requires less effort to imitate". With Arabic on the other hand, she found herself making "Little or no phonemic distinction between qāf and kāf, ha and kha" and the glottal fricative 'ain remained for her a nonsound. While she attributes this to insufficient attention being given on her course to the sounds that are different in Arabic from English, she is sufficiently convinced that the weakness is hers never to attempt learning a Far Eastern tonal language, no matter how strong the cultural motivation might be. This seems a rare attitude since the general impression emerging from the contributions was that acquiring sound systems was not the forbidding task it is often thought to be and that even if it were, there were always other factors impelling learners to overcome it. It depends perhaps on how perfectionist the learner is and most seem to accept less than perfection in reproducing the sound system, at least initially. Perhaps a relaxed attitude to phonology at the start pays dividends in

better pronunciation because communication develops be-
tweentimes. We might then save ourselves the inhibiting
guilt feelings recorded by contributor D: "I feel I suffered in
earlier days by thinking that learning to read what I could not
speak was wicked".

Prompt 5: Forms of practice

Some of these have already been touched on in preceding
sections eg talking to oneself, listening to tapes, bathing in
sound, copying a model; and others were mentioned by
contributors in such a way that it will be possible to group
them in more detail later under the heading of each form of
practice eg language laboratory, internal dialogue etc.

But from the contributions it became apparent that the whole
concept of 'practice', as a process somewhere between
learning and using a language, tended to evaporate. Is it
perhaps a concept teachers have but which has little reality
from the point of view of the learner?

All contributors mentioned learning techniques eg memorising
vocabulary, reading, doing written exercises etc. and all
mentioned language use eg fluency, interference, dreaming,
thinking in the language etc. but there seemed to be no
middle ground between learning and using that could possibly
be occupied by "practice" - a sort of game that you played
with language acquired prior to using it in the real world. To
the extent that taped drills or written exercises were useful
as 'practice', it was because they were a part of learning,
either acquiring new or consolidating old language. To the
extent that going into the bazaar to talk or living with a
foreign family were useful as "practice", it was because in
these situations the language was being used. Even talking to
oneself or internal dialogue is language in use rather than
practice, providing the conversation is interesting; and if it is
not, there is probably not much learning going on either. If a
learner picks up a newspaper or a simplified reader with the
sole aim of 'practising', the chances are he will not learn
much; but where he reads them as they are meant to be read
he is in fact 'using' language, not 'practising' it and in these
circumstances will probably learn a lot.

I confess that the above remarks do not derive from the
contributors accounts directly but are merely inferred from
my attempts to group the material. All the same there does
seem to be a case for re-examining the whole concept of
practice, though I appreciate that in view of the current

tendency to downgrade mechanical drills and upgrade simulation and role-playing, teachers have already begun the re-examination. Contributor E, who had been a teacher of classics himself, did have something to say about practice but it was more from a teacher's than a student's viewpoint, and in any case concluded that the best practice was what came closest to natural use. Following his comments on dreaming he wrote "...maybe there is a difference in situation, whether consciously or sub-consciously perceived, between speaking to an audience and speaking to none (or an imaginary one). This may mean that the value often ascribed to language work being done with tape recorders, with the student on his own in a language booth, is not as great as is often thought . . . There is a great deal to be said for making the student practise the language, whether orally or in writing, in as many situations as possible. The variety is stimulating; and the practice more nearly simulates the natural use of language".

Prompt 6: A good ear, photographic memory, 'gift of the gab' etc.

A fair amount has already been said about 'a good ear' in sections 3 and 4 above and more evidence can be left to the section on 'mimicry'. Two contributors mentioned their photographic memory as helpful, although this may have meant rather 'visual' memory. Two of the contributors originally invited who had formerly been classmates of mine seemed to me at the time to have photographic memories, but one did not contribute and the other did not mention what I took to be his photographic memory in his account, so I am still in the dark.

Three contributors mentioned 'the gift of the gab'. In the case of Contributor E it was not his own but his wife's! "If one is a natural chatterbox and is uninhibited about making mistakes, that is an enormous advantage in getting through the error-prone stages of learning languages. My wife, for instance, was much better at speaking rudimentary Arabic in shops etc in the Middle East than I even though I could carry on a much more sophisticated conversation with educated Arabs when I put my mind to it". He may well be right in considering volubility a personality factor different in kind from having a good ear or a photographic memory, in which case I was wrong to group them all together. Contributor N was speaking of his love for his mother tongue when he wrote: "My house is constantly awash with words - a hereditary affliction passed down by my Irish forebears from a tragic past (verbal overkill; more than the gift of the gab)" but it

nonetheless spilled over into his love of communication in foreign languages and was a strong personality trait. Contributor J, though not claiming it for himself, assumed that "those with the gift as L1 will enjoy the same advantage in L2 once (or if) they reach a level of communicative competence to trigger it off." Personality factors will be dealt with in the next few sections.

Prompt 7: Empathy, sympathy, antipathy for the language and its speakers and their culture.

Nine out of thirteen contributors had something to say on this head and they were singularly unanimous in agreeing that they learnt a language better when they were interested in and/or respected the speakers and their culture.

Contributor A: "I have found it a great help if I am interested in the people who speak the language I am learning, their culture and life and religion (if it is different, which it nearly always is) . . . European languages are much more rewarding to me, because people in Europe can be well-educated and interesting without necessarily speaking a foreign language". This contrasts with other places where such people would almost invariably speak English better than you could their language, or would in any case insist on using it to the detriment of your own language development.

Contributor B was helped by his "strong fascination for non-European cultures" which helped "to 'get under the skin' of an Asian language eg importance of concepts of time, and also attempts to pin down similarities and differences between local and such typically European concepts as honesty, love/Agape, love/Eros, altruism, heroism, snobbery, gamesmanship etc. In this one is very much helped and enlightened in one's perception of the finer points of a foreign language culture by professional contact with advanced TEFL students and teachers". When we remember that this contributor reacted to his being thrown into the deep end of learning French in a French family at the age of 10 by rejecting all things French yet in adult life finds sympathy for the speakers a great stimulus to language learning, we must conclude that for some learners the 'deep end' approach can be counter-productive and that perhaps language courses, to remain appetising, should always have cultural elements in them. One might go further and say that these elements should be 'cultural' in the most exalted sense of the word Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe, Michelangelo - rather than the all-embracing anthropological sense, since for most students

only the former would excite admiration. Interest is of course another thing. Perhaps other contributors can throw further light on this.

Contributor D was very catholic in his concept of culture: "Anything can usefully be read, from classical literature to menus, shop-names, laundry lists, anything, so long as it still forms part of what one might call the national awareness". . . . ie as I understand it, culture in the anthropological sense.

Contributor F said much the same as A: "I have always found it easier to learn the language of a culture I admire than of one for which I have little respect. This, of course, militates against the less commonly taught languages because the spread of language is often associated with the cultural achievement of its original speakers". This was linked with the adoption of a sympathetic persona in the new language and with the character of languages and speech communities themselves. These will be dealt with below.

Contributor G has already been quoted for the way in which her childhood love of Homer and the Greek myths helped her to learn Greek. I am not sure that the effect of her childhood love of a dachshund on her learning German is quite of the same order but she certainly found the target language culture a powerful force for good. "During this third year[at secondary school]we had been reading some literature in both Latin and French and this was when I began to take off in terms of interest. The Latin teacher's outlook on literature and culture was off-beat, humorous and inspiring and I began to work at my grammar in order to improve my tools to get at this tempting and fascinating world".

Something similar was recorded by contributor J in learning Russian: "The Soviet Union tends to fascinate people whether they have Marxist leanings or not. The Russian language thus seems to start with an advantage. I started learning Russian with no real interest in Russian history or politics but with a definite interest in literature and drama (pre-revolutionary). I finished learning with a much wider interest in and affection for things Russian - and things Soviet".

Contributor H, who, it may be remembered, found language learning a way of growing personally, naturally regards empathy or at least sympathy with the target culture as being important. Both words can mean 'fellow-feeling' the capacity to enter into the feelings of another' but the former perhaps

closely associated, the motivational characteristics of individual pupils appeared to be neither exclusively integrative nor wholly instrumental". (op.cit. p.7)

No doubt the debate will continue but it is worth noting that the above data comes largely from young learners in school. This suggests perhaps that if there is an 'integrative' element in their learning, it means integration, not with the foreign language community and culture, but with the adult group - parents etc - whose expectations they are hopeful of fulfilling. Achieving this identity may offer the same satisfaction as an older learner might get achieving identity with speakers of a foreign language. Older learners also have more idea of what the foreign identity is and can therefore be expected to respond to this motivation more. On the other hand, adults also have more bread-and-butter reasons for learning languages.

Let us now look and see if our contributors can throw any light on the subject. Only seven of them made overt statements on this issue.

Contributor G, who is aware of the debate, listed as an ingredient of success "Intrinsic interest in what the language embodies or symbolizes to me eg Homer, Mozart, German boyfriend" not to mention her dachshund. As her work is closely concerned with the Arab world she felt constrained to say elsewhere: "To my shame I have made little formal effort to learn spoken Arabic yet. This is perhaps a case where extrinsic (ie instrumental) motivation (which I should have) is not enough. However I have now made some Arab friends and therefore a glimmer is coming through" [ie integrative motivation is coming into play]. On the other hand she was susceptible to instrumental motivation since she lists as another ingredient of success "Near immediate pay-off in terms of task made easier. This could consist of a foreign national reacting to my halting words", or provision for self expression in the language, or access to some work of art. Her experience with French for archaeological purposes and Italian for pastoral purposes, shepherding a school party through Italy, were instances of this. And she goes on to say: "I've seemed to fit my learning strategy to the motive bombardment of sound if I want listening comprehension, dogged reading if I need to read something, accompanied by some linguistically based overview of the language".

Having mentioned his interest in Russia as integrative motivation, contributor J adds: "A more normal motivation was that I planned to go on to read Russian at Cambridge after National Service so wanted the best start I could get from the army". This looks like instrumental motivation but is it really? Why want to study Russian at Cambridge? Nevertheless he did regard "a more purpose-specific reason for learning" as a factor compensating for increasing age. Perhaps his most revealing statement came in another section when he was not really considering motivation at all: "My goal and real joy has been the times when you forget what language you're communicating in because you are intellectually, emotionally or in some other way totally involved. Then you can be thinking, feeling and imagining in it". This seems a very good description of the 'integration' that presumably lies at the end of integrative motivation but it is not the sort of experience someone can have before learning his first foreign language. It would suggest, however, that integrative motivation can increase with successful language learning.

Contributor C described himself as "one who enjoys languages for their own sake as well as for their socio-cultural content and advantages". The mention of "advantages" suggests instrumental motivation, which, if I interpret his later statements correctly, should loom larger as one leaves the school system and gets involved in a job where language learning can reflect one's professional activities; yet in his own case he claimed that the demands of his own profession had only induced him to acquire "a survival kit of spoken sounds" in Persian and Arabic.

Contributor D seemed to take for granted that the initial motive was communication and knowledge of the local scene, but was concerned about sustaining motivation once the learning process was under way: "If the language is learnt in situ it is important to start at once. The longer you delay, the more it doesn't seem worthwhile . . . If the learner is not immersed in local culture through an intensive course or close everyday contact with native speakers, there has to be some part of his life in which it becomes natural to use the target language . . . The variety of language being learnt should be appropriate and usable in whatever situation is most at hand for using it. My problem with Thai was that most people around spoke a different dialect". Perhaps his approach could be helpful to future researchers since by inquiring into loss of motivation or negative motivation we may get a better picture of motivation as a whole. My own learning of Arabic,

for example, was ostensibly instrumental since I would get an attractive allowance if I passed the examination, yet I cannot honestly say I learnt for the money in any positive sense. There was, however, the negative motivation of fear - fear that, having made the effort and achieved a good standard, I might yet lose the money by failing the final examination. Needless to say this anxiety might just as well have inhibited learning as promoted it.

Contributor L experienced a sharp contrast between her motivation in learning Swahili and that for learning English, French or Italian. "When I started learning English, French or Italian I did so with no immediate purpose in mind except that, of course, of attaining some proficiency in the language. That, however, was far from being the case when I had to learn Swahili. Before I went to Tanzania I went through about a third of the Teach Yourself Swahili book, learning vocabulary and doing the exercises. But when I actually got to the country some three or four months later, I had to start speaking in a language of which I only possessed the very bare rudiments. This was a completely new experience for me. Fortunately, at the beginning I had only to concentrate on telling our houseboy what I wanted him to do . . . my real aim being to make myself understood rather than understand others". However, a road accident put her in a Tanzanian hospital for a week and she was obliged to communicate with nurses who spoke no English, to understand as well as be understood, picking up new words by ear and maintaining conversations. This was an important step in her learning of Swahili since she then went back to her grammar, learnt more - and more correctly, - and so fixed the language in her mind that, six years after leaving Tanzania and hardly using the language since, "I am surprised to find that I remember a fair amount and it would probably not be hard to pick it up again if I ever need to". Are we concerned here with two types of instrumental motivation, or two stages of the same motivation? Or did the second stage, apart from the exposure factor which was obviously important, involve an element of integrative motivation not present in the first?

It was perhaps unfortunate that the prompt for this section was phrased to express the polarity between instrumental and integrative motivation, since it was obvious that one motive, which admittedly may subsume others, was simply enjoyment. Not surprisingly the good language learner seems to like languages. Whether he likes them because he is good at them or is good at them because he likes them is difficult to say but the two factors must interact to produce more effective

learning. The theme hardly seems worth elaborating on here. Not many contributors actually stated, like contributor C, that they enjoyed languages for their own sake, but there was plenty of indirect evidence that they enjoyed the things that went with language learning. These incidentals will be dealt with in later sections, where they can be identified. Here we are concerned only with the enjoyment of learning a language, not with the fruits of having learnt one.

Contributor N wrote: "for me, learning a foreign language has always been, first and foremost, a pleasure. . . . I derive an almost physical and sensual pleasure from listening to sound-sequences of a new language as it is becoming familiar; intense intellectual satisfaction from being able to break the code, to break into the code; emotional satisfaction from breaking through to communication" and then, describing a memorable conversation with a young Yugoslav soldier fishing on a short leave, he concludes: "Although there are many sensible motives for learning a foreign language, few bring me such intense satisfaction as the ability to communicate in this simple, pointless, phatic way with another human being who would otherwise remain remote". Admittedly the latter statement relates to the fruits of having learnt a language and came three years after he began learning Serbo-Croat. It is almost an echo of contributor J's statement above about his "goal and real joy" in language learning. However, these statements together illustrate very clearly just what the pleasure of learning languages can consist in.

Though two other contributors also experienced this pleasure, its role in relation to other factors came into question. Contributor I wrote: "When I have to learn a new language I invariably approach this with enthusiasm - it is never a necessary chore so one could say that I begin with a mental set towards the task". Contributor H wrote: "My approach to language learning is characterised by a delight in language as a phenomenon. I do not find language learning a burden, but very much more a stimulus; in some cases I find it even a relaxation". Contributor J recognised the learner types of I and H but claimed he was not of that kind: "Some people really plunge into a new language with relish, are never satisfied with one way of saying something when they can find ten, are endlessly fascinated by similarities or differences between languages and so are continually gathering and exploiting 'incidental learning'. They don't have to concentrate too hard, they love it. I'm not like that, I fear, but I'll concentrate and persevere with appalling doggedness if I really think it's necessary or think in the end I'll want to".

This is very awkward motivation to classify though it is probably nearer instrumental than anything else and closely related to "the will to succeed" mentioned by contributor M in her first sentence. It seems to be based on a belief that the unpleasantness of the present task will eventually give way to enjoyment, or at least to the satisfactions of success. I am not sure whether we are dealing with two learner types here - the plungers and plodders - or with different stages of the learning process. Contributor J asked: "Have you ever felt that the plungers-in sometimes lose interest just as whole-heartedly?" No doubt the answer would be yes in some cases but the reason it is not so in all is probably that even the plungers have the strength of character to endure the 'long night of the soul' in language learning. In my own experience I have been a plunger at the beginning and a plodder in the middle of any language I have managed to learn to the end. Where I have not plodded, as in Turkish or Chinese, I have not learned. At the beginning I feel I am making great progress and enjoying the ride; as long as I can focus on the present task and look back over the ground already covered, language learning can be, as contributor H puts it, both a stimulus and a relaxation. It is, after all, a certain and systematic type of knowledge unobscured by opinion, ideology, doubt, lacunae or the other things that may undermine our confidence in other branches of learning. When, however, I focus on the future task and note the ground still to be covered, the resulting tension takes much of the pleasure out of learning. It is only by plodding at this stage that learning can go on.

Joyless language learning can be successful, however, at least within the instrumental goals laid down, as contributor K remarked: "Latin, which I had to learn for university entrance requirements, failed to motivate me and I acquired only sufficient knowledge to meet the requirements". Contributor N suggested there was motivation in addition to what has already been considered: [in learning German] "my motivation was neither strictly instrumental nor integrative; it was educational and aesthetic." In fact it was to penetrate and enjoy German culture so is closer to integrative than instrumental motivation; but perhaps we should not cling to this polarity when learners who are aware of it feel it does not apply.

This leaves me with very little to add to Clare Burstall's conclusions. For adult learners also different types of motivation come into play, often within the same learner, concurrently or successively. Ostensible motivation may not work unless it is triggered by the motivation within the motivation; and this in its turn may derive from the trivia and incidentals we shall examine in later sections.

Prompt 9: Adopting a persona for each language.

The Jekyll and Hyde implications of this prompt might in principle have frightened some of the contributors but in the event seven commented, three admitting that they did adopt a persona.

Contributor F was the most voluble on the subject:

"I find that to speak a language well I have to adopt a new persona that goes with the language. This is not, however, the result of an effort of will. The language itself imposes the persona to a great extent and is then supplemented by the image one has acquired, correctly or incorrectly, of the speakers of that language. Hence Spanish, which reeks of the warm, passionate south seems to be the natural language of endearment, or, more crudely, a splendid language to chat up a bird in. Hence it has become the language of our married life though I did my courting in English. With its numerous diminutives it provides more scope for saying nice things than English. German seems to be the language of military precision and dominance and I become a bit of a bully when I speak it. . . . French provides for a sparkling persona redolent of wit and trenchant intellectual insights but also provides for a relapse into le je m'enfoutisme about which, in English, I would feel guilty. English remains for me principally the language of throw away humour, amused detachment, clinical scholarship and the humdrum exchange of information. I think the adoption of the persona facilitates the learning of the language and can take place quite early on in the language learning process".

Contributor K spoke of the way language met an adolescent need for self definition, made more acute in his case by the insecurity he felt as a day boy at his minor public school and retaining his East London suburban accent.

"This made more acute the common adolescent need for self definition and I found that learning to simulate the speech of French and German speakers gave the illusion of assuming a different personality, of being somehow a different person. I spent a good deal of time fantasizing and transposing myself in fantasy into other social and cultural situations, escaping thereby from the reality of my drab English suburban background and the sense of social inadequacy which afflicted me. Thus the satisfactions of language learning were emotional rather than intellectual".

This is probably a more common situation than most language learners and teachers will care to admit. The problem of mastering a socially unacceptable regional accent in Britain is touched on by contributor B who, while he was learning Khmer aged 23-25 "at the same time performed the more difficult task of converting unacceptable northeast accent into received pronunciation (RP)". This certainly strikes a chord with me but my RP had to be acquired earlier to survive in a British army officers' mess. In passing it might be mentioned that 'correcting' one's own accent is good linguistic training and the extent to which it gives the learner an advantage over others who have not had to correct their native accents would be a sociolinguistic point worth investigating.

Contributor A did not actually say he adopted a persona but indicated indirectly that he might. "In Persia I used to go into the bazaar and pretend to be a Persian who had been brought up abroad". A certain ability to project oneself into the foreign speech community is implied here, as is his ability to adopt the style of a German writer he has been reading or, during a long evening, to "imitate the accent and delivery of my conversation partners". The latter perhaps is more related to mimicry.

Contributor B, however, seems to link this phenomenon with the question of "Adopting a persona - I would broaden this, in my own case, to matching one's own personality to any interlocutor, which happens in native language and foreign language situations. Certainly one is helped in struggling to break the laugh-barrier . . . if one can adopt the persona of the cranky Englishman (or merely foreigner/gringo) and poke gentle or if necessary savage fun at it". This seems rather different from the concept inherent in the original prompt, where it was supposed a learner might adopt the persona of the foreign language community. This is rather a learner adopting the stock image of his own nationality and conveying

it through the foreign language to comic effect. On reflection, I see this to be potentially as important a factor as our original concept of persona. In a sense the learner slips out of his real personality into a stock type whose attitudes and reactions can be predicted by both him and his foreign interlocutors; through this neutral intermediate personality perhaps language flows more freely since the learner is saved the embarrassment of too much self-revelation at an insecure time and his hearers can interpret his imperfect utterances by reference to a stereotype.

Perhaps we should also interpret as an 'intermediate' persona the Anglo-Argentine adopted by contributor N after learning Castilian Spanish in Spain and finding himself in Argentina.

"When I first arrived in Argentina, adapting my Castilian (Englishman's version) to the Spanish of the River Plate was one of the more interesting linguistic problems I have had to face. The question was: should I adopt forthwith all those phonological features of the language which I was capable of observing - or carry on with my own Peninsular variety? Within three days I had switched. From an incomprehensible English pedant, I became that familiar figure - 'ingles' or gringo, accepted by a community of Anglo-Argentines who for generations had spoken fluent Rioplatense, often with a strong English accent. I congratulated myself on this solution, which allowed me to lead a tranquil existence marked out as an Englishman but fully accepted as an immigrant to the Argentine Republic".

The intermediacy here, however, seems somewhat nearer the foreign language community than that of the 'cranky Englishman' mentioned above, unless contributor B is also thinking of the second or third generation expatriate Briton resident in Latin America.

However, this is speculation and too much importance should not be attached to two mentions. In any case contributors expressed as much indifference or hostility to the idea of persona as favour.

Contributor G said she could only accept role-playing in language learning where it was not ridiculous, implying that most of it is. "Role play for me includes any early steps into a new language. This is analogous to my view of acting. I hate being put into a role". Contributor H, though assiduous in following a model, felt that his own personality had to be reasserted through departure from the model. "Thus, having

chosen a model, I try to speak Swedish or Persian, or whatever it may be, like that person with certain variations to allow for elements that I think need to be reflected in my speech in order to show my personality". Contributor J wrote succinctly: "Adopting a persona or resisting it? Neither, honestly, in any of my languages". And finally contributor L disclaimed the conscious use of a persona but found that unconsciously a persona could impose itself.

"I do not think my personality changes as I speak in one language or another. But there is no doubt that the limitation of vocabulary in a particular language may convey a wrong impression of your true personality to the listener, because you are not able to bring forth your whole personality in the same way as you would in your mother tongue. On the other hand, a language is full of complexities and very often it is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of the ways of thinking of the people that uses them, so when you reach a certain stage of proficiency in a foreign language, your ways of thinking are bound to suffer readjustment. I think that this is necessary if you want to attain a high degree of proficiency in the language but I also think it may not be possible for you to do it consciously. In some cases, your native ways of thinking may prevail over those of the foreign language whether you like it or not. In my case, I feel as if the English ways of thinking are winning over my whole personality, although the process is by no means complete".

It is apparent that the concept of persona needs to be clarified and that at least in its present crude form it does not play a part in more than a small segment of language learning.

Prompt 10: Resistance to a new persona

There were only two explicit comments on this but one was so closely linked with embarrassment that it is left to the next section. No one boldly said, for example, that though they spoke fluent Lithuanian they took positive steps against thinking or behaving like a Lithuanian. On the other hand, contributor M, wrote that "The manifold varieties of Arabic I have met have deterred me from attempting to adopt a new persona for this particular language" but she recognised the role of a persona in mastering Arabic script, which is standardised. The general position can be deduced from the previous section. Those who felt the need to adopt a persona

did it better when the persona was one sympathetic to them though not necessarily 'nice' in any objective sense. Those who did not adopt personae seemed to do so through lack of need, not through active resistance. A special form of resistance was detectable in some accounts, however, but this seems to be a resistance to language categories, not the personality that is supposed to go with them. This will be dealt with below under the rubric 'mother-tongue chauvinism'. There was thus nothing to support contributor F's surmise that "the inability to adopt a persona with conviction, as in the case of shy, introverted, insular and older people must, I think, always impede the learning process. Once a national personality is formed and firmly entrenched it becomes difficult for people of that country to project themselves into a foreigner's shoes. Hence, perhaps, the notorious inability of the British to learn languages and the obvious difficulties of middle-aged and older learners anywhere". In view of the other evidence in this paper the surmise was probably unwarranted in the first place.

Prompt 11: Embarrassment and inhibition

Eight contributors touched on this though none, surprisingly, mentioned that they spoke better 'after a few drinks'. This is perhaps a piece of unreliable folklore.

Contributor A implied that when he spoke Arabic, Arabs were judging his achievement hastily and unfairly, which is obviously embarrassing and inhibiting at the same time. He went on: "As for shyness and inhibition, it is very understandable and thus it is essential that one should at least start off with people who are either being paid to put up with one's imperfect knowledge of their language, or with people who speak little or no English".

Contributor B spoke of a 'psychological barrier' which in context might imply the potential embarrassment that causes inhibition in language learning. Equally, however, it might refer to anxiety dealt with in a later section. He speaks of a gift for mimicry, "the essential cause of whatever success I have had in learning languages since it allows early breakthrough of the psychological barrier (impressionistically defined as the point at which you can make a native speaker of the foreign language laugh" (with you, I assume, and not at you). Later, he takes up the theme: "Embarrassment, inhibition, resistance to a new persona for good reason (ie inability to communicate in early stages of learning a foreign language, thereby embarrassing or irritating an interlocuter)".

Early fluency in restricted range of a foreign language gives the impression that you know more than you do. Hence native speakers talk back to you at a level where you cannot reply. "The problem here is to stop the torrent of incomprehensible speech without giving offence".

Contributor D found that until behavioural signals were mastered communication between learner and native could be embarrassing: "politeness forms may seem indirect, insincere and generally silly. (At present I am suffering from the reverse and cannot persuade myself that Cantonese speakers are not consistently and methodically rude: everyone else - ie speakers of other Chinese dialects or other languages - agrees about this, so perhaps they really are; they certainly shout a lot)". If I may add a personal gloss to this, I have often felt the embarrassing lack in English of a standard socially acceptable reply to 'Thank you', having learnt bitte, de nada, pas de quoi, prego etc in other languages; and coming to relatively unceremonious Arabic after Persian, with its elaborate system of polite padding, I found conversation jerky and rather embarrassing since the language seemed to have fewer 'softeners' when you made a gaffe. Of course embarrassment is something which occurs in the mother tongue too and relates to personality, upbringing and social poise. (Contributor E paid tribute to the natural chatterbox 'uninhibited about making mistakes', as we have seen). It would be surprising if this disappeared completely in the foreign language, though we have seen that for some learners the escape into a foreign social context is a relief from the social embarrassments of their mother tongue.

To the extent that self-confidence is the other side of the embarrassment coin, contributor G recorded the curious fact that whereas her Italian, virtually self-taught, is the only foreign language in which she is perfectly self-confident, her conversational ability varies widely with mood and situation so that at times she even has a stammer! It will be remembered that she also found role-play ridiculous and hence, presumably, embarrassing.

Contributor J lumped 'gift of the gab' with considerations of confidence and inhibition and had this to say:

"Embarrassment and inhibition seem to me to depend on target level expectation and, to a lesser extent, what is laughingly called 'maturity'. I don't seem to get uptight about my performance unless L1 speakers have explicitly under-gauged my level - 'Ah, you must have learnt French

at school' to a university French graduate - or, more importantly, if I am in the company of an L2 speaker who is better than me and shows it".

Contributor L, when she came to use French frequently "found it quite a challenge but I had by then been exposed to other languages and I had lost the shyness and sense of ridicule which had made me much more conscious of the correct use of words both in English and French when I had just started to speak these languages". The relief from embarrassment here is attributed to exposure and practice but maturity may have had something to do with it as contributor J suggests, for ten years had elapsed since contributor L had stopped learning French at the age of 21. On the other hand it is debatable whether people are less easily embarrassed as they get older. As their self-esteem and social position becomes established they may become more reluctant to venture into situations where these could be threatened. It is easier to look a fool at 15 than at 35, I believe, but the experience of others may confute this. However, contributor M quotes an incident which must have had a devastating effect whatever the age of the student: "...unless my listener is intelligent enough to deduce meaning from context (in which case he probably speaks reasonable English, so why bother anyway?) his confusion is total. It may even reach the stage of one class where a fellow student was struggling to articulate his meaning and after several attempts the teacher's brow suddenly incorrugated and he exclaimed, 'Ah Mr. Smith, now I understand; you are speaking Arabic!'" I think most learners would find the corrugated brow, or any signs of effort on the part of their interlocutor, embarrassing and inhibiting and contributors have touched on two factors which frequently cause embarrassment: knowing that your interlocutor speaks your language better than you, his; and having to speak in the presence of a compatriot who knows the foreign language better than you. Contributor L concluded with a statement that might well conclude this section: "I have now learned that making mistakes and still saying something is better than not saying anything at all and keeping thus away from mistakes." This might encourage the timid learner and demonstrate that the learner himself is not a static constant but a growing organism.

Prompt 12 **Display and self-projection**

In offering this prompt I thought contributors might say that they found language a way of showing off. In the event only two touched on this subject but several mentioned a positive response to a competitive situation, which may imply some element of display. Adolescent schoolboys occasionally turn up with some book on an obscure language in order to impress their fellows and in some cases, no doubt, actually learn the language for this purpose; but this is perhaps not so much language behaviour as general showing off behaviour. All the same, contributor G must have experienced something similar: "I was the only one in my year doing Greek and thus got star treatment, on which I thrive".

Contributor B wrote: "Display and self-projection. Necessary only for French, which was the language of courtship and subsequent marriage. Also, very importantly, the need for entry and deep immersion in a foreign community (wife's family, friends, subsequent friendships struck up jointly). Bilingualism gave the unexpected result of feeling outside both native language and foreign language communities as a critical observer, yet a member of both as a communicator". Self-projection seems to be a stronger motive than display here. Contributor F used English for courtship and Spanish for the language of married life thus foregoing opportunities for display when it was needed but adopting the foreign language for self-projection and absorption into a new family. In a future study it would be better to separate display and self-projection from each other and perhaps fuse them with other closely related factors.

Prompt 13: **Home and school background (help or obstacle to learning)**

Seven contributors had something to say on this topic but this is another category where separation might have paid off since only a few mentioned home background whereas several mentioned school background. The latter was almost invariably concerned with teachers and teaching methods and these will be dealt with in later sections.

Contributor K began: "I think that my early interest and relative success in language learning had something to do with a sense of personal and social insecurity arising from my being sent as a day boy to a minor public school and being made embarrassingly aware of my East London suburban accent, which I promptly set about 'correcting'. This might also have been quoted under Prompt 9 Persona etc. for his

experience tallies with that of contributors B and F, who also had native accents to correct. It is more important here, however, as illustrating the effect of school as a social rather than as a teaching institution.

The attitude of contributor F to French seems to have derived from the social status of grammar schools rather than the subject itself: "I never learnt a language before I went to grammar school, when I started French. Though I knew nothing about the language it seemed in prospect the most attractive thing grammar school had to offer. Could this have been snob appeal, since it was conspicuously a subject taught in grammar schools and not in secondary modern schools? Possibly, but probably not, since Latin was in the same category yet never had the same allure".

Some of the contributors came from a multilingual home. Contributor H, for example, says: "The languages I grew up with were English, French with some Flemish. I spent 6 of my first 9 years of my life in France and Belgium and in fact learned to babble in French as a baby before I learnt English". Similarly, contributor N: "One of my earliest memories is that of hearing Urdu and Pushtu spoken by North Indian troops camping in Cornwall . . . I accepted without surprise the use of a whole set of lexical terms for everyday household objects, personalities and activities which were derived from Hindi or other Indian languages. When the war began in earnest, my father returned to India with our ayah and batman and these words gradually fell out of use.

"Later, after the war, my father, a fanatical linguist, would organize family lunches when supposedly only French was spoken. I still remember these occasions with embarrassment, but there was no doubt about our general willingness to learn French. We were bludgeoned into integrative motivation".

Contributor G also had a father who spoke good French and at the age of 10 felt she ought to attempt this. On the other hand contributor J had plenty of encouragement but no language background at home. "Home had helped with L2 and L3 [French and German] by being warm, encouraging and offering the necessary resources, but there was never any other Lx [any foreign language] speaker in sight".

As one might expect, for the contributors who chose to mention it home background had an important effect on their language learning; but that still leaves a majority who did not feel it worth mentioning at all.

Prompt 14: Anxiety - relaxation, fear or praise as stimuli

This prompt was intended to express two polarities-anxiety/relaxation and fear/praise - though the way it was printed may have obscured this. While several contributors spotted the pairing of fear and praise, few treated anxiety and relaxation together, though some mention was made of them separately. Both topics were closely related to embarrassment but whereas embarrassment was thought of as something arising out of language use, ie the communicating situation, the other prompts were thought of primarily as facets of the learning situation.

Contributor J wrote: "Praise is better than fear as my stimulus - especially as I get older and less 'afraid' ". This was endorsed by contributor G: "Fear removed means learning increased in my case". Contributor N quotes at length an example of fear and praise used as complementary stimuli:

"At my prep school, I was taught Latin by our headmaster. His method still seems worthy of comment, even at this distance of time. He lined the entire class up, seated on chairs with backs to the wall. His whole teaching technique can be summed up as a massive application of the stick and the carrot. We were given large amounts of homework, and we used to construe passages of Latin prose in class. He would question us relentlessly. If we answered correctly, we stayed put; if we answered incorrectly, the question passed on to the next in line who, assuming he answered correctly, won promotion and moved physically into your seat, while you, dejected moved further down the line towards the dreaded bottom position. If you answered wrong three times in one 45 minute period, something extremely easy to do, you were whacked on the outstretched palm with a ferocious instrument of punishment called a tolly. You were punished if the class ended with you in the last chair".

How could anyone learn in this way, it might be wondered, but the boys did - and even enjoyed it! "We enjoyed this treatment: our own and other boys' humiliation, the ephemeral and uncertain glory of the top three seats. The adrenalin flowed with the hexameters. Unfortunately it was virtually impossible for us to concentrate on the meaning or beauty of

Ovid's verse while the sadomasochistic proceedings held our attention". As a mere language class, however, it was a success and in less exaggerated form tension and anxiety can have positive effects on learning.

That is not the case with contributor M who thought that: "If teachers - and examining boards - were more honest, though, they would admit the majority of German adjectives end in -en and 50% of nouns are masculine with a mere 15% neuter, and thereby avoid a lot of unnecessary tension in classroom teaching". But she admits to experiencing tension even in the language laboratory alone and concludes "this tension must be 'magnified' when one is exposed to the public ear". As a teacher of German she was herself a source of tension in her pupils but tried to minimise this by encouraging her pupils to speak "a fluent pidgin German which was nonetheless intelligible at the expense of correct endings, but I believe I had at least removed the inhibiting factors to fluent speech, firstly, the preoccupation with grammatical accuracy that I had suffered from myself and, secondly, the apparently innate nervousness of a British child on a public occasion. Lone utterance in a foreign language can be awe-inspiring enough without the constant expectation of a verdict of right or wrong". Yet elsewhere she regrets that the normative textbooks used when she was learning languages meant that "we never had the fun of correcting or criticising other peoples words". The implication is that pupils do not mind being corrected by their peers but are afraid of being corrected by the teacher. I am not sure that this is so and even if it is, surely a pupil would respond less to the praise of his peers than that of his teacher.

But praise alone is of limited value, as contributor D points out: "The motivation provided by exaggerated local praise for your accent, fluency, erudition or whatever wears very thin and has to be replaced by some better founded proof of success". To supplement this some driving may be necessary, particularly, as contributor E suggests, in forcing pupils to use the foreign language in natural situations. They should "be obliged by the school programme, to use colloquial as often as possible - ie throughout the teaching period. This sounds obvious, but I think some people have to be driven; and the teacher should distinguish between those who need pushing in this way, and those who do not".

Contributor F found tension and relaxation operative even in solitary vocabulary learning. To relieve the former he felt he had to be on the move and when relaxed he felt he could learn vocabulary effortlessly. "For longer and bigger vocabulary learning I must be on the move, preferably walking but travelling in a bus or train is also helpful. I do not know the physiological reasons for this but it may have to do with the fact that the movement prevents inner tension building up and the rhythm of footsteps harmonises with the rhythm and repetition of words I am learning. It is also a form of organised distraction... There are some words that are so laughably out of the way that they seem to induce a moment of relaxed tension in the learner during which they are effortlessly absorbed into the mind. Such, for me, were the Swahili for 'an overseer' (msimamizi), the Arabic for 'plenipotentiary' (mufawwad)" not to mention the Persian for 'fengreek' (shambelile) which he cites earlier.

Contrast this with the state described by contributor G, who lists among things that do not help her to learn: "Any sort of tension or pressure eg my misery in French and the strides I took in classics once I got my teacher squared. There is a most unsatisfactory state of mind into which I got locked for some of my university career when one is self-consciously 'trying to learn' and concentrating so much on this effort that one is in fact not absorbing anything".

Of the seven contributors who commented on this prompt, most regarded anxiety, tension and fear as counter-productive, praise and relaxation as beneficial but there is apparently room for the stick as well as the carrot, though the teacher has to be capable of wielding it and the pupil temperamentally suited to taking it.

Prompt 15: Concentration and incidental learning

There was a connection between this section and the last and a corresponding polarity. It was thought that concentration would be related to anxiety and incidental learning to relaxation.

Contributor F was most conscious of concentration when learning vocabulary and felt that he learnt items from a list with the front of his head. "The actual location seems to be between the eyebrows - could this be the seat of visual memory? I cannot learn this way for long, however, and it gets more difficult as I get older". He then mentioned how movement relaxed him, as mentioned in the previous section,

and how with this organized distraction "I find that . . . vocabulary seems to lodge in the back part of the head, between the ears". As a preamble to the previously quoted passage on learning the Persian for fenugreek he suggested "that at least for some learners vocabulary is acquired largely through caprice or incidental factors not through strong motivation". His remarks, of course, were limited to the field of vocabulary learning. He also needed concentration, however, to counteract the influence of almost automatic Spanish on his French and other types of interference like track-jumping and spillover. But here concentration was related to language in use, not learning.

Contributor B mentioned the apparently related phenomena of saturation and unconscious cycling.

"I am always conscious of a dual phenomenon: saturation and unconscious cycling. Saturation occurs quickly in the early stages of learning a language, whatever the activity (listening, speaking, reading, writing), and less and less so as command improves. However, when one is saturated and 'switches off' the cycling begins. The mind throws up words and phrases which have occurred during conscious learning in any mode, and the feeling is like an obsession with a tune which won't go out of one's head. Perhaps a throwback to the 'babbling' stage of native language acquisition. I am conscious of subvocalising during the 'cycling'."

I may be doing the contributor an injustice by not giving these phenomena autonomous treatment for while the 'cycling' is possibly related to incidental learning, it is doubtful whether 'saturation' has anything to do with concentration. As these phenomena were only mentioned by one contributor they merit further investigation.

Contributor H, as demonstrated earlier, concentrated particularly on the sound system of a new language: "One of the things I do on beginning a new language is to listen extremely hard to the sound system to the phonology of the language. This is a most concentrated piece of attention, and requires analysis of all those sounds which for one reason or another are unfamiliar". At a later stage he also devoted a lot of attention to tense systems. As remarked above, most of the other contributors acquired the sound system almost incidentally.

Contributor J wrote: "I have a feeling that your 'incidental learning' is a bigger issue than it might appear. It seems to

me that how much incidental learning you do depends on how much you want to do". Then he cited language enthusiasts who "are endlessly fascinated by the similarities or differences between languages and so are continually gathering and exploiting 'incidental learning'. They don't have to concentrate too hard, they love it" whereas he will "concentrate and persevere with appalling doggedness . . ."

Contributor K was in a very happy position. "My approach to language learning is not primarily analytic and I have, I think, retained the ability to assimilate new structure and lexis unconsciously, surprising myself at times by spontaneously using forms which I have never seen grammatically described or analysed".

He was the only contributor to record this.

Prompt 16: Languages learned - what order? Does it get easier?

Though two contributors found it difficult to decide, the consensus was that it did get easier but difficulties arose that were not present when one was learning the first language. Many of these were difficulties of interference, which will be dealt with later. Others were difficulties of advancing age which were shown in the first section to be not as devastating as one might expect.

Not many contributors actually listed their languages in order and in any case it would be tiresome to reproduce the lists here. The accompanying remarks, however, were the most valuable yield of this prompt.

Contributor B wrote: "In general each 'new' language is easier to learn than the last though with increasing age it becomes more difficult (perhaps because psychologically less important)". Contributor E found his way into Arabic made much easier by his knowledge of the classics as his mind was attuned to grammatical categories and distinctions. As will be seen in the section on grammar, most contributors found that they benefited from a quick overview of the grammar and it is of course easier to get this with successive languages. Internalising the new grammar is, of course, a different thing and comes up against interference. Contributor E found that his concentration on dead languages in part accounted for his hesitancy in speaking colloquial Arabic, and he wrote: "An aptitude for colloquial is not necessarily linked with an aptitude for comprehending the

grammar of a language". It seems that the benefits of having learnt other languages are felt largely in the sphere of getting to grips with the grammar of the new language.

Contributor G needed prolonged exposure to "a possessive adjective/pronoun system which took its marking from the gender of the thing possessed rather than from the possessor" before she could really believe it was true, but it was easier to believe in her second language, Latin, than in her first foreign language, French. The 'linguistic insights' that came with such opportunities for comparison between languages promoted interest, facilitated learning, and developed her personal 'Language Acquisition Device' which found new fodder in the parallel text libretti of operas in Italian. "Succeeding with Italian gave me a new post-university confidence in myself as a linguist. I then embarked on German..." she writes, and includes as one of her main ingredients for success "Linguistic cynicism and awareness (experience of language learning, grammatical description and linguistics)". She concludes "that the more languages you learn the easier the next one must be".

We saw above that in the speaking of a new language (contributor L) previous experience; reduced embarrassment and inhibition.

Several contributors, as will be shown in a later section, said that they learnt best when they could bend the language to their personal strategies and steer the teacher (B, H, G) and this obviously depends on previous experience; but contributor J, who listed his languages in order - French, German, Russian, Thai - found it "difficult to compare degrees of ease when circumstances, approaches and motivations differ so much". Different motivation was mentioned by contributor L when she came to learn Swahili after English, French and Italian but there is no explicit mention that these earlier languages helped her. Later however she says: "There is no doubt that my previous knowledge of languages influenced my learning of Persian. I started in a similar way to the one I used with Swahili, working on my own with the help of the Teach Yourself Modern Persian book. But Persian was not so remote a language as Swahili had been for me years before. First of all, I had the advantage of knowing the Arabic script. Then I found that memorizing vocabulary was easier in Persian than in any other language I had studied previously, due to the fact that so many words are clearly Arabic or Indo-European in origin". Lest it be thought too banal and obvious that someone who has learnt one language

can then learn one from the same family easier, I should quote contributor I: "I find that a language which does not belong to the same family as one I know is easier to learn, provided that it belongs to the same language group. If it belongs to the same family, confusion may arise. If it belongs to another language group entirely, difficulties will arise at every point - syntax, lexis etc.". If I interpret this right this should mean that contributor I would find it easy to learn German after Spanish (different families of same group); difficult to learn Italian after Spanish (both in same family) and very difficult to learn Hebrew after any of these (different group). Some of this is not what one would have predicted and she was the only contributor who put this view; contributor B, in another context, specifically noted that interference was not due to language similarities. The section on interference will throw further light on her statement, however.

Contributor M said that in Arabic "having a linguistic education, I can exploit my own minimal vocabulary to the full". However, she went on to say: "Because the success of language learning is so dependent on the methodology of the teacher it is difficult to assess whether language learning actually gets easier. An increasing insight into the structure of the language, which enables you to get a new one more quickly and which hopefully the study in depth of any language must bring, is possibly counterbalanced by decreasing memory, particularly for learning words out of books". She was the only contributor who attached much importance to the teachers methodology and I wonder whether she was here speaking as a teacher rather than a learner, especially as in her very first paragraph she states that appreciation of a teacher's methodology has only grown with her as an adult learner whereas at school it was more a question "of sympathy for the individual teacher that determined one's will to succeed."

In general, experience of language learning does seem to assist grammar, vocabulary and personal poise in the new language.

Prompt 17: The relative difficulty of each language

From what has been said above it will be apparent that difficulty will be partly intrinsic to the language, partly dependent on the relative order of languages in the learning queue and partly on the learner's own experience and proclivities. Only four contributors made clear statements on

the subject. This was a little disappointing since they had had rare opportunities to make comparisons and were indeed partly chosen because of this. Furthermore, while it would be extremely difficult to prove objectively that one language is more difficult than another, most learners, it was thought, would have a rough hierarchy of relative difficulty in their minds about the languages they had learned; a consensus over certain languages and features might have suggested things which, on further investigation, could be shown to be objective difficulties, intrinsic to the language, not the learner. If I had been asked, for example, I would have said that a language with few variable forms over a given span of utterance is easier than a language with many. Hence an 'isolating' language like Malay is easier to learn than a highly inflected language like Russian. However, it could be argued that a statement like this tells you more about the learner than about the languages. Like the notion of practice, the notion of difficulty seemed to evaporate since it seems a function of all the other learner inputs, not an objective quality on its own. It would seem possible, as Pimsleur's Language Aptitude Battery and other tests show, to match a particular type of learner with a particular type of language and predict success, but not to grade languages according to difficulty since difficulty is an artefact of the learner. When organisations like the British Civil Service, for example, grade Japanese, Arabic and Korean as 'hard' languages and Spanish and Italian as 'easy' it is tacitly understood that they have in mind the average learner from their ranks whose profile has emerged over two generations of trial and error.

Contributor B, already quoted, said: "Relative difficulty: no special difficulties for any language except Khmer, where the memory load factor of learning the alphabet of 72 different letters based on South Indian script hindered vocabulary growth through reading. In general each 'new' language is easier to learn than the last . . .".

Contributor N learnt Spanish easier because it came after Latin and French but "I do not share the widely held view that 'Spanish is easy'. Certainly there are no bloody battles with the secondary vowel system such as I remembered from learning, and later, teaching French; but, pronunciation apart, Spanish is so rich simply in vocabulary and in idiom that one never seems to arrive on a plateau that can safely be called mastery". Yet he found German easy. "German was my 'easy' language, despite inflections". Both views confute the widely held notions that a learner constructs a hierarchy of difficulties and that Spanish is easy. Contributor J went

further in exposing the vacuity of my own premises. "Without pausing to philosophize over the meaning (or otherwise) of the word 'difficult' when applied to languages, I will say that I found the more inflected languages (ie German and Russian) harder at first and yet felt that they tended to 'level out' once the chore of mastering the technicalities had been gone through. The less inflected ones (ie French and Thai) gave you a 'faster' start but then slowed down. This is the most dreadful subjective generalisation, I know, but its not easy to isolate much else from other considerations such as method, intensity, motivation etc".

Like N, contributor M also found German surprisingly easy after French and Latin: "The immediate surprise with German was to discover that some speech, because of its proximity to English sounds, was actually intelligible from the start. . . . This is a great advantage because it removes any subconscious resistance to absorbing a new language. Not only that, the spelling is consistent and the intonation requires less effort to imitate. On this basis Dutch would make an ideal introduction to foreign language learning as this has only the remnants of Teutonic declensions".

I am grateful to contributor M for providing the *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole notion of 'objective' difficulty. Were it possible to provide a scale of languages rated according to difficulty, presumably one of the things one would like to do with it would be to choose a language which, other things being equal, would provide an easy apprenticeship in language learning. But of course the other things never are equal and if our scale led us to introduce Dutch, or Frisian, or Malay in our schools as first foreign languages, the returns would be even more meagre than they are now. We cannot, apparently, postulate a general language learning aptitude and match it with language in general; we can only match particular languages with particular learners, and the learners understandably are largely governed by non-linguistic considerations.

Prompt 18: How presented - intensive, extensive, rules and examples

Apart from hints that contributor E benefited from clear and logical presentation of Latin and that D no longer believed that language should first be presented orally, there were no comments on this prompt that could not more profitably be grouped in other sections.

Prompt 19: 'Character' of each

Only three contributors, H, N and F touched on this substantially though contributor G's remarks about the utility of Latin and Greek rhetorical markers might also say something about the character of those languages and their place in discourse analysis; illuminating incidental remarks occurred in other accounts.

Contributor H wrote: "In fact the character of discourse has been so little analysed that this is perhaps the most difficult area of language learning to grasp and master at intermediate and advanced levels. It is the flow of the language that most learners find very difficult to appropriate. Even languages close to English have a different dynamic. German, for example has more complicated patterns of discourse than are normal in English. Subordination and rank shift go further in that language, whereas in Scandinavian languages the discursive features are very much fewer than in English. The effect on native English speakers of Scandinavian discourse is that the statements are inadequately joined together, giving a kind of lapidary quality".

Other contributors touched on the rich sound system of Khmer (B), the lack of softeners in Arabic as compared with Persian (self in text), the logicity and clarity of Latin (E), the way you can mark the course of an argument in classical languages before the words actually go in (G), the phonic familiarity of Dutch and the strict word order of German, (M).

Contributors N's affinity for German and Spanish had something to do with his ability to project into the language a character based on the associated culture and society. He took an immediate liking to Spanish: "From the first moment I read the lines by Lorca, about Cordova - 'Cordoba, lejana y sola' - I was a captive. I loved the sounds of the language and was fascinated by the remoteness and foreignness of Spain in the closed era of the post-war decade, so cut off from my suburban experience by distance, politics, ideology and history". Nevertheless, people do attribute to languages qualities which are supposed to belong to the language itself, regardless of its associations. Hence German is popularly called 'a guttural' language, Arabic a 'clear' (mubayyin) language, Persian a 'sweet' language, Italian a 'musical' language, and Danish a 'disease of the throat'. Admittedly most of these terms (not for Arabic and Persian) are applied by outsiders and refer to the superficial sound of the language. Some of these terms have achieved historical

respectability. The term 'barbarian' comes from what the Greeks thought their non-Greek neighbours sounded like. 'Ajami' applied by Arabs and 'Tajik' applied by Turks are disrespectful terms still used in the Middle East for Persians because of the sound of their language to non-Persian ears. But these, of course, are terms invented by non-language learners; indeed, by people who are positively resistant to the languages involved.

Nevertheless, when you get inside a language there is a semantic character as well as a phonetic one, as contributor F pointed out when speaking of persona and language: ". . . one develops a sense of what is sayable in one language and not in another. I long ago despaired of ever being able to say anything profound or make subtle distinctions in Persian but was agreeably surprised that Arabic, ostensibly a language more remote from Western habits of thought, afforded great scope for this. I would feel as foolish using English for amorous discourse as I would using Italian to express military precision and dominance. So the language persona acts as both a promoter and as an inhibitor of language". If there is a persona which some learners adopt there is similarly a character which some learners foist on to the language. This is hardly the place to drag in a discussion of the Sapir - Whorf hypothesis ("We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages" etc) but there is some evidence from our accounts that to varying degrees learners can feel imprisoned or liberated by the languages they learn. Whatever they sense as the cause of this must surely be the true semantic character of the language quite independent of any extraneous character they may foist upon it. While we may therefore identify three characters - a phonetic one derived from the sound of the language, an extraneous one derived from notions about the background culture, and a semantic one derived from the range of meaning within the language, our paper does not provide us with much information on any.

Prompt 20: Models used ; a variety or one? - a book, a teacher, an informant, TV, tape or any combination of these.

Only two contributors made clear comments on the main concept here, that of a model, but the subdivisions of the theme were given more frequent and extended mention so they will be dealt with in autonomous sections later. It was apparent that the notion of a model - as something passive to be copied - was not part of the learning framework for most of the contributors. They thought mostly in terms of active

human agents affecting learning, - teachers, informants, interlocutors - or of inanimate materials - books, TV, tapes etc. Whereas several of them elsewhere emphasised the role of mimicry, few placed importance on the model to be mimicked.

Contributor J, speaking of learning Russian in the army, said: "We had, and needed to have, a variety of models. There was the bilingual smoothy already mentioned, the Group Leader of our Russian-speaker-to-5-learner sessions and there were the many different models heard in the authentic taped material used to train our listening/reporting skills and our ear".

But such multiplicity of models is tantamount to having no model other than the whole language in some ideal and abstracted form. Only contributor H found that having one model was important to his learning processes: "Another interesting aspect of the phonology of a language is the need, not at the beginning stage but at the intermediate stage, to find someone whom you can use as a model. It is certain to be the same sex and may be of similar age and educational background, though this is not essential. Plurality of models may also be used but it is normal for one of these to predominate for me". And as quoted above, he tries to speak the language like that person with minor variations to show his own personality.

Not too much should be inferred from contributors' silence on this subject since the concept of a 'model' like that of 'practice' may be so obvious that it was taken for granted. Certainly there was indirect evidence that contributors responded to models. Not only was mimicry widely admitted but contributor N suspected his "spoken German betrays the pedantic characteristics of a North German Customs Officer", - his model, whom he calls an "informant possessed of an almost moralistic sense of appropriacy". Contributor A, as mentioned above, found he was aping his interlocutors at the end of a long evening and could write in the style of distinctive German authors he had been reading recently. He says: "In speaking I find one has the constant guide and example and stimulus of the other person or persons". But whereas an 'example' equates almost exactly with the notion of a passive model to be imitated, the 'guide' and 'stimulus' belong to a more active order of human being - the teacher, informant or interlocutor.

Prompt 21: Grammar - how acquired?

Every contributor but two had something to say on this issue and not surprisingly it was regarded by all as an important topic.

Contributor A set the tone when he began: "Method of learning: learn how the language is organised. The grammar, inflections, conjugations, declensions etc. etc., if possible from a good grammar book which sets it out in traditional form ie declension of nouns, conjugation of verbs, the various clauses, and other forms ['clauses' may be a typing error for 'classes']. Important that the grammar should be of the currently used language and not too academic. Plenty of exercises are needed".

So in his scheme of learning the traditional pedagogic grammar is the first essential, though vocabulary learning runs concurrently.

Contributor B wrote: "I find I need 'grammar' in the sense of rationalising the structure of each language to my own satisfaction, in order to progress. But this isn't formal grammar in the sense of learning and applying the rules. Closely allied to this need for grammatical rationalisation is the need to translate mentally in the early and consolidation stages of FL learning ie the process is one of using English as a meta-language for getting my ideas straight on the structure and semantic range of the FL. For exceptions (eg irregular verbs, impermissible collocations etc) I rely on auditory and visual memory ie the way words or phrases stick in the memory with the tone and accent of the voice one has heard pronouncing them; the position of a word or phrase on a page".

Contributor H also needed grammar but reshaped it to serve his needs:

"I need always to have the grammar of a language laid out as a system for me. I cannot learn a language simply by induction, although I use that quite considerably; nevertheless I believe it needs to be used with great caution and with frequent checks on native speakers.

All systems of presenting the grammar of a language are inadequate; I find that I have to reshape them into my own grammar of the language. That does not mean that I rewrite the grammar completely. In most cases what the

system says is right as far as it goes; the trouble is that it doesn't go far enough, eg in providing a coherent statement of intersentential features . . . those expressions that oil the discourse".

Our notion of grammar was intended to include syntax and discourse above the sentence insofar as it can be systematised, but most contributors concentrated on the more elemental features - morphology, tenses, paradigms etc - assuming, and perhaps rightly, that once you have the bricks you can then build walls. Contributor H was unusual in giving syntax and discourse special mention but he had a very good reason: "One of the things I seek to find out most from the syntax of a language is its basic thought system, which I often find exhibited more clearly in syntax than in any other aspect. I feel that unless I grasp this way of thinking I shall never be able to handle the language efficiently. I do not think I pay particular attention to any one feature of syntax regularly in learning a new language, except for adverbs. . . . expect to have to devote quite a lot of time to tense systems and am relieved when this is not the case. This is because I find the relationships between time and tense particularly difficult to grasp; even the aspectual system in Russian I still find difficult to understand". He works up speed in handling syntactic forms using oral substitution and drills on himself.

The remarks of contributor E were scattered and oblique but it was apparent that his firm grounding in Latin and Greek grammar by traditional methods had stood him in good stead when he had to learn modern languages. Contributor F thought vocabulary more of a key to language learning than grammar and was actually put off by complicated grammar: "I find a highly complex grammatical structure off-putting, particularly if the complications seem to be semantically otiose eg the twenty singular and four plural classes of Fulani nouns, the rich morphology of Russian. It is not a deterrent in dead languages because I will not be required to do complicated manipulations of the elements at speaking speed. Once I have made progress in learning the new grammar however, I find that its initially unfamiliar categories begin to impose themselves on English, on other languages and on my own mental framework. Hence the delightful game played by learners of Arabic of forming broken plurals out of English words eg sword - *sawarid; dog - *diwāg, or the East African hands game of sticking Swahili noun prefixes on to English words. This is, I suppose, the learner flexing his linguistic muscles. As he progresses, these categories

become built into his mental processes and he applies them automatically". Though he does not actually say so, contributor F also learns best from a clear, traditional pedagogic grammar.

Contributor G was bad at learning paradigms and resistant to foreign grammatical categories until linguistic insights began to hit her and she found cultural motivation: "I began to work at my grammar in order to improve my tools to get at this tempting and fascinating world [Latin and French Literature]". Though often castigated for grammatical inaccuracy in class, she responded well to grammar when alone with her teacher: "The Greek language has a formidable number of bits to be learnt and for a notorious non-learner this may be thought to have caused difficulties. However, the embarrassment which ensued in a private lesson if I didn't learn my paradigms and vocabulary made sure that in fact I did. Here came a curious dichotomy - I was very good at learning 'vocabulary' ie lexis, perhaps because of the 'naming of parts' fascination and the penetration into another culture added to my natural collector's instinct. I was, however, pretty useless at getting all the paradigms right and remained so until degree level". Despite her poor memory for paradigms she "always enjoyed the syntax part for its own sake: ie I had full competence in the language systems but had not the words (literally) to express this competence. This, I take it now, is a direct result of the way one is taught classics. No oral/aural reinforcement to drum in correct forms. You learn it, recite it and that's it". Nevertheless, she did succeed, like contributor E, in internalising classical grammars even to the point where the new categories imposed themselves on the mother tongue, as mentioned by contributor F. Contributor G goes on: "I still mentally insert Greek particles in any piece of text I want to analyse, and I find this extremely useful when I am trying to do formal discourse analysis in English". It is interesting that she should treat syntax more favourably than paradigms etc since this suggests that, like contributor H, she felt that this gave valuable insights into the target culture. She concludes by saying: "I cannot efficiently learn an unmotivated paradigm but I can extrapolate from chunks of language which I know by heart". She benefits from "total immersion in the language coupled with overt information on what should be going on. That is, I read grammar books and then immerse myself in films, records, books but only real language works here, not cooked-up language".

Contributor I also liked to know what was going on in the language she was studying: "I like to know 'why' and therefore I am interested in the mechanics of the grammar". Nonetheless, she seems to internalise the grammar partly by carrying around in her head a stock of typical phrases and paradigms on which she can ring the changes as necessary: "I also have at hand two or three phrase books not with the object of parrot learning ... but rather as an 'aide-memoire' to common expressions from which I make a form of substitution table of phrases which are necessary in a 'survival kit'. ... Shocking as it may seem, but possibly stemming from a traditional background too, I am - at present - learning paradigms. Normally I would not do this because it would not be necessary. Serbo-Croat is highly inflected, however, and time is, to say the least, short. Therefore, although in principle I would prefer to learn case-endings in phrases etc. I find that in my present situation the paradigm is quicker". She uses mnemonics wherever this is helpful.

Contributor J learnt French and German in the traditional British school way with a pedagogic grammar and exercises and when he came to do Russian in the army he found it "intensive with grammatical structure central in 'class sessions' but less so in our groups. ... However specific our [occupational] needs were, we needed, it was considered, the whole grammar of Russian and we were taken systematically and pragmatically all the way through it. The Joint Services School for Linguists was not hung up on any particular theoretical framework; the approach was eclectic ... Rules, explanations, examples, translation, drilling - anything went as long as it worked. (Interesting contrast to our American counterparts, trained apparently with almost total audio/lingual/behaviourist purity)". The teacher, though ambilingual in Russian and English, used "mainly English in his presentation of the course materials and conducted almost completely oral lessons (writing was mainly for 'homework') so we learners, destined for a listening [and report writing] occupation, were doing a fair amount of translating and sentence-level speaking in our class sessions". So here was a largely traditional presentation of grammar backed up by oral practice for which stimulus was usually the mother-tongue. "The situations and contexts in which our grammar was presented to us were purpose-specific; all the paradigms, examples, drills and more cognitive activities were based on military lexis and topics ... a lot of lexis came in with the grammar".

It seems that the Army would agree with contributor I that when you need to learn fast and intensively, paradigms and traditional cognitive grammar sessions are better than more inductive methods. At least this is so far a certain type of learner, and contributor J openly states: "Most strategies work if the need and motivation are there. I prefer a cognitive approach, am turned off by (though I may still learn from) behaviourist type drilling"

Contributor K claimed his satisfactions in learning languages had been emotional rather than intellectual: "I had no interest in the abstract grammatical relations, though I experienced no great difficulty in acquiring a working knowledge of the grammar". I think I would sympathize with him there. I remember while learning Arabic that a certain type of student would obtain a detailed descriptive grammar, like Wright's, and enjoy going into the details of obscure and rarely used grammatical forms. I could not understand this interest and felt that by internalising the very limited pedagogic grammar used on the course, I was getting all I needed to be able to speak and use Arabic. I think we should always distinguish between grammar as an intellectual pursuit and grammar as a tool of learning. Much of the criticism aimed at grammar in teaching assumes it can be only the former and discounts its use as the latter. As we have seen, the majority of contributors use it as a tool which they adapt to their purposes and internalise as part of the learning process. No contributor claimed to be able to stand up and recite rules if asked to. It is very likely that one's conscious knowledge of the rules fades as one's obedience to them becomes more automatic.

Contributor L also learnt her languages by the traditional methods, which she found slow but not wearisome. After intensive exposure to Swahili for a time she felt drawn back to the book to learn more of the grammar and so her Swahili became more correct. Such was not the case in Arabic where she felt the grammar was gone through too quickly: "I now believe I got through that grammar book a little too fast so that I never studied the individual chapters in any real depth; I read them, understood them and then did the exercises, but their content was soon forgotten too". Here was a cognitive type learner starved of the reinforcing support of practice materials. One would hope that dogma was fast disappearing from discussions of language learning but some of the contributions suggest a growing polarity between 'cognitive' and 'behaviourist' methods. It seems from the case of contributor L that in fact both are needed successively in

learning each new language item. Without cognition the meaning and purpose of behaviourist drills cannot be grasped; but without these drills cognitively perceived patterns cannot be internalised.

Contributor M, though basically hostile to the grammar-translation methods she used at school and which, she thinks, stunted her aural learning, nonetheless quotes an interesting example from her teaching experience suggesting that cognition should precede drilling: "Adults likewise new to the experience . . . find it difficult to manipulate the drills for the Broughton Penguin Course [in English] in the open classroom and proceed best when several examples are worked through with the teacher first". The same would apply to language laboratory drills, where she had felt the 'tension' of incomprehension. She also pointed out most valuably that some grammars are made to seem more difficult than they are eg German where examining boards might "admit the majority of German adjectives end in -en and 50% of nouns are masculine with a mere 15% neuter and thereby avoid a lot of unnecessary tension in classroom teaching"; and conversely, that some are claimed to be easier than they are eg Arabic where she found "the much vaunted logicity of the 3 - radical system for word building" not as useful as you might expect. This brings us back to the old question touched on above as to whether pedagogical grammars should be primarily accurate descriptions of the language or primarily tools for learning. Probably most are an uneasy compromise. For descriptive accuracy writers feel obliged to hedge their statements with qualifications and exceptions, when possibly the learner would benefit more from a broad generalisation, which would help him to internalise a pattern quickly, and take the risk of making mistakes when he came upon the exceptions. For the same reason they tend to abandon traditional terminology for more scientific terms, ignoring the fact that the student might welcome more familiar terms as working hypotheses until he reaches a stage in his learning of the foreign language where greater sophistication is necessary. Children and naive foreign learners eg Levantine taxi-drivers, traders in tourists traps etc. seem to communicate quite well by ignoring a great deal of grammar on the one hand and over-generalising from the little they know on the other. While this would not be a satisfactory level of language to aim at in any education system, it might well be an intermediate goal to be pursued by a pedagogic grammar that really put pedagogy first. We have seen how most contributors need and use grammars but most like to adapt them. Might it be possible to discover what the principles of

adaptation are and incorporate them into pedagogic grammars? An opposite point of view, however, might be inferred from contributor N who learnt German very successfully from a combination of authentic texts and "a self-instructional manual which set out the basic grammar of the language in a sensible way, with a minimum of generalisation and a number of useful examples. These I used to alternate, always pressing ahead with a new and more difficult reading text, returning now and again to the pedagogic grammar". He quickly reached a plateau where he could read literature despite "the height of the grammatical mountains that remained to be scaled. This experience of language learning was marked by long periods of concentration as I worked away on the code interrupted only occasionally by periods of socialising". He went on:

"It seems to me now that I learned to speak and to understand German by internalising an extensive vocabulary and a set of morphological and grammatical rules from my reading - and grammatical studies - before I ever needed them to communicate in a social situation. When I did require them, all I needed to do for understanding spoken discourse was to match what I heard to see whether it fitted something I had read. If it did, I would shift that utterance, or elements of an utterance, out of my 'passive' memory store and into my active store". He was, of course, aided by residence in the country and the "special intuitive rightness and predictability" of German for the English speaker. He would not, apparently approve of over generalisation in a pedagogic grammar but in view of the other materials he was using he was daily exposed to the exceptions - refinements that go into a descriptive grammar.

After a disastrous attempt to learn Maghrebi Arabic by the inductive discovery method with an informant, he turned to a pedagogic grammar written by a Franciscan missionary.

From the accounts it would seem that the vast majority of the contributors like and benefit from clear pedagogic grammars - or benefit even if they do not do not like them - providing there is plenty of practice material to reinforce and internalise what has been learnt cognitively.

Prompt 22: Vocabulary - how acquired - in isolation, in context, in a list

Understandably, the acquisition of vocabulary (lexis) also occupied a great deal of the learners time and merited comment from all but two of the contributors.

Contributor A went about learning words in a very brisk and businesslike way: "Concurrently with the grammar learn as many words as can be absorbed. Write all words on cards, and test endlessly, in both directions. About thirty words a day can be learned, of which twenty will stick". After some grammar and vocabulary has been acquired, students should start collecting from authentic material - books, radio, TV, tapes etc. "All colloquialisms, proverbs, odd constructions, exclamations etc. should be noted down on cards and learnt by heart. It can be useful to start making a dictionary for easy later reference. But this should not replace the cards. On no account should one think that one can write words down in the dictionary and then forget them". So with this learner isolated list learning looms large and only at a later stage does learning words in context play an equal role. In any case, words met in context are ultimately isolated for learning and revision. I originally equated list learning with card learning because both were equally different from picking up words in context but it is apparent from the stress Contributor A lays on cards as opposed to the dictionary that for him lists and cards are not the same.

Like A, contributors E, F and M all went through the same Arabic course in which the use of cards and frequent tests were the norm, thirty to sixty words per day had to be learned, and this went concurrently with learning grammar and meeting words in context. While E and F found this successful and stimulating, M "never perfected the basic word list of 3000 words". A similar system was applied in the army Russian course described by contributor J, with the addition that the vocabulary to be learned was highly specific to the job and hence less motivateable but the army was able to compensate for this by the threat of a return to regiment if the student did not keep up the pace: ". . . all the paradigms, examples, drills and more cognitive activities were based on military lexis and topics. We certainly learnt the words for 'a 122mm machine gun', before the word for 'potato' and I seem to remember acquiring the Russian for 'birch' and 'whale' only as call signs in some of the 'authentic' listening we used to do during training! So a lot of the lexis came in with the grammar; a lot more came in bilingual lists to be learnt - or else".

Though contributor L learnt Swahili vocabulary from lists in the first instance, she found that when she got to Tanzania she was "only learning words as I needed them for my immediate use. Those words I used more often I remembered more easily, until a time came when I had acquired a basic vocabulary and had only to look up the occasional word in a dictionary". The prospect of immediate pay-off was stimulating and frequency of use was reinforcing. However, contributor F wrote: "Indeed, my own experience suggests that at least for some learners vocabulary is acquired largely through caprice or incidental factors, not through strong motivation. In all the languages I have learned there are some extremely common and useful words which I have had a devil of a job to remember and will slip away if I do not make an effort to retain them. I have been through agonies wondering why an obviously useful word will just not enter my head, while some ludicrously obscure words lodge there without effort". Contributor I noted the same thing: "In every language (but not with the same item or types of item, so it is not an experience-or emotion-associated block) there are always one or two (or more) words which I have difficulty in fixing in my memory. I cannot account for this and of course, eventually they do stick". Contributor F tried to explain it. Speaking of his learning of Arabic vocabulary under pressure at the age of 35 he wrote: "The problem was not acquiring the vocabulary but keeping it and I found that after three or four days I began to lose what I had learnt. Then the effort to rememorize words was often much more arduous than the effort of memorizing them in the first place. It was rather as if the mind had become calloused through over exposure to these words and would not admit them. Only by reactivating the vocabulary either in reading, writing, speaking or internal dialogue could I keep it in circulation. Hence word frequency played a role in the retention of vocabulary because naturally opportunities arose for using the common words more often than for the others, but frequency and usefulness seemed to play no part in the initial acquiring of vocabulary". Contributor M criticised the particular frequency principle on which the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies word list had been compiled but if F's findings are felt to be generally valid then selection on another principle would not produce more learning, since frequency is only important in the retention phase and, as we saw above, J knew the Russian word for '122mm machine gun' before 'potato' without feeling deprived.

While most contributors took it for granted that word learning would loom large in their learning processes, some went further and gave it emphasis.

Contributor H wrote: "For me the learning of vocabulary and its utilisation and practice play a far greater part than they do in any modern method of language learning that I have seen. I put a very great effort into the active learning of vocabulary. I wish to emphasise this particularly since I am convinced that one of the main weaknesses in modern language learning methodology is that we have no method for handling lexis. . . . In handling vocabulary I always make my own vocabulary notebook. The order in which I note down words that I select for this book is always: first English, then if need be a phonetic transcript of the word in the foreign language, then the orthographic version in the foreign language, and finally if need be an example of its use in a phrase or very short sentence. I order it this way round because it is more difficult to remember from English into the foreign language than the other way about and the act of writing it in this order helps to bridge the gap that way round".

"The selection of words that I make for the vocabulary notebook is based on frequency in the first place with considerable weight being given to the functional, notional or situational relevance of the item for me. The arrangement of words tends to vary but frequently I find that I have three different vocabulary lists going on at the same time. The first one is chronologically arranged. The second one may be alphabetically arranged and drawn upon the chronological list, though not incorporating all of it. The third vocabulary list is either grammatically or situationally ordered. In the grammatical list I might for example group all adverbs together; I find that adverbs are particularly important at the early and intermediate stages of language learning and that without command of adverbs one's communicative competence is profoundly impaired".

"In learning from this vocabulary list I use three methods: prompt from reading with oral response; prompt from reading with written response; oral prompt with oral response. I reserve the mode oral prompt with written response for sections of dictation".

In learning Serbo-Croat contributor I also compiled her own lists on alphabetical principles from English: "I make a word list of my own in alphabetical order of English words and this

goes everywhere with me so that while waiting for taxis, queuing in shops, waiting for trains . . . I can usefully occupy my time in learning the lexis" demonstrating that "they also Serb who only stand and wait". While her list may be alphabetical, however, she also regroups her vocabulary according to topics and situations when she wants to activate it through internal dialogue. As mentioned above, she remembers words better when she sees them written down. She also mentions the value of association in learning vocabulary as she translates from journals or newspapers: ". . . the material itself is interesting, of course - also because a knowledge of the subject matter is an aid and finally because the association enables me to remember the structure and lexis".

Contributor F found this in learning Spanish from reading though he used handwritten word lists, often situationally grouped, in learning his other languages. He also laid great stress on word learning and mentioned the value of association:

"This brings me to the subject of vocabulary learning, which to me always seems the key to any language. I am quite happy to pronounce badly and make grammatical mistakes but there is no escape from learning words".

"I find that if I try to learn vocabulary I must concentrate on a word list and learn the items one by one with the front of my head. The actual location seems to be between the eyebrows - could this be the seat of visual memory". With the organised distraction of movement he finds tension relieved and the vocabulary lodges in the back of his head "somewhere between the ears. I am, after all, repeating to myself 'mental sounds', merely looking at the word list to pick up the next item to be memorised".

"Of course, a lot of vocabulary is retained by association and if a new word has an obscene meaning or association it seems to stick even more easily, as army instructors well know. I have found it useful to learn words in groups eg garden vegetables, household articles, 'at the beach' etc. and find that in recalling the word I recall the source first, a particular vocabulary list, page of a book, the book itself, or the situation where it was first learned. Fellow students have often astounded me by being able to remember the number of the page, the place on the page and adjacent words, but I can only do this in rare patches. All the same, when a word has slipped out of consciousness it can often be brought back in

this way and I usually get a 'tip-of-the-tongue' sensation where some incomplete neural trace precedes and sometimes induces recall of the total word. It is usually the consonants that leave the strongest trace".

Contributor E thought vocabulary should not be learnt in isolation but should be used in grammar, syntax and translation contexts as much as possible and D implied that reading was his most fruitful source of vocabulary. Contributor B was more explicit. Having mentioned that the South Indian script of Khmer slowed down his acquisition of vocabulary through reading he went on: "Vocabulary immediately expands once one achieves reading fluency. Ninety per cent of all the lexical words I know in any language come from reading". Contributor G resisted the rote-learning of vocabulary and paradigms at school but found that when she wanted to read French for archaeological purposes: "I have to confess, heretically, that because I could already read French fairly fluently (which must therefore have included ability to handle all the mystic rhetorical strategies) all I needed to do was to sit down and learn off all the technical terms as vocabulary. This was a strange experience since most of the technical terms in English were already quite new to me. . . . In fact I can still remember the French for some of the terms that I perhaps never knew in English". Nevertheless she learnt her Italian mostly through parallel libretti texts and "pleasurable rote learning of all the arias I had to sing". Contributor N likewise resisted list-learning while at school: "We were required to learn lists of words by rote, deliberately mauled the pronunciation to get a laugh . . .", and he later complains about the "dismal routine" of "contextless sentences"; yet he learnt vocabulary well in Spanish and German through the medium of reading. The context here was not a situational one, but the one of the word in a passage of writing for, as quoted above, he acquired words long before he needed to apply them. There are, apparently, degrees of isolation and degrees of contextualisation in vocabulary learning. While our contributors were mostly capable of acquiring words all the way along a continuum from isolated list learning to picking up new words in situation, there is a slight hint that those who learn successfully from lists also benefit from contextual learning, while those who most appreciate contextual learning do not seem to respond very well to vocabulary in isolation. Contributor M found the MECAS Arabic word-list unhelpful and arbitrary, never mastered it and found word lists actually inhibiting: "The direct translation of vocabulary which suggests there is a one for one equivalent of each word, prevented me from

experimenting in speech with paraphrase until quite late" [when learning French at school] but as an adult learner this is less of a restriction because she knows areas of meaning in bilingual word lists overlap. Contributor H had a conscious technique for dealing with this: "In the process of memorisation it is important to explore the boundaries of meaning in a word. . . . Memorisation gives an opportunity for the mind to sense out the possibilities of applying the item under memorisation to a variety of contexts. It strengthens the capacity to develop an intuitive sense of the quality and range of meaning in a word. These ranges of meaning can be established by exploring at the same time words that are situationally akin". Here is the learner creating contexts around words met in isolation, 'processing' the words and achieving greater 'cognitive depth' on the pattern discussed by Earl W Stevick in Memory, Meaning and Method, Rowley, Mass, 1976 pp.30-32. It is not surprising he remembered them better and used them more easily. Most contributors agree however that some conscious effort to learn words plays an important part in the learning process and that words do not just 'rub off' through exposure, or at least, not in quantities sufficient to guarantee swift learning.

Prompt 23: **Relation between the two**

Not enough was said on this theme by any contributor to add anything to what can be deduced from Prompts 21 and 22 and other parts of the study. There was contextual and isolated learning of both grammar (paradigms etc) and vocabulary. As grammar must be embodied in words, vocabulary learning goes on as an incidental of grammar learning. The reverse is not often possible though where a grammatical feature is also a feature of a class of words eg the '-ing' of present participles in English, the '-ly, -lich, -ment, -mente' of adverbs in English, German, French and Spanish respectively, it will clearly add to a learner's power to build vocabulary. Contributor M had mentioned that the trilateral root system of Arabic grammar was not as useful in helping a learner to build active vocabulary as might at first appear, but I think there is little doubt that it helps in the recognition of new words whose general area of meaning can be guessed from the three root letters used. In view of the widespread view that reading was a good way of acquiring vocabulary, and that to read a text with understanding a basic knowledge of the grammar is necessary, it follows that progress in grammar should promote progress in vocabulary learning.

Prompt 24: The role of teachers and the teaching situation

Comments on teachers were mixed. In some cases contributors preferred to treat the teacher as a mere informant and where they were mentioned favourably it was usually not for pedagogic but for personal reasons. As several of the contributors were or had been teachers themselves, this testimony is doubly valuable; but probably the most remarkable thing is that so few of them, whether teachers or not, thought it necessary to mention teachers at all!

For Contributor A the teacher got mentioned only as someone who is paid to put up with learners' imperfect knowledge of the language or with whose family it would be advantageous to stay after the first month or two of learning. On the other hand Contributor E put his early success in classics down to "nothing more than good, clear teaching and a natural appreciation of logical structures. I do not think that an aptitude for languages was necessarily involved. Sympathy with one's teacher, especially in the formative years, is of considerable importance, as I have found from being both a student and a teacher of the classical languages."

Contributor G disliked her teacher of French and in her own eyes was bad at that subject, though got high marks in exams. By contrast her "Latin teacher's outlook on literature and culture was off-beat, humorous and inspiring" and to get at this attractive world she learnt well and willingly. With the same teacher later for Greek she felt that her erratic performance was progressively better understood and "this understanding helped me improve my Latin as well. Fear removed means learning increased in my case". Hence it was the human, personal relationship, rather than technically 'good' teaching that got results. Something similar was recorded by Contributor N when learning Serbo-Croat from a teacher who constantly prattled away about "Vuk Karadzic, the self taught grammarian and folklorist from Western Serbia who founded the modern Serbian language." Her [the teacher's] method was simple and made no concessions to second-language-teaching methodology. It consisted in talking discursively about Vuk, scarcely pausing to grasp what I said. Her enthusiasm was infectious and as she spoke I began to perceive something of the reward that knowing Serbian well could bring. Nowadays it is fashionable to criticise teachers for indulging in excesses of teacher talk. But listening to a teacher talking on a subject that truly interests him or her can certainly develop listening comprehension". The variety of other teachers he had also had their hobby horses. "With one exception - a man who had been trained in

teaching English as a foreign language and was not popular because of his attachment to structure drills - the teachers were not trained as second-language teachers. It would not be fair to say that they were outstandingly effective as teachers, but certainly they were not as ineffective as, theoretically, they might have been. Our comprehension skills grew rapidly under the constant exposure to discourse, while our speaking skills remained undeveloped. No doubt we could have done with a battery of language-laboratory drills to develop fluency in producing sentences marked by inflected features, but, by and large, we progressed, and we enjoyed (or am I generalising?) the learning experience".

In learning German, however, he used an "informant" rather than a teacher and did very well. He tried to learn Maghrebi Arabic with a naïve informant in Morocco, however, to disastrous effect.

"This time my method was different. I decided to 'discover' Maghrebi with an informant and a tape recorder, . . . my informant was Said, our Berber gardener. From the start his reaction to the tape recorder was disappointing: he believed that it contained a jinn and that if he spoke into the microphone he would be possessed by it. (There is an analogy with the camera, which, in my experience, is often held to contain an evil eye). He was struck dumb and, when I pressed him, would only giggle nervously. There was an additional problem: I was unable to start him off, or sustain the discourse, because I knew no Maghrebi. The informant proved too naïve by half - meanwhile he had concluded Monsieur was mad - so I gave him up, compelled to adulterate the purity of my 'discovery' method by having resort to an educated bilingual informant who understood what I was trying to achieve". This also failed for the 'informant' would not accept the passive role and insisted on teaching literary Arabic".

This amusing incident highlights the question of prestige. Do people really learn well from teachers of low prestige who may be their social inferiors or even employees? Equally, do people learn varieties of language that have low prestige as well as they would more prestigious varieties? I suspect the answer is no in both cases since in neither case could the necessary state of 'surrender' be induced in the learner. Nevertheless, there are thousands of cases, of which readers will probably know several, where people learn successfully from their drivers, servants, students, 'bearers' or the neighbours' children. But what prestigious teacher would

willingly teach a non-prestigious variety of language; and if he did, how successful could he hope to be? It is merely a guess but I suspect teachers teach with more confidence when there is an element of cultural and moral correctness in the language they are teaching even if this is false to the scientific picture we have of language. Merely passing on a neutral code cannot be as satisfying or exciting. As Contributor D pointed out with reference to Thai: "It is not always easy to get local teachers to help you [to learn appropriate language], because they feel they lose face by teaching you a non-prestige variety".

Like Contributor E, M also found that "at school it seemed less a question of interest or otherwise in the language, its speakers and culture, than of sympathy for the individual teacher that determined one's will to succeed. As an adult it has been easier to appreciate an able teacher who teaches clearly and methodically even if one dislikes their personality". Yet she cites a group of teachers who prevented the adoption of a grammar book "whose very clarity they distrusted". Clarity was the virtue applauded by both E & M yet M attributed much more importance to a teacher's 'methodology' without showing what mixture of personality and technique this involved. It is a sad fact that many of the people most suited to be teachers on personality grounds never go into the profession, or, if they do, soon seek promotion out of it into inspection or administration. For those that remain the methodological techniques offered should be congenial enough to allow that initial sympathy with the students to grow. It is unlikely to if the teacher feels uncomfortable with his method. On the other hand, it probably will if the teacher does feel comfortable with his method, regardless of what that method is. But presumably there will always be some students for whom this method is uncongenial and it therefore impedes their side of the sympathy relationship. There seems to be no way out of this dilemma but Contributor D strongly advised that "feelings of guilt about using wrong methods should be thrown out".

The "variety of models" mentioned by Contributor J and the "heterogeneity of methods" mentioned by H are no doubt the practical solution. In the army Russian course mentioned by J one teacher sticks in his mind. "There was as I remember, only one teacher for the class sessions, ambilingual (one Russian parent) highly intelligent, urbane and super efficient; he believed in the JSSL method . . ." Group sessions were more dependent on the character of the teacher "(mostly oldish emigres with real stories to tell). Their most

interesting feature was that they were conducted 100% in Russian even when we were at a level where it didn't really seem feasible".

The first teacher seems to have excited respect and admiration rather than affection but this, combined with a method he believed in, seemed to get results. The teachers in group sessions perhaps excited more affection and interest, and, as it were, transcended the language barrier between them and the students. Contributor J concluded: "I don't think my learning strategies are to be isolated from my living strategies. I don't really mind following the strategies recommended by the teacher I happen to be with. Most strategies work if the need and motivation are there".

By contrast Contributor H had very definite ideas on the place of the teacher in his learning processes:

"I want the teacher of a foreign language to act as an informant to me, not to decide on the pattern of learning or to elect the materials. I find that I wish to steer the course of learning myself. I rapidly become impatient if the teacher follows a line of thinking of his own that he thinks important. I need to have rapid variations of pace to suit my type of understanding and may need to go over something in painstaking detail, while other areas I wish to race through because I understand them from analogies".

"I find that many teachers of foreign languages abroad use non sensical grammars. They have strange misconceptions about the nature of language, and feel the need to develop them at length instead of giving the information that I myself need".

"I therefore approach the lesson with my own agenda and stick to that. This will include a number of questions that I wish to ask; also areas that I wish to explore together, but following my track".

"At the early stages of language learning it may be more useful to use a primary trained teacher than the conversationalists that are often hawked onto one by well-meaning friends abroad".

This is no doubt a reflection of his increasing sophistication as a learner and presumably did not apply when he was at school and just beginning. Contributor G shows a similar development and lists among the things that inhibit learning:

"Disliking the teacher, or even being indifferent to a teacher - in fact now I'd rather not even have a teacher - just an informant". Yet even in her twenties the charming personality of a lecturer had a beneficial effect of her efforts to learn Welsh.

I think it might be concluded that as we generally enjoy winning the approval of people we like and admire, in the particular case of language teachers this operates to beneficial effect. However, the older the learner gets the more critical he becomes, the more sparing of his admiration and hence the less chance is there of meeting someone whose approval really matters. In these circumstances learners are likely to place more stress on the technique of the teacher and where it does not come up to scratch, guide it. Needless to say, there are plenty of teachers who will not accept guidance and in the struggle that follows an antipathy can be generated which inhibits learning. In such circumstances it would, indeed, be better to have no teacher at all.

Very little was said on the teaching situation that was not deducible from the comments about teachers. While Contributors L & J seemed self-effacing enough to benefit from any classroom situation (this self-effacement is as much a learner contribution as anything else, albeit a negative one): the others were either plainly uncomfortable in the teaching situations normally provided for learners, (H, G, M) or treated the learning process as something that went on almost independently of it. Nevertheless, at least two contributors benefited from the competitive atmosphere of the classroom, the opportunity to stand out as best pupil (G) or criticise the mistakes of fellow students (M) and I am not sure whether a desire to criticise the teacher is not an essential part of the adult learning process. As Contributor D says; "It is more difficult of course to throw out one's feelings about the teacher using wrong methods. It seems to be part of one's involvement in the learning process to want to criticise the teacher. Anthropologists and missionaries seem to have an enviable detachment in this respect, and seem to do better" perhaps because they are less inclined to attribute their failures to the teacher and their successes to themselves.

Contributor E thought the school environment more important than the home environment in promoting "movement (ie appreciation of results) and enjoyment on the part of the student" and he had clear ideas about what constituted a good teacher while recognising the variety of methods: "I do not think it is worth going much deeper into teacher techniques

for this exercise, as they vary so much between teachers; but rules, consistency, continuity, structure and variety (ie the maintenance of interest) are crucial". What all the contributors seem to look for implicitly in a teacher is predictability. Some seemed to impose this predictability by steering him. Others seem to accept the teaching style of each without judgement and adjust themselves to the pattern they can predict. One of the most disturbing parts of my own language learning experience was a course where the teachers and texts were changed nearly every month or so. While I might get a good teacher with one change, I could get a bad one with the next but the need to constantly adjust my learning pattern was upsetting and demoralising. I would rather have stayed with a 'bad' teacher and learned how to handle him. The reason is perhaps that 'method' accounts for only a small portion of the learning process - if any - whereas the relationship with the teacher and the learners own contribution play the predominating role and should not be disturbed. It would be interesting to see whether further research could measure the relative effects of 'variety', 'consistency' and 'continuity' in the learning process but to conclude it might be worthwhile quoting contributor M again on both teaching and the teaching situation: "My most successful language teachers have undoubtedly been my European hosts who provided a stimulating environment for a hesitant student so that gentle correction replaced the classroom . . .".

Prompt 25: The role of examinations

All of the contributors had had their language learning efforts crowned by success in a variety of examinations, in most cases university degrees or British public service examinations.

Contributor M felt strongly that her learning of Arabic had been distorted by the need to take an exam: "Because the MECAS course was geared to an examination on the antiquated pattern of translation into and out of the language the initially enlightened approach to Arabic exemplified in the textbook by Ann Arbor University in Michigan (sic) was steadily eroded by the need to prepare for this exam". The use of such words as 'antiquated' and 'enlightened' betrays certain preconceptions which were not shared by the majority of the contributors and will be dealt with later, but the fact remains that if a textbook one likes is abandoned to subserve an examination about whose value the learner has doubts, the effect can only be one of 'demoralisation' such as Contributor M recorded. Nevertheless, she did pass the examination she was working for.

Perhaps modesty forbade most of the contributors from stating the obvious truth that in fact when it came to examinations they usually passed, in some cases brilliantly. None except M expressed criticism of the types of examination they had passed. Contributor E said: "Some people like examinations, and others do not. As I do, I see the value of them in providing incentive and in giving a realistic test of progress made. In fact, I do not think any student can do without them. Some educationalists advocate a free learning atmosphere in which the pressure of examinations is absent. I think they are deceiving themselves and their students; and that all teaching benefits from a certain degree of discipline, because that is the way the human mind is made up".

This of course may be a valid pedagogical point but for the "incentive" element to be there the examination need not necessarily be "a realistic test of progress made". Providing it appeared to be valid a quite invalid examination could act as a stimulus for teaching purposes. As a corollary, however, a test that was not felt to be valid by the student would not be an incentive, no matter how accurate a testing instrument it was. There is probably a case for two types of test, the one awesome and ceremonious to spur the student on; the other neutral and scientific to measure his progress. It is unhelpful to criticise one by the criteria of the other.

Contributor G separates linguistic ability from exam-passing ability and claims: "I think I passed all my exams on the strength of my ability to translate into English and my interest in the literary side of subjects. I remember having four different shots at the genitive of Pericles in my 'A' level Greek prose" confirming that her "passive recognition was fine in all the three languages I studied but my production was likely to be disastrous". As only one of them was a living language, however, there was little need for production in real life. Nevertheless, as her later experience in successfully writing Italian showed, it was possible to transfer recognition skills into production skills and hence the examiners were perhaps not wrong in deducing that she possessed wider skills (at least potentially) than those actually tested in the examination. Yet apparently, as her case shows, the deduction is not reversible. If examiners had deduced from her oral and other competence in Italian that she could therefore easily do translation from English to Italian, they would have been wrong: "What I cannot do comfortably is translate from English to Italian in cases where I have been asked to write letters for friends. I have to write my own letters straight into Italian. Is this connected with my hang-

ups about Greek and Latin prose?" Though she did on the whole pass exams she cited tension, pressure and competition as inhibitive factors on her learning process, so she might have done better without examinations. Contributor I said: "I cannot say I work 'towards' an examination and indeed, I never think of a possible examination" but J was quite different: "Every four weeks of our army course there was a test. If you fell below a certain level on it you were straight back to your regiment! Well, that's some motivation, and it's not egocentric. The same test, incidentally, dictated your rises or falls in the small groups - unabashedly called Group 1, Group 2 etc. in order. I have to confess that this kind of competitive structure works with me; in my learning French, German and Russian I have tended to start weakly but then respond strongly to the second competitive challenge". Here is the incentive working as Contributor E envisaged it. And these tests, apparently, were not so much tests of achievement as tests of the pace at which you could learn. There does not seem to have been any opportunity to resit at a later date. Late achievement was considered no achievement at all. This indicates again the importance of momentum in some language learning. To move at the pace of the slowest man would have wasted the learning potential of the rest of the group. Nevertheless, on the micro level it appears from the research of Pinkus and Laughery 1970 and Nelson 1971 that in fact learners retain more if allowed to move at their own pace from item to item within a given overall time. (See Stevick op.cit. p.28-29). Whether an imposed rhythm on the macro-task is as unhelpful as it is on the micro-task would be worth investigating further. In the case of Contributor J it apparently was not.

Of course examinations can determine what a learner chooses to learn but there was only one mention of this, from Contributor M: "I have only ever learned vocabulary specifically for examinations when free composition is on the agenda and that when I was subject-spotting, as with the Civil Service exam in German when my husband and I backed 'Willi Brandt and his Ostpolitik' and fortunately for us we were not disappointed". When topics can become as predictable as this examinations can become less tests of achievement and more draft syllabuses. Head examiners would be less justified in deducing the other language skills from good performance in one skill in the examination since it can be specially prepared for. The candidate must correspondingly have less faith in an exam where he may be given credit for skills he knows he hasn't got. Hence exams of this type probably have an in-built decay mechanism whereby they

gradually cease to be incentives or good measures of achievement and need to be replaced. This decay will obviously be counterbalanced by the fact that examiners will gradually deduce less and less from the answers submitted as nearly all candidates prepare themselves equally for the predictable questions.

The contributors, possibly aware of this curious dynamic working in the background, seemed not to need the confirmation of examinations that they knew a language but benefited from it as a spur to achieving that knowledge. None equated success in an exam with linguistic ability and except for M, all seemed uncritical of the examinations they had taken, perhaps rightly assuming that whatever testing instrument was used they would come out roughly in the same position relative to their peers. Equally, several claimed to know well languages in which they had taken no examinations. For the learner, then, an exam seems to be a pedagogic incentive as long as it remains credible to him as a measure of achievement.

Prompt 26 Which aspects of language do you find easiest and most difficult to acquire?

Apart from contributor M, who mentioned her difficulties in aural learning and reproducing some Arabic sounds accurately, only contributor A had anything clear to say on the subject. He found that for him understanding was the most difficult, and translating into the foreign language the second most difficult task while the easiest task of all was translating from the foreign language. Reading between the lines in other accounts, it was apparent that some found grammar easier to grasp than sounds, vocabulary easier than morphology and so on but none attributed this to the intrinsic difficulty of the material but to their own strategies and tastes. Contributor H for example, in recognizing his difficulties in acquiring foreign notions of time and tense, especially the aspectual system of Russian, clearly implied they were his difficulties and not difficulties inherent in the material. This is perhaps not surprising in view of the fact that under Prompt 17 few contributors had anything to say about the relative difficulty of languages. It is apparent that within the same language they do not feel strongly that some aspects are more difficult to acquire than others. Contributor H said: "Only a few vowels give real trouble, such as those in which there are fundamental reversals, such as the Japanese closed back spread lip sound" suggesting an objective reason - fundamental reversal - for the difficulty,

while contributor F found 'semantically otiose' grammar and morphology off-putting; but these were the only hints at objective criteria for difficulty.

Prompt 27: Translation as a learning device

In the last twenty years translation has become almost a dirty word and people use it in hushed and apologetic tones as though it were something that could only be allowed among consenting adults. Of course the term covers a variety of meanings according to context. It can be a purely mental process preceding language. It can be a form of teaching exercise. It can be a form of test. As contributor M warned, it can mean a belief in the one-to-one equivalence of words in a list, inhibitive and uncreative. On the other hand, it can be an explorative process similar to contributor H's probing out the boundaries of meaning in a word, and can thus throw light not only on the foreign language but on the mother tongue. It can be the highly literary activity of the professional translator or the rather crude approximations of the translating machine, which, from a foreign term meaning 'hydraulic ram', is likely to produce 'water goat' as an equivalent. It is obvious that not all these various processes will be equally beneficial or equally deleterious to language learning.

Contributor B made some helpful distinctions to start us off:

"Translation as a formal device for learning new languages I find slow and boring - more of a hindrance than a help. But translation in the broader psychological sense is absolutely central ie one is always translating mentally when one stores and retrieves information, usually translating mentally within a language (in this I would include summarising, expanding, re-ordering, combining the new and the remembered)".

Contributor E regards translation as one of a variety of ways in which vocabulary can and should be exercised and adds: "In spite of the modern tendency to put the emphasis on translation from the foreign language into English, I think a much greater understanding of both the foreign language and English follows if there is a good deal of English-foreign translation. (Incidentally, I believe that the lower standards of English that now appear to be prevalent in British schools may be partly due to the lesser part that foreign languages, particularly Latin, are playing in the early stages of school curricula".

Contributor G, as already shown, passed her examination on the strength of her ability to translate into English in accordance with her "own strong priorities which were to understand the language and the culture, not to develop the arcane skills of translating Times Third Leaders into Greek". Nevertheless she did find that the experience of writing Greek prose (ie translation) helped to clarify her use of language generally since it "involved a Discourse Analysis in all senses. The correct use of Greek particles, and Latin and Greek rhetorical markers is obligatory. I learned to mark the course of an argument before the actual words went in. The complex anaphora cataphora etc. were clearly marked and it makes me think that the 'rhetorical' problems of ESP students in English consist in the lack of such a well-developed system of marking in English, not in the interpretation of those few markers that we do have: ie how do you teach the interpretation of ellipsis?" She even found a grammar translation method of learning Welsh worked for short spans of language and with a stimulating teacher.

As a learning technique contributor M found translation unhelpful and discouraging: "Likewise written translation out of the mother tongue has always seemed to be vastly time-consuming. One's distance from perfection is always so great, especially if a native speaker is the marker, as to be discouraging to someone still acquiring the elements of a language. So called 'proses' have always seemed interesting from the academic angle of specialists who have opted for languages post O-Level". However, she goes on to contrast translation into the mother tongue: "Translation into the mother tongue is obviously a simple affair compared with the rigours of 'essays and proses' depending as it does on an ability to find 'le mot juste' in English rather than wrestling with inadequate memorisation of foreign words and phrases. Arabic, and no doubt other languages without a universally recognised transliterative system, adds the diverting task of deciphering the usually well-known proper nouns of English".

Contributor A, though eminently fitted to do translation into a language like German in which his performance was near-native, was not convinced of the value of translation:

"Like, I suspect, most other people, I find translation into my mother tongue infinitely easier than the other way. Partly for this reason, I think that the different aspects of knowing another language are in fact based on different skills. I find the most difficult understanding, perhaps an indication of incipient deafness? The easiest I find

translation into English. The second most difficult, translation into the foreign language probably because, however much I've read, and I've read a great deal in German, it is still an artificial process in which one pieces language together in stilted fashion and mechanically. I can only achieve any style in a foreign language if I've finished a book in a distinctive style".

If the two modes of translation, from and into, are felt to be so different in degree of difficulty, as several contributors would agree, their value as testing techniques must also be assessed differently.

Contributor M condemned translation as a testing technique on the grounds that it was 'antiquated' and yet most contributors accepted this sort of test as at least one valid element in the process of assessing their achievement, so whether it is antiquated or not is beside the point. To the extent that a passage for translation is a set of instructions more refined, precise and complicated yet more economical of space than those used in most competing tests to elicit language, it is still a valuable testing instrument. To the extent that it provides a whole context in which individual items must be interpreted it is arguably the best instrument for testing a student's capacity to perceive and interpret meaning, with all its layers and nuances, beneath the surface structure of the language since it obliges him to plumb the underlying semantic structure and come up with a correct equivalent in the other language. Nevertheless, its power as an indicator must vary greatly according to whether it is translation from or into the foreign language. All the same, much of the criticism of translation is valid only if one makes the mistake of supposing that it operates by converting one surface structure into another surface structure without the mediation of the semantic structure common to and underlying both. If I interpret contributor B correctly, the translation he regards as 'absolutely central' is this constant interplay between semantic structure and its numerous surface equivalents and it is at the opposite pole from the one-to-one equivalence suggested by bilingual vocabulary lists. Yet the few other contributors who mention translation at all do not treat it as 'absolutely central' because they are thinking of it principally as a formal exercise. If what contributor B says is correct, translation in his sense would be an important process common to all language learners and users. I suspect it is; and what the contributors have to say about the other forms of translation would have to be evaluated in this light since a 'formal exercise' that reflects

an 'absolutely central' language process, however poorly, cannot be lightly dismissed. On the contrary, it would be worth devoting some effort to modelling it more closely on the underlying psychological process. In that way it would not appear boring and mechanical and learners could perhaps get the pleasure contributor H derives from seeing in the thought of a foreign culture through its syntax. Contributor E took it for granted that translation from the foreign language served her need to explore classical culture. I suggest that translating into Greek could have been equally revealing had the exercise not been based on Times Third Leaders, which she would probably not have read anyway.

Contributor I found translation a valuable learning aid partly because she was allowed to choose interesting matter not Times Third Leaders: "I do use translation, but usually from journals and newspapers (when I have acquired enough of the language to do so). This partly because the material itself is interesting, of course, - also because a knowledge of the subject matter is an aid and finally because the association enables me to remember the structure and lexis". I would confirm this from my own experience and would add that I am stimulated by the challenge to express in one language what I read in the other, a challenge not present to the same degree in free composition or conversation where you can always take the easy options. It is the uncompromising rigour of the translation exercise that appeals. Two way verbal interpreting has a similar appeal though the pressure is greater and the rendering of what is said correspondingly cruder.

To conclude, it is a pity our prompt did not clarify the various things that could be meant by the word translation and the uses to which it could be put and it would be worth investigating further the relationship between the 'psychological translation' mentioned in B's account and the other forms. The other forms can be beneficial to some learners but not to others.

Prompt 28: Educational background eg the effects of an interest in the history and distribution of languages.

The idea behind this prompt was that, as several studies have shown, students seem to benefit from an educational (and home) background that encourages interest in and sympathy for foreigners and their languages since this positive attitude facilitates learning. A derivative of this might, for example, be an interest in philology or comparative linguistics though there is no necessary connection between this and the good

language learner. Some very good linguists of my acquaintance seem singularly incurious about language in the broader sense while conversely, many good theoretical linguists are not good language learners.

Contributor G mentioned how the first linguistic insights hit her when learning Latin: "I also became interested in the history of language at this time which helped me make rapid strides towards greater linguistic sophistication". With Italian she "became fascinated by such philological intricacies [as the plural of 'mura'] and this is one case where the dichronous approach to language has helped someone at least". She later cites learning modern Greek as "another obvious case where philological interest and some knowledge would make the learning task easier for me". This is all part of the "linguistic cynicism and awareness" that she includes among her ingredients of success.

Contributor H, who had a multilingual home background in childhood, mentioned his delight in language as a phenomenon and his sensitivity to the dynamic and syntax of languages, but his interest seemed to centre on synchronous comparisons between languages, not historical linguistics. Contributor N similarly came from a home background that encouraged the study of languages but as his motivation is strongly cultural and communicational he does not mention an interest in 'facts about languages' as an element in his learning processes. It may be there but it would be very subordinate in the hierarchy. It did not appear at all in contributor J's reckoning; he mentions his home background as being warm and encouraging for his first two foreign languages but it was not, apparently, a multilingual background.

I would range myself with contributor G in this as I did find comparative philology, admittedly at a very superficial level, an absorbing topic in my teens and early twenties when I was learning languages. I am sure it enabled me to acquire Spanish quickly by extrapolation from French, though no doubt I committed plenty of howlers on the way, as when I wandered through central Madrid with a pair of shoes in my hands looking for a cobbler. Guessing from French 'cordonnier' that the Spanish must be something similar I went round asking people if they could show me the way to a 'cordero' and only found out later that I had been asking for a 'lamb'! It certainly helps to sensitise me to the associations of new vocabulary which in turn help to fix words in the mind eg Russian 'khleb' meaning 'bread' is cognate with Anglo-Saxon 'hlaf' = loaf; Latin 'caput', German 'haupt', French 'chef'

and Spanish 'cabeza' are all the same word transmogrified. As a result, when you are stuck for a word you at least have a rough idea where to look.

Nevertheless, from the accounts it appears that this was not an important factor for most of the contributors.

Prompt 29: Fluency and loss of it.

Prompt 30: Revival of Fluency after a gap.

It will save time and space if these topics are dealt with together. I think most contributors would agree with B, even if they did not say so, that: "Fluency is fluid ie I am conscious of either improving my command or losing it at all times. Experience shows that revival of fluency occurs with immersion in a foreign language context within a few days, even after a hefty gap". This is, of course, oral fluency, which was what the prompt meant. Reading fluency and writing fluency were not covered by the prompt or the contributors, who guessed rightly that we were here concerned almost exclusively with speaking. This was obvious in contributor C's comments: "... a good ear can lead to near fluency. Naturally, the situation (socio-cultural), the focus (content) and the amount of exposure (practice) determine the wealth of the language learnt, as well as its fluency ... there is a general tendency to 'get by'. A good 'baratin' is easily acquired in French and there is no need to look at the North African immigrant population to see how true that is".

This threw further light on the meaning of fluency, which turns out on examination to be a much more complicated word than it appears. In everyday language, if you say someone speaks such and such a language fluently, your lay auditor may well suppose you to mean 'perfectly'. This is not, of course, the meaning here, where the North African immigrant's ability to get by in French is equated with fluency.

Certainly none of the contributors seemed to imply that fluency meant perfection. Indeed, several accounts indicated that the search for perfection ie 'grammatical accuracy' would inhibit fluency, and none of the contributors claimed that they never made mistakes. Clearly then we must define fluency as the ability to speak a language at roughly the same pace and with the same degree of automaticity as a native speaker. It is not just a question of how fast your mouth moves but how far you need to concentrate on the utterance. Though he did not call it fluency, contributor J indicated

what fluency feels like from the inside: ". . . the times when you forget what language you're communicating in because you are intellectually, emotionally or in some other way totally involved. Then you can be thinking, feeling and imagining in it". So we are describing not only a feature of speech, but the state of mind that produces it, a 'mental' as well as an 'oral' fluency.

Contributor A, though of near-native fluency in German, felt that his fluency in Arabic was not comparable: "But the unpleasant fact remains that in funny languages like Middle and Far Eastern ones, a lower standard is accepted than in European ones. It is often said, probably rightly, that no foreigner has ever learned to speak Arabic properly, which is probably why someone invented the spurious title 'Arabist' to describe those who know a bit of the language and culture". If this is true then when we speak of someone speaking French 'fluently' we indicate a different level of performance from when we say someone speaks Arabic fluently. Hence fluency means, apparently, two different things. I suggest, however, that for a European speaking non-European languages it is possibly the 'mental fluency' that is lacking. If a measure of oral fluency could be established and applied to both cases it might appear that the flow of speech is roughly the same but the amount of concentration needed to produce it is more for Arabic than for French. Hence from the inside of the speaker it 'feels' less fluent, though for the listener it may sound the same. This is pure speculation but it may be worth testing.

Contributor A found that: "If I don't use a language even for a short time, say two months, I find I forget things very quickly, starting of course with the things one knew most superficially. I find I can only 'know' a language by applying it therefore have to keep up a constant effort to use it". This is probably a familiar pattern for most language learners. It is not enough to 'know' a language; one needs to know that one knows it and seek reassurance in use. In fact, from what contributors say about revival of fluency after a gap, it seems that loss of fluency is as much a state of mind as fluency. Perhaps contributor E should not worry too much if his Arabic slipped away once he left the Arabic environment, for it will probably come back. Indeed contributor J says: "I have achieved fluency in French, German and Russian, lost it quickly after gaps but found it comes back just as fast, sometimes more strongly than before" under the influence of maturity factors.

Contributor N was pleasantly surprised to find that German came back to him so easily: "After more than a decade during which I had no opportunities to use the German language, I had occasion to go to Austria for a holiday. I was interested to know whether my German had survived. I needn't have worried: it had. It was as if I had taken a live fish and frozen it then returned to eat it later". He attributes this to the "single-minded intensity" of his learning experience but in fact contributor F noted the same in his recovery of Persian after a gap of ten years and his initial learning experience had been a three year degree course with two subsequent years in Persia. However, let us make clear we are talking about the revival of fluency, not the achievement of fluency for the first time after these long gaps. Indeed, as contributor L indicates referring to her Arabic, language which is not learnt to the pitch of fluency just falls away and cannot be revived when opportunities to use it are not present.

Prompt 31: **Conscious and unconscious use**

Only contributor K was in the happy position of being able to learn unconsciously: "My approach to language learning is not primarily analytic and I have, I think, retained the ability to assimilate new structure and lexis unconsciously, surprising myself at times by spontaneously using forms which I have never seen grammatically described or analysed".

There were elements of unconscious use implicit in other accounts eg the unconscious cycling of contributor B, the unconscious use of Spanish lexis with French pronunciation by contributor F and the ways he described of language evoking situation and vice versa; but insofar as these references were only implicit they are not weighty enough to deserve treatment here; insofar as they were explicit they were put under different heads eg dreaming, interference, track jumping etc.

Prompt 32: **Interference between foreign languages**

Interference phenomena have been comparatively well studied and Vildomec gives numerous examples. It was thought worthwhile to separate two types of interference on the assumption that interference between foreign languages would be primarily confusion between equally weak learned codes; whereas interference from the mother tongue would represent more the intrusion of the strong native self, the mother tongue identity, which includes a linguistic code but is something much more, into the relatively weak and unstable

foreign self, whose sole basis may be only a learned code. It is interesting to note that whereas eight of the fourteen contributors mentioned the first type of interference, only three mentioned mother tongue interference.

Contributor A began: "Once I know a language well, I find relatively little interference problem, particularly if the languages are far apart linguistically and culturally. I have never had any problem, for instance, in finding Persian words come out when I try to speak German, or vice versa. But there was for a short period a bit of a problem between Arabic and Persian". Contributor I it will be remembered, found it difficult to learn languages in the same family because of the confusions (interference ?) that would arise, and contributor F elaborated on this theme:

"Most language learners have had the disappointing experience of finding a new language pushing out an old one, particularly if they are similar. I had this experience with Spanish pushing out Italian, a common happening; but there is a related phenomenon, where the new language replaces the old unknown to the speaker and adopts the phonology of the old. It happened to me, however, when, after living for a year in Spain and speaking a great deal of Spanish, I crossed the French border and began to use French quite unaware of the damage it had suffered. I went into a shop to buy something and with absolute confidence in my French, which had been fluent, said something like Tenez vous des cartes postales? When postcards were produced I realised I had to go and change some money so I said 'Espérez un peu pendant que je vais cambier du dinère'. I was using Spanish lexis in hypothetical French forms or with meanings interchanged. 'Tenez' had the Spanish meaning of tener ie 'have', but the French form, meaning 'hold'. Espérez similarly had the Spanish meaning of esperar ie 'wait', but the form of the French verb 'hope'. Cambier was a Spanish first conjugation verb Cambiar 'to change' pronounced as a Frenchman would pronounce it and with appropriate French first conjugation ending, while dinère was a stab at a viable French form of the Spanish dinero 'money'. This may sound highly contrived but the sentences were produced spontaneously and unwittingly and I would have gone on producing such hybrids in the full conviction that I was speaking good French had not my wife stopped me. To a lesser extent I still get this sort of interference now when I speak French and it takes an effort of concentration to reject the Spanish and find the right French word, though the general speed of the

utterances has not noticeably slackened. This would suggest that once a phonological framework has been firmly established it survives as a separate entity and imposes itself on new content put into it. This of course is a truism when we consider the mother tongue imposing itself on a learned language but it was certainly a surprise to me that the phonology of a learned language could impose itself on a later-learned language in the same way".

Both contributors B and J have something to say on the chronology of interference. B wrote: "Interference: always from the previous language no matter how long the time-gap, eg English interference when learning French; French interference when learning German; German interference when learning Khmer (after only six months study of the former at a gap of seven years!); Khmer interference when learning Indonesian; Indonesian interference when learning Spanish. Interesting point: chronological interference rather than interference due to language similarities (eg minimal interference from French when learning Spanish)". This is an interesting antidote to statements made by other contributors about interference due to similarity. J wrote: "Interference has tended to be not from the strongest foreign language but from the most recent. Also the attempted revival of a very faded if once strong language may suffer interference from a weak language rather than a strong one eg when my German was strong enough for me to teach in a Goethe Institut (in Thailand) . . . my Russian, which I was trying to revive at the time, came up against interference from my rather pathetic Thai". We have seen how contributor E's non-spoken Latin and Greek interfered with his much more recent modern Arabic so perhaps there is, as J suggests, "a Ph.D. hidden away here somewhere". Perhaps some more light can be cast on the subject in the section on track-jumping below. (Prompt 34).

Nevertheless, the frequency and form of interference, like so many other factors in this paper, seem to vary from learner to learner. Contributor L, for example, notes it as a very rare phenomenon with her: "I have not often experienced unconscious interference between my foreign languages, so perhaps I can remember the few instances when this has occurred more vividly. I have mentioned above that I often used English instead of French when I started learning the latter! [recency effect again]" "I remember only once speaking English instead of Spanish quite unconsciously, for it was to my mother, who does not understand English. On another occasion, as I was orally translating from French into English,

I started to do it into Spanish to the amazement of my English-speaking listener!" As the mother tongue of this contributor is Spanish this statement can serve as a bridge to the next section on interference from the mother tongue.

Prompt 33: Interference from the mother tongue

Surprisingly this was hardly mentioned at all. In addition to the last quotation in the section above, the only data given was contributor B's statement that he had English interference when learning French ie his first foreign language; but as he is speaking in the context of purely chronological interference from the previous language it is apparent that the mother tongue enjoyed no special status in this. English merely happened to be the only other language previously learned and hence it followed the pattern observed with later languages also. Contributor F's assertion that "the mother tongue imposing itself on a learned language" could be taken for granted would thus seem to be the observation of a teacher rather than a learner. It is not inside information.

Both error analysis and contrastive studies assume that there will be some mother tongue element in the mistakes learners make. From the mistakes some of my students have made in English it has often been easy to detect a mother tongue origin in cases where I knew the students' mother tongue. I would not therefore wish to question the assumption. But it seems that language learners are almost unaware of this form of interference. It may be pure fluke that the phenomenon has hardly received mention but when we consider that elsewhere contributors have said something about:

- (a) Interference between foreign languages.
- (b) Interference from the foreign language on the mother tongue.

and that there was a clear prompt to talk about interference from the mother tongue, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that from inside the learner it seems a much less important issue than teachers and analysts think. (Or perhaps, because it is a phenomenon of which the learner is not aware and hence difficult to correct, it is much more important than teachers and analysts think.)

As the outside evidence for this type of interference seems clear, an explanation of this oddity should be sought. Could it be that what learners express in the foreign language is a

mind and an identity already shaped by the mother tongue and inconceivable without it but not dependent on actual language for its expression? Hence might it exert its influence without the learner perceiving it as linguistic interference? I confess I find this puzzling and hope further accounts might be illuminating.

It would be worth supplementing our scarce information at this point with Vildomec's findings (op.cit. chap III sections 14-18 pp.205-213). He found that the mother tongue tended to dictate its laws to foreign languages and only four of his subjects reported categorically that they had no trouble in this respect. The effect of the mother tongue was increased if the subject was tired or excited, or if the milieu, eg a compatriot as interlocutor, somehow strengthened the mother tongue bond. Whereas the foreign language affected the mother tongue mainly in the form of vocabulary, the mother tongue affected the foreign language more subtly through the "inner form of speech", (mostly syntax), and pronunciation.

A foreign accent in speech is the one thing that even expert linguists find difficult to lose and it is the thing above all else that gives the foreigner away. It is perhaps that part of the mother tongue identity which the learner is most reluctant to surrender. Frequently there is a point beyond which he will not improve as though he were no longer aware of the need for improvement. Yet paradoxically many learners talk as if the only thing they feel needs improvement is their pronunciation. I suspect this is their overt, public attitude compensating for a fact they will not admit to themselves, that really they do not want to lose their accent. Syntax seems just as closely bound up with a person's ego and thought processes and may have similar defence mechanisms.

The "inner form of speech", which is not really language but more, perhaps, what I refer to above as the 'mind' or 'mother tongue identity', may exert its influence almost unperceived by the learner for, being both medium and message, it is below the horizon of critical awareness and hence beyond threat.

However, it would be distorting Vildomec's positive findings to yoke them to a hypothesis devised to explain my negative findings. I can only leave the matter open. After all, the fact that my contributors say almost nothing on the subject may indeed be a fluke!

Prompt 34: Track jumping and spillover from one language to another

This was a special form of interference best elucidated by a long quotation from contributor F:

"I have often found that languages seem to run in tracks in the mind. I have occasionally had to do three-way translation or speak to the same person in French and Persian alternately...I find this extremely fatiguing because of the need to keep switching tracks and the concentration needed to stay on one. As a result the language is more self-conscious and less fluent. If concentration is relaxed more fluent language comes out but I soon falter because it becomes impossible to separate the tracks and a sort of mental rail collision takes place. Only by restoring concentration can the tracks be separated again.

"A related phenomenon is that of track-jumping. I often find that a foreign word or phrase introduced in an English conversation will switch my mind on to the track of the foreign language and I will either think a bit in it or say my next few words in it till I realise my mistake.

"Similar to this system of track in languages and short-circuiting between them is the association of non-linguistic fields with a particular language. Activities or relationships carried on in a particular language reassert themselves when that language is used, and vice versa".

The two examples he then quotes are best left to the next two sections and as there were no other statements about track jumping we can proceed straight to the next two prompts.

Prompt 35: Situation evoking language

Prompt 36: Language evoking situation

To illustrate the association of non-linguistic fields with a particular language and vice versa contributor F went on:

"An amusing example of the former [in fact Prompt 36] happened to me as follows. I spent two years in Guinea speaking French most of the time to Africans and hence picking up a lot of French applied to African social relations. One of these was the question 'Même mère, même père?' which was always asked if someone introduced

a brother or sister. On my return to Europe I was travelling in the same railway compartment with two French girls and talking to them in French when one of them mentioned that the other girl was her sister. Automatically the question 'Même mère, même père' sprang to my mouth and it was all I could do to stop myself uttering it. Here was a language evoking a certain mental framework.

"An example of the opposite process [Prompt 35] also derives from those two years in Guinea. I had lots of Russian colleagues who were actively proselytizing for the Soviet Union and this led to frequent and often heated discussions in French on Communism and recent European politics. I find that now, even at a distance of 15 years, I unconsciously carry on internal debates on these topics in French, even where the point at issue is new, and need to switch my thoughts consciously into English". [Admittedly this is memory of a situation evoking language rather than situation itself].

"Most of what I have said so far seems to indicate that language is a system of mental predispositions which continue to exist whether or not they are actualised. If this is so it would explain the persistence of latent language which can be recalled when one is plunged back in the situation that originally demanded it, even though consciously, outside that situation, one can hardly recall it at all".

While only one other contributor mentioned the second of these phenomena, four others mentioned the first, situation evoking language.

However, contributor E's comment was prescriptive: "perhaps students should from the very beginning, be made to use the language in as natural a situation as possible", which did not give an example from his own experience though in a negative way his own experience tended to bear this out, since he found that when he left an Arabic speaking environment his Arabic quickly fell away: hence no situation means no language. However, it would be rash to conclude that therefore situation evoked language. It is, of course a commonsense proposition and numerous textbooks are based on the assumption that it is true.

Contributor G claimed that in Italian "my conversation ability varies wildly from near native to the near idiot according to the situation and mood I am in. This could be the result of the clearly demarcated situation in which I had learnt to operate best, but it's possibly also a personality thing . . .". She later mentioned that she spoke best in situations where role playing was not ridiculous - presumably natural situations where her real self could be directly interpreted through language.

Contributor N gives a fleeting glimpse of his family using Spanish or Hindi words and expressions in an English stream of speech when some household object or situation apparently triggers off an association more deeply imprinted in a foreign language than in the mother tongue.

Finally, contributor M seems to come nearest to the phenomena described by F when she says:

"Whereas the European languages have been learned orally in family conversation and studied in literary texts, Arabic has been picked up in the kitchen and read in newspapers; hence the two language types do not always overlap. Therefore, if I were faced with a short political passage to translate into German it is possible that the Arabic term would spring to mind first. This is partly because the daily newspapers I know from Lebanon and the Gulf are cliché-ridden and these phrases are absorbed by dint of repetition, while German quality newspapers like 'Die Zeit' take great pride in their neologisms and precise, accurate turn of phrase".

Elsewhere she strongly advocates the learning of language in context - both situational and linguistic, I imagine - and puts this into practice in her teaching wherever possible because the student finds contextualisation "much more rewarding both linguistically and psychologically".

All the same she "never found learning lists of words the arid task it sounds" and she throws a little light on Prompt 36, language evoking situation, when she says "but it has always evoked best for me when the words are organised into topics or when the vocabulary list is a personal evocative reminder of the situation it was garnered in as, for example, the booklets I brought back with me from a term spent at a German university where the words were a highly personalised diary eg why wood sorrel? Because we made punch requiring the addition of this".

Unfortunately, there was not enough detail to show us how situation and language evoke each other and we must remain with the unexciting conclusion that the commonsense assumption must stand but in a form which cannot be put to much use in language teaching.

Prompt 37: Lag between knowing and applying language

Five contributors mentioned this. Contributor G said: "At school French and Latin were both taught 'traditionally' - learn this - apply this - move on - and I always found that they were moving too fast for me, so I was only confidently applying things several weeks after they had been 'done' in the lesson. I was considered careless in the extreme...". Contrast this with her statement that though she has never needed to apply German she feels that she knows it and could apply it once plunged into the milieu. It brings us back to the question of latent and realised language and the idea that language might be a "series of mental predispositions which continue to exist whether or not they are actualised". There must be, I should imagine, a point where language atrophies and disappears through lack of exercise but the gap between knowing and applying seems to be an important constant in each learner and hence something for the teacher to take into account. Mechanical drilling may fill the gap with something that does not serve to internalise the language whereas a fallow period might serve the learner better.

Contributor B, as mentioned above, had something very valuable to say under this head:

"I am always conscious of a dual phenomenon: saturation and unconscious cycling. Saturation occurs quickly in early stages of learning a language whatever the activity (listening, speaking, reading, writing) and less and less so as command improves. However, when one is saturated and 'switches off' the cycling begins. The mind throws up words and phrases which have occurred during conscious learning in any mode, and the feeling is like an obsession with a tune which won't go out of one's head. Perhaps a throwback to the babbling stage of native language acquisition. I am conscious of sub-vocalising during the 'cycling'".

Contributor E as a teacher believed that students should move on to applying the language in situations as soon as possible after learning it but at the opposite pole contributor K seemed to be able to learn without any lag at all. Indeed, applying came before learning in some cases; or rather, he was only aware of having learned after he had

applied some language acquired unconsciously. Contributor J mentioned that although his home had been encouraging there was no other foreign language speaker or learner in sight with whom he could apply that language. This is the familiar pattern for millions of language learners in schools all over the world and while undoubtedly they would benefit from early and frequent opportunities to apply the language, the lack of these opportunities, for some learners at least, is not as disastrous as we might expect. Most of our contributors at some time or other were capable of storing unapplied language for long periods against the time when they could use it. An interesting case of this was contributor N who spent a winter in Germany learning German before going out and seizing the opportunity which had long been open to him of applying the language. The results were excellent; for him German was the easiest language of all. How far it is attributable to his voluntarily maintaining a lag between learning and applying is, of course, hard to say but the fact that he was allowed to choose his own pace must have been beneficial. As mentioned above, he internalised grammar and an extensive vocabulary before he ever needed to communicate in a social situation and it was then only a question of moving them from a passive to an active store. Admittedly, he attributes some of his success to the nature of the German language itself and we might hypothesize that for a learner of a given mother-tongue some languages are more tolerant of lag between learning and applying than others. Probably the more remote languages need to be applied piecemeal earlier if their unfamiliar systems are going to be internalised at all. Otherwise whatever is learnt later will rest on weak foundations and the framework into which it must fit will be too unclear for it all to build up into a coherent system. To try to apply more later would strain the learners span of memory and concentration. Hence applying smaller amounts earlier will reassure him and build up confidence.

Prompt 38: Application of language before 'knowing' it

The case of contributor K mentioned above was the only unclouded example of this phenomenon. The cases of B and N, both plunged into a French milieu at an early age and expected to apply the language before they knew it properly, show the negative effects this practice can have, at least initially, though both overcame these effects eventually. The experience of contributors A, E, F and M with Arabic and L with Swahili show that even very good learners will remain hesitant and uneasy with a foreign language if they are forced to apply it at a time when they are not fully confident of mastery. On the other hand, the moment of truth has to

come sometime as it came to contributor N: "I come now to Serbo-Croatian. I arrived in Belgrade, the capital of Yugoslavia, and at the age of 35 first experienced culture-shock. The agony of verbal deprivation afflicts the communicative more than the rest" [and by his own confession he is 'over-communicative'.] "I remember standing on the pavement outside our rented house listening to my landlord making friendly conversation in Serbian and thinking: 'This is hell and I can't stand it' as I nodded my head in furious overcompensation".

It is a demoralising experience for both the young and the mature learner, this anomie and wordlessness, and it is best avoided if possible. While our contributors are almost by definition people who have on occasions survived the 'deep end' approach, there are probably millions who have drowned and will never learn languages again. It is therefore probably best to spare learners this experience if possible and it seems that lag between learning and applying can be tolerated much better than premature application of language. In some cases, as where contributor L found she could understand Persian better than her nominal acquaintance with the language might lead her to expect, the 'deep end' approach can bring pleasant surprises but they are not to be counted on. The more usual result is hostility to the language and those who speak it, a natural defence against the apparent threat to the learner, now reduced to child-like helplessness. Adults probably suffer more than younger learners so it would seem a mistake for firms to send out employees to foreign countries without preparation in the hope that they will pick up the language on the spot. They are more likely to pick up a lasting hatred of the language and the country unless they are experienced and dedicated linguists like contributor A who wrote: "I find I can only 'know' a language by applying it and therefore have to keep up a constant effort to use it".

Prompt 39: Dreaming in a foreign language

Only two of the contributors mentioned dreaming. Contributor A wrote: "I have dreamed in all three of my best languages but the only one I dream in regularly is German". Contributor E complained that he had never been able to think spontaneously in Arabic but "On the other hand, I have frequently spoken Arabic in my dreams and, unless the jump from sleep to wakefulness plays tricks on me, an immediate check revealed that what I had been saying made sense and was as correct Arabic as I was capable of speaking". I have found in my own experience that I tend to dream in a foreign language only when I have been paying more than usual

attention to it during my conscious moments eg before an examination. This may be connected with increased anxiety.

Prompt 40 Recall of latent language

Some of this has already been treated in earlier prompts dealing with fluency and revival of fluency and the lag between knowing and applying language (Prompts 29, 30 and 37). Only three contributors had something to say on this.

Contributor A wrote: "I often find that I cannot recall a word if asked 'cold' for it, but that it comes back to me if I am speaking the language in a conversation". Contributor B relied on "auditory and visual memory ie the way words or phrases stick in the memory with the tone and accent of the voice one has heard pronouncing them; the position of a word or phrase on a page" but he does not make it clear whether these auditory and visual associations are instrumental in bringing words back. Contributor F did make use of these associations, however: "I have found it useful to learn words in groups eg garden vegetables, household articles, 'at the beach', etc. and find that in recalling the word I recall first a particular vocabulary list, page of a book, the book itself, or the situation where it was first learned. Fellow students have often astounded me by being able to remember the number of the page the place on the page and adjacent words, but I can only do this in rare patches. All the same, when a word has slipped out of consciousness it can often be brought back in this way and I usually get a 'tip-of-the-tongue' sensation where some incomplete neural trace precedes and sometimes induces recall of the total word. It is usually the consonants that leave the strongest trace". In the context of reviving fluency after a gap he also said: "When language does come back to me in this way it comes back in formulaic chunks, not as isolated words and there does not seem to be much relationship between frequency and recall. Infrequent words I knew ten years ago come back just as easily as the common words - sometimes more easily. The criterion is how well they were absorbed in the first place, not how frequently they have been used since".

Recall seems an undeniable mechanism in language use and no importance should be attached to the fact that only three contributors mention it. It merely illustrates that the coverage of unstructured introspective accounts is bound to be patchy and that not too much should be made of the contributors' silence where there is plenty of outside evidence that a phenomenon exists.

Prompt 41: Translation from and into

This has already been well covered under Prompt 27 where translation was considered as a learning and testing device, though contributor B's statement about translation as a psychological universal should more properly be placed here. He added elsewhere that: "Closely allied to this need for grammatical rationalisation is the need to translate mentally in the early and consolidation stages of foreign language learning ie the process is one of using English as a metalanguage for getting my ideas straight on the structure and semantic range of the foreign language".

This is perhaps to be equated with the 'pursuit of meaning' widely noted as a characteristic of good language learners (Stern, Rubin et al.) probably as a riposte to the 'contextually impoverished instructional situation' to use a phrase from Dr M.B. Wesche's unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Toronto January 1975 p.43 full title The Good Adult Language Learner: A Study of Learning Strategies and Personality Factors in an Intensive Course). This desire for translation, for equivalance, is very different from the formal translation exercise considered as a learning and testing technique and of course contributor B makes his own distinction between them, finding the former 'crucial' and the latter 'boring'. Dr Wesche illustrates the need for the former sort of translation in most students of language (op.cit. p.43-44):

"But even with a meaningful learning set a learner cannot make the necessary associations without access to the signification of the new items he is learning. This can be provided in various ways, including inference from semantic, grammatical and paralinguistic clues in the immediate context, or via provided translations. One might suppose the latter to be most important when the former are lacking. Cooke in a study of kinds of explanation perceived by adolescent students to be most useful in learning a second language found that they wanted to know the semantic meanings of new words introduced in drills. Asked how they preferred to be presented something they would remember and be able to use, the highest rating was given to the statement: 'I like to have translations of new words or expressions'. Other options included oral practice, grammatical explanations, working out their own explanations of grammar, in order of stated preference. There is no way of telling whether these students would have felt such a strong need for translation in other kinds of learning situations offering more contextual clues to meaning, but it is clear that they felt that knowing

meaning was very important for effective learning. Preliminary observations for the present study revealed a similar concern for knowing meaning among English speaking Ontario civil servants learning French".

Whether we call it 'translation' or not the need is there and while good language learners can often get at meaning through inferring from context etc. because of their greater 'cognitive courage' (Carton's term) it would seem perverse not to give them, and the less able, the chance to home in on meaning quicker by giving explanations and bilingual equivalences. However much it might be objected that nominally equivalent words in different languages rarely have the same range of reference, it is usually the case that their common core of meaning is much clearer and more specific than the 'contextually impoverished instructional situation' would make it. It is significant, I think, that contributor B also says that 90% of his vocabulary in any language is derived from reading ie where either the context is rich enough for meaning to be perceived or where he can look up meaning in a dictionary.

Because of the need to use one word to mean two quite different things it is difficult to separate the remarks here and those under Prompt 27 so they should be read together. Suggestions for two new terms to keep the processes distinct would be a boon to linguistic enquiry. My own attempts have merely produced monstrosities like 'equivalation', 'semantic matching', 'transcription', 'transideation', 'intersemation', 'cross-signification' etc.

Prompt 42: Use of films, radio and other media

All the contributors who mentioned films found them very difficult and unhelpful. Contributor J wrote: "In my L2 and L3 I had, like most people, found phones and films traumatically difficult media. In L4, Russian, our listening skills were so well trained (physically as well as pedagogically) that listening really was no problem". Contributor L's reaction was similar: "Personally, I have found that the use of films, radio, TV etc. have never helped me in the process of learning a language. I have 'enjoyed' watching a film in English occasionally as an English student but I do not think films have furthered my knowledge of the language in any way. In fact, it has not been until I have reached some proficiency in the language in question that I have been fully able to understand a film or follow a radio or TV programme in that language". Contributor I wrote: "As far as the media are

concerned, I find that films which are sub-titled are distracting, but it is possible to drag one's attention from the sub-titles; but films which are 'dubbed' are almost wholly useless - to me, anyway - since one is following lip reading in one language but sound in another".

Contributor A, on the other hand, found films and TV beneficial but only in the advanced stages. It is true that he recommended taping radio and TV programmes earlier, after getting the hang of pronunciation: "Once this stage is over and pronunciation is roughly right, leave it off. Much later, start taping TV and radio programmes and going through the recordings with the teacher, who can explain colloquialisms and translate". The two significant points here are, of course, that he is only concerned with the TV sound-track, not the picture, and that in its recorded form it can be gone over and explained. This is not so in the cinema or with the TV programme that is not recorded on videotape. So ordinary film watching is, in fact relegated to the advanced stages: "Read a tremendous lot. Watch the TV. In European countries this is no hardship. In the Middle East it is a grind".

Among the three most important things that helped her to learn contributor G mentioned: "Bombardment of sound ie total immersion in the language coupled with overt information on what should be going on. That is I read grammar books and then immerse myself in films, records, books but only real language works here, not cooked up language". She learnt Italian from the BBC Parliamo Italiano TV programme, the only contributor to claim having learnt any language in this way. The radio proved on the whole a beneficial medium to most of the contributors eg contributor H: "At an early stage too comes bathing in the sound of the language. This can be done by listening to the radio semi-consciously, while doing something else. At such times one can listen to a short phrase and then switch down or off the radio and repeat it over and over again exploring the texture of the words memorised. It is not necessary to know what the words mean or even to have the correct word divisions. All that is needed is a flow of sound in concatenation". Contributor I used tapes of Serb-Croat in the same way as background while she was doing something else and presumably could use radio for the same purpose. Contributor M felt she missed this type of back up in learning French "in pre-audio visual days with only the odd BBC broadcast to vary the teacher's voice" because when she eventually went to France she could not see through the native pronunciation and intonation to the underlying words, hearing jeudi instead of je dis. She goes on: "I have

always wondered whether people reared on an audio visual course introducing such structures don't also concoct mentally their own transcription based on the spelling of their native language which they then have to remake when confronted by the actual orthography of the language. These misconceptions did not, however, occur in German to the same extent because the spelling is largely phonetic". Nevertheless, because of the way she has been taught she "cannot appreciate how people can absorb [language] in gobbets from tapes and pictures without encountering ambiguities of meaning. Familiarity with grammatical terms also makes me feel safer with a Teach Yourself Book supported by a series of visits to the country, as with my experience of Dutch". Like other contributors who did the Middle East Centre for Arab Studies course in Lebanon, she was expected to listen to the radio, particularly newscasts, and model herself accordingly: "On the Arabic course the taped material available was purely repetitive. Because it seemed aimed at training us to be perfect newscasters of classical Arabic the novelty of self-tuition quickly evaporated and the language laboratory session became a self imposed chore".

This brings us to comment about the language laboratory, which was uniformly unfavourable. Contributor M speaks elsewhere of the inhibiting tension of the laboratory and the need for advance explanation of drills. Contributor J admits he is turned off by behaviourist drilling. I myself simply fall asleep after about ten minutes in a language laboratory. Contributor N, however, would have welcomed "a battery of language laboratory drills to develop fluency in producing [Serbo-Croat] sentences marked by inflected features" and approved of a taped Latin audio-visual course for his son but he did not record any actual benefits from language laboratory learning. Following on his comments about dreaming in Arabic, contributor E said: ". . . maybe there is a difference in situation, whether consciously or subconsciously perceived, between speaking to an audience and speaking to none (or an imaginary one). This may mean that the value often ascribed to language work being done with tape recorders, with the student on his own in a language booth, is not as great as is often thought, even though it may be helpful for actual practice with vocabulary, accent etc". Contributor F, with his need to see things written, would probably not benefit much from the language laboratory, and still less in view of what he says subsequently: "On the other hand, I do not need to actually say a word before I can learn it, nor do I find that

frequent repetition of a word alone facilitates learning". Though she learnt well from other media, contributor G hated the language laboratory for Spanish: "We had a five-week 4-hour a week language lab course (the only language lab course I ever heard) when I was at Bangor as preparation for five-weeks' teaching practice in Madrid. I also recorded the BBC's Tal como es records and bought the books. I hated the language laboratory but still remember such useful phrases as 'Tocas en la banda?' - 'No, toco en la orquesta.'"

However, in fairness to the laboratory it should be pointed out that:

- (a) All of the contributors had their early learning experience in a pre-audio-visual age and hence their learning patterns were set independent of the language laboratory.
- (b) The language laboratory was devised for the 'bad' learner, someone who was too shy to speak in class, too slow at replying to keep up with the rest, too insensitive both aurally and orally to pick up language without ponderous drilling, even perhaps too non-literate to learn from the written word.

It is therefore not surprising that these contributors do not react very kindly to the language laboratory though these need not be the reasons and their reactions may reflect a universal attitude of language learners of any age group. Nevertheless, both G, H and J favour a variety of methods and feel that any method will work to a certain degree (except that H draws the line at structural drilling which impeded his learning of Bengali). Hence the laboratory as one of several available methods in a course is probably much more valuable than one which dictates that the course must be taught exclusively through it. As contributor E concludes: "Most aids I have used are fine, so long as one can avoid putting too much emphasis on any particular one - ie because the school has spent money on a projector or a language booth, or because a little old French lady happens to live down the road".

Prompt 43: Reading, writing, speaking, understanding; separate skills or interrelated forms of the same thing.

So much dogma had accumulated about what language consisted of that it was thought worth asking the contributors

what they felt. The orthodox answer of 10-15 years ago - that "language is speech" - did not receive much support and most contributors, whether by choice or force of circumstances, had supported their acquisition of foreign speech by the use of reading and writing. Indeed, many of them used reading and writing to acquire the language necessary for speech. The classicists (E&G) seemed to learn non-spoken languages in much the same way as they learnt spoken languages though F remarked that learning dead languages was more difficult for him "because the possibility of speaking is removed" and these languages left a weaker impression.

Contributor A thought that "speaking and writing in the foreign language are probably the same skill; its just that one can rarely achieve the same pattern of stimuli in both cases". Contributor B "became proficient in everyday usage in the four modes (my underlining) in about eight months" when learning Khmer. Contributor C, however, did not find the same in learning Persian and Arabic: "...my limping attempts to break the back of both these languages would seem to illustrate the difficulties of attempting a hard language with a non-Latin script. Again, one can get by with a survival kit of spoken sounds, particularly within the professional demands of the job situation, but it will take more than mimicry to master the motor skills of reading and writing." It is true that if one's language learning ability depends primarily on mimicry the aural/oral side of language will be easier to acquire than the visual/motor side, but contributor B also laid great stress on mimicry yet managed the visual/motor side of Khmer successfully.

The challenge of an exotic script and the individual skills have been dealt with in previous sections; here we are concerned with the relationships between them. As contributor M pointed out, the spoken form of Arabic is almost a different language from the written, so one would expect these skills in Arabic to be felt as separate: "... reading and writing Arabic is a very different skill from speaking and understanding it and I am constantly beset by the problem of how to write down the thoughts which come to me in the spoken form. No wonder people resort to cliches and the worn phrase." However as the written forms are universal there is a strong temptation, to which I certainly succumbed, to use written forms in speech rather than learn the local spoken dialect. Expatriate Arabs do this themselves so the phenomenon is widespread and shows how, given the right circumstances, written language can impose itself on spoken

language and should not, therefore, be treated as a sort of second-class form. Of course this is even more true in the languages of literate societies.

From scattered hints in F's contribution it is apparent that he feels the four 'skills' to be aspects of the same thing and perhaps he would favour contributor B's use of the term 'modes' rather than skills. Contributor G felt herself to be weak in the "crucial skills of prose writing" because there was "no oral/aural reinforcement to drum in correct forms." She was speaking about classical languages and "prose" here means, of course, translation into the foreign language. She was more concerned to understand the foreign culture (and hence read?). She went on: "My later experience with writing modern language confirms this inkling that writing is greatly helped by transfer of other skills, rather than straight tuition in writing. In Classics you're confined to practising reading, writing and translating skills, with no possibility of any transfer or interchange." This recalls contributor F's feeling that dead languages left a weaker impression because the speech element was absent. Contributor G proved to her own satisfaction that writing Italian was a mode of her general competence in the language when she was called upon to write a letter in a legal dispute after hardly any practice in writing Italian and found that "there were virtually no mistakes in it. I have never written anything of any length so this cannot be taken as firm evidence but it leads me strongly to think about the eminent transferability of the other skills which I have learnt."

Though Contributor H sets out the various elements in his language learning processes very systematically as though they were separate, in fact it is apparent that they feed each other and he says: "The role played by reading in feeding my knowledge and understanding of the language is extremely great. It is my main source of language learning. I would find it impossible to learn a language without being able to read it, since I depend a good deal on visual memory." And later: "I am convinced that writing the language is one of the principal ways of appropriating it . . ."

Contributor J's Russian course had to answer the question of relation of skills pragmatically: "We were being trained to listen, understand and record and/or summarise. EOP [English for Occupational Purposes but he means Language for Occupational Purposes, presumably LOP] for an occupation where you never had to speak (for obvious reasons) and where, in theory, you only had to read your own writing, with such

specific needs for their learners, it is interesting to try to remember how narrowly the army zeroed in on them: if the learner doesn't need to speak the target language (TL) do you just not train him to speak? If he won't have to do much writing, can you leave it out?" The army answered by giving them training over all the language skills thereby implying that really knowing the language involves knowing them all; in other words, that they are not really separate skills but modes of the same mental process. "However specific our LOP needs were, we needed, it was considered, the whole grammar of Russian and we were taken systematically and pragmatically all the way through it. . . . Rules, explanations, examples, translation, drilling - anything went as long as it worked. . . . The army . . . Clearly didn't believe in the isolation of skills and knew a bit about motivation; why, we even had a Russian choir."

Of course, if skills cannot be isolated is it correct to go on calling them skills at all? We tend to become prisoners of our own words and the word 'skill' applied to language seems singularly inappropriate, putting language on a par with piano-tuning or carpet-laying. Once the term has become current, however, we are almost obliged to see language refracted through it and treat language as if the term were appropriate. It is apparent that most of the contributors reject the idea of separate language skills, like the army did.

Contributor K says: "I have found reading, and listening to authentic material, of great value; indeed, much of my knowledge of Malay/Indonesian was initially acquired from reading, later activated by speaking both as recall and by the practice of talking to myself mentioned above."

Only Contributors L and N seem to believe that the language skills are separate; as L puts it: "I certainly think that reading, writing, speaking and understanding are separate skills and much of what I have written above will prove so in my particular case." However, N is not so unequivocal though when he talks about voluble Serbo-Croat teachers and says "Our comprehension skills grew rapidly under the constant exposure to discourse while our speaking skills remained undeveloped," he implies that the development of the one could not entail the development of the other so they are separate skills, not modes of language competence.

**Prompt 44: Memory, forgetting, mental blocks
tip-of-the-tongue effect.**

Ten out of fourteen commented on this and it will be best to begin with Contributor H who had his memorizing mechanisms very well analysed:

"I am convinced that language learning taxes the memory very greatly; particularly lexis, but also to some extent syntax. A great deal of effort is essential and various exercises must be used. These include repetition until the phonological pattern of an item is fully interiorised. The results of these efforts must be to build up stocks of lexis and syntax available at various levels of recall from instant to more remote.

"In the process of memorisation it is important to explore the boundaries of meaning in a word. . . . Memorisation gives an opportunity for the mind to sense out the possibilities of applying the item under memorisation to a variety of contexts. It strengthens the capacity to develop an intuitive sense of the quality and range of meaning in a word . . .

"The types of memorisation used in language learning include:

- "1. **Visual:** Shape of the word as a visual form, whether printed or hand written is memorised. I find that some words are memorised in print and some in handwriting, usually but not always my own.
- "2. **Auditory:** the sound of the item reverberates somehow in the mind even though silently; or it may be assisted by subliminal tongue movements in the mouth. The voice that I hear is always male and tends to be my own but need not be.
- "3. **Kinaesthetic:** I use a great deal of kinaesthetic memory for abstract words in particular. I would describe this type of memorisation as a kind of dynamic track with a shape; the variation in memory image comes in the variation of shapes or tracks.

"Memorisation can also be subdivided in the following way:

- "1. Conceptual: the memory is aided by analysing and then synthesising the elements in a compound thus forming a total concept.
- "2. Derivational: reference is made in the mind to meanings in other related languages where the elements in a word, or the word itself have cognates.
- "3. Mnemonic devices: these can take a bewildering variety of forms and tend to be very individual. I use largely forms of visual and kinaesthetic tricks in order to ensure that I remember a word. For example the Bengali for tree is 'gatch' and I think of the trunk of a tree with a gash on it!

"A very important feature in memorisation techniques is of course that of revising and for this I use again a variety of patterns, sometimes asking for assistance from others and sometimes simply doing it on my own. In revising, one of the main targets is speed so that one can work up instant recall of a word from signals in either direction, sometimes it is the word's meaning if in English, sometimes it is the word in the foreign language from English. The signal may even be an oblique one where one word acts as a signal for a group of related words all of which have to be remembered."

No other contributor went into such illuminating detail about his memory and memorisation devices but most gave snippets corroborating parts of what contributor H had written.

For example, contributor I also used mnemonics: "I have one at present for the paradigm of declensions which in Serbo-Croat is not set out in the classical form. It runs

<u>N</u> o	-	Nominative
<u>G</u> entleman	-	Genitive
<u>D</u> rinks	-	Dative
<u>A</u> ny	-	Accusative

<u>Vicious</u>	-	<u>Vocative</u>
or		
<u>Injurious</u>	-	<u>Instrumental</u>
<u>Liquor</u>	-	<u>Locative</u>

Contributor L was presumably making use of 'derivational' techniques when she wrote: "Then I found that memorizing vocabulary was easier in Persian than in any other languages I had studied previously, due to the fact that so many Persian words are clearly Arabic or Indo-European in origin." There was corroboration of 'auditory' and 'visual' memorizing in Contributor B's statement that: "I rely on auditory and visual memory ie the way words or phrases stick in the memory with the tone and accent of the voice one has heard pronouncing them; the position of a word or phrase on a page"; and Contributor F said he was capable of the latter in patches.

Several contributors, as mentioned above accepted the belief that memory fails with age but when actually set to memorize vocabulary lists in adult life found that they could cope (E, F, M, J), possibly because of compensating factors such as greater experience and maturity and a more conscious strategy. But forgetting seemed to be more frequent with advancing age.

Contributor B said: "I think I have an awful memory for words." On the other hand, contributor A was very insistent that learning words, as early as possible was vital: "Concurrently with the grammar learn as many words as can be absorbed, write all words down on cards, and test endlessly in both directions. About thirty words a day can be learned, of which twenty will stick. About half or three quarters through the grammar book, start reading prepared texts, usually available in commonly studied languages. Continue reading, noting words that are new on cards and incorporating them into the word memorisation effort, maybe raising the number per day to fifty or sixty." But he later says: "If I don't use a language even for a short time, say two months, I find I forget things very quickly, starting of course with the things one knew most superficially." Contributor F, in learning vocabulary, spoke of learning from word lists with the front of his head "possibly the seat of visual memory", and finding that organised distraction eg walking, aided memorisation. He also claimed not to have a particularly good memory, and in anycase this deteriorated with age. As has been set out above, he thought memorising partly depended on caprice and association, and certainly did not necessarily tally with the

frequency of an item learnt; it depended more on the intensity of the initial absorption process. He therefore found re-memorisation rather difficult. Contributor G was not a good memorizer and initially got by on recognition but perhaps, like many of the contributors, she gave her memory less credit than it was due; after all, when she came to learn French lists of archaeological terms or operatic arias in Italian both out of interest, she did very well, and she lists motivated rote-learning as one of the things that make her learn. "Rote-learning of something from the literature/music that I happen to want for myself. I cannot efficiently learn an unmotivated paradigm but I can extrapolate from chunks of the language which I know by heart. The parallel discipline of music/verse provides a soothing vehicle for language learning." There is a hint here of the beneficial effects of induced relaxation (or organised distraction?) on memorizing already exploited in Lozanov's 'Suggestopaedia'. Contributor J said: "My memory is of the short-term nagging kind" and agreed that as one gets older one loses ones "snappy" memory; but unfortunately he did not elaborate except to say that with such a memory he learnt Russian vocabulary well. It would be interesting to know more about short term and long term memory but the topic is well surveyed in Stevick (op.cit). It would also be fascinating to learn how contributor K can absorb languages without much memorization effort at all.

Contributor L was set to memorize conversations, poems and longer paragraphs etc. while learning French but found she could still express herself better in English where she had not memorised chunks of language. She wonders: "Was this due to the fact that the memorising of whole passages and conversations hindered my mind to think (sic) easily of an originally constructed sentence. I never found that difficulty of expression in Italian where I did very little memorization, if any at all." Contributor F found the same with Spanish and from my own experience I can add that one of the most inhibiting, loathsome episodes of my language learning was being forced to memorise Arabic dialogues and then repeat them mechanically in class. I felt that if I had already learnt it I did not need to practice it, but if the object of the lesson was to teach this material it did not need to be learnt in advance of the class. I ended up treating it as a learning lesson rather than a practising lesson and did not noticeably fall behind my comperes.

Contributor M found her photographic memory useful in remembering the shapes of Arabic words and contributor I also stressed her dependence on visual memory, both of which

facts have been mentioned earlier. Contributor N had obviously included periods of concentrated memorisation in his language learning particularly for German, and suggests that reading helped him to memorise since his memory seems to be biased towards visual de-coding.

What seems to emerge from these accounts is that the rather arid experience of memorising can be gone through even in middle age with success as long as motivational factors can keep the learner at it and provide the stimuli that encourage him to use, either mentally or practically, the new material absorbed. This would confirm the finding that the more you do with what you learn the more will it become an internalised part of you.

Prompt 45: Internal dialogue and imaginary situations

Prompt 46: Suppressed vocalisation

Several studies have noted that the good learner often carries on internal dialogues and subvocalised conversations with himself and as these are so closely related they can be dealt with together. Seven contributors recorded using the former, five the latter and these five were all included in the seven who used internal dialogue.

Contributor A wrote: "I have found internal dialogue and imaginary situations a very useful way of learning. But one becomes quite impossible for one's friends if one's even thinking in the language being studied when one's not speaking." Contributor I wrote: "I tend to describe in my mind various things I am doing, in the language I am learning eg I am going to the office, I have come from home, I am waiting for the taxi - I hate waiting. I plan what I will eat and how to order it". "She continued:

"From reading about my new country, I pick a place, eg Belgrade, and fix myself mentally in the Central Square and repeat directions for getting to my destination. I plan my arrival by air and conversation with airport customs officials - in other words I devise situations in which I may find myself and from past experience of similar situations, I work out little dialogues for myself."

Contributor K worked in a similar way: "As to method, I recall reading aloud a great deal and talking to myself. This is a practice which I continued through university and still do today as a means of keeping my command of my languages active, and of improving my control of new languages."

We have already seen how contributor B is aware of constantly translating mentally and of unconscious cycling of new language. He adds: "I am conscious of subvocalising during the cycling." Contributor F found he still carried on internal dialogues in French on Communism and other topics he had discussed with Russian colleagues in Guinea fifteen years previously. Contributor H wrote: "Most of my productive practice, however, occurs in talking with myself. I am able to conduct conversations on general social and cultural topics and sometimes professional ones too. These may be in the form of short explanations that I give, but are more often in the form of a question and answer dialogue with somebody that I imagine myself to be with."

Contributor N spoke of internal dialogue only in connection with his mother tongue and in particular with reference to his writing of poetry: "The messages, to no one in particular, sent by another self whom I do not fully know bring a special satisfaction - that of communication without an interlocutor and without a motive. In my own mind, I think of that relationship as being actually with language itself as my partner. Which is odd, since more prosaically, I exploit language for getting to people. Writing poetry seems to be a meditative, not exploitative, activity."

It would be difficult to estimate what role internal dialogue in a foreign language played in his learning processes since he seems impelled more than most to communicate to another person. Other people, I feel, very often have their best conversations only in the mind. They can always think of marvellous things to say once the real occasion has passed and they may well continue an argument mentally for hours after it has ceased on the ground. Perhaps it is they who also learn language well by internal dialogue whereas more placid, less introspective types would learn better by real communication. This would be worth investigating further.

Prompt 47: Thinking in a language

This should also be closely related to the previous two prompts though Contributor B wrote. "Thinking in a language. I think this is a red herring. I see no difference between ability to use a language and ability to 'think' in it (ie I am convinced that there is no such thing as thought separate from language)."

This is debatable unless we define language as whatever conveys thought. In this way such language-substitutes as mathematics or Herman Hesse's 'Glass Bead Game' would come into the definition, though more normally they would be considered non-linguistic ways of thought. Nevertheless, Contributor F with his experience of language as running in tracks, suggests that thinking and use are almost inseparable and that, if anything, thought gets lost in language. Indeed, it is the absence of conscious thought that permits language to flow most freely and conscious thought is only brought in when a change of track is needed or the language needs monitoring.

Contributor A said: "I find that thinking in the foreign language is a process that happens fairly early on. Just as soon, in fact, as one has sufficient vocabulary at the tip of one's tongue to be able to talk without planning. For a long while, perhaps always, there are situations in the language to which one will react in the language, and others where one still has to think of the English and translate. I find, though, that I often embark on a sentence and then I find that I am in fact saying nonsense. On closer examination, this turns out to be not because I don't know how to say the words or phrases needed, but because I haven't thought exactly what it is I want to say. Then I have to switch back into English, think out my speech, and translate back."

Contributor J finds that this fusion of thought and language, the loss of one in the other, is the chief pleasure of learning languages "My goal and real joy has been the times when you forget what language you're communicating in because you are intellectually, emotionally or in some other way totally involved. Then you can be thinking, feeling and imagining in it. This kind of situation is of course also the best way to get into the application of a language you have previously only 'known'."

Contributor L dates her starting to think in English from her first visit to Britain - four weeks in Cambridge at the age of 18. But this was a gradual process. "The process of improvement was slow, as that of learning had been in the first years . . . My English had become fairly fluent but it may not have improved much further had I not married an Englishman and lived since then in a more or less English environment. The learning of the language has since become a more complicated process and in many respects it is not only the language as such but the reflection of the people who speak the language which have to be taken into consideration

as well. This period of what may be called 'advanced learning' started in a similar way to the previous process of thinking in English. This time it was not lectures, but parties and conversations where I was more and more called upon to take an active part and give my own opinion. This process is in fact still going on, though I have long ago overcome the first stage in which my mind had to get attuned first to the speech of others and then to other ways of thinking. In many ways, English has become a second mother tongue and the complexities which this involves may not be entirely relevant to English language students at large."

Perhaps not; but there is already a good deal in common here with the other contributors who mentioned having achieved bi-lingualism, B & C. The former said: "Bi-lingualism gave the unexpected result of feeling outside both native language and foreign language communities as a critical observer yet a member of both as communicator." The latter wrote: "French is my domestic language and I don't know if there is a moral in the fact that what often suffers is the native language."

In all these cases there is the suggestion that the learnt language invades the previously exclusive domain of the native language but whether this should be interpreted as an invasion of thought processes or the mechanics of language is not clear and the contributors adopt differing interpretations. Contributor L might be given the last word: "... when you reach a certain stage of proficiency in a foreign language, your ways of thinking are bound to suffer a readjustment. I think that this is necessary if you want to obtain a high degree of proficiency in the language, but I also think it may not be possible for you to do it consciously. In some cases, your native ways of thinking may prevail over those of the foreign language whether you like it or not. In my case, I feel as if the English ways of thinking are winning over my whole personality, although the process is by no means complete."

Admittedly this was written with reference to the voluntary adoption of a persona (Prompt 9) and seems to show the opposite process at work - the imposition of a persona by the language itself. No doubt the two can go hand in hand, the thought and the language progressively readjusting to each other and to the identity of the individual learner. Too little was said by anyone to substantiate or disprove the claim made by B that, apparently, thought is silent language and language is noisy thought; but such a hotly debated topic could hardly be settled on the strength of a mere seven contributions.

Prompt 48: Immersion in a language and its effects

Ten of the contributors had something to say about this and we have already referred above to the unfortunate experience of contributors B and N in being plunged into a French milieu too early for them to respond positively though both have since admirably recovered from the shock; indeed B is now bilingual in French and regularly immersed in a French family environment.

Contributor D thinks that immersion "in local culture through an intensive course or close everyday contact with native speakers", is an essential prerequisite for learning a language and failing that "there has to be some part of his life in which it becomes natural to use the target language."

Contributor G, as already mentioned, lists as one of the three most important factors that make her learn: "Bombardment of sound ie total immersion in the language coupled with overt information on what should be going on. That is, I read grammar books and then immerse myself in films, records, books but only real language works here, not cooked-up language." Contributor K similarly benefits from authentic rather than prepared material and, though he does not say so, we might conclude that he benefits from immersion since his approach is "not primarily analytic and I have I think retained the ability to assimilate new structure and lexis unconsciously."

Of course it hardly needs stating, still less proving, that one's performance in the language improves with immersion in the milieu. But it seems that this is more likely to happen if exposure occurs at the right time, as in the case of contributor L's stay in a Tanzanian hospital which improved her Swahili, and if the learner retains the right amount of initiative. Contributor A's account, for example, suggests he gets a tremendous amount of exposure - TV, newspapers, tapes, living with a family etc - and yet the contributor never lights upon the rather passive sounding term 'immersion' because in all this he is making the running. Contrast this with the sound immersion advocated by contributor H: "... the practice of bathing myself in the sound of the language. This is a passive form of listening rather along the lines that we have experienced as children when adults were talking and we were playing on the floor." And like his fellow contributor I, he benefits from having the radio playing in the foreign language while he is doing something else. Though this listening is described as 'passive', it is nonetheless

purposeful and that must make a difference. We all know examples of the unashamed monoglot who has lived in a foreign community for years and 'still can't speak a word of the damned lingo'. In such cases immersion has singularly failed so there must be other factors needed to give it the beneficial effects usually attributed to it.

Contributor M makes the case for immersion very strongly:

"On the basis of my own experience of living with German-Austrian families that turned me post-O-level from a stuttering speaker of German to a reasonable if not sparkling conversationalist, I am convinced that a couple of years grounding in the new language followed by a mass exchange scheme would do more to raise the linguistic confidence and attainment of the British than the ritual 4 or 5 years to 'O' level. Though it's true that after a 2 months total immersion in the language I was still described by the A-level oral examiner as 'painstaking', I personally ascribed this to the time taken to marshal my arguments in the literary texts."

Though my own experience would confirm the beneficial effects of total immersion after a few years learning the language, I feel slightly uneasy at the prospect that the 'ritual 4 or 5 years' might give way to 'ritual' immersion with the same dubious results for language learning as mass baptism has for Christianity.

As we have seen so often in this study, teaching processes and techniques rarely have an objective efficacy in themselves; rather they tend to be efficacious only insofar as each learner makes them so. This should make us suspicious of universal prescriptions even when something as obvious and common-sense as immersion is prescribed.

SECONDARY DATA (SD)

The above sections covered the main topics as I saw them when I drew up my invitation letter, and on the whole these remain the salient points.

However, nearly every contributor added something of his or her own which I had not foreseen and this should not be wasted. These data can, however, be recorded in briefer form since my main purpose is to offer them as concepts later researchers may wish to use or investigate. In many cases they are special applications of the main prompts, sometimes with a new emphasis or a shift in focus. Hence most of the relevant quotations will be found in the Main Body of Positive Data and there will be no need to repeat them. The comment, if any, will be in summary form. Only where something really new and important has been said will I attempt to evaluate it at length.

Readers are in any case referred to the data grid in the Appendix.

- SD1 **Need for a quick cognitive overview of the language** - G
- SD2 **Stress on exercises** - A - needs plenty in various forms.
- SD3 **Paradigms** - E,G,H,I,J,M,N - helpful for some, boring for others, difficult to remember for G.
- SD4 **Take off point** - B,G,N - point where you can make a foreigner laugh by B's definition.
- SD5 **Ear and grammar relationship** - C,F,M - according to C a good ear is more important than an understanding of the mechanics of the language.
- SD6 **Mimicry** - B,C,F,H - essential basis for B; important for C but not enough for reading and writing.
- SD7 **Intensive listening** - B,H,N - pleasure in assiduous listening common to all three.
- SD8 **Learning of vocabulary in isolation** - A,B,E,F,G,H,I,M,N - mostly able to do it but some critical of the practice and doubtful of the results. Need felt for lexis methodology.

- SD9 **Learning of vocabulary in context** - A,B,E,F,H,I,N,M - great stress laid on vocabulary from reading; preference for grouped and associated vocabulary lists with some personal reference.
- SD10 **Value of reading** - A,B,D,F,G,H,I,K,N - important source of vocabulary, gives style to imitate, important as means of cultural access.
- SD11 **Use of word cards** - A - strongly advocated and used by some other contributors though not singled out for mention.
- SD12 **Use of listening tapes** - A,E,G,I,M,N - advocated by some, hated by many, loved by none.
- SD13 **Use of vocabulary books** - A,F,H - beneficial in all cases mentioned but in case of F not essential.
- SD14 **Importance of interest as motivation** - A,B,C,E,G,H,I,J,K,N - rated highly by all.
- SD15 **Style** - A,N Thomas Mann focus for comment in both. Style only acquired late and by influence.
- SD16 **Humour** - B - concept of the 'laugh barrier' as the point at which a learner feels comfortable in the new language and takes off.
- SD17 **Feeling of alienation, outsidership relative to foreign community** - B - in bilingual situation.
- SD18 **Identification with foreign community** - B,N - and implicit in other accounts but not overtly stated.
- SD19 **Speechlessness and speech congestion** - B,D,F,N - due to two quite different things; on the one hand, deficient knowledge of the language in early stages, and on the other, collision of tracks when rapid switching from one language to another is required.
- SD20 **Saturation** - B
- SD21 **Unconscious cycling** - B - both complementary processes, the former resulting from conscious learning, the latter following after saturation point has been reached.

- SD22 **Functional motivation** - C - acknowledged as efficacious but pros and cons weighed.
- SD23 **Bilingualism and its effects** - B,C - Native language suffers; speaker is critical observer of both speech communities and yet a communicator also.
- SD24 **Interference from the foreign language on the mother tongue** - C,E,F,G - sometimes expands native range of concepts, sometimes impedes.
- SD25 **Importance of speaking in relation to the whole learning process** - D,E,F,G,H,K,L,N - obviously loomed large but had varying significance for different contributors. Some preferred to leave it later than others. Some felt it an essential dimension for any language to be learnt.
- SD26 **Appropriateness of language variety/style learnt** - D,M,N - the style learnt should be the style you are going to use and hear around you though prestige varieties may be taught more widely.
- SD27 **Self esteem - the effect of praise or blame** - D,F,G,J.
- SD28 **Behavioural interference, social effects on language** - D,M,N.
- SD29 **Methodological preconceptions** - C,D,G,M,N - both as applied in own language learning and as evinced by comment in text.
- SD30 **Attitude to the teacher** - E,G,H,L,M,N - look for sympathetic personality rather than method. Some insist on guiding teacher and using him/her as informant.
- SD31 **Logic** - E,G,M.
- SD32 **Clarity** - E,G,M - two of these were classicists and benefited from both virtues. By implication so did several others who did not openly say so.
- SD33 **Need for momentum and pace** - E,G,H.
- SD34 **Enjoyment of learning languages** - B,C,E,G,H,I,N.

- SD35 **Consistency and continuity** - E,H - related to momentum and pace.
- SD36 **Variety** - E,H,I - beneficial to all.
- SD37 **Separation of skills** - A,B,C,E,F,G,H,J,L,M - some felt skills to be all modes of the same thing - language - but others felt them separate (see Prompt 43).
- SD38 **Aids** - E - (see Prompt 42 and SD60).
- SD39 **Need for discipline** - E.
- SD40 **Advantages of the gift of the gab, being a natural chatterbox** - E,N.
- SD41 **Physical location of language operations** - F,H.
- SD42 **Visual impact** - F,H,I,M,N - common need to see things written if they were to stick in the mind.
- SD43 **Value of phonetic description** - F - not felt to be much use if imitation were possible.
- SD44 **Sound clusters** - F - consonants seemed to leave strongest trace but too thick a cluster would be hard to learn.
- SD45 **Remoteness of the target language** - F,I.
- SD46 **Effect of the foreign language on the mind** - F,L,N - ways of thought change with prolonged bilingual use.
- SD47 **Formulaic retention and recall of language** - F,H,I,M.
- SD48 **Frequency of repetition** - A,F,H,I - both a rote-learning mechanism consciously applied and something inherent in words because of their distribution and use in a language. The former valuable, the latter not as valuable for first learning as one might think.
- SD49 **The stimulus of competition** - F,G,J - beneficial on the whole.
- SD50 **Rememorising** - F - harder than memorising in the first place.

- SD51 **Association of vocabulary** - F,H,I,M - beneficial.
- SD52 **Tip of tongue effect** - F.
- SD53 **Imposition of foreign language sounds on other languages** - F
- SD54 **Mother tongue chauvinism** - G,M - the attitude that foreign languages are somehow an imperfect derivative from the mother tongue and sometimes associated with hostile attitudes to the speakers eg G disliked her teacher and suspected her of telling lies about French because she "could not conceive of a possessive adjective pronoun system that took its marking from the gender of the possessed rather than the possessor. In fact I would not write the correct form for months." M had misgivings about French in English schools. "This inhibition may well again be the result of teaching French as the first foreign language for the caricature of a gesticulating, fast-talking Frenchman lives on and is as such anathema to the supposedly phlegmatic English." Admittedly this is not strictly speaking 'mother-tongue' chauvinism, just xenophobia which happens to interfere with language learning.
- SD55 **The cultural allure of a language and its speakers** - A,F,G,H,N - beneficial in all cases and conversely A and F found it difficult to learn the languages of cultures they did not respect.
- SD56 **Inaccuracy and carelessness** - G,J,M.
- SD57 **Collectors instinct in acquiring vocabulary** - G
- SD58 **Recognition** - G,L - in both cases gave maximum cultural pay-off for least effort.
- SD59 **Syntax** - G,H,N - closely related to thought of foreign community.
- SD60 **Transfer of skills** - G - (see above SD37) - found it operative in her case.
- SD61 **Learning foreign language vocabulary before knowing the corresponding mother tongue equivalents** - F,G.

- SD62 **Songs and musical stimuli** - G - for Italian.
- SD63 **Rote-learning** - G,H,I,L,M,N - in some cases beneficial though boring; in others, inhibitive.
- SD64 **Comparing languages, seeing parallels, having insights from related languages** - G,I,M - beneficial
- SD65 **Mood** - G - this referred to personal mood(s) at the time of learning, not the grammatical mood of verbs.
- SD66 **Ego - impermeability, resistance to learning** - G,H.
- SD67 **Unrealised (latent) language, acquired but not used** - F,G,L,N - all were capable of carrying latent language and learning through it.
- SD68 **Extrapolation (generalisation) from learned to new language** - G - but by implication all of the contributors must have been fairly good at this, elsewhere termed 'cognitive courage'.
- SD69 **Role-playing** - G - only where it is not ridiculous is it beneficial, the implication being that it often is ridiculous.
- SD70 **Self directedness; imposition of own personality on the learning process** - G,H,N.
- SD71 **Variety of methods used** - H - and by implication attempts to teach by one method alone would fail.
- SD72 **Notional word need ie predicting a need and thus creating the conditions to learn a word** - H,I.
- SD73 **Reading aloud** - H,K,M,N - beneficial but some resistance from M.
- SD74 **Mouth, tongue and jaw exercises preparatory to speaking** - H
- SD75 **Exceptional value of adverbs** - H - they seem to extend the range of one's control over language.
- SD76 **Difficulty in perceiving tense/time relationship** - H.
- SD77 **Drills and substitution tables** - H,I,J,N - got a mixed reception; some hostility and no clear enthusiasm.

- SD78 **Use of informant, or teacher as informant** - H,N.
- SD79 **Scanning ie quick reading** - H,M,N.
- SD80 **Dictation** - H
- SD81 **Keeping a diary in the foreign language** - H.
- SD82 **Learning by deduction (from the rules to the material)** - H,M - though several others learnt in this way, apparently.
- SD83 **Learning by induction (from the material to the rules)** - H,L,N - in contrasting these learning styles H claimed he could not learn simply by induction alone, although he used it considerably and with caution.
- SD84 **Importance of intersentential features** - H,N.
- SD85 **Discourse ie stretches of language above the sentence** - H,N.
- SD86 **Exploring frontiers of meaning in words** - H,M.
- SD87 **Kinaesthetic memory** - H - defined as "a kind of a dynamic track with a shape; the variation in memory image comes in the variation of shapes or tracks."
- SD88 **Memorization techniques** - A,F,H,L,M,N - learning from lists, cards, both ways acceptable. Association, targeting and trying out of words common.
- SD89 **Revising** - H.
- SD90 **Impatience** - H,N.
- SD91 **Textbooks** - I,M.
- SD92 **Mnemonics** - H,I.
- SD93 **Non-absorbtion of frequent words** - F,I - could not explain this phenomenon since useless words could frequently be absorbed effortlessly.
- SD94 **Loss of self in the language** - J,L.

- SD95 **Working towards a specific target** - J,M - beneficial.
- SD96 **Cognitive approach** - A,B,G,H,I,J,L,M,N - beneficial.
- SD97 **Insecurity as a motive force** - K.
- SD98 **Search for identity** - K.
- SD99 **Concealment of identity** - K
- SD100 **Unconscious assimilation** - K.
- SD101 **Understanding** - L,M,N.
- SD102 **Prior experience** - B,E,G,J,L,M,N - beneficial in all cases.
- SD103 **Learning in a formal way** - L - beneficial and by implication acceptable to most other contributors.
- SD104 **Post-correction after speaking** - L.
- SD105 **Value of study on one's own** - A,G,I,M,N - for overt statements but it was apparent that most contributors regarded study on one's own as almost the norm, even where reference to a teacher could be had.
- SD106 **Language laboratory** - E,G,H,J,M - (but see Prompt 42).
- SD107 **Inhibiting effect of poor print** - M - in Arabic.
- SD108 **Value of supplementary readers** - A,M - but G and K preferred 'authentic' not prepared material.
- SD109 **Slang** - M - not easily picked up.
- SD110 **Idiom** - M as above but I suspect many contributors would disagree if asked.
- SD111 **Free writing (composition)** - A,G,H,M - considered an advanced skill difficult to master (but possibly more attractive than guided writing?).
- SD112 **Complexity, density, convoluted structure of language** - M - negative effect.
- SD113 **Linear sequential structure in contrast to above** - M - positive effect.

- SD114 **Disparity between learning and ability to use language (levels of learning etc) - M,N.**
- SD115 **Social comparability of foreign and native speakers - A,D,M.**
- SD116 **Aural recognition evoking visual sign - M,N.**
- SD117 **Value of fluent pidgin - M.**
- SD118 **Importance attached to mother tongue - N - stressed at unusual length and the only account to do so hence some quotation would be worthwhile:**
 ". . . whatever the pleasure I have taken in learning foreign languages in all sorts of places and circumstances, my first love has always been the English language. Research has shown the power of integrative motivation to drive a learner on towards the rewards of social acceptance by another, ethnically different, socio-economic group. Well, by the same token, it may be that my aim has been to win social acceptance by my peers in my own society. I love to use my mother tongue - to talk, to listen to, to read and to write it. . . . I am, however, interested in the quality as well as the quantity of human discourse, and frequently turn my attention away from patterns of meaning while reading or listening to enjoy the flavour of spoken or written style. I regularly read poetry and occasionally write it. Trying to compress experience into words that seem to come forth from a subliminal level as if called up by surface, rhythms, pauses, assonances (or perhaps it is the rhythms that start deep?) is for me an intensely rewarding experience."

Conclusion

Though I am writing a conclusion I must make it clear that I am not drawing conclusions. In kindly contributing an endpiece Mr Steven McDonough of the University of Essex has set this type of study in context, with its hazards and defects as well as its virtues. He has also drawn attention to the fact that the University of Essex has the nucleus of a bank of introspective accounts that may well produce more weighty material for further research along the lines suggested by this paper. It would therefore be premature to squeeze some conclusions out of our very slender body of data. The study, after all, was intended to be a beginning, not an end.

However, it would not be too adventurous to make just two rather obvious points.

First, the data tends to confirm the various tentative lists of broad language learning factors drawn up by Carrol, Rubin, Stern et al. To summarise only Stern's list, as an illustration, it has been noted that the good language learner:

- (1) Has a personal learning style and pursues positive learning strategies
- (2) Has an active approach to the learning task
- (3) Has a tolerant, outgoing approach and empathy with the foreign speech-community
- (4) Has technical know-how about tackling a language
- (5) Has the ability to systematise the new language and progressively revise the system as he learns more
- (6) Constantly searches for meaning
- (7) Is willing to practise
- (8) Is willing to use the language in real communication
- (9) Can monitor and criticise himself sensitively
- (10) Can develop the new language as a separate reference system and think in it.

(See Dr H H Stern The Good Language Learner - Canadian Modern Language Review 31-1975 pp.304-318).

There is evidence scattered throughout this paper to indicate how far most contributors would confirm these findings. Equally, however, it is apparent that these factors are in most cases triggered off by personal factors in each learner. While the researcher tends to see them at a rather high level of generality, the learner sees them as much more the outcrops of his own personality and experience. Furthermore, quite different - even contradictory - personal factors may trigger off the same virtue in several language learners. As the teacher meets the student at the triggering level, and is indeed one of the triggering elements, it is important that these underlying mechanisms should be made clear in teacher training.

I suspect - and here is the second unexciting point I wish to make - that these underlying mechanisms are the sort of things we take account of in general pedagogy and they are not specific to the language learning process unless teachers exploit and channel them in that direction. For whatever general and common characteristics we may detect in a group of good language learners, there appears to be at the root of them a seething mass of personal characteristics possessed by each learner. It may very well be these that the teacher must tap if he is to unleash that peculiar personal energy that drives someone to learn languages. The alternative is to use a methodology based on the model 'good language learner' but this may be quite inappropriate to any one learner since it is devised to cater for an abstraction, not a person. I doubt if there can be any learner 'model' in the foreseeable future and there can be no escape from treating the learner on his own terms as a whole person, which is probably what the good teacher has long been doing anyway.

The latest piece of research to reach me just before going to press is a paper delivered by Dr Marjorie B Wesche at the Los Angeles Second Language Research Forum 1977 entitled Learning Behaviours of Successful Adult Students on Intensive Language Training. It suggests a learner model based on an information processing model but concludes on a note which I feel to be an appropriate conclusion to this study:

"...satisfactory explanation of the language acquisition process in all its aspects remains far beyond the reach of present theory or research. More than anything, the work done so far in second language acquisition, including the observable and conscious aspects of the learner input studied here, gives an indication of the complexity of the process, and the many kinds of factors which bear upon it. Behavioural observation in the classroom and elicitation techniques with L2 students can make an important contribution to our understanding of this process."

For their kind help in facilitating this modest essay in an elicitation technique, I should like to thank, first, the contributors themselves; secondly, Mr Steven McDonough for his interest and valuable concluding paper; thirdly, my colleagues Mr David Haines and Dr M J Murphy for help in compiling the bibliography round the core of a print-out kindly supplied by the ERIC Clearinghouse of the Centre for Applied Linguistics, Washington D.C.; fourthly, the numerous scholars, and particularly Dr Wesche, who have given me

permission to quote from their works; and finally the English Teaching Information Centre of the British Council for sponsoring the project and publishing the finished paper.

The contributors' accounts will be deposited in the Language Teaching Library (ETIC Archives) 20 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1AY 2BN, and made available to researchers wishing to check the original texts from which I have worked. It is hoped, however, that the present paper gives an accurate and balanced picture of what the contributors wanted to say. If it does not, the fault is entirely mine and I trust that later researchers, by returning to the original texts, will be able to correct my errors.

INTROSPECTION AND GENERALISATION

(for references see Bibliography)

by Mr. Steven McDonough
University of Essex

I have been asked to write an endpiece to the foregoing discussion of language learners' observations, commenting on the relationship between the points raised and some of the current research trends in Applied Linguistics and the Psychology of second language learning. I propose, first, to discuss the relative utility of various types of enquiry, in order to see what sorts of information one can reasonably expect from them; secondly, to discuss selected points from the main body of data in the light of information from other research sources; thirdly, to describe some of the points of interest to be found in the Case Studies of Language Learning which some students at the University of Essex have written as part of their M.A. course in Applied Linguistics; and lastly to attempt to draw some implications for language instruction from all these individual learning histories.

(1) Types of enquiry and their utility

A consistent and not very secret theme in G.D. Pickett's work in assembling and grouping the data contained in the foregoing paper has been the desire to redress the balance of investigation in the learner's favour; there has, of course, been a widespread swing in the past few years from writing about teaching method and teaching styles to writing with a "Focus on the learner" (Oller, J. & Richards, J. 1973) and about learning styles. Nevertheless, few studies have actually found themselves able to interrogate learners directly or allow the learners' views to be heard. That there are great problems for any method of investigation of anything so large as the learning of a language is obvious; but it is also obvious that no one method can be sufficient alone. There have been many experimental investigations, few of them have been capable of supporting generalisations; survey data of various types exist, often highly dependent on the original test population and, again, offering only weak support for theoretical statements; systematic observation of FL classroom learning has been in progress for some years, but has been hampered by the lack of valid analytical systems. It is therefore entirely reasonable that attention should once again be turned to introspective reports, after the methods which superseded the Introspectionist school of Psychology in the 1880's have been felt (though not proved) to be wanting.

In any empirical psychological investigation, that is, an investigation to support any theoretical or general statements about some topic, there are essentially four criteria against which the method of obtaining the data can be checked. These are: (1) The accuracy of the possible results, sometimes referred to as the internal validity, by which is meant how likely it is that the results in truth reflect what they are supposed to reflect. (2) The generalisibility of the possible results, sometimes called the external validity, by which is meant the likelihood that statements that are true of the sample investigated might be true outside the bounds of a particular study: eg in studies of learners, to other learners. (3) The reliability of the results, that is, their independence from considerations of the time of the investigation or, to some extent, of the details of a particular experimental session. In testing, reliability often concerns consistency of different parts of the test or repeatability across sections; in experimentation it is often concerned with whether the result can be replicated. (4) The sensitivity of an enquiry, by which is meant the subtlety or fineness of the discrimination that the enquiry can in principle make.

As an illustration one can check various general types of enquiry against the criteria in terms of the following diagram.

	<u>Enquiries</u>			
<u>Criteria</u>	Self Report	Analytical Observation	Survey	Experiment
Accuracy				
Generalisibility				
Reliability				
Sensitivity				

The accuracy of a report of one's own experience may be open to doubt. This is not because anyone can possibly know better, but because of considerations like the following:

- (a) Possibly crucial aspects of some performance may have been blurred by the act of performance in a way that renders them unavailable for report - this is part of what we mean by 'unconscious', where

some decisions are taken so rapidly that the actual process is not registered in memory; this is characteristic of skilled performance like driving a car and to a certain extent speaking a foreign language.

- (b) Following upon this, if a report while an experience is fresh is open to doubt, a report given after time has elapsed is even more dubious. Elapsed time is always filled time: recollections of experience may often include reinterpretations of experience.

- (c) A report is usually expressed in language to someone else. It is not necessarily true that everybody is equal in their ability to describe experiences and it is unlikely, that the reporter and the receiver will understand terms in the same or the intended way. While these considerations limit the accuracy of self-reports, they do not imply rejection of them; for example a survey is naturally subject to all the same caveats, but the usual method used to increase its completeness and avoid the expression problem, the questionnaire, is open to great disadvantages. As Pickett has pointed out, direct questioning may elicit replies that are not authentic in the sense that the respondent never thought of that point during the experience in question. More damagingly, there is no more guarantee than with self-reports that the language of the questions will be interpreted in the same way by respondent and receiver. The internal validity of an experiment has to be controlled absolutely, and there is a well developed set of techniques of sampling, counterbalances, statistical controls and designs which can be used. On the other hand the necessity of such an elaborate set of procedures has limited the class of phenomena that can be investigated in that rigorous way. Whether language learning in classrooms can be treated in this way has never been adequately demonstrated. The global studies of Smith (1970) and Scherer & Wertheimer (1964) for example, have often been attacked as inadequately controlled, but it is difficult to imagine forms of adequate control that would nevertheless allow real teaching to function in real classrooms with teachers who find no conflict between the role of experimental pawn with a strict set of possible behaviours and that of teacher flexible enough to care for each student in the class

in an appropriate manner. Nevertheless one cannot abandon all attempts at measurement: to do so is to fall into the trap of equating opinions with empirical results, and one has no better criteria for accuracy of individual opinions than of measurements.

It should be obvious that internal validity or accuracy is a problem to be faced by all forms of enquiry; the fact that all of them are embarrassed by it is nothing new.

Generality, external validity, of enquiries raises the issue of the extent to which statements about one sample of people investigated can be true of other people. Self-reports do not escape this difficulty: a person's description of an experience may well be as accurate as is possible, but be totally idiosyncratic. Of course it is none the less valuable: techniques such as the questionnaire and the translation of reports into standard statements minimise individual differences where those differences may be the most useful piece of information. Nevertheless introspection was abandoned early in the history of 'scientific' psychology precisely because such serious, trained self-observers could not find agreement on basic questions such as the nature of problem solving and the relationship between sensation and perception. From that period in psychology it is Cattell's experiments on the eye-voice span and Ebbinghaus' monumental self discipline in his memory experiments, most of whose conclusions are still unchallenged, that we remember, rather than the fanciful idiosyncracies of Wundt and later Titchener. This collection of self reports of language learning can, and does, make no claim to external validity. The only sense in which it can have meaning outside itself is if it is perceived as authentic by readers with similar experiences. One might term this "post-hoc validation by consensus". One might draw an analogy here with a teacher who is experimenting with a new technique, finds it suitable for a class, and then advocates it; but the teacher's criteria for suitability should include any measures that are possible, eg student attrition rate. Similarly, conclusions drawn from this body of data can only be in the form of hypotheses to be tested in some more controlled form; part of its value is the richness of those hypotheses. The external validity of a survey or an experiment or a piece of analytical observation can, by contrast, be subjected to more control; populations can be precisely defined, the object of the investigation concisely expressed. The perennial difficulty of more controlled experimentation in 2nd language learning is that, in isolating a problem for study, one removes it from its usual

context and thereby one is in danger of debarring the conclusions from applicability to the problem when back in context: laboratory results on memory, for example, are rarely perceived by teachers as being relevant to classroom situations. A further example is afforded by the 'tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon'; although most people experience this occasionally, and learners of languages frequently, it is very difficult to arrange a situation in such a way that some learners experience having a word on the tip of their tongue at a time convenient to the experimenter. I have attempted to find out (unpublished) what sort of cues non-native learners of English use to search for a word in this state: their searches are similar to their searches in the native language, but their knowledge of the foreign language phonology and morphology affects the process in fascinating ways. There is a sense in which experimentation is like using a butterfly net; the methodology is sure, but catching the phenomenon is sometimes exhausting.

The reliability of enquiries is not simply a statistical problem. One man's description of his learning history may differ seriously on re-writing it, not for sinister reasons but simply because more things occur to him after the first writing. Although there are statistical procedures for estimating the reliability of experimental results and those from some surveys, and this affords a necessary measure of control, the only foolproof test is replication. Analytic Observation techniques have always the problem that records differ markedly according to recorder; operation of many of the Interaction Analysis systems (Wragg 1972) suffers from this, and analysis using a 'rich interpretation', ie attempting to locate all the possible relations between utterances in an interpersonal situation to find one which is the common denominator, introduces the possibility of observer bias in a serious way.

The sensitivity of a method of enquiry refers to the degree or subtlety of discrimination of which the method is capable. Clearly, self-report is probably capable of finer distinctions here than any other method, for the reporter. Subject to the constraints of accuracy, the problem is then one of generalisability. For how many people is the distinction in question important, and how does it fit in with their experience? The value of self-report data such as is in this Paper, Vildomec's (1963) book, or the Essex Case Studies, resides primarily in the fineness and subtlety of the distinctions possible, whose generality and importance within a general theory of language learning other methods can establish.

Before leaving this extended discussion of the relative merits of methods of enquiry, which has necessarily been selective and deliberately has not repeated the excellent discussions of research method in Campbell & Stanley in Gage (1963), it is worth mentioning by way of comparison the chequered history of the study of imaging in psychology. After the general rejection of introspectionism and the excesses of Titchener's phenomenology, in which he claimed that imaging was inseparable from thought and particular images were related in symbolic ways, study of this undeniable, but private, human mental activity lapsed (except in psycho-analytic circles) until revived by Peter McKellar's (1957) attempt to measure imaging by rating scales of intensity and quality. Measurement was followed rather long afterwards by Paivio's (1971) important attempt at using imaging as an explanatory concept in, among other things, the hard experimental science of psycholinguistics. Since then the argument about the concept, its nature, and status as a possible explanation for certain phenomena (eg given two sentences of identical structural complexity, easier understanding of the one with concrete referents than the one with abstract referents) has raged and techniques for manipulating it experimentally have been developed (Kosslyn 1977). Thus concepts and ideas from different research methods can be refined and pursued by other methods as the methods themselves develop.

(2) Some relations between the data and other research trends

Although one of the problems of introspective reports is that they often disagree in intractable ways, there are a number of interesting reflections in the data presented here of research results in other areas.

One such area is the broad study of learning strategies. It still remains true that not a great deal of progress has been made in the strategies a learner adopts in categorising and ordering new materials in order to extract from it general principles of the organisation of the language. The behaviourist psychologists even denied that this was amenable to measurement and therefore it was outside the pale of scientific analysis. A considerable amount of research on categorising and the discovery of general organising principles, and their utility in memory, has since been performed in the laboratory. For example, Wason (1973) has demonstrated how reluctant many people are, when discovering a simple general rule, to formulate 'hypotheses' whose disconfirmation would be maximally informative: presumably

because although it is logically necessary to know when to abandon a whole class of possible rules, there is felt to be no point if no new idea can immediately replace them: a wrong hypothesis is preferable to no hypothesis. Craik and Lockhart (1972) have re-directed work on memory by suggesting that retention is directly related to the 'depth' of coding. By this, they meant the position, on a scale extending from surface, perhaps phonological, features, to deep semantic features and even features of importance within the personality of the learner, of the type of coding used by the learner to transform the new material into a form suitable for retention and profitable use. This is echoed in Rubin's (1975) double-edged remark that learners learn what they exert themselves to learn: the coding employed is a crucial determinant of the success of later retrieval, in terms of accuracy and time. It follows that if the exertion includes the elaboration of connections and associations to other previously learnt material, then this will be reflected in later performance; if it only includes repetition, then only that retrieval will be reflected, and Craik has already shown that mere repetition actually prevents 'deeper' forms of coding. Mandler and Pearlstone (1966) have investigated the differences between subjective and imposed forms of coding. For many types of task a subjective code is as useful or more efficient than an imposed one, particularly when the task is such as to allow a category system to be devised relatively easily; but imposed codes are not always the less efficient. In the main body of data under Prompt 21 there is a wealth of introspection referring to learners' struggles with new grammatical systems. Many of the authors reported a mixture of subjective coding and reliance on the ready made 'rules' of a convenient grammar. Perhaps one area for future research might be an attempt to find more detailed criteria for the effectiveness of subjective and imposed codes for particular learning tasks. In this sample a recurrent theme for example is the need for exposure to discourse in order to work out intersentential features - "those expressions that oil the discourse". Related to this question of learning strategies and coding behaviour is the question of practice (Prompt 5). Most of the contributors appear to have found practice to be of little use, except where it formed part of normal language use. Perhaps a better term for the unwanted form of practice would be 'meaningless rehearsal'. It is a sad fact that in many cases this is what learners in language laboratories end up engaging in; authors of my Case Studies at Essex (v. later section) have commented on the necessity for adequate advance organisation of lab. rehearsal material and explicit incorporation of that material into the main teaching programme, since under

those conditions, 'rehearsal' can become 'practice', with coding and retrieval taking place at a semantic level. Thus it can be preparation for conversation without the distractions of interpersonal interaction, similar to the 'talking to oneself' mentioned by several contributors.

Although many variables in information processing have been shown to be strongly related to task-type, it is equally obvious from the experimental literature as well as from subjective reports that individuals differ considerably in their approaches to tasks and their choice of strategies. There have been several groups of suggestions for useful parameters of individual difference in cognitive style; a useful summary is given by Messick in Sperry's book (1972). Naiman et al. (1975) have proposed to test field dependence (Witkin: the degree to which a person can resist distraction by irrelevant features) and cognitive breadth (Pettigrew: the tendency of a person to operate with broad or narrow category systems) among other things in an attempt to uncover the 'unconscious' aspect of language learning. While it is true that interviews or self reports do not necessarily reveal this sort of information it is also quite possible that such cognitive styles are conscious in the sense that the operator knows that he is using a particular strategy (it may not be deliberate), but is unaware that other people work in any different manner. In fact such differences are revealed by self-reports, though not in a generalisable way: the problem of terminology is particularly difficult here. Many of the authors seem to have adopted quite idiosyncratic strategies; perhaps the most dramatic difference is revealed by the contributor who claimed that he could 'absorb' the new language without operating 'conscious' strategies, while others have said that a judicious mixture is needed. Several authors refer to a distinction between 'plungers' and 'plodders'; there are as few distinctions to be separated there, such as preferences between massed and spaced learning, immediate exposure to independent communication and controlled matching of exposure and private study, 'intuitive' v. 'rational' learning, etc. Nevertheless these variables, whatever their eventual clarification, are felt to be of importance by these learners. Cognitive style is inherently a diffuse concept, but any design for language instruction has to take account of it in some appropriate manner, at some stage in the process. It is also clear that the list of identifiable styles at present available is inadequate, both because definitions are not sufficiently independent and because as more learning experience is written down and codified, more styles will become apparent.

Contributors pay a great deal of attention to attitudes. It is clear that attitudes bear a complex relationship to success in language learning. At one level, a favourable attitude to some speakers of a language may well provide the initial impetus to strive beyond the helplessness stage in their language; however, how long that continues depends on the situation. In Burstall's evaluation of French in the Primary Schools of England (1975), success in learning French more often predicted favourable attitudes than vice versa; in the 'natural' situation, which many of these contributors were in, greater knowledge of the language seems to have brought greater understanding of the culture and a more critical attitude to that culture, which may or may not interfere with further acquisition of the language. Schumann (1976) has attempted to delineate some of the factors which comprise social and psychological 'distance' between a learner or learning community and the community of the target language. His paper considers seven sociological variables in the relationship between the two groups: (1) politico-economic power; (2) life style; (3) enclosure; (4) group cohesion; (5) group size; (6) culture congruence; (7) attitudes; and (8) intended length of residence. For Schumann, psychological distance is a set of variables which are relevant for any particular member of the learning group if he goes against the group norm: culture shock, motivation, language shock and ego-permeability. Although there are many mentions of these points by the contributing authors, the analysis is not quite satisfactory since learning is ultimately individual; it is the cognition and evaluation of these variables by an individual which influences his own learning. In a sense, the variables of social distance have to become ones of psychological distance before they can exert effects on the learning process. One variable which occurs in both of Schumann's lists is culture shock: an individual's experience of culture shock is presumably related (inversely) to the general cultural congruence of the two communities. Several contributors have mentioned this. Another variable, language shock, received some attention. Pickett has coined the term 'mother tongue chauvinism' for the feeling, common among beginners, that a new language is merely an unnecessarily ludicrous collection of unrelated noises; but several experienced language learners also comment (Prompt 19) that a new language may have some general feature that makes it interesting of itself, whether in its phonology, syntax or lexicon. The variable of 'ego-permeability' to which several contributors appear to refer signifies, in psychiatric terminology, the extent to which a person's self is affected by experience. In psychiatry it tends to be used of patients who

exhibit instability of the 'ego-boundaries': eg "[patients who] dissolve their personalities out into the world of other people and outside objects; outside things also come back into them" (Crowcroft, 1967 p.35). But here we are not concerned with abnormal psychiatric states, but with a set of attitudes characterised by curiosity and an openness to 'foreign Weltanschauungen' and habits of thought. Cattell identifies 'Permia' as one of his 16 personality factors (Cattell, R B., 1965) among normal people. There is no necessary implication here that the integrity of the self is unstable. It is of course part of what is popularly referred to as 'thinking in a language'. Several authors remark that each new language is easier to learn than the last one; this is linked with the last point for one contributor who adds that increasing age and maturity renders him less worried about sounding like a foreigner: one's aims alter with age; but it is also linked with the research question of aptitude. Research in aptitude has proceeded for nearly thirty years, mainly concerned with the setting up of small, job-sample tasks that predict success with the first foreign language in schools. These learners have emphasised, as Stern (1974) did, that a large component of successful learning is previous 'know-how': (a) experience of strategies of language learning and (b) a knowledge of what to expect. Obviously the best way to give the beginner (a) is to teach him a language; but it is worth mentioning that some attention to the nature of language in general might be of benefit to a new language learner, to bring to consciousness his intuitions derived from his possession of a native language.

Several contributors mention the problem of interference between languages, and there is useful preliminary data on the channels of interference. The findings of verbal-learning experiments in the 1950's were applied to foreign language learning by Jakobovits (1968) and since then most studies have investigated interference by finding comparative linguistic descriptions of 'similar' elements in two languages and attempting to predict errors of intrusion on this basis (Selinker, L. 1969). The Contrastive Analysis hypothesis has run into deep water and the debate is interesting in its own right, but these reports raise two other dimensions which have not received much attention. The first is that of order: is interference to be expected primarily from the most recently acquired language? The second concerns the level of proficiency reached in any of the learner's other languages, or in other words the integrity of the other languages: is interference expected rather from a well remembered or a poorly remembered language? There are hints here, and from

the Essex Case Studies, that there is a strong recency effect, but that, less expectedly, a 'weak' language interferes more than a 'strong' one. Perhaps a weakly remembered language is in a sense untidily scattered in terms of associations in semantic memory, whereas a strong one is neatly under control.

An argument in the current research literature which these authors have hardly mentioned concerns the suspected relationship between first and second language acquisition. The reason is that, presumably, none of them can remember their first language acquisition. However several of them mention a reluctance to be bound to a teacher's idea of progress. But those who are resistant to a teacher are those whose need is for 'adult' and 'cognitive' control over their intake, the language problems they want more information on, and the nature of the feedback they get; these learners would be highly resistant, as are many adolescent and adult learners, to learning situations which they perceived to be redolent of child language acquisition, even though they would recognise that the initial helplessness of an older learner is in some respects analogous to, and in other respects (cognitive maturity etc.) far worse than that of a child. Research which purported to show analogies between first and second language acquisition (Dulay and Burt, 1974, Hatch, E., 1976) D'Anglejan, A. and Tucker, G., 1975) has often not considered alternative competing explanations.

(3) The Case Studies written by University of Essex M.A. students

For nine years or so now, candidates for the degree of M.A. in Applied Linguistics at Essex have had the option of learning a language during the course and writing a report on their learning of it. Languages offered have been usually Russian and Portuguese, with Chinese one year. The teaching has usually been in a small group, often with a native speaker participating. On average five or six students have opted for this course, so the total number of reports is now between forty and fifty. In this connection I note that Naiman (1975) was intending to develop mini-courses for use as experimental learning experiences in order to examine the learners' behaviour; perhaps the following remarks can be taken as preliminaries to those results, as Essex has so far insisted on self reports and has not observed the learners analytically. In terms of the M.A. course that would be difficult as it could bias the assessments.

Nevertheless the information to be gleaned from these Case Studies might complement that in the rest of this Paper since the Essex authors are concerned with an immediate experience. The Report is written immediately the language learning is terminated and therefore the authors have the process of instruction and self-study more directly in view, and more vividly in memory, than the authors in Pickett's sample, who were reflecting over a period of many years.

The motivation of a Case Study writer for learning the language is usually untypical. Most of the students have been experienced teachers, with the result that they have wanted to experience being a pupil once again. Some report, moreover, that they wish to experience either a type of teaching that is new to them, or that they wish to experience as a pupil the sort of teaching they are used to giving, but have never themselves learnt a language by; for example, if the method they were trained in was Audio-Lingual but the method used when they were at school was Grammar-Translation. In fact these motivations appear to become less important as the learning period continues, as they realise that they cannot realistically put themselves into their pupils' shoes and that the instruction is usually very intensive and somewhat special. Also the writers are students on a post-graduate course, in which context not only are the reports marked for interest, detail, and theoretical coherence, but also the students often wish to try out many of the new concepts of linguistics, psychology and methodology, that they have encountered in Applied Linguistics. For example, one group elected to try and write transformational grammars of Chinese in order to understand some problems in the syntax. The sample therefore differs significantly, in their preoccupation with teacher behaviour and exploration of Applied Linguistic concepts, from Pickett's authors, who had no such influences, although at least one holds an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from Essex.

The accuracy of these case studies in terms of the discussion under (1) is probably enhanced by the freshness of the experience. Of course, the students know that the final assessment is to be of the report and not on the language learning: one can write a good report on failure, if there are interesting reasons. This acts in two ways, which nearly all writers have commented on. Firstly, people take notes about the learning problems that arise, though mostly the discipline of daily diary-writing fails; secondly, the need to find interesting things to say about the learning leads to "the tyranny of data-collection". This quote comes from a student

who elected to do an error-analysis. He became increasingly worried that his errors might be motivated by the need to write the report rather than by genuine learning problems.

Many authors have attempted to analyse the group dynamics of an intensive course. Usually the groups have been small, so that not unnaturally intense rivalries can develop. Many students have found that the group situation influences them in powerful ways, either by providing a stimulus if they think that some one is coping better than they are, or by confusing them if they observe some correction of another pupil by the teacher and they haven't understood, or by carrying them if other pressures have made them fall behind. One author obviously gave up the pretense of learning very much for domestic reasons and wrote a detailed study of the ways the group compensated for him and the teacher softened the blow of negative feedback. Naturally, any situation in which most of the group agree about features like pressure, gradual consciousness of failure, irrelevance of the teacher's criteria, as has happened, is by definition a cohesive one. Few authors have investigated the possibility that the cohesion of the group itself might have depressed performance - although this is a well known research result (Davis, J.U. 1969).

Very many authors have commented on the pace and intensity of a five week course. They have repeatedly found that in about the third week the unrelenting pressure of new grammar points and new vocabulary have brought about 'reactive inhibition' and they have been unable to find time to consolidate earlier learning and take in new learning at the same time. Added to this pressure, the content of teaching on these courses has often been partly cultural as well, with the teachers attempting to hold discussions on topics of cultural interest as an introduction to conversational skills. While this barrage of information and talk has often been resented at the time by the students, it is significant that many of those who have written in terms of the strongest protest about this as an instructional process have found that, on reflection, they appreciated the 'baptism of fire'. Most of these authors have also commented that coping with nearly indigestible amounts of new language has forced them to stop relying on the teacher for help in learning, since appropriate feedback is usually difficult to obtain, and thrown them back on themselves. Whether this is good pedagogy or not is not the point at issue; it does highlight the ambiguity of a teacher's position as the source of a model of the new language and as a director of the learning process.

Several authors have commented on the question of the difficulty in an intensive course of providing both instruction in the new code and opportunities for communicative use. Few have denied that both are necessary: in this they agree with Pickett's sample. Usually it has been impossible to provide both and cover a respectable amount of the major structures of the language in the time available. A couple of authors have solved this problem in idiosyncratic ways; one (perhaps a 'plunger') enjoyed short intensive courses and found them to be vital preparation for later communicative learning, and the other flew off to Moscow with her husband in the middle of the course. Few reactions have been as dramatic as this. Many have commented that obtaining appropriate feedback is difficult, even in a communicative situation. Several of Pickett's contributors have also commented on this. Although there is a great difference between the linguistically naive native-speaker informants mentioned by eg contributor N, and the professional native-speaker University language instructors, the learners seem to share the problem of error correction. The difficulty seems to be that although it is easy to recognise when an error has been made - experienced language learners don't need to be told this very often - it is difficult to profit from a correction based on a wrong diagnosis. Needless to say, teachers' and informants' diagnoses are very often wrong; the literature on Error Analysis has demonstrated how easy it is to be wrong. The learner is then in a double handicap; he has not expanded his knowledge, and he does not know enough of the language to explain the error to the teacher/informant. Of course it helps if they share another language, but there is usually time pressure, and a teacher also has - or adopts - a responsibility not to confuse the learners more by introducing new grammar of a different level of difficulty.

There have been many critiques of the teaching materials used on these courses, which are of mainly local interest, and not surprising in view of the predominant motivations of these teacher/students. The students have used the courses to help them decide about the suitability of various exercise types and instructional techniques. Reactions to language laboratory work have ranged from furious frustration to intense guilt feelings on the realization of what previous pupils had been subjected to. Nevertheless most learners have found that the language laboratory has a place if its role is not meaningless rehearsal at an artificially forced pace but well-prepared 'practice' in the sense of meaningful, if not creative, language use, without a live interlocutor. Monitoring by the teacher has been criticised by several, not only

because of the error-correction problem, but because they resented the teacher's intrusion into a very private and secure manipulative practice session. Several writers comment negatively on the break in aural concentration when the tapescript is available to them.

Few writers have come up with many interesting idiosyncratic learning procedures. One might have expected more idiosyncratic exercise types and forms of homework as advocated by Larson and Smalley (1972), but in fact most writers have been content with traditional forms of private exercise, supplemented with some practice at the newer forms of linguistic analysis they have learnt on the course. It is possible that the presence of a professional teacher actually has inhibited such idiosyncratic developments.

(4) On drawing implications

Having argued in some detail in section (1) about the generalisability of this sort of material, I cannot draw any very precise conclusions for the teaching of languages. However, all of the contributors and writers of Case Studies have been adult and experienced learners, and some implications at least for adult teaching can perhaps be hinted at.

The first concerns the role of the teacher. There are many factors in the decision of what the appropriate teaching mode for a particular course is, but whose importance is emphasized here is that of a source of language - not necessarily a model for imitation. His/her function as a regulator of learning is less definite. One good strategy adopted by some teachers is to adopt a different style for certain sessions: in other words to be available on those sessions as an informant only, where the adult (and probably adolescent) students regain the responsibility for their own learning by having the discipline to bring problems, texts, pronunciations, etc. to the attention of the teacher and the group. Many contributors have commented adversely on the problem of abiding by someone else's teaching plan; this is possibly the result of some particular organisation rather than of teaching behaviour as such.

Secondly I would highlight the importance of individual differences. Almost all of Pickett's contributors and the Case Study writers have shown great concern for their individuality; although the research literature has not yet caught up with and classified the many cognitive variables

involved, the task is clearly important. It concerns not only individual differences of pace and concentration, and cognitive variables such as breadth of categorising, but also very personal reactions to particular instructional activities, from the language laboratory through participation in class instruction to the adoption of different roles and gaming techniques.

Thirdly, it is clear that further research in more precisely defined areas will be necessary before detailed instructional implications can be worked out. Individual experience is ultimately the only source of particular new ideas for learning and for teaching; a major function of research is to establish the communality of experience and examine its relation to instruction. One benefit of this sort of approach which one would hope to see is some direction of effort to communicate the obvious excitement and enjoyment of language learning experienced by these writers to the regular language classes in schools, where according to a recent report (Salter, 1977) more pupils are turned off than on.

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APPENDIX – DATA GRID OF FACTORS PER CONTRIBUTOR
(Key to symbols on page 181)

Prompt Contribution	Contributor														Total of Mentions
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	
1 Age, Sex, Time-Span etc		-	-	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	11
2 Writing, Exotic Scripts etc	[+]	-	-	+	+	+	+	+			/				8
3 Oral, Aural, Visual Learning			o			/	-	/	/				-	+	7
4 Sound System Acquisition	[+]	+				-	-	[+]					+	+	7
5 Forms of Practice								+							1
6 Good ear, Photo memory, Gab		+	+		+	+	/	+	+	+		?	/	+	11
7 Empathy, Sympathy, Antipathy	+	+		/	+	+	o	/	?		o		+		10
8 Motivation – Instrumental/Integrative			/	/		[+]	/		[/]		/		+		7
9 Persona For Language	[+]					+				-	[-][+]	/	/		7
10 Resistance to Persona				-				-							4
11 Embarrassment/Inhibition	-			-	-			-		/		-	-		8
12 Display/Self Protection	[+]						o								2
13 Home/School Background	+						+	+		+	[+]		+	+	7
14 Anxiety, Relaxation etc				/	-	-	+			/	o		-		7
15 Concentration/Incidental								?	o	+			+		5
16 Order Learned – Easier?		/			+		/			/		/			5
17 Relative Difficulty		/								/		/	/		4
18 Presentation – Intensive/Extensive etc				o	/										2
19 Language Character									/			/	/		3
20 Models – Book, TV, Teacher etc								/	/	/		/	/		5
21 Acquiring Grammar	+	[+]	?		+	[+][?]	[+]	+	+	-	/	+	[+]		13
22 Acquiring Vocabulary	+	+			+	+	-	+	+	/		/	/		11
23 Grammar/Vocabulary Link										/		/			2
24 Teachers and Teaching						?						/	/	/	5

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Prompt Contribution	Contributor														Total of Mentions	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N		
25	Role of Examinations					+	+		-			+			4	
26	Aspects Learned – Ease Difficulty	/									/		/		3	
27	Translation for Learning	/	[+]			+	+	+	+						6	
28	Background Interests								+	+	-			/	4	
29	Fluency and Loss	/						○		+				/	5	
30	Revival of Fluency	/					/				+	?		/	5	
31	Conscious/Unconscious Use											+			1	
32	Interference between FL's	/	[/]			/	+			-	/		/		7	
33	Interference from MT	/					+						/		3	
34	Track Jumping/Spillover		○	/	/	/				-					5	
35	Situation – Language					/	/	/					+	/	5	
36	Language – Situation							/					+		2	
37	Knowing/Applying Lag	/			/			-						/	5	
38	Applying Before Knowing	/										/		/	4	
39	Dreaming in FL	/				+									2	
40	Recall of Latent L	/	/					/							3	
41	Translation	/	[-]			+				+	-	+	-		7	
42	Films, Radio, Media									+	?		-	/	4	
43	Language Skills	/	○	/			/	/	○	/		/	/		9	
44	Memory/Forgetting etc.	/	/			+	+	[+]	+	/	○	+	/		10	
45	Internal Dialogue	+	+			+	+	+	+	+			/		7	
46	Suppressed Vocalisation		+			+	+	/		+					5	
47	Thinking in FL	+	/		/	○			/	/		+	.		7	
48	Immersion in FL	?	?					+	£	+	+	○	+	+	○	11

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Secondary Data	Contributor														Total of Mentions				
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N					
1	Cognitive Overview														+			1	
2	Stress on Exercises																	○	2
3	Paradigm																	○	7
4	Take-off Point																	○	3
5	Ear/Grammar Link																	-	3
6	Mimicry																		4
7	Intensive Listening																	/	3
8	Vocabulary in Isolation																	[+]	9
9	Vocabulary in Context																	/	8
10	Value of Reading																		9
11	Use of Word Cards																		1
12	Listening Tapes																	- /	6
13	Vocabulary Books																	/	4
14	Interest as Motive																		9
15	Style																	+	2
16	Humour																		1
17	Alienation/Outsidership																		1
18	Identification																	/	2
19	Speechlessness																	-	4
20	Saturation																		1
21	Unconscious Cycling																		1
22	Functional Motivation																	[+]	1
23	Bilingualism																	-	2
24	Interference – FL on MT																	+	3

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Secondary Data	Contributor														Total of Mentions
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	
25	Speaking – Learning Link			/	/	+	-	/			+	/	/		8
26	Appropriacy of FL			/									/	/	3
27	Self-Esteem			/		+	+								3
28	Behavioural Interference			/									/	/	3
29	Method Preconceptions			o	-			-					/	/	5
30	Attitude to Teacher					+		?	-			/	+	/	6
31	Logic					+		o					+		3
32	Clarity					+		o					+		3
33	Momentum/Pace					+		-	?						3
34	Enjoyment		+	+		+		+	+	+				+	7
35	Consistency/Continuity					+			?						2
36	Variety					+			+	+					3
37	Separation of Skills					/	/	/	o		/	/	/		7
38	Aids		/	o	/		[+]							-	5
39	Need for Discipline					+									1
40	Natural Loquacity					+							/		2
41	Physical Location							+		o					2
42	Visual Impact							+		+	+			+	4
43	Phonetic Description							-							1
44	Sound Clusters														1
45	Remoteness of Language							+						-	2
46	Effect on Mind							/					+		2
47	Formulatic Retention							+		+	o			-	4
48	Repetition		+						?		+	/			4

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Secondary Data	Contributor														Total of Mentions
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	
49	Competition						+	?			+				3
50	Rememorizing						-								1
51	Association of Vocabulary						+	+	+				+		4
52	Tip-of-Tongue-Effect						+								1
53	Imposition of FL Sounds						/								1
54	Mother Tongue Chauvinism							-					-		2
55	Cultural Allure	+					+	+	+						4
56	Inaccuracy/Carelessness							-		-			+		3
57	Collectors Instinct						+								1
58	Recognition						+						[+]		2
59	Syntax						+	+					/		3
60	Transfer of Skills						+								1
61	FL Vocabulary Before MT						+	+							2
62	Musical Stimuli						+								1
63	Rote-Learning						+	+	?				/		4
64	Linguistic Insights						+	?	-		-	-	+		5
65	Mood						/						+		2
66	Ego-Impermeability						/	/							2
67	Unrealised Language						+	+					/		3
68	Extrapolation						+					/			2
69	Role-Playing						-								1
70	Self-Directedness						+	+					/		3
71	Variety of Method							-							1
72	Notional Word Need							+	+				+		3

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Secondary Data	Contributor														Total of Mentions
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	
73	Reading Aloud								+			+		- /	4
74	Mouth Exercises								+						1
75	Value of Adverbs								+						1
76	Tense/Time Difficulty								-						1
77	Drills/Substitution								+	+	-			/	4
78	Teacher/Informant								+					/	2
79	Scanning								+					o	2
80	Dictation								+						1
81	Keeping Diary in FL								+						1
82	Deductive Learning								+				+		2
83	Inductive Learning								[+]			+		-	3
84	Intersentential Features								/					/	2
85	Suprasentential Discourse								/					/	2
86	Frontiers of Meaning								+				+		2
87	Kinaesthetic Memory								+						1
88	Memorization			+				+		+				/	4
89	Revising								/						1
90	Impatience								-					/	2
91	Textbooks									+					1
92	Mnemonics								+	+					2
93	Non-Absorption/Frequent Words							/		+					2
94	Loss of Self in FL										+				1
95	Working towards FL Target										+				1
96	Cognitive Approach										+				1

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Secondary Data	Contributor														Total of Mentions		
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N			
97	Insecurity Motive														+	1	
98	Search for Identity														+	/	2
99	Concealment of Identity														+		1
100	Unconscious Assimilation														+		1
101	Understanding														[+]	/ /	3
102	Prior Experience			+		+		+			+		?	+	/		7
103	Formal Learning														+		1
104	Post-Correction														+		1
105	Self-Study										+				+	/	3
106	Language Laboratory						/		-	-					-		4
107	Poor Print														-		1
108	Supplementary Readers														+		1
109	Slang														-		1
110	Idiom														-		1
111	Free Writing														/		1
112	Complexity/Density														-		1
113	Linear Structure														+		1
114	Learning/Use Disparity														/	/	2
115	Social Comparability														/		1
116	Aural Recognition														/	/	2
117	Fluent Pidgin														+		1
118	Importance of MT														/		1

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N

Key to Symbols:

- + Positive and beneficial in language learning.
- Negative and inhibitory in language learning.
- ? Contributor unsure whether beneficial or inhibitory.
- [] Statement heavily qualified or expanded.
- / Neutral comment.
- || Meaning not clear to compiler.
- Inference only.

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January 1978

BRITISH COUNCIL
PUBLICATION

£2.50

ISBN

