METALINGUISTIC BEHAVIOUR
AND ITS ROLE IN DEVELOPING LANGUAGE AWARENESS
IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
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Canada

Abstract

"Metalinguistic Behaviour and Its Role in Developing Language Awareness"
Master of Arts 1998

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Defining metalanguage broadly to include the range of experiences, feelings, thoughts, and

reactions of language learners during the language learning process, this study is based in both

second-language acquisition theory and empirical research in second-language learning.

Empirical and theoretical studies on form-focused instruction make it clear that some

kind of direct grammatical instruction has an impact on second-language learning. It becomes

clear through a further examination of relevant literature that a learner-centred approach

which raises awareness of language while catering to the varying needs and learning strategies

of the individual student is most suited to the language classroom.

The research study itself is based in a first-year university-level Latin course. Through

an analysis of the metalinguistic strategies of language learners, it is discovered that the

learner undergoes a process of metalinguistic discovery which is manifested in a blend of

traditional and individualized metalinguistic behaviour.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The second-language learning process is a complex and fascinating phenomenon. For researchers, it raises such issues as the ideal situation and age for learning, the role of the first language, and the method of instruction best suited to learning and, ultimately, acquisition. However, because of the wide range of factors involved in the process — for example, linguistic proficiency, literacy level, type of exposure, learning style, environment — there is rarely consensus among second-language acquisition researchers on many of these issues. The field is frequently divided on problems as general as the role of direct instruction in second-language learning, and as specific as the type of access learners have to principles of Universal Grammar. The former is a highly practical concern, with implications for classroom practice, curriculum design, and teacher training; the latter is much more abstract, blending theoretical linguistics with recent advances in second-language acquisition (SLA) theory and pedagogy. Consequently, an effective praxis of second-language learning cannot ignore any of the numerous approaches which recent theoretical and empirical research in applied linguistics has suggested or investigated. More important, such a praxis cannot ignore the central role played by the language learner in this debate. Taking a learner-centred approach is crucial in any research which aims to show how second-language learning takes place. Regardless of the site of learning (i.e., in a naturalistic setting or in a classroom), learning takes place within the learner herself; there are other components to the "system," of course, but they are supplementary or complementary to the experiences, attitudes, actions, and beliefs of the learner.

When examining the learner, the researcher has a range of possible options for investigation. For example, she can examine the end product of the learning process — acquisition — by assessing the learners' achievement in a course or their level of oral or written proficiency, for example. Or she can investigate learners' performance on specific language tasks, measuring this against some norm or standard. Such tasks might include reading or listening comprehension, cloze passages, or conversational or communicative strategies. Alternatively, the researcher might choose to examine more closely the processes involved in learning itself, conducting ethnographic research on classroom discourse, "teacher talk," or students' negotiation of meaning. A specific type of discourse in the second-language classroom is metalinguistic discourse: how students talk about language when they are learning it. It is in this particular domain that this study is based.

But what exactly is metalanguage? Generally speaking, it is the language used to talk about language and linguistic phenomena: the "jargon" of applied linguistics, perhaps. Metalanguage can come in many forms, and as Hedgcock (1993) notes, coming to a satisfying and all-encompassing definition of metalanguage is difficult, specifically, he says, because the manifestations of metalinguistic awareness are subject to so many linguistic and extralinguistic factors. Birdsong (1989) also notes the "complex" nature of our understanding of metalinguistic performance. Gombert (1990) traces the history of the term "metalanguage" back to the 1950s and 1960s, but makes a convincing argument for it not to mean simply "knowledge about language"; he proposes that it be viewed instead as "cognition about language." Indeed, it is worth noting that most discussions of metalinguistic behaviour focus on the ability to express grammatical judgements or articulate grammatical rules (e.g., Seliger

1979). More recent tests of metalinguistic skill (cf. Alderson *et al.* 1997) stress similar things, all of which amount to an ability to express in concrete and often rather formulaic terms established concepts and definitions of grammatical terminology.

Such a view of metalanguage is somewhat narrow, however, and in this study I prefer to conceive of it more broadly. I view metalinguistic behaviour as the entire set of judgements and opinions which a learner has about language and language learning: reflections, discussions, investigations, explorations, questions, problems. It is the central component of language learner discourse, embodying both what a learner feels about language and what she feels about the language learning process itself. This broader definition of metalinguistic behaviour is not new (see Færch 1985), but is gaining currency in recent work in applied linguistics. Bialystok (1994), for example, discusses the interacting knowledge sources which inform a language learner's approach to a second language. These sources include the learner's knowledge of the first language (L1), access to Universal Grammar (UG), knowledge of the world ("maturity"), and other learning experiences. If the newly emerging concept of Language Awareness (LA) is added to this scenario, it becomes clear that metalinguistic knowledge (and, therefore, the behaviour stemming from it) deals simultaneously with learners' experiences, awareness, cognition, and knowledge of language. It is in this broad-ranging definition of metalanguage and metalinguistic behaviour that this present study is firmly rooted.

The central aim of this study is to examine the ways in which metalinguistic behaviour is manifested in the language learning process, and the implications of this behaviour for second-language pedagogy. While it might, in the long run, be helpful to explore the

connection between "good" metalinguistic behaviour and "success" in language learning, this thesis will not deal with such notions. Instead, through various qualitative instruments, the goal is to examine the nature and development of metalinguistic behaviour in a university classroom-based introductory Latin course. It will become clear that the classroom and the learner are the points of intersection of a range of applied linguistic and pedagogical theory about how language is taught and learned. Most notably, it is in the particular experiences of the learner that larger issues such as the role of formal grammar instruction or the level of access to Universal Grammar come together; how learners articulate their experiences in conjunction with the way a language is structured and the way it is taught is the most crucial factor in assessing how second languages are learned. Naturally, this situation depends on a range of other factors,[1] and it is not the aim of this thesis to make revolutionary pronouncements that will resolve long-standing questions of applied linguistics. Instead, by examining the reflective, discursive, and analytical processes which learners employ as part of their own linguistic awareness, a clearer picture of the cognitive, affective, and experiential factors underlying second-language acquisition will emerge. I propose that metalinguistic behaviour, by complementing the L2 input that stimulates principles of UG and by raising students' awareness of form and meaning in language, can positively enhance the second-language learning process.

In Chapter Two I review a range of pertinent studies on language learning and acquisition, particularly from the last decade. The principal underlying debate is that of the

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[1]For example, learners' prior linguistic exposure, second-language learning experience, overall ability, etc.

role of formal instruction ("focus-on-form," to use Long's term), since it is from a focus on

form that much grammatically-focused metalinguistic behaviour stems. A knee-jerk reaction

to focus-on-form is a fear that it might signal a return to traditional methods of grammar

instruction, such as rote learning, drills, and grammar-translation.[2] However, current SLA

theory advocates a balance between a focus on form and communicative teaching methods,

with instruction in formal aspects of language delivered through such concepts as

"consciousness-raising," "input enhancement," "noticing," or, more broadly, "language

awareness." Clearly related to these issues is the question of the value of the first language in

the second-language classroom; this is another historically contentious question, but one

which has become more popular recently as a tendency to disregard the influence of the L1 as

wholly negative has given way to recognizing the positive transfer effects of the first language.

And once again, the term "language awareness" surfaces, since one's linguistic (and hence

metalinguistic) awareness is based in one's L1. The extent to which such awareness is also

based in Universal Grammar is a huge issue, one which is also explored in Chapter Two, but

with as practical an approach as possible. Although UG remains a rather elusive and highly

theoretical notion, its concrete manifestation must surely come in learners' expression of

similarity and difference between their L1 and the L2 in question. Clearly, while such

connections are difficult to quantify, the fact that learners articulate them is crucial to an

understanding of the processes underlying language learning. In fact, as should now be clear,

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[2]Cook (1989) phrases it well when he says that "if grammar is to be reinvented, applied linguists will have to look seriously at the advantages of contemporary models of grammar, . . . rather than go back to the grammatical solutions of earlier generations" (35). A similar caveat should apply to the *teaching* of grammar.

the learner is the link between abstract theory and pedagogical practice. Recognizing this, I end Chapter Two by exploring recent research on learner strategies, as well as on teaching methods specifically designed to enhance and reflect such strategies.

Following the review of recent literature in Chapter Two, in Chapter Three I describe the empirical research study itself. The wholly qualitative approach which I adopt means that the issue of achievement (i.e., as reflected by grades) in the language course will be disregarded. Such achievement is, for many learners, the point of the entire process, but given the limitations of a short-term study, as well as the host of additional factors which can affect student achievement, I will focus solely on what can be readily observed and analysed within the research site itself. After all, for the purposes of this study, second-language learning does not necessarily equate to second-language achievement as measured in the context of a course. Instead, I am seeking evidence for the *existence* of metalinguistic behaviour which might enhance learning. This might imply — but not immediately demonstrate — the *potential* for subsequent improvements in achievement. Therefore, it is behaviour, not achievement, which is the central focus of this study.

I am convinced of the validity of qualitative research methodology here for two principal reasons. First, my own research experience has shown that quantitative methods are inappropriate to a study which aims to observe attitude and behaviour rather than readily measurable variables obtained through assessment tools. Second, there is adequate literature to support qualitative/ethnographic research in education. In particular, among the excellent outlines of qualitative methodology, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) provide a comprehensive account of the entire qualitative research process and of the importance of theory within that

process. I am also struck by Glaser and Strauss's (1967) now seminal work on grounded theory, into which the present study fits perfectly. They note, for example, that "the process of generating theory is independent of the kind of data used" (17-18), adding that there need not be a "clash" between quantitative and qualitative methodology.[3] They go on to state that theory should arise out of the data, and not vice versa (261). As teacher/ethnographer, I plan to learn from the research (having previously been informed by the existing literature) and thus to generate the basis of a theory of the nature and role of metalinguistic behaviour in second-language learning.

The qualitative methodology chosen for the study was designed to provide a range of metalinguistic evidence. Classes were audiotaped on a regular basis, students kept a weekly journal of reactions to the class and to language learning, and metalinguistic comments on grammatical concepts were gathered through assignments and examinations. In addition, students completed a general questionnaire on grammar and language learning at two points during the course. Such qualitative data collection tools yielded a huge and diverse range of student comments, and these are analysed and discussed in Chapter Four. What becomes clear is that there are certain patterns to the metalinguistic behaviour demonstrated by the students, and most of these patterns suggest that some focus on form — be it through direct instruction, communicative "noticing" tasks, or even through journals themselves — are a crucial component of students' classroom language learning experience. The findings corroborate many of the research findings of recent studies which call for a balance between

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[3]However, Lazaraton's (1995) examination of the current state of qualitative research in applied linguistics suggests that qualitative research still carries less weight than quantitative.

focus-on-form and communicative strategies; they challenge others which maintain that metalanguage has little effect on SLA. Moreover, as Chapter Five indicates, the findings of this study suggest that more classroom research needs to be done to examine further both the role of metalinguistic behaviour in second-language learning, and the potential role of metalinguistic reflection and analysis in contributing to language proficiency.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

My purpose in this chapter is to review the theoretical and empirical studies which are relevant to the present research. For ease of presentation, I have divided the review into four sections, although there is no clear boundary between them. The first section, "Focus on form," discusses the issue of direct grammatical instruction in second-language learning, a debate which has a long and interesting history. Instead of presenting a comprehensive elaboration of the entire debate, I begin with the assumption that some role for direct instruction is now accepted by most teachers and researchers; in fact, only a few recent studies continue to deny a role for form-focused instruction. The second part, "Universal Grammar," looks at one specific area of the UG literature which is connected to this study, i.e., the extent to which language learners have access to principles of UG in the L2 acquisition process. While much of the UG debate focuses on highly technical linguistic concepts which are beyond the scope of this study, I focus instead on linking focus-on-form theory with UG theory in an attempt to suggest that focus-on-form and UG access complement the language learning process.

Crucial to such a connection is the notion of language awareness, which is the broad-ranging topic of the third section of this chapter. While language awareness as a movement is a relatively new phenomenon, I include in this section the related areas of "consciousness-raising" and the role of the first language, both of which have fundamental roles to play in language awareness. By the time the third section is complete, it should become clear that focus-on-form, UG, and language awareness are interrelated areas which affect language learning in important ways. More important for this study, however, is the fact that they can

be seen to converge in learners' metalinguistic behaviour. In the final section, therefore, I

extend the literature review to include information on learning strategies which involve

metalinguistic behaviour. Many of these studies involve empirical research which will serve to

validate the empirical methodology chosen for the present study. In the final chapter I will

return to some of this literature as I suggest directions for further research in this important

and empirically understudied area.

2.1 Focus on form

The debate over the role of formal grammatical instruction in the second-language classroom

has been raging for almost two decades (cf. Long 1983), but it is now safe to say that

practically all theorists and researchers would assign some value to form-focused instruction.

Indeed, as early as 1986, Garrett noted that the "claim that the teaching of grammar is of

limited use . . . is the cause of considerable uneasiness in the field today" (133). Similarly, for

Long (1988), to say that instruction is of limited use is "obviously premature and almost

certainly wrong" (135). Carter (1990) points out that lack of grammar instruction has

"disempowered [learners] from exercising the kind of conscious control over language which

enables them both to *see through* language in a systematic way and to use language more

discriminately" (119). Even Terrell (1991) notes that there is a clear role for grammar in

SLA: direct instruction can act as an "advance organizer" for input, as "meaning-form focus,"

and as a means by which learners can "acquire" their own output. Such support for direct

instruction is not meant to suggest, however, that the debate is over; rather, the debate has

switched from one surrounding the presence or absence of direct instruction, to one of extent

or degree. Most of this section, therefore, is devoted to presenting the range of viewpoints in favour of a focus on form and to indicating the current position of most SLA theorists on the issue.

It would be misleading and inaccurate to say that the proverbial pendulum has swung all the way in the focus-on-form direction. The leading proponent of the "no grammar" standpoint, Stephen Krashen, still advocates that his input hypothesis (cf. Krashen 1985) is superior to its "rivals" (Krashen 1994). These rivals, however, are output-centred rather than exclusively form-focused, even though many of their proponents (including Swain 1985) would argue for a place for a focus on form in SLA. Krashen maintains that there is no value in English grammar instruction, a position which reinforces the earlier, more vocal stance he had taken on the issue (see, for example, Krashen 1993, where he maintains that the "effects of grammar teaching still appear to be peripheral and fragile" [725]).

Equally vocally, but for different reasons, Mitchell and Martin (1997) reject formal grammatical instruction, citing teachers' own dislike and fear of grammar as sufficient evidence for dispensing with "confusing" metalinguistic terminology in the classroom. One French teacher, for instance, claimed that "I've not even considered tenses with [the students], I just don't think it's important at the moment"; another was "just feeling [her] way with" teaching grammar explicitly (19). Mitchell and Martin place more emphasis on the need for rote memorization than on grammatical knowledge. Also opposed to grammar in the classroom is Jeffries (1985), who, despite making a strong argument that students have very little grammatical knowledge at their disposal, calls grammar terminology an "obstacle to second language learning." She concludes, with some chagrin, that "the innate respect that

language teachers have for formal grammar instruction is not shared by theorists in second language acquisition" (390). Perhaps Jeffries was right in 1985, but her claim would likely not be valid today, when an increasing number of SLA theorists are calling for a return to some form of direct grammar instruction.[4] It is worth tracing some of the evolution of this viewpoint.

Carter (1990), discussing the LINC (Language in the National Curriculum) program in the U.K., outlines four reasons for teachers' possible hesitation to return to grammar. First, it is perceived that returning to grammar means returning to traditional grammar instruction; second, there is a myth that grammar does not lead to greater competence; third, many teachers feel that only advanced learners can learn grammar; and fourth, Carter senses that teachers believe that language is best learned implicitly or sub-consciously. He counters by suggesting that teachers should use examples of authentic texts to teach grammar, but notes that there remains

> a challenge to present grammar in the classroom in ways which avoid the worst excesses of formalism without losing sight of the fact that grammar is systematically organised. A further major challenge is to find ways of teaching grammar which are sensitive to a continuum of implicit to explicit knowledge and which recognise that appropriate and strategic intervention by the teacher are crucial to the process of making implicit knowledge explicit. (117)

Also discussing the implicit/explicit distinction, Little (1994) notes the importance of developing a lexicon to enable individuals to discuss language rules:

> Whether we are concerned with explicit or implicit grammatical knowledge, words inevitably come before structures. After all, explicit knowledge of

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[4]Mohammed (1995), however, argues against direct instruction and metalanguage in language teaching, concluding that "the more metalinguistic terms and complicated analyses are avoided, the smaller the gap may be between teaching and learning strategies" (57).

> grammatical rules is useless unless we know some of the words whose
> behavior the rules describe; and implicit knowledge of grammatical rules can
> develop only in association with a developing mental lexicon. (106)

He calls for the development of a metalinguistic awareness, with conscious knowledge of the words used in formulating rules. Grammatical labels are used to demonstrate the relationships among words, not as abstract entities standing alone. Odlin (1994) echoes this in a discussion of second-language learning, calling for a codified target language as a way to mutual understanding, and saying that having a language codified "simplifies both the teaching and learning of second languages" (2). In addition, Sharwood Smith (1981) notes that learners can take explicit knowledge of rules and internalize it through practice as one of many strategies for learning. Yip (1994) asks students to discover language patterns for themselves, to work out their own rules with a minimum of linguistic jargon while they become conscious of structures which are ungrammatical. She refers to this problem solving process as a "cognitive puzzle," which students with a raised consciousness to language can solve on their own and according to their own needs and interests.

However, while Green and Hecht (1992) found in their study that German learners of English as a foreign language could correct English errors better when they knew a rule explicitly, they could also make corrections even when they could not state the rule (cf. Seliger 1979; Hulstijn and Hulstijn 1984). Green and Hecht also found that English language speakers could correct errors in English, but were often not able to state the rule for the correction, implying that explicit knowledge of rules may not be a prerequisite to accurate performance. Perhaps not, but as Ellis (1990) states, "explicit knowledge serves to sensitize the learner to the existence of non-standard forms in her interlanguage and this facilitates the

acquisition of target-language forms" (195). Both Sorace (1985) and Gass (1983) also stress

that metalinguistic knowledge is an important part of the development of SLA. Sorace (1985)

also notes that in the early stages of interlanguage, second-language learners' (L2ers)

competence is more likely to be metalinguistic than purely linguistic, and remarks on a

"growing interaction between [their] metalinguistic knowledge and their productive use" of

the L2 (252).

Much of this metalinguistic knowledge, it has been argued, comes in the form of

negative evidence about the L2, and the role of negative evidence in language learning has

been the subject of some debate. Schwartz and Gubala-Ryzak (1992), for example, argue that

negative evidence is merely information about a sentence, not an actual source of input: "this

type of input contains information about the sentence, e.g., the propositional content that such

and such a string is ungrammatical. Information about a sentence is not a feature of PLD

[primary linguistic data]" (33). What is most unsettling about this view is that it assumes a

totally implicit, purely cognitive approach to SLA, where L2 learning takes place almost

entirely in the interface between L2 input and UG (see below). It is as if the learner has little

or no conscious role in the process. Schwartz does, however, later admit the potential for a

broader scope to the kind of knowledge gained from negative evidence and explicit data. In

Schwartz (1993) she draws the familiar distinction between competence and performance: ". .

. whereas explicit data and negative data effect [learned linguistic knowledge], they do not

effect linguistic competence. They may, nevertheless, affect linguistic behavio[u]r, and

sometimes that may be all we are seeking" (160).

Returning to the question of negative evidence, it seems that feedback in the form of appropriate metalinguistic input can turn L2ers' implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge over which they have direct control, especially at the early stages. When this is combined with the types of "fluid" communicative approaches advocated by VanPatten and Cadierno (1993a; 1993b), it could help learners to avoid the overuse of the Monitor that was perhaps justifiably cautioned by Krashen. While Beck *et al.* (1995), echoing Schwartz, contend that any kind of evidence leads not to "true" grammatical knowledge but to "learned linguistic knowledge," others suggest that negative evidence is vital for accuracy. White (1988) remarks that "depriving students of correction is far more problematic than is usually supposed, if the student is aiming for accuracy as well as fluency in the L2" (57). Birdsong (1989) also points to the importance of negative evidence: "explicit negative evidence can," he says, "promote narrowing of the Interlanguage grammar" (135) in that it can "disconfirm certain types of hypothesis about grammatical structure" (131). Birdsong is quite candid in his treatment of the problematic aspects of negative evidence, too. He notes that the same individual variation that characterizes the grammaticality judgements forming the central part of his "metalinguistic output" also plays a part in making negative evidence, the focus of "metalinguistic input," so enigmatic a concept. As he summarizes,

> . . . the role of negative evidence in language acquisition depends . . . on the types of hypotheses entertained by the learner, the inherent usability of the evidence, the expertise of the learner in incorporating the evidence into learning mechanisms, and the implied goals or benefits of the use of negative evidence. (1989:132)

Included in these variables is the notion of the short- or long-term effects of negative evidence or, indeed, of any type of metalinguistic input.

Studies which detail the long-term effects of any type of focus-on-form instruction or

metalinguistic behaviour are noticeably lacking in the literature, mainly because of the

difficulties inherent in such research designs. Simply put, there are too many other factors —

both linguistic and extralinguistic — which could skew the data.[5] Still, two studies in

particular are helpful here in that they illustrate not only the problematic nature of longitudinal

performance studies but also the potential for long-term benefits from metalinguistic input.

Carroll and Swain (1993) report that metalinguistic feedback can lead to good

performance on language tasks. Subjects were trained in a specific linguistic concept and then

tested on their ability to apply the concept; follow-up was done one week later. As Carroll

and Swain report, "Our results raise the possibility that claims that learning about the language

is useless in promoting learning of the language may be incorrect" (1993:372). Spada and

Lightbown (1993), meanwhile, investigated the improvements in performance of learners who

received two weeks of form-focused instruction and who later were in intensive, five-month

ESL programs in Québec. Results showed some significant gains in linguistic ability both at

the end of the instruction period and at the end of the intensive ESL program. A comparison

between the results of the two studies here indicates the *potential* long-term benefits of

ongoing metalinguistic intervention. The Carroll and Swain study does not indicate significant

long-term gains, but nor does its design allow for such gains; perhaps a general failing of many

empirical studies investigating direct instruction is the short timeframe involved, an almost

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[5]There are numerous aspects of classroom teaching and learning which can affect students'
overall linguistic competence, e.g., time devoted to various tasks, students' motivation, general
aptitude (see Alderson *et al.* 1997, e.g.). Coupled with that are practical difficulties inherent in
longitudinal studies: researchers' time, costs, and the problems of tracking.

inevitable drawback, given the constraints on all researchers' time. In fact, informal follow-up with subjects six months and one year after intensive form- and meaning-focused instruction in my own research yielded quite disappointing feedback in everything except attitude (Krüger and Boyne 1996). So what the combined results point to is the need for a commitment to continuous metalinguistic intervention in second-language classrooms. Such intervention should not be intensive or designed to exclude other approaches (e.g., communicative), but rather a normal, "contextualized" part of the teacher's inventory of linguistic input.

Indeed, in her recent paper on the role of positive evidence in SLA, Trahey (1996) found little to suggest that such evidence is beneficial to L2ers unless it is given in a meaningful context. In a research design similar to Spada and Lightbown's (1993), Trahey investigated the extent to which francophone children in Québec learned adverb placement in English following a two-week "flood" of exposure to grammatical adverb structures in the L2. She discovered that while the students could recognize what was grammatical in English, they still followed L1 adverb placement rules; one year later, their performance had not changed. While Trahey notes that positive evidence of English adverb placement led to a preference for that word order in the data she gathered, the positive evidence alone was not sufficient for the "unlearning" of the ungrammatical word order. Trahey suggests that the "failure," as she calls it (134), can be attributed to a number of factors, the most important of which is her observation that positive evidence alone cannot lead to long-term gains in performance (or in underlying competence) if it is given in a *decontextualized* situation. Essentially, Trahey is calling for a blend of approaches:

It has been proposed that what is required for successful L2 teaching is an emphasis on structure which is completely incorporated within contextualized and naturalistic exposure to the language — that is, primary linguistic data plus attention to form. . . . This proposal advocates an incorporation of a focus on structure within the context of other naturalistic linguistic input. (136)

What is needed, then, is attention to contextualized metalanguage that is useful to the learner, appropriate to the learner's ability and motivation level, and meaningful both in the context of the task at hand and in the broader realm of (meta)linguistic awareness.

At this stage, if we assume that metalinguistic behaviour has a role in the SLA process, it is easy to see how such intervention could revert to the "traditional" form-focused instruction that is now quite antithetical to effective L2 pedagogy. So where is the ideal place for metalanguage in the overall process? Sorace (1985) phrases this challenge rather well: "If one believes that formal knowledge of a foreign language does have a positive function, the question is open as to how to exploit this potential in a lively, communication-oriented learning situation" (252). Garrett (1986) calls for a "processing grammar," which requires "an understanding of the steps by which the expression of communicative intent, the processing that mediates between meaning and form, takes place" (146). VanPatten and Cadierno's (1993a; 1993b) research on the differences between "traditional instruction" and "processing instruction," which is also comprehensively reported in Archibald and Libben (1995:350-54), demonstrates the important role of metalanguage as a means of bridging form and meaning at the input processing stage as well as at the output production stage (see also VanPatten 1996; VanPatten and Sanz 1995). Although VanPatten and Cadierno (1993a) also found that learners receiving so-called traditional instruction performed equally well on production tasks — which suggests a prominence for traditional instruction that is frequently downplayed —

they do raise some important points about the nature of any kind of focus on form in the

second-language classroom:

> . . . explicit grammar instruction should first seek to make changes in the
> developing system via a focus on input and only afterward should instruction
> provide opportunities for developing productive abilities. . . . [I]n addition to
> the fluid and "freer" interaction that often happens in communicative
> classrooms, it is important for instructors to also develop focused output
> activities that encourage learners to be accurate while also attending to
> meaning. . . . [T]here is room for tasks that are structured around particular
> grammatical points where real messages are communicated and learners attend
> to both content and form. (239-40)

Once again we see the idea of a harmony between communicative and form-focused methods

of instruction, a harmony which can work only when the methods are appropriate.

Ideally, a model similar to Ellis's (1990) integrated theory of instructed learning should

help to bring us closer to the type of metalinguistic strategies that can work for the learner.

The integrated model combines the best of all possible strategies and approaches to SLA,

allowing for both form- and meaning-focused input by the teacher, accommodating a number

of learning styles, and both affecting and effecting explicit and implicit knowledge at the

processing stage. Ellis (1994), claims that formal instruction "helps to automatize both

implicit and explicit grammatical knowledge" (102). But while he is convinced that "there is

no direct interface between the two types of knowledge" (1990:194), he does allow that form-

focused input can have an effect on implicit knowledge. And perhaps when metalinguistic

knowledge becomes articulated by the learner as a form of output, it can be recycled as a form

of valuable *input* to the learner once again (R. Ellis 1995). As Sharwood Smith says, "the

learner's metalinguistic behaviour can function as input" (1991:129). This, as Ellis also

suggests, can allow both the learner and the teacher to use metalinguistic behaviour to their

mutual benefit.

In addition to automatization, Ellis (1989) supports the notion that direct instruction

prevents fossilization of learner errors, especially those caused by transfer. This

"defossilization" is also raised by Larsen-Freeman (1995), who, like Ellis, discusses the role of

practice in raising consciousness about target structures.[6] Larsen-Freeman's term for this

contextualized talk about language is "grammaring," which captures very aptly the active

nature of the new approach to grammar instruction. This "new grammar" (Carter 1990)

involves what Carter would call a "happy medium" between communicative methods and

formal instruction, something which, incidentally, dates as far back as Canale and Swain

(1980). Consciousness-raising activities (see below, section 2.3) play a role in this

methodology, of course, and the development of new approaches has led to exciting

innovations in language curricula such as those described in Shrum and Glisan's (1994)

collection of papers on "contextualized language instruction." Adair-Hauck and Donato

(1994), for example, describe a range of eclectic means by which grammar can be integrated

into whole language approaches in ways which can be fun, exciting, and effective for learners.

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[6]Ellis's view of practice, however, needs some discussion. Although he believes that
practice has its uses (specifically for C-R), he notes that "there are strong grounds — empirical
and theoretical — which lead us to doubt the efficacy of practice. 'Practice' is essentially a
pedagogic construct. It assumes that the acquisition of grammatical structures involves a gradual
automatisation of production, from controlled to automatic and it ignores the very real constraints
that exist on the ability of the teacher to influence what goes on inside the learner's head from the
outside" (1992:237). This has further relevance for the discussion of teacher and learner
strategies below.

The importance of such affective factors in SLA should not be underestimated, and it has been well documented in such sources as Ely (1986), the James and Garrett (1991) collection, and Warden (1997), whose French immersion students not only rated a range of grammar activities as "useful," but also developed a set of interactive games which engaged the class in fun activities centred around grammatical gender. Warden's doctoral thesis is a good example of a series of important recent contributions made to this topic by researchers at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Lyster (1994) argues that students' negotiating of form enables them to "draw actively on their own (socio)linguistic resources" (446). Specifically with reference to the immersion classroom, but with broader relevance, Lyster describes the important role played by the teacher, not in correcting basic errors, but in encouraging students to "go beyond" what they would do on their own:

> Sans encouragements, ils ont tendance à opter pour un discours simplifié,
> caractérisé par un vocabulaire restreint et un mélange de niveaux de langue, en
> s'attendant à ce que le professeur joue son rôle traditionnel de 'transmetteur de
> connaissances' et fournisse le mot juste. Or, en partant de ce que les élèves
> savent déjà et en les incitant à aller au-delà, la négociation de la forme s'avère à
> une stratégie efficace dans l'enseignement et dans l'apprentissage du français
> en classe d'immersion dans la mesure où elle pousse les élèves à mieux
> s'exprimer. Ce faisant, elle ne décourage point la communication puisqu'elle
> en fait partie. (460-61)

Furthermore, Kowal (1997) talks about the important role of focus on form in conjunction with collaborative grammar tasks. Task-based approaches, in fact, are common subjects for research. Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993), Fotos (1994), and R. Ellis (1995), for example, all discuss the benefits of grammar tasks in promoting students' awareness of TL structures. Even though the primary language for most of these task-based approaches is the L2, much

can be extrapolated from this and applied to the role of the L1 as an effective metalanguage

(see section 2.3 below).

The 1990s have seen a tremendous growth in articles discussing both theoretical and

empirical reasons for incorporating grammar instruction and communicative methods. Long

(1991), often credited with coining the "focus-on-form" term, argues that in isolation it is

"counterproductive." In fact, in a range of recent empirical studies, researchers such as Day

and Shapson (1991), Dyson (1996), Ellis and Laporte (1997), and Bardovi-Harlig (1995)

conclude that there is a need for context- and meaning-based approaches to grammar

teaching. Dyson discusses the need to "bridge the divide between a focus on form and

communicative language approaches by investigating a methodology for combining them"

(1996:60). Her research on migrant speakers of English in Australia supports the

effectiveness of form-focused instruction and "undermine[s] the credibility" of those who

claim it has no place in the ESL classroom (74). Ellis and Laporte's excellent synopsis of

SLA theory contains both a clear defence of focus-on-form (without which "formal accuracy

is an unlikely result" [1997:78]) and a call for variety and balance in SLA. More specifically,

Harley (1993) employs a quasi-structuralist approach to delineating the central trends in

second-language teaching. Acknowledging that learning in French immersion classrooms is

primarily experiential in orientation, she asks whether more analytic (or form-focused)

methods can be incorporated into such classrooms, given the success of these methods. She

extends the experiential/analytic opposition further, adding implicit/explicit and

intralingual/crosslingual to the set of dichotomies. She lists a range of advantages to

presenting students with a focus on form, not the least important of which is enabling them to

avoid confusion and to raise awareness of unusual features of their L2.

Batstone (1994) introduces another opposition, that of process/product. He argues

that "grammar as process" involves using language in a dynamic, context-driven way. Using

content as a starting point, Batstone claims that "grammaticisation" of this content is the key

to a process-oriented way of learning grammar. He continues:

> Grammaticisation tasks . . . aim to present grammar not as the pre-formulated
> product of someone else's choice, but as the outcome of the choices made by
> the learners themselves. This is, after all, how grammar is called upon in
> normal language use: as a resource for choice, and as an integral part of the
> construction of a wider discourse. (233)

A similar view is found in van Lier (1996), who eschews a return to traditional metalinguistic

descriptions "pre-determined in a syllabus." Indeed, the notion of "normal language use" is

key to many researchers' conceptualizations of the integration of focus-on-form and

communicative approaches. Herschensohn (1990), for example, calls for "authentic"

approaches to grammar instruction, adding that such approaches should be "experiential" and

"interactive." She draws heavily on the work of Canale and Swain (1980), and responds

almost directly to Krashen when she states that the role of grammar "need not be peripheral"

(456). In Cadierno's (1995) discussion of formal instruction using a processing instruction

framework, calling attention to input in order to transform it into intake must be done in a

meaningful way, with equal attention to form and function in the input. Indeed, Cadierno

"deconstructs" many of the form/meaning barriers that the debate over formal instruction had

erected; in short, there is an important place for both.

Focus-on-form raises a range of theoretical and practical issues underlying the research

conducted in this study. As the underlying basis for "traditional" metalanguage, a focus on

form is at the core of any attempt to raise students' awareness of linguistic structure. In a broader metalinguistic context, the now popular "blended" approach in the communicative classroom is particularly important to this study. While the third section of this chapter returns to the practical issues relevant to the classroom, the next deals with a more theoretical linguistic approach: Universal Grammar.

2.2 Universal Grammar

Simply put, UG is the cognitive blueprint that allows natural human language to occur. As Chomsky describes it in *Reflections on Language* (1976), it is "the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages. . . . the essence of human language" (cited in Cook and Newson 1996:1). As such, it is difficult to deny the appeal of theories which attempt to show the importance of UG in SLA: since second languages are natural human languages, the processes of acquisition should by their very nature be in some way governed by what Chomsky portrays as the overarching linguistic system common to us all. Sharwood Smith (1988), Herschensohn (1990), and VanPatten (1996), for example, argue strongly for interaction between L2 input and UG, a position echoed by the leading proponents of UG access in SLA. But even if we assume that UG plays a role — despite opposition from Schachter (1988; 1996) and Schmidt (1994), for example — how does this relate to issues of metalanguage? Part of the answer can be found by looking at the notion of parameter resetting: if we think of parameters as "switches," input of a certain sort (in this case, L2 data) can reset these parameters from the L1 value (if there is one) to the L2 (if a change is necessary). Such input is said to provide the "trigger" for parameter

resetting. If we are to assume, as the previous section suggested, that explicit instruction is a desirable and necessary part of language teaching, then it is equally safe to assume that certain features of the L2 will need more explicit instruction than others. As Flynn and Martohardjono (1995) report, those features which differ "parametrically" from the L1 benefit from the "triggering" effects of explicit instruction.

Such a view of UG is certainly oversimplified, and while it serves the present purpose adequately, some of the current debates surrounding UG are worthy of consideration. For example, Schachter (1996) would argue that there is a clear distinction to be made between "triggering," which involves choosing options, and "learning," which concerns the mental processes involved in "acquiring" a language. In rejecting UG access in SLA, therefore, Schachter (1996) insists that "learning" a second language involves more time and effort than the triggering associated with L1 acquisition would imply. Another UG-related issue is captured in Cook's (1991; 1994) discussion of multi-competence, which concerns the way in which multiple languages are stored in the mind. Cook argues that both L1 and L2 are stored in the same "black box," with L1 and L2 input both triggering settings for UG parameters. Cook (1994), however, unlike Flynn and Martohardjono (1995), denies that explicit instruction has any direct influence on triggering UG principles. Even so, his view of UG is diametrically opposed to Schachter's, thus illustrating the spectrum of opinions on what is, admittedly, an abstract concept that is very difficult to study empirically.

So, while the theorist or researcher can categorize the learning process in terms of a resetting of parameters, what does this mean for the learner? Ringbom (1987) expresses it most effectively:

> The beginning learner tries to establish as many simplified cross-linguistic references as possible to his [sic] L1, and only afterwards, when his L2-reference frame is becoming sufficiently extensive, will he start modifying these simplified equivalences to make them conform fully with actual L2 usage. (60)

Krashen and others might argue that this process happens naturally, and indeed it may, yet it is highly likely that access to an explicit rather than implicit knowledge of L1 grammar can facilitate smoother, more effective learning. As Ellis has pointed out, such L1 knowledge "speeds up learning . . . and helps to prevent the kind of grammatical fossilization found in naturalistic adult learners" (cited in Master 1994:232). And there is certainly a high degree of "grammatical fossilization" in university-level language learners; what is needed is the means to gain access to the seemingly fixed parameters which breed such fossilization so that they can be actively reset for L2 learning.

The nature of UG, and particularly its role in SLA, has been the subject of much recent discussion in the field. Rutherford (1994), for example, makes it clear that the range of arguments for and against UG in SLA is "immense." White (1989), in her seminal work on the topic, notes that just as in first-language acquisition, L2 input underdetermines the L2 grammar and must be supplemented by UG principles within the learner which are still as active as they were in L1 acquisition. Perhaps stating the obvious, White notes that these principles are "highly abstract and complex," and that "one should not attempt to teach this knowledge" (182). Clearly, abstract syntax and the intricacies of theories of government and binding belong in the linguistics classroom and not the language classroom, but even so, what White goes on to say is less anti-metalanguage than it might appear:

> Part of the UG claim is that such properties cannot be learned; hence, presumably, it is pointless to teach them. Indeed, without realizing it, language

> teachers presuppose this kind of knowledge [of UG] in their students; language
> teaching (where it is oriented towards language structure) concentrates on
> language particular properties rather than universal principles. (1989:182)

Already noting the importance of some focus on form, White continues by suggesting that

despite the complexity of UG principles, some instruction in concepts governed by UG could

be useful and possible.

Cook and Newson (1996) also discuss the potential for metalanguage as a means of

tapping into the underlying UG knowledge in L2ers:

> The explanations of 'reflexives' in pedagogical grammar books . . . do not go
> very far towards explaining the Binding Principles the L2 learner knows. This
> does not exclude the possibility that L2 teaching could hypothetically be based
> on grammatical explanation of principles and parameters syntax . . . . (128)

This suggestion would frighten off many language teachers, and perhaps not surprisingly.

Translated into more useful terminology, what Cook and Newson allude to is entirely logical:

if the L2 input that plays a central role in any learner's acquisition of an L2 interacts with what

they intuitively know as UG, appropriate metalinguistic input will surely help rather than

hinder the motivated learner. In fact, as Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985) note, UG is

a source of consciousness-raising in SLA. In addition, Flynn (1991) and Towell and Hawkins

(1994) cite UG as one of the various knowledge sources upon which language learners draw.

As one might expect, however, there is disagreement among researchers concerning

the usefulness of metalinguistic explanations in SLA. In fact, Cook (1991) himself notes that

"one of the major problems with the UG position is deciding what evidence other than the

speakers' intuitions is valid" (106). Schwartz and Gubala-Ryzak (1992:2) list the three

principal sources of input given to L2ers: primary linguistic data, negative evidence, and

explicit positive evidence (i.e., metalanguage). According to Schwartz and Gubala-Ryzak, only the first of these three has any direct impact on UG. Schwartz and Sprouse's Full Transfer/Full Access model (1996) relies more on the naturally occurring UG properties than on any kind of metalinguistic intervention; in fact, Sprouse has made it clear that "metalinguistic knowledge and linguistic knowledge are two different beasts, and ... neither one can 'feed into' the other" (1996, pers. comm.). Furthermore, Felix and Weigl (1991) argue that the access to UG in SLA is actually hindered by formal instruction and metalinguistic intervention, and conclude by noting that the classroom is perhaps the worst place to learn a language. But "worst" need not mean "impossible" — as is so often the case, much depends on the actual learning situation: the age, linguistic background, and motivation of the learners are extremely variable. But with adult learners, UG concepts can be presented in a "user-friendly" way, and here is where metalinguistic intervention strategies can play an important role. Without getting into theoretical notions of UG (which the teacher may not or, indeed, need not know), the teacher can describe the practical realities of UG scenarios. Students likewise need know nothing of UG, but the metalinguistic intervention by the instructor — and the ensuing dialogue or "language talk" — can complement the interaction between L2 input and UG that White and Sharwood Smith, among others, describe.

Furthermore, throughout the literature, the connection between UG and L2 learning has centred on the role of the L1 in the equation. As Corder (1992) puts it:

> . . . it is not, I believe, an accident that the structural characteristics of the
> learner's language are so pidgin-like in the earlier stages. Not only can learners
> be said to regress to an earlier stage of their own linguistic development but to
> some more basic, *possibly universal*, grammar. This could be expressed as the
> mother tongue stripped of all its specific features. (24, emphasis mine)

But Clahsen and Muysken (1989), for example, question the extent to which L2 learners can access UG principles through their L1, and Hawkins (1992) sees UG as a barrier to successful L2 learning. Bruhn-Garavito (1993), however, discovered that adult learners of Spanish "acquire" the language in much the same way as do native speakers, supporting the L1/UG connection. Furthermore, Flynn (1993) claims that a "direct relationship" exists between L2 acquisition and theories of L1 acquisition and UG, which echoes an earlier position taken by Cyrino (1990).

My own research has shown that potentially one of the most important sources of metalinguistic knowledge for L2ers is their own L1 grammatical knowledge. In empirical research carried out with English L1 university students taking courses in modern and classical languages, Krüger and Boyne (1996) found that students' comfort level and general ability to recognize grammatical concepts increased after a 12-hour workshop on fundamental concepts of English grammar. We discovered a "vital interface" between students' attitudes toward their mother tongue grammar and their language learning behaviour, and predicted that this would translate into improved performance not only in language courses but in other language-related tasks. Much of this line of enquiry is connected to the growing language awareness field, one which advocates the cross-curricular benefits of improved knowledge about language and general linguistic concepts. The L1 is the natural point of departure for this kind of metalinguistic knowledge; as we conclude, a learning environment "that provides access to the implicit L1 knowledge that [L2ers] so capably handled as first-language learners" (46) is ideal for enhancing language awareness. While our studies certainly cannot

hope to investigate UG in any depth, we would argue that our findings in the area of L1/L2

interface support a role for UG in L2 learning. As Corder (1992) says:

> . . . the part played by the mother tongue . . . is a good deal more pervasive
> and subtle than has been traditionally believed. (. . .) Language acquisition is a
> process of elaborating this basic [mother tongue] grammar in the direction of
> the target, and here again the mother tongue comes in to act as a heuristic tool
> in the discovery of the formal properties of the new language. (29)

Viewing the mother tongue in heuristic terms allows learners to enquire into the nature and

structure of language; this process of enquiry will complement the natural processes of L2

acquisition and its interaction with UG.

Finally, it is important to place the question of access to UG in proper perspective, at

least for the purposes of this study. Jordens (1991) views metalinguistic intervention as even

more important than UG access. This is a difficult argument to support, since metalinguistic

intervention is tangible and UG access often quite abstract, but Jordens' approach to

"linguistic knowledge" is convincing for its practicality alone. He views the important

processes underlying SLA as more significantly explicit than implicit, placing more emphasis

on the crucial nature of L1 intuitions and L2 knowledge. The former is connected to UG, of

course, but raising L1 (mother tongue) intuitions to consciousness is a vital part of the SLA

process, as both Corder (1992) suggests and Krüger and Boyne (1996) predict. And once an

explicit knowledge of the L1 has been achieved, explicit knowledge of the L2 can be gained

more easily. Jordens does not imply that the connection between the L2 and UG is non-

existent; on the contrary, he feels that the explicit nature of the linguistic knowledge he

discusses can be of more immediate relevance to the L2er. The "natural" processes of SLA

still take place, but they are enhanced by a combination of L1 intuitions and L2 knowledge.

In short, it is unclear exactly what access — if any — L2 learners have to the

properties of UG which are claimed to govern L1 acquisition. Thus, the place of UG in this

discussion is somewhat tenuous. But if we are to assume that some connection exists, then

the importance of UG to this study is clear. If metalinguistic behaviour can be said to act as

input which might "trigger" certain properties of UG, then explicit L1 knowledge of some

kind must play a role. The role of the L1 is one of the many aspects of general linguistic

awareness in SLA, and it is to that topic that this chapter now turns.

2.3 Language Awareness

As Ringbom (1987) comments, there is a "conspicuous absence of investigations of exactly

how the L1 functions as an aid, not an obstacle, to L2 learning" (48). It has been historically

assumed, he notes, that the L1, especially if it is typologically unlike the L2, can have only a

negative impact on L2 learning. Granted, fossilization is a pervasive problem in L2 learning,

but it is a problem which can be alleviated, not exacerbated, by a knowledge not only of L1

grammar, but also of some of the fundamental properties of language and linguistics. Gregg

(1989) makes the point very well: "acquisition of a language involves more than the

acquisition of rules for the production of utterances. It involves the acquisition of knowledge,

including knowledge that will never find expression in output" (18). This refers, of course, to

language awareness.

Language Awareness (LA) is a rapidly emerging sub-field of applied linguistics. It has its roots in Great Britain, specifically in documents such as the Bullock and Kingman reports,[7] but has quickly become a more widespread area of interest. In general terms, LA refers to the knowledge, both implicit and explicit, that learners have of language as a phenomenon; this usually means mother-tongue grammatical and structural knowledge, but it can also extend to linguistic concepts that are not language specific. More broadly, LA can apply to spoken and written language, advertising, the media, discourse analysis, and so on: in short, everything that could possibly involve language. The movement has prompted universities to develop language awareness courses, it has sparked new curricular ventures in teacher training (Wright and Bolitho 1993; Gass 1995; note particularly the debate between Borg 1994/1996 and Rastall 1996), and it has led to a new journal, *Language Awareness*, which has been on the cutting edge of applied linguistic research since its inception in 1992.

Given the scope of Language Awareness, it might seem unnecessary to broaden it further. However, for the purposes of this review, I am viewing language awareness (lower case) as the confluence of a number of interrelated topics: "noticing," "consciousness-raising," the role of the L1, and Language Awareness itself. As has now become quite clear, the division between these areas is as arbitrary as that between others already surveyed, since they all coalesce in the type of language that learners use to discuss their language learning process. Just as focus-on-form can be tied to UG, and UG to issues of L1 knowledge, so can both these areas be seen to affect — and be affected by — notions of language awareness.

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[7]Released in 1975 and 1988 respectively. See Department of Education and Science 1988; Donmall 1985; Hawkins 1984; van Lier 1996.

Consciousness-raising (C-R) is by no means a new description of the way in which

learners' awareness of linguistic phenomena can be heightened by a range of pedagogical and

learner strategies. It dates back at least as far as Sharwood Smith (1981), and by 1985,

Rutherford and Sharwood Smith were questioning the extent to which C-R played any direct

role in the SLA process. They note that the metalinguistic awareness that results from C-R

has a range of "degrees of explicitness," and that C-R itself is difficult to quantify. This is not

surprising, given the highly qualitative and "mentalistic" nature of the evidence learners

provide for C-R and other forms of metalinguistic awareness actually taking place. As a

result, much of the research into learner strategies (see section 2.4) is conjectural and highly

context-driven. Nevertheless, trends in theoretical investigation of language awareness can

clearly be seen, and if, as Lazaraton (1995) suggests, the credibility of qualitative research

methods is improving, more empirical research will surely follow.

One way of approaching language awareness is through the notion of "noticing"

aspects of linguistic input and turning such explicit awareness into a means by which

acquisition can be achieved. Gass (1991), for example, describes formal instruction as a kind

of "selective attention device" through which learners can "attend" (cf. VanPatten 1990), or

be "alerted" to features of the target language which are worthy of notice:

> Hence, the goal of explicit grammar instruction is not necessarily accuracy.
> Rather, a more realistic [one] . . . would be to highlight specific parts of a
> language's grammar which do not coincide with target language norms and
> would thus act as a trigger for future change. It is the *means* by which change
> is triggered; it is not the *end.* (140; emphasis in original)

Batstone (1994) also discusses the importance of noticing, adding that, in his product/process

framework, noticing is a "product approach" since it involves a focus on target forms and not

on the means by which they can be achieved effectively. And Ellis (1995; but see also 1990, 1994), in his discussion of interpretation tasks, regards noticing input as the first step in turning it into good intake, a view with which VanPatten (1996; see below) would agree, and with which Kennedy (1996) clearly does. In discussing classroom explanatory discourse, Kennedy stresses the importance of teachers' metalinguistic explanations in transforming input into meaningful intake (27).

It is, indeed, not surprising that much of the discussion of consciousness-raising takes place in the same articles in which there is a clear call for integrating grammar instruction with communicative approaches to language teaching. Trévise (1996) sees a need for more classroom metalinguistic interaction in order to draw attention to learners' "fossilized metalinguistic representations." She notes that meaningful classroom metalanguage leads to productive discourse. Fotos (1994) argues strongly for grammar consciousness-raising tasks, using Long's concept of "negotiated interaction" to stress the ways in which such tasks can improve output. Similarly, both Kowal and Swain (1994) and Kowal (1997) demonstrate the ways in which task-based collaboration can promote language awareness.

So while various forms of consciousness-raising are widely supported, what is the role of consciousness itself in SLA? This has been an important question in recent literature (cf. N. Ellis' [1995] review of empirical research on this very issue). Schmidt (1990), for example, sees noticing as the first element in a continuum of consciousness which results in eventual understanding. In fact, "paying attention to language form is hypothesized to be facilitative in all cases, and may be necessary for adult acquisition of redundant grammatical features" (149). He stresses the importance of a conscious awareness of linguistic

phenomena, coupled with a metalinguistic discussion of these phenomena. In Schmidt (1994)

he adds that learning rarely occurs without awareness, a point reiterated by Larsen-Freeman

(1995). Schmidt downplays the role of unconscious learning in SLA, questioning the

usefulness of Chomskyan concepts of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and UG and

challenging Krashen's notion of comprehensible input by calling for more "attention" to input.

In fact, McLaughlin (1990) claims that the conscious/unconscious distinction is "worthless,"

and that terminology that has more empirical and practical relevance is more appropriate.

This supports what Schmidt himself claims when he concludes that "we have simply not done

much research to assess sensitively what learners notice and what they think as they learn

second languages" (1990:150). It is hoped that the present study can respond to that concern.

Focusing on what learners do with input is clearly a popular approach to SLA. From

Krashen's "comprehensible input" to Sharwood Smith's "input enhancement" (1993), input

has been the thrust of much empirical and theoretical research into learners' SLA strategies.

A major contribution to this has been VanPatten's (1996, and elsewhere) input processing

theory, which emphasizes the role of processing, and not simply being aware of, input as a

means of converting it into meaningful intake. While processing instruction shares much in

common with consciousness-raising and input enhancement, VanPatten believes that

processing instruction goes beyond both, much in the way that Batstone's (1994)

product/process distinction operates. Simply put, merely raising students' awareness or

consciousness, VanPatten says, does not allow for the "form-meaning mappings" of

processing instruction, which is "not about raising learners' consciousness about grammatical

forms but instead [about] enriching their subconscious intake" (1996:84-85). Processing

instruction enables learners to consciously attend to both meaning and form in the input, something which noticing alone cannot do (cf. VanPatten 1990).

The concept of consciousness is also dealt with by van Lier (1996), who contends that consciousness has not received the treatment it deserves in SLA, mainly because it is seen either as unimportant or as associated with explicit instruction. Van Lier turns to Spinoza's and Csikszentmihalyi's views of consciousness and knowledge to provide a better definition of consciousness as part of the language learning *process*. Spinoza's view of knowledge has huge implications for our discussion of metalinguistic behaviour: "He who knows something knows at the same time that he knows it and he knows as well that he knows what he knows" (van Lier 1996:74). Awareness of language, therefore, can be perceived as much broader than simply attending to the formal properties of the language; consequently, consciousness can correspond more to Csikszentmihalyi's view of it as the "organizing, controlling, and evaluating of experience" (van Lier 1996:73). Yet like Schmidt (1990), van Lier (1996) views consciousness and language awareness quite holistically. Awareness, for van Lier, is the combination of epistemological and axiological factors such as attention, perception, conscious engagement, and reflection (11). He terms this his notion of "language *learning* awareness" (53, emphasis mine), which I would represent as follows:

EXPOSURE → ENGAGEMENT → INTAKE → PROFICIENCY.

We could question the final element, of course, since it is subject to more in-depth research. Still, the idea of engagement with the language that follows initial exposure and eventually leads to intake is supportive of views of language instruction such as VanPatten's and Ellis's, where the active involvement of the learner in both form- and meaning-related activities is

paramount. Learner strategies are the topic of the final section of this chapter, but for now it

is important to discuss the crucial role played by the mother tongue (L1) in any discussion of

language awareness.

The history of the discussion of the role of the mother tongue in SLA is long and

complex. Most recently, however, just as most researchers have acknowledged a role for

formal instruction, so have they acknowledged that the L1 must also play an important part.

Corder (1992) makes a convincing case for the L1, arguing that a sole focus on target-

language forms is inappropriate and does not aid in students' ultimate L2 acquisition.

Continuing the comparison between formal instruction and the role of the L1, it is not

surprising that Krashen (1981) would have such little faith in the ability of the L1 to be

influential in SLA:

> the L1 may "substitute" for the acquired L2 as an utterance indicator when the
> performer has to produce in the target language but has not acquired enough
> of the L2 to do this. It may in fact be the case that the domain in L2
> performance is the same as those rules that are most prone to L1 influence,
> while aspects of the target language that may be learned (late acquired, easy to
> conceptualize; e.g. bound morphology) are relatively free of L1 influence.
>   First language influence may therefore be an indication of low
> acquisition. If so, it can be eliminated or at least reduced by natural intake and
> language use. (67)

Yet there are few these days who would deny that teachers and learners using the L1 to

discuss language has a strong influence on learning.

James (1994) claims that the L1 is one of the best ways of explaining grammar is to

use the L1. Increasing language awareness helps to develop learners' "L2 learning know-

how" (213). Harbord (1992) calls L1 use "natural" for learners. For him, the L1 can lead to

greater communication and rapport between teachers and students, something which,

presumably, cannot be achieved (at least in the early stages of learning) in the L2. Exclusive use of the L2, Harbord would argue, is insufficient to lead to the kind of learning environment which enables students to learn effectively. He goes on to say that the L1 should be used "to provoke discussion and speculation and to help us increase our own and our students' awareness of the inevitable interaction between the mother tongue and the target language that occurs during any type of language acquisition" (355). Py (1996) talks about the crucial role of the L1 in his continuum of reflection and conceptualization in SLA. The discourse which allows learning to move from reflection to conceptualization is, according to Py, framed best in terms of L1 metalanguage. The presence of the L1, he says, is positive, and "recourse to the mother tongue is central to the metalinguistic processes appearing in the discourse" (184).

Van Lier (1996), one of the most influential figures in this area, assigns a very important role to the L1 in his interactional model. According to him, "there is no better way to raise awareness of one's own language than by learning a second language" (18). The converse, presumably, would also be true, i.e., that there is no better way to learn a second language than to raise awareness of one's L1. Van Lier borrows heavily from the trend in the mid- to late-1980s (see Ringbom 1986; 1987; Kellerman and Sharwood Smith 1986) of viewing the L1 in a much different light from the primarily "negative transfer" position of the early 1980s. As he says, "there is enormous potential for cross-fertilization between native language and foreign language(s) which is insufficiently exploited in the schools" (19). This reflects the trend to ignore the potentially positive effects of the L1 in SLA. Ringbom (1986; 1987) is a leading figure in attempting to reverse this trend. He notes that much of the work

on L1 transfer had previously been focused on the negative effects of the L1 — the so-called "interference" position. His work on Swedish and Finnish illustrates a much more important role for the L1, especially when the L1 and the L2 are similar. Ringbom believes that while L1/L2 similarities can improve comprehension, they can hinder production. This can be compared to Lightbown's (1991) view that a focus-on-form can help to alleviate the problems that students have when the L1 and L2 forms are dissimilar.

While Ringbom's approach to the L1 is commendable for what it says about positive transfer, its limitation is that it fails to consider language as a system with universal properties. In noting that Finns will have more difficulty learning English than will Swedish-speaking Finns (1987:65), Ringbom makes an important point about linguistic similarity, but he does not mention the possibility that linguistic universals could play a role as well. Despite the lack of similarity between Finnish and Germanic languages, general language awareness could assist Finns with their English skills. Ironically, Ringbom's failure to acknowledge LA (and, perhaps, UG) is reiterated by Krashen (1994), whose discussion of the unimportant role of L1 grammar focuses more on the peculiarities of English grammar than on universal grammatical properties. A more balanced perspective can be found in the work of researchers who consider a comprehensive range of knowledge sources in learners' approaches to SLA.

Flynn (1991) claims that three bodies of knowledge interact in the second-language learning process: UG, knowledge of the L1, and general cognitive knowledge. Flynn stresses teacher awareness of this situation, arguing that teachers can be better prepared if they recognize the range of knowledge that learners bring to the language classroom. Towell and Hawkins (1994) concur, but expand on Flynn's position. They see, in addition to UG and the

L1, a role for explicit instruction and contextualized exposure to the L2 as important in enhancing the learning experience. Furthermore, a talent for language learning interacts with these knowledge sources to aid in proficiency. Towell and Hawkins believe that formal instruction is a necessary but not sufficient condition for language learning to take place, but notes that skilled language learners can be successful if they combine formal instruction with "learned linguistic knowledge, knowledge based on L1 surface transfers . . ., ultra-rapid application of rules and compensatory strategies" (258). Regardless of the combination of knowledge sources (see especially Bialystok 1994), the L1 is prominently positioned as a powerful influence in language learning.

Beyond the important pedagogical role which the Language Awareness movement plays in SLA, general linguistic awareness can be viewed in much broader terms. Learners' awareness of language involves everything that they know, feel, notice, reflect, and experience about language. While much of this is implicit, subconscious or intuitive, much of it also can be expressed explicitly or consciously, in metalinguistic terms, with the L1 as the crucial foundation. As Bialystok (1994) explains about the analysis of implicit knowledge,

> The resulting knowledge about language that emerges from this process of analysis is a set of representations that are more explicit than the unanalysed representations out of which they emerged. As these notions of language become more analysed, the learner understands more about language in general, about its structure and its possibilities. Part of this is the basis for what is called metalinguistic knowledge . . . . (561)

This metalinguistic knowledge, and the ways in which it is manifested, are dependent on the learner, and on the experiences that she brings with her to the language learning process. Expressed this way, metalinguistic behaviour is broad-ranging, covering much more than

merely "talk about language." Awareness — both linguistic and metalinguistic — can encompass both cognitive and affective ones; as such, it equips learners with a range of strategies for approaching L2 learning. The final section of this literature review will turn, therefore, toward the topic of language learner strategies, and specifically the methods available to the researcher for establishing the nature of these strategies and for evaluating their effectiveness.

2.4 Language Learner Strategies

Important work on learner strategies in language learning has been conducted for a number of years now.[8] Recently, there have been calls for more research into the role of explicit awareness of learner strategies in language learning. Chamot and O'Malley (1994), for example, discuss the importance of metacognitive and social/affective learner strategies, and call for more exploration into the role of such strategies and of explicit awareness in general. As they and others ask, does being aware of how a language is being learned have any impact on the learning process?

Borg (1994) outlines his "Language Awareness as Methodology" approach as a means by which teachers can promote awareness of language and of language learning as a tool for improved performance in language courses. Although criticized by Rastall (1996) as lacking a theoretical foundation (which Borg [1996] refuted), Borg's approach indicates the role that both teachers and learners can play in promoting "explicit understanding of language as well

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[8]See, in particular, the collections by Chaudron (1988) and Wenden and Rubin (1987), and earlier articles by Wenden (1986a; 196b).

as an awareness of their own learning by involving them in discovery-oriented tasks which are both affectively and cognitively motivating" (62). Of his five main features, the final three are most relevant to this section:

(3)   Learning is most effective as a process of learner-centred exploration and discovery. . . .

(4)   Effective awareness-raising depends on engaging learners both affectively and cognitively. . . . (e.g. referring to their personal beliefs, attitudes and feelings) as a means of making them cognitively more receptive. This position acknowledges the dependence in learning of the cognitive on the affective domain . . . .

(5)   LA as methodology develops in learners the knowledge about language as well as skills for continued autonomous learning. . . . [It] incorporates opportunities for learners to think about, discuss and evaluate their own learning with a view to increasing their understanding of how the learning process can be made more effective. (62)

What Borg proposes suggests, first, that teachers should use explicit awareness-raising strategies, and second, that these strategies should encourage learners to become autonomous, self-directed language learners (cf. van Lier 1996) who are consciously aware of how they learn.

Turning first to the role of the teacher in fostering learner strategies, it is clear from this review that the kind of formal instruction or "meta talk" (Færch 1985) that teachers use is valuable in the overall language learning process. Even Schachter (1986), who defines metalinguistic input quite narrowly as teacher feedback to learners, sees the long-term usefulness of such teacher intervention. Mitchell (1994) sees a need for more research into the kind of "talk about grammar" that exists in terms of its benefit for learners' metalinguistic strategies. And, as mentioned above, both Harbord (1992) and Kennedy (1996) discuss the role of teachers' L1 grammatical explanations in promoting conscious attention and teacher-

student communication and rapport. Anderson and Vandergrift (1996) go further: "Given

that the use of metacognitive strategies, particularly comprehension monitoring, appears to be

crucial for successful learners, teaching strategies should foster the growth of metacognition

among students" (17). There appears to be a call for a great deal of teacher-student

cooperation in the language learning process. Indeed, Bygate (1994) cites recent research in

cognitive psychology which claims that qualitative changes in the way knowledge is stored is

essential if learning is to take place; for Bygate, teachers and students interact to bring about

learning through a conscious awareness of this need for qualitative change.

What does this mean for the learner? After all, researchers such as Schmidt (1990)

and Batstone (1994) have announced a noticeable shift in pedagogical focus toward learner-

centredness, and many others stress the need for the learner to inform the teacher, through

metacognitive and metalinguistic activities, what works in the classroom. A number of

methods of assessing learner strategies can be found in the empirical research on language

learning, and it is clear that there is no single method that works best. Oxford (1996)

compares the effectiveness of questionnaires with other methods, and compiles a table

containing as many advantages as disadvantages for most methods. Techniques for assessing

learner strategies range from written reports such as questionnaires and journals or diaries

(Bailey 1983), to verbal reports and retrospective accounts (Wenden 1986; Lennon 1989;

Cohen 1996), to discourse analysis conducted on think-aloud protocols (Black 1995) using

videotaping (Doukanari 1995).

Authentic classroom talk, despite the methodological problems associated with its

collection, appears to be most helpful in establishing exactly how learners approach language

learning and how they discuss language in a classroom setting. Seliger (1983) relates comfort, interest, and motivation to higher levels of classroom talk. Distinguishing between "high input generators" and "low input generators," Seliger claims that the former are more likely to make rapid progress because of the extent to which they test hypotheses. Ely (1986) makes similar connections between learner comfort, risk-taking, and motivation. In fact, affective factors in language learning appear to be largely responsible for the "fun" which can make otherwise tedious focus-on-form memorable and enjoyable (cf. Krüger and Boyne 1996). The needs of the learner are thus afforded a status equal with that of the needs of the teacher, which in itself can help to promote learning.

Furthermore, and responding to the calls for an integration of formal instruction into communicative classrooms, much work has been done on analysing French immersion language talk to discover the extent to which learners' negotiation of form and meaning affects learning. Swain and Lapkin (1995), for example, explain that students' verbalizing their linguistic knowledge during classroom group interaction helps them to see where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and enables greater articulation of their linguistic resources and deficiencies. Kowal (1997) and Lyster (1994) cite considerable improvement in students' performance after being involved in collaborative tasks surrounding linguistic forms. And Storch (1997) notes that students' negotiation of meaning through language talk indicates important areas where work is still needed to improve their understanding. What these studies have in common is the attention that is paid to what the learner says as she learns a language, i.e., the range of reflective, discursive, and analytical talk which characterize what Swain and Lapkin (1995) call a "language related episode" (LRE). In addition to enabling the teacher-

researcher to adjust her methods to better suit the particular class, metalinguistic behaviour gives learners themselves a chance to express their views about language learning, and in doing so they can make decisions about how they are engaged in learning.

As this literature review ends, it is worth summarizing the ways in which the major issues described here converge on the learner. The question of formal instruction is learner-centred since the debate would not exist without the effect of instruction on the learner being of primary importance. Similarly, the issue of UG access is learner-centred, since UG access occurs in the minds of learners, and nowhere else. Language awareness is firmly learner-centred, promoting as it does such concepts as the raising of learner consciousness, learners' processing of input, and the methodological options available to the teacher in order to enhance learners' linguistic awareness. It seems only fitting, therefore, that a study of metalinguistic behaviour should consider the learner as its central focus. As the expression of all the feelings, reflections, experiences, and beliefs that learners hold about language and language learning, metalanguage clearly holds the key to a range of important theoretical, pedagogical, and methodological questions. The present study draws on the lessons learned and the advances made in the literature, responds to the questions it answers, and, it is hoped, attempts to reinforce the strong links which exist between the intersecting theoretical and practical approaches which this chapter has described.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The present study was designed in order to investigate the nature of metalinguistic behaviour in a class of second-language learners at the university level. The initial motivation for the study was a desire to determine the way learners talk about language while learning: do they use traditional grammatical terminology or do they develop a metalanguage of their own? The rationale for such a research question stems from the various debates on form-focused instruction outlined in Chapter Two. Beyond those debates, however, it became clear as the research design was under way that notions of language awareness and learner strategies were equally, if not more, important than the initial basis for the study. As a result, the research question was broadened to reflect the expanded definition of metalanguage that I have outlined above. The ultimate focus of the research question was, therefore, extent to which metalinguistic behaviour is influenced by — and in turn influences — language learners' language awareness.

The language class chosen was an introductory Latin course at the university level. While obviously not a "modern" language and thus not a typical language for applied linguistic research, Latin was well suited to the purposes of the study. Despite its traditions as a highly formal language, with teaching techniques appropriate to that label, Latin can be made enjoyable through a careful selection of teaching materials and methods. In other words, teaching Latin need not mean a return to grammar-translation teaching; indeed, there is no reason why Latin (or Greek) cannot be taught in ways similar to modern languages. While there is little practical application, and certainly no place for "conversation" in the typical

sense of the word, students can still practise orally and discuss form and meaning in the classroom. The "non-spoken" nature of Latin was not problematic, since metalinguistic behaviour can manifest itself in an introductory-level course in any language.

3.1 Participants

The participants were all enrolled in a first-year, introductory-level Latin language course at an Ontario university. The total number of registered students began at 24, and dropped to 16 by mid-year,[9] when the data collection process ended. All students completed a participant consent form (Appendix A), and all research was approved through an ethical review protocol administered by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Students were made fully aware of the study during the first week of the course, and were given the option to withdraw without their course performance being affected.

Personal data were not collected as an integral part of the study. However, it is perhaps interesting to remark that all but six of the initial number were female; the lowest age of participants was 17, while the oldest participants were in their early thirties. Since most students were in first or second year, the typical age of participants was 20-21. All subjects spoke English with native or near-native fluency, although English was not the first language of all participants: it was ascertained through class conversation (and through their journal and questionnaire entries) that many were bilingual French/English, while the other mother tongues represented were Twi, Cree, and Ukrainian. Only the Twi speaker had learned

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[9]This drop was due to typical attrition in first-year courses. Because they are often completely new subjects for students, classical language courses suffer from quite high attrition rates.

English as a second language in a school context. Some participants had studied Latin at high school, but not recently. All participants were therefore eligible to take an "introductory" course rather than an "intermediate" one. Participants did not reveal why they had chosen to take the course, although it became clear that some participants were majoring, or intending to major, in classics; others were taking Latin as support for other language or linguistics courses; and others were taking Latin as an elective, often to support courses in mathematics and science.

3.2 Research Context

The Latin class met for four hours weekly from September 1997 to April 1998, although the research period was limited to first term (until December). Classes were devoted to reading and translating passages from the course text, *Ecce Romani* (Longman 1995), as well as to discussing grammatical points and practising these points through oral exercises, often in small groups. Students submitted weekly written assignments taken from the text, and wrote bi-weekly in-class tests. An examination was held in mid-December.

It should be noted at this stage that I was both researcher and course instructor, which has the potential to be problematic. I made every attempt, during the research design, implementation, and analysis, to be as objective as possible. I also stressed to the students that my primary function in the classroom was as teacher. During the data analysis stage, I relied solely on the data that I had gathered (which I reproduce in Appendix B, as well as throughout the text) for my information. Obviously, no amount of distancing can prevent "researcher memory"; however, whenever my evidence is purely anecdotal and not based on

data, I state this clearly and take care not to use it as a basis for conclusions. Throughout the study, participants were very interested in my research, and seemed at ease with my dual role at all times. There was initial unease with the audiotaping, but this dissipated quickly. Some students also commented that they found the journals tedious or difficult, but this did not affect the quantity (or quality) of the journal submissions. In short, while complete objectivity cannot be guaranteed, every effort has been made to ensure that the roles of teacher and researcher did not overlap in a negative way. More positively, obviously, the dual position affords the teacher/researcher a unique perspective as participant observer, especially when part of the material analysed is teacher metalinguistic behaviour. In fact, since the audiotaped data were the only recorded data involving the teacher, comments on teacher metalanguage are restricted to that data.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

To provide a range of data gathered from diverse sources (i.e, from classroom interaction, personal reflection, homework, etc.) data for this study were collected using four methods:

3.3.1 Audiotaped classes[10]

At six sessions during the data collection period, a 50-minute class was audiotaped, with students' permission. While it was originally intended that the class be audiotaped at weekly

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[10]Originally, the research design called for videotaping. Because of the physical location of the classes, and because of a desire to make the research component of the class as unobtrusive as possible, audiotaping was chosen instead. Despite the obvious loss of a visual record of class interaction, with its attendant benefits, audiotaping provided equally valid data.

intervals, initial analysis of transcripts showed that this was too frequent; much of the same data was being collected. Consequently, classes were taped on September 25 (week 3), October 2 (week 4), October 9 (week 5), October 16 (week 6), November 13 (week 9), and December 4 (week 12; the final day of first term). No audiotaping was done prior to week 3 in order to allow participants to become familiar with each other and with the instructor.

Audiotapes were transcribed soon after being recorded, and the relevant sections of these transcripts are contained in Appendix B. What has been omitted are sections of the transcript where students are simply reading in Latin and translating; included instead are those sections of the transcript which involve students and the instructor discussing issues of language. Extracts from the transcript are reproduced at appropriate points in Chapter Four.

3.3.2 Metalinguistic data from tests and assignments

A regular part of assignments, tests, and exams (as well as of oral work in class) involved providing descriptions or explanations of linguistic structures found in Latin. On two occasions, this information was collected and analysed for evidence of metalinguistic behaviour. First, as part of a September 30 test, students were asked to describe two Latin phrases: 'servus perterritus' ('the terrified slave') and 'ancillas molestas' ('the annoying slave-women'). Second, for an October 9 assignment, students were asked to indicate the clues which led them to decide whether a phrase was nominative plural or genitive singular, since these forms are identical in certain noun categories. Appendix C contains both assignments. For both data collection instruments, fourteen students responded with lengthy descriptions; for this reason, not all data are reproduced in the appendix. Instead, trends and patterns are reported in Chapter Four.

3.3.3 Journals

As part of the course requirements, students were asked to complete a journal describing their experiences in the course. The instructions to students in the course syllabus read as follows: "This is an opportunity for you to reflect on your experiences learning Latin this year. In the journal, please write your reactions to what happens in class, how you are progressing with the language, and anything else you think is relevant. The journal is submitted at the end of each quarter . . . ." Journal entries were worth 5% of the final grade in the course. Because the entries themselves were numerous (at least ten per student) and often lengthy (approximately one page each), journal entries are not reproduced in their entirety in an appendix; instead, sections used for illustrative purposes are provided beside the respective description and analysis in Chapter Four.

3.3.4 Questionnaires

At the beginning and end of the data collection period, participants completed the same general questionnaire on language learning and grammar. This was designed to give students the chance to speak about their experiences with second-language learning and their reactions to grammar outside of the course context, and to assess whether there had been any change in those reactions at the end of the first term. The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix D.

3.4 Data Analysis

While the principal goal of the data analysis for all four instruments was to collect evidence of metalinguistic behaviour, the nature of the data analysis was different for each.

3.4.1 Audiotaped classes

As with most research where transcription of data is involved, the first thing to be mentioned is that collecting authentic classroom data leads to a large amount of data, much of which is relevant but a lot of which is of little value to the study. The first task of the researcher is, therefore, to establish what data are worthy of analysis. In addition to the miscellaneous chatter which occurs in any "social" setting, I identified two distinct types of language-based interaction in the transcripts: straightforward Latin reading and translating, and metalinguistic discussion of the Latin texts and their English translations. Since I was not concerned with the former for the purposes of this study, I focused on the "language related episodes" (LREs; see Swain and Lapkin 1995) contained in the metalinguistic discussions. A close analysis of these LREs led to a further subdivision into various categories of "teacher talk" and "student talk," such as open and closed questions, "scaffolding hints," and a range of student responses.

3.4.2 Metalinguistic data from tests and assignments

The two sets of data (the test on September 30 and the assignment on October 9) were analysed in order to ascertain the type of metalanguage used by students. During the test on September 30, students were asked to grammatically describe two Latin phrases. 'Servus perterritus' was selected since it was a noun/adjective combination in the nominative (subject) case; both words are masculine singular, of the second noun declension. 'Ancillas molestas,' another noun/adjective pair, was chosen for contrast; this phrase is in the accusative (object) case, with both words being feminine plural, of the first noun declension. A small amount of

quantitative analysis was conducted on the concept identification section, merely to ascertain the frequency of certain terms. For both phrases, data from fourteen students were gathered, and the frequency for certain anticipated categories (e.g., noun, declension, number, gender) was compiled. A closer analysis was made of students' descriptions of the concepts of "object" and "agreement."

For the case identification assignment on October 9, students had to discuss the clues which led them to choose "nominative singular" over "genitive plural" for certain phrases. Data were analysed and responses categorized according to the specific type of metalanguage; responses ranged from those based heavily on textbook metalanguage to more elaborate instances of "reflective" and "discursive" metalanguage.

3.4.3 Journals and Questionnaires

Data gathered in journals and questionnaires were analysed thematically according to the topic presented by the student. For both data collection instruments, the broader definition of metalanguage is crucial, since a strict definition would permit as valid data only those entries and responses which dealt with the language itself. Broader categories of response, including the experiential and the affective, were used as the analytical framework for these sections of the research. Specifically for the journals, the categories of response ranged from comments unrelated to the course, to highly specific comments on grammar and language learning. For the questionnaires, each question was analysed in turn, with no particular framework in mind.

I turn now, in Chapter Four, to a discussion of the findings of the data analysis.

Chapter Four

Findings and Discussion

In this chapter I present the findings of the research study and discuss the patterns which

emerge from the data. For ease of analysis, and in line with the structure of Chapter Three, I

report on each of the data collection instruments in turn, and conclude with a synthesis of the

findings.

4.1 Audiotaped classes

The first distinction to be made was between "teacher talk" and "student talk." I deal with

these, and with their various sub-categories, in turn below.

4.1.1 Teacher Talk

The various types of teacher talk can be classified as "intervention strategies." They represent

attempts on the teacher's part to promote students' learning. The strategies can be

categorized as follows: open-ended questions, closed questions, indirect "scaffolding" hints,

correction strategies, and grammatical explanations.

4.1.1.1 Open-ended questions

These questions typically open LREs, and are the most common method of generating

metalinguistic responses from students. They are open-ended in that they do not require a

particular type of response; instead, they allow students to frame their response in the way

which they find most comfortable. Examples include the following:

"can anyone tell me anything about that sentence?"
"Is there anything you can tell me about the word 'occupata'?"
"any ideas what that might be?"
"what is the difference between...?"
"can you say anything about ... and ...?"
"what do you suggest?"
"have you noticed anything new so far?"
"who can summarize what we did yesterday?"
"tell me something about 'domini boni'"
"grammatically, what's going on in this sentence?"
"so, cases, tenses, etc.?"

The prevalence of words such as "anything" indicates the open-endedness of the questions; students truly have the freedom to respond independently, without the teacher subjectivity which a specific question can contain. Of course, it is clear that the teacher is expecting a certain *kind* of response, but he is also affording the students a process of independent discovery in arriving at the response, allowing them to focus on case, tense, number, gender, etc. While the particular objective of the lesson might hint at what the teacher expects, a question as general as "tell me something about 'domini boni'" is designed to elicit a range of form-focused responses such as "plural," "masculine," or "nominative," or more advanced metalinguistic descriptions such as "they agree."

4.1.1.2 Closed questions

These questions, on the other hand, have a specific focus, usually a particular word or a point of grammar. They tend to occur in the middle of a LRE, and only very occasionally in the middle. This suggests that the typical strategy is to open LREs with open-ended questions designed to elicit general metalinguistic comments, and then, if necessary, to continue with a more closed, focused question that isolates a specific structure or concept. They occur less

frequently in the data, which suggests a preference on the part of the teacher for open-ended

questioning. Examples follow:

> "what case is 'cubiculum'?"
> "what would 'the good hand' be?"
> "'togam' is obviously what gender?"

> "why is 'periculosum' in the neuter?"
> "why 'cum canibus'?"
> "why do the two words look the same?"

While most of these questions have a single response in mind (e.g., "feminine" is the only

acceptable answer to the third question), some such as the questions in the second group

would lead to a longer, more elaborate metalinguistic discussion, much like the open-ended

question. Essentially, a "why" question would generate this, while a "what" question is much

more limited in scope. In fact, as the analysis of student responses indicates (see section 4.1.2

below), "what" questions require students' attention to explicit, learned knowledge, while

"why" questions permit greater reflection and, possibly, the rendering explicit of students'

implicit knowledge.

4.1.1.3 Indirect "scaffolding" hints

"Scaffolding"[11] refers to an interaction protocol in which teachers assist students in arriving at

a complete response by providing a framework of prompts upon which they can build their

answer. In the data collected here, such scaffolding provided students with hints so that they

could arrive at the answer which the teacher deemed most useful and appropriate. The

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[11]Færch (1985) traces the origin of the term "scaffolding" back to Slobin (although Bruner is often credited with coining the concept). It should be stressed that although "scaffolding" has a useful explanatory function in this study, I interpret the term rather narrowly here.

teacher can be seen to "push" the students toward a greater understanding of the concepts; in addition, of course, he could be seen to be imposing a certain response on students. Whatever the motivation, however, scaffolding can be seen as empowering, facilitative, and interactive. Færch, however, states that it has limited usefulness in foreign language learning. Although serving a valuable communicative function, he notes, scaffolding can often be highly demanding on students. Færch's point is valid, but he refers most specifically to scaffolding in the L2, whereas the scaffolding in the present study is primarily in the L1. This distinction is important, since metalinguistic talk in the L1 is much easier for beginning learners; indeed, L2 metalinguistic talk of any sort in elementary Latin courses is quite unimaginable. So, despite Færch's reservations, scaffolding can be viewed as a mechanism enabling students to explore their understanding of the concepts.

The characteristics of scaffolding in the data are quite clear: it occurs in mid-LRE, and usually involves an incomplete utterance which the student subsequently completes in some way. Examples of scaffolding hints include the following:

"so that means...?"
"there's also a word in there for 'you'..."
"she would [be the direct object], so...?"
"no, think about it: Marce...Cur, Marce...[pointing]"
"right, how did you get to that?"
"OK, why?"
"OK, so what case is this taking here?"
"meaning...?"
"and the case would be...?"
"'arborem' would be toward the *tree* [as opposed to *trees*]..."
"it would be 'in...'?"
"we're going into the trees so it's just..."
"that would be..."
"yes, whereas ablative would be more..."
"now phrase it in terms of direction and location"

"and the other ones would all be...?"

"yes why do the two words look the same?"

Frequently, the teacher begins with a positive response to the previous statement, such as

"yes" or "OK," and then adds a further prompt to generate more reflection or discussion.

Scaffolding seems to combine the focus of closed questions with the freedom of choice

inherent in open-ended questions, and as such creates discussions which promote students'

engagement with their own (and with the teacher's) metalinguistic knowledge. In the study,

scaffolding also takes on predictable patterns, and students appear to feel a certain level of

comfort with them as the exchanges become more rapid. An obvious drawback of this rapid

interaction, of course, is the fact that the more capable students (or the more vocal, which are

often the same students; cf. Seliger's [1983] notion of "high input generators") tend to

participate more. The extent to which quieter students can learn by observation rather than

from experience cannot be measured, although I would suggest that metalinguistic practice

and interaction are more valuable than merely watching and listening, despite the noticing that

the latter involves.

4.1.1.4 Correction strategies

While scaffolding hints build upon the correct input provided by students and push them

toward fuller understanding, teacher's correction strategies focus on redirecting students after

they have answered incorrectly. In keeping with the learner-centredness of open-ended

questions and scaffolding hints, correction strategies emphasize the positive elements of the

students' responses, and rarely take the form of a simple "no." Still, this negative response is

found occasionally, and it is worth speculating about the rationale for this. First, it could be driven by the particular context of the LRE. For instance, a "no" could be given when a number of students seem eager to respond, as opposed to a one-on-one exchange where one specific student is being asked (or has volunteered) to deal with the problem. Second, it could be dictated by the tone of the discussion. Good classroom rapport could permit the teacher to feign anger and disappointment by jocularly responding with a "No!" on occasion, with the understanding that it is not meant to close discussion. Third, and most likely, a teacher responding "no" could simply indicate that the answer is obviously wrong, most likely when there is a choice of only two answers, and the wrong one has been given. The teacher cannot be expected to respond positively to everything; even so, the small number of simple "no" responses in the data would suggest that the teacher's tendency to elaborate and encourage is much greater than his tendency to be negative.

So what correction strategies *are* used? Some encourage students to reflect further:

"OK, think about it..."
"no, think about it..."
"no, before you go any further."

Others suggest that an error is understandable, and prompt students to consider the alternatives:

"not quite a direct object. what *is* the direct object?"
"but if it looks like a direct object why is it not one?"
"'cubiculo' could be dative, but it could also be...?"
"they look like plural, but are they?"
"does that agree?"
"no, we're still in the accusative."

Still others repeat the entire response or the incorrect element to draw attention to the

problem:

"masculine?"
"'areae'?"

In short, teacher's error correction strategies encourage as much metalinguistic input as do his

questions and prompts. They leave the responsibility for finding the correct answer firmly

with the student, and enable her to explore and extend her metalinguistic knowledge.

4.1.1.5 Grammatical explanations

The final type of metalinguistic intervention strategy that the teacher employs is embarking on

an explanation of a grammatical point. Such explanations are typically longer than the short,

one-line or one-word exchanges which characterize much of the interaction. They frequently

close LREs, synthesizing the information exchange which has just taken place. They serve the

purpose of consolidating grammatical information by blending the contextualized

metalanguage of the LRE with the more standard metalanguage of the textbook, for example.

The following LRE illustrates the way in which a scaffolding protocol initiated by a closed

question culminates in a longer grammatical explanation[12]:

    T -   Now this is interesting: 'togam virilem.' 'Togam' is obviously what gender?
    S -   Feminine.
    T -   Yes because of the -am ending. What about 'virilem'?
    [laughter]
    T -   Yes it means something pretty masculine. How do you know?

---

[12]In the exchange which follows, as in all transcripts of dialogue, "T" refers to the teacher, and "S" to the student who responds. Only when it is important to distinguish between students is the notation "S1...S2" used.

S -   We don't know - from that word on its own, but from 'togam' we know it's feminine.

T -   Yes, the word 'virilem' is feminine. So the word 'virilem,' or 'manly,' is a feminine word here.

S -   [laugh] it's kind of ironic.

T -   This brings up a nice point between biological gender and grammatical gender. This is grammatical gender we're doing here. 'Manly' is only feminine here because 'toga' is feminine, it's grammatically feminine, not biologically. But what's even more interesting is that we've never yet seen adjectives with that ending, we've seen nouns with that ending but not adjectives.... Remember with the word 'urbem' we couldn't tell its gender...here it works the other way around.

And in the following example, two open-ended questions begin a LRE which ends with two

longer grammatical explanations separated by a student clarification question:

T -   Who can summarize what we did yesterday?

S -   Ablative and genitive forms.

T -   Yes, and specifically with the ablative, what did we discover you could do with the ablative case?

S -   You could use 'cum' with something...

T -   Yes, there's an obvious distinction to make. You can say 'cum baculo,' but that means you were going accompanied with the stick, just as in the previous chapter the slaves were accompanied by the dogs 'cum canibus,' not just 'canibus' because that would mean they were using the dogs as an instrument.

S -   So if you hit someone with a stick, it's just 'baculo'...?

T -   Yes, it makes it easy because you don't have to worry about prepositions, and the case is always the same with instruments, the ablative.

Teacher intervention, therefore, appears to play an important role in encouraging learners to

engage in further metalinguistic exploration. Through questioning, hinting, and explaining,

the teacher facilitates metalinguistic interaction and knowledge sharing on the part of the

students (see Kennedy 1996; Lyster 1994). The next section deals with the nature of that

student talk.

4.1.2 Student Talk

Because the taped sessions were predominantly teacher-student interactions, the majority of

LREs were initiated by teachers. This means that most of the student talk in the data

collected for this study was in the form of responses to the various categories of teacher talk

described above. Although they show little evidence of student-initiated metalanguage, the

data do illustrate the extent to which teacher talk can enhance students' metalinguistic

behaviour. To compensate for the lack of student-initiated talk, a small amount of student-

student interaction was recorded; even though there are few examples, certain important

trends can be observed.

4.1.2.1 Responses to open-ended questions

Students tend to respond to open-ended questions through the standard metalanguage of the

textbook. They appear to view such questions as requests for the particular grammatical

information common to these tasks. Open-ended questions such as "So can anyone tell me

anything about that sentence?" are cues for responses dealing with gender, number, case,

agreement, etc. This demonstrates a trend toward a predictable pattern which, while useful

for enabling students to identify key grammatical concepts, is rather unproductive in other

ways. Students are often hesitant to respond, and when they do respond, their suggestions are

given with the rising intonation typical of interrogative statements:

```
T -    So can anyone tell me anything about that sentence?  Anything at all?
S -    They're plural?
T -    They look like plural, but are they...?
S -    Is it "of"?
T -    Yes, that's right, "of."  And what do we call that case?
[pause]
S -    Genitive case.
```

As students become more familiar with the metalanguage, the questions change back to

statements, but the responses remain quite pointed and concise. This indicates increasing

comfort but still demonstrates a tendency to provide what students perceive to be the

teacher's expectations. While it is encouraging to see this fluid interaction develop, open-

ended questions tend to be limiting to the students rather than liberating:

> T - So tell me something about 'domini boni.'
> S - It's in the genitive.
>
> . . .
>
> T - Tell us something about 'baculo.'
> S - Ablative.
>
> . . .
>
> T - Grammatically, what's going on in this sentence?
> S - 'e fossa' is an ablative.
>
> . . .
>
> T - Grammatically, what's going on in this sentence?
> [pause]
> T - Do we have a direct object?
> S - 'Cisium.'

What is encouraging about these extracts is the accurate responses; however, compared with

other teacher strategies, it is clear that open-ended questions produce metalinguistic behaviour

that is more formal and less exploratory and reflective.

4.1.2.2 Responses to closed questions

While in many cases closed questions yield responses very similar to those prompted by open-

ended questions (which would be expected because of the focused nature of the enquiry),

closed questions also give students the opportunity to explore more complex concepts in their

own way. In addition, as discussed in section 4.1.1.2 above, direct "what" questions tend to

elicit specific answers using explicit knowledge, while direct "why" questions allow students

more flexibility. The following closed questions have specific target answers:

> T - What case is 'Syre' in?
> S - Vocative.
>
> . . .
> T - What conjugation would 'appropinquabant' be?
> S - First.

Compare these responses to the "why" questions which follow:

> (a) T - Why 'cum canibus'?
> S - Because it's the dogs and it's an ablative plural.
> T - Why not just 'canibus'?
> S1 - Because then he would be using the dogs somehow...using the dogs as a means, instead of with...
> S2 - ...using the dogs as an instrument.
>
> . . .
> (b) T - Tell us something about 'baculo.'
> S - Ablative.
> T - Yes, why not 'cum baculo'?
> S - If it was 'cum baculo' it would be him and the stick both beating the guy.

In (a), the students respond to the teacher's second question with a highly reflective,

exploratory attempt to describe 'canibus' as an ablative of means or instrument. They

eventually achieve their goal, but only after a couple of redirections. The grammatical

concept in question is more complex than a question about declension or gender, so it is to be

expected that students would need more time to reflect on their knowledge. The first extract

also shows student collaboration, an indication of the benefit gained by students' verbalizing

their initial reactions to a grammatical problem. Extract (b) shows an interesting contrast

between the direct response "Ablative" and the less technical "it would be him and the stick

both beating the guy." Students are clearly able to work in a standard metalanguage as well

as in a "coping" metalanguage that is possibly more meaningful to them. The student

understands the concept, but expresses it in an unorthodox (yet correct) fashion.

4.1.2.3 Responses to "scaffolding" hints

A similar what/why distinction can be observed in scaffolding protocols. When the target

response is clear, e.g., information about case, gender, etc., the response is short and the

resulting interaction quite fluid and rapid. The following scaffolding protocol begins with an

open-ended question and continues through a series of prompts for more information:

T -	Tell us about the various words in that sentence. Case or gender.... 'Servus'?
S -	Masculine nominative
T -	'Iubet'?
S -	Third person singular.
T -	'Cistas'?
S -	Masculine
T -	Masculine?
S1 -	It's feminine.
S2 -	Plural
T -	Feminine plural. Case?
S -	Accusative
T -	OK, and 'cubiculis'?
S -	Plural
T -	Plural... and the gender here is...
S -	We don't know.
T -	We can't tell from the word.
. . .	
T -	'Viam' is... feminine singular [to inaudible responses] And the case?
S -	Accusative.
T -	'Portare' is what kind of word?
S -	Infinitive
T -	Yes, and what conjugation would that be?
S -	First
T -	First, yes! next sentence...

Student responses in the above extract are very short, but once the scaffolding starts to deal

more with "why"-type issues, the student responses become much more involved. Such

interactions appear to be most effective in enabling students to arrive at the most complete

understanding of the issue through a combination of teacher intervention and their own

reflection and investigation. For example,

S - For ten years the Trojans held off the Greeks.
T - Right - how did you get to that?
S - Well, 'decem annos' is for ten years, 'Troiani' is the subject, and 'Graecos' is the direct object.

. . .

S - [from 'per dolum'] 'dolum' is the direct object.
T - Not quite a direct object - what is the direct object?
S - 'Urbem.'
T - Right, 'urbem.'
S - So 'per dolum' is a preposition.
T - Yes 'dolum' takes a preposition and the case it takes is the same as the direct object...

While still based in standard metalanguage, the students' responses are phrased in more

complete sentences instead of one-word exchanges. This may indicate a different pace for

different types of scaffolding protocol, but it could also indicate a tendency to use

metalanguage more comfortably when given the chance to reflect rather than simply to

respond. Students also employ "coping" metalanguage to deal with more complex concepts:

T - So what is the central difference between the use of accusative and the use of ablative with the prepositions we've seen so far?
S - They're actually affecting the state of the object.
T - That would be...
S - Accusative
T - Yes, whereas ablative would be more...
S - Has nothing to do with it.
T - Yes, that's useful, now phrase it in terms of direction and location.
S - You're already there with the ablative
T - You're already there with the ablative...

S -   ...and you're going towards with the accusative.

T -   Yes, it's the difference between motion towards and position in.

The responses "has nothing to do with it" and "you're already there with the ablative" are students' attempts at answering the teacher's initial question. This protocol illustrates the way in which standard metalinguistic behaviour and students' own terminology combine to produce the target response. The response is then synthesized by the teacher and expressed in a succinct, "textbook" fashion to reinforce the learning. Students thus have at least two ways of accessing the grammatical information: through the teacher-generated standard metalanguage, and through the metalanguage which they have negotiated and developed for themselves. Scaffolding, therefore, can be seen to have important metalinguistic advantages.

4.1.2.4 Student-generated questions

This notion of multiple access to metalinguistic knowledge is further reinforced by the types of questions which students ask of each other. In one classroom task, students were asked to read and translate a sentence, and then ask another student a question about that sentence. The type of question was not explicitly stated, but it was understood that students would model the questions on the typical questions used by the teacher in similar situations.

The questions fall clearly into two categories: highly metalinguistic or form-focused questions, and surface-level questions centred on meaning. Both types are valid, and they reflect varying degrees of comfort with the concepts being analysed. While it might be interesting to speculate on the linguistic competence of the students who asked form-focused questions, I prefer to suggest that the two categories reflect the different methods which

students have of storing and accessing knowledge about language. In addition, they indicate

the different emphasis which certain students place on meaning over form, and vice versa.

Form-focused questions centre around identification of parts of speech, and students tend to

be much more demanding of their peers than the instructor is:

> "how about if you can change the conjugated verbs into the present tense?"
> "how about, give, uh, the three principal parts to the two verbs."
> "OK, identify any adjectives and say what noun they modify, and their declensions."
> "what declension is the 'murem mortuum'?"

Meaning-focused questions tend, on the other hand, to deal with changing certain words

within the sentence, thus changing the translation. In some ways, this type of question is more

demanding, since it requires students to *generate* the appropriate form rather than identify it.

It also illustrates that the ability to express grammatical knowledge is less important to some

students than the ability to use it in authentic ways: clearly a theoretical/practical distinction.

> "can someone change that into...?"
> "change the sentence to say..."
> "change it from 'it's not necessary' to 'I have to.'"

These students could be seen to be avoiding metalanguage themselves, since they do not ask

about declensions, cases, etc., explicitly. Yet they demand that the knowledge of how to

transform the sentences be implicit: what is important is the product, not the process, while

the more technically metalinguistic questions suggest a greater emphasis on process.

In any case, the data from students' questioning of their peers illustrate a close

connection between learners' comfort level with metalanguage and their own learning

strategies and intervention techniques. Students' understanding of grammatical concepts

reflects how they prefer to be asked questions, how they respond, and how they question one

another. Their comfort level with the standard metalanguage might be an indicator of how well they will perform in a course (although the data are insufficient to show this), but they are unlikely to be an indicator of the extent to which concepts have been learned: some students simply access metalinguistic information in idiosyncratic ways. The teacher must recognize this in order to enable all students to become comfortable with the material, and while this does not mean sacrificing the standard metalanguage, it does mean innovating with metalinguistic strategies and interventions so that students' points of access to metalinguistic knowledge are as numerous as possible.

4.2 Metalinguistic data from tests and assignments

4.2.1 Grammatical Description Test

The results of the analysis demonstrate that the students are able to identify quite accurately the basic concepts which the two phrases contain; more important, however, the analysis supports the findings of the audiotaped classroom sessions which indicate a tendency to combine standard and individualized, "coping" metalanguages.

For 'servus perterritus,' the results appear in Table 1. Comments on misidentification are included in the third column. It is clear that students identify number and gender with greatest ease; almost all responses included something about the nouns being singular or masculine. The fact that the two words in each phrase were noun and adjective was less important (perhaps even obvious). Declension, which is frequently associated with gender at this stage of the language, was correctly identified by fewer than half of the students.

Meanwhile, the responses for case were divided almost evenly between "subject" and

"nominative." The (perhaps even obvious). Declension, which is frequently associated with

gender at this stage of the language, was correctly identified by fewer than half of the

Table 1: Concepts identified for 'servus perterritus' *n*=14		
Concept	Frequency	Comments
SINGULAR	11	(PLURAL=1)
MASCULINE	10	
ADJECTIVE	7	
SUBJECT	6	(OBJECT=1)
NOUN	6	
2ND DECLENSION	6	(3RD=1) (2ND CONJUGATION=1)
NOMINATIVE	5	(ACCUSATIVE=1)

students. Meanwhile, the responses for case were divided almost evenly between "subject"

and "nominative." The latter is a more technical term than the former, which indicates that

students refer to the concept of subject in different ways, perhaps depending on linguistic

background or comfort level.

In fact, many students went on to say more about the subject:

"it acts as the subject"
"there is no direct object" [in the sentence]
"subject of the verb 'respondet'"
"acts as a subject"
"nominative - the 'frightened slave' is the subject"
"this is the subject because he is the one responding"

These elaborations indicate a solid understanding of the concept: students can see the phrase as a unit (the two words were treated as a singular entity, i.e., "it acts," "this is," etc.); the notion of the words "acting" grammatically is well expressed; the subject/object distinction seems clear; and the final comment indicates an attempt to phrase the concept in more familiar language.

For 'ancillas molestas,' the results were similar, as Table 2 indicates.

Table 2: Concepts identified for 'ancillas molestas' n=14		
Concept	Frequency	Comments
PLURAL	11	(SINGULAR=1)
FEMININE	11	
DIRECT OBJECT	9	
ACCUSATIVE	7	(NOMINATIVE=1)
1ST DECLENSION	7	
NOUN	4	
ADJECTIVE	4	

Again, number and gender were most frequently identified, and noun and adjective least frequently discussed. With this phrase, however, more students (16, compared to 11 for 'servus perterritus') identified either "direct object" or "accusative," and sometimes both. Students described the phrase simply as "direct object," or more technically "direct object of the verb 'spectat.'" Some even used the standard abbreviation "d.o.," which suggests high comfort level with the concept. Other interesting responses included the following:

"accusative - acts as direct object"
"accusative . . . the 'annoying slave-women' are direct objects"

"'ancillas' - direct object; 'molestas' - adjective of the direct object"
"this is a direct object . . . it is a D.O. because they are no longer being watched."

These responses illustrate similar tendencies to those exhibited in the first phrase: students use

a combination of standard metalanguage and a more familiar metalanguage in order to convey

their intended meaning. Clearly, at least with basic terminology, an approach which combines

a traditional grammatical foundation with more contextualization would reinforce the kind of

metalinguistic behaviour which the students find comfortable. This can be supported further

by examining the metalanguage used to discuss the concept of noun-adjective agreement in

these phrases. Students used a combination of words like "describe," "same," "endings," and

"agree" to demonstrate their grasp of the concept:

"it describes 'servus'"
"takes the same ending"
"'perterritus' is an adjective describing the slave"
"there is an agreement between the endings"
"agrees with the noun"
"an adjective describing the slave-women"
"both end in -as"

While the same end result is often achieved, some students rely more heavily on standard

terminology, while others use more straightforward (and perhaps, for them, more meaningful)

metalanguage. This test took place in the fourth week of the course, and even at this early

stage the results clearly show a distinction between different metalanguages.

4.2.2 Case Identification Assignment

In a similar way, data from the October 9 assignment show identifiable patterns. An analysis

of the data demonstrates a trend in responding which formed a clear continuum as follows:

TEXTBOOK-BASED ———— "GRAMMAR"-BASED ———— DISCURSIVE

"Textbook-based" responses relied heavily on the grammatical explanations provided in the text (see Appendix C). Such responses can be seen as "stock answers" which, in many cases, were even more concise than the textbook clues themselves. "Grammar-based" responses used a standard metalanguage informed by the students' more general knowledge of grammar, and therefore indicated a relationship being made between this assignment and previous knowledge. "Discursive" responses, which also contained a high level of standard metalanguage, were often expressed as an exploratory "discussion" of the process of discovering the grammatical "clues." They showed signs of a logical process of discovery being undertaken by students, as well as a high level of questioning, reasoning, and reflection. Students seemed almost to be negotiating the solution with themselves in a frequently conversational style.

Textbook-based responses tended to be short and simple, providing the minimum amount of information necessary to "get the marks." Incorrect responses were given with no indication of the process which the student had employed to arrive at the answer. It is important to note that textbook-based responses are completely acceptable; certain students prefer to follow textbook guidelines strictly, and many are successful in that endeavour. However, only three of the thirteen students whose data could be used in this part of the study were classified as textbook-based. Two students were either simply grammar-based or alternately textbook-/grammar-based, while the majority of the students (eight) fell at the discursive end of the continuum, some more so than others. This indicates a preference for exploring the language using a highly personal, reflective, and often humorous tone. Students

were not encouraged to use any particular approach (in fact, if anything, the textbook *was*

their guide), yet they consistently demonstrated a tendency to use a discursive metalanguage

incorporating standard terminology along with a more "casual" register.

Some examples follow:

(a) Student 2 - "Textbook-based"

"nominative plural; there's only one noun in the sentence" [clue given in text]
"nominative plural; 'puellae' and 'matres' are linked by 'et'"
"genitive singular; two nouns which are not linked by 'et'"
"genitive singular; again 'vocem' is singular"
"genitive singular; 'filium' is the object (direct) of 'petunt'"

(b) Student 10 - "Grammar-based"

"'puellae' is nominative plural because the girls are the subject of the sentence. 'Sunt' is another clue"
"'pueri' is nominative plural because the boys are the subject. The ending 'ant' on 'ambulant' is a plural ending. 'Pueri' could also be genitive singular also depending on the context."
"'Marci' is genitive singular because it is Marcus' house. Also, 'sedet' is singular so there are no plural nouns.
"Again 'puellae' has to be genitive singular because there are no plural endings in the sentence"
"'Marci' is genitive singular because it is the voice of Marcus."

(c) Student 6 - "Discursive"

[This one is reproduced in its entirety since it is so exemplary of the discursive type]

"'puellae,' nom. plur., is the only noun of the sentence"
"both are correct, but the second is unlikely"
"the conjunction 'et' links the two subjects 'matres' and 'puellae', both nom. plur."
"being a proper noun, 'Marci', gen sing, cannot be plural. Moreover it is unlikely to be associated with 'villa; since the two nouns are separated by the preposition 'in.'"
"Since the verb 'audit' is singular, it cannot have a plural subject. Moreover, it is unlikely that the noun 'puellae', gen sing., is associated with 'pater' since these two nouns are separated by a third noun 'vocem' which is apparently linked with 'puellae.'"

"being a proper noun, 'Marci', gen sing, cannot be plural. Moreover, it is unlikely that 'Marci' is associated with 'pueri' since these two nouns are separated by a third noun, 'vocem' with which 'Marci' must be associated. Since 'vocem' cannot be associated with both 'Marci' and 'pueri,' it follows that 'pueri,' nom plur., is the subject of the plural verb 'audiunt.'"

"since the verb 'sunt' cannot have two subjects unless they are linked by a conjunction, it follows that 'fratres' is the subject of 'sunt.' Moreover, it is unlikely that the noun 'pueri,' gen sing, is associated with the noun 'horto' since these two nouns are separated by the linking verb 'sunt' and the preposition 'in.' Thus 'pueri' must be associated with 'fratres.'"

"It is very likely that the noun 'servi,' nom plur., is the subject of the plural verb 'petunt' since it is separated from every other noun in the sentence. Since the verb 'petunt' cannot have two subjects it follows from the above that 'domini,' gen sing., is associated with 'filium' since this is the closest noun. Note that other interpretations are correct, but I believe that any good Latin writer would choose another word order to express the other possible interpretations.

While the responses in (a) are frequently as correct as those in (b) and (c), it is clear that the process of discovery in (c) is far greater than that in the other examples. The use of this more transparent metalanguage enables both student and teacher to see the exploratory and reflective processes at work. As a result, when the response is incorrect, the cause of the error is easier to locate than it is when only short responses are given. The data also show that the more discursive students feel more comfortable with the grammar as a "dynamic phenomenon," or perhaps as a puzzle that is to be investigated, rather than as a set of rules which are to be learned and repeated. While Student 10 shows a tendency toward being liberated from the prescriptive grammar, Student 6 has definitely arrived. The responses illustrate an important trend in those students located at the discursive end of the continuum: basing responses on common sense and logic rather than solely on rules. Phrases such as "it follows that" and "it is unlikely that" can be compared to other discursive students' responses:

(Student 3)   ". . . even though it is possible for 'them' to be walking in the boy's field it is unlikely . . ."

"If 'puellae' is plural then either 'vocem' or 'audit' would be as well."
"'The brothers' boys are in the garden doesn't make any sense."

(Student 4)   "Well I guess you could have someone else writing his letters but why would they?"
"'fratres' could also be acc[usative]. pl[ural]. but nothing is being done to them."

(Student 11)   ". . . since it is doubtful that 'They write the boy's letters' I'd go with nominative plural."
"Its [sic] doubtful that there's more than one Marcus."
". . . and it makes more sense to say 'the boy's brothers' than 'the brother's boys.'"

(Student 14)   "Word order and logic tells us that 'epistulas' is the D. Object . . . otherwise, the phrase would not make a lot of sense."

It is clear that students see grammar as a highly complex phenomenon with technical explanations which demand high-level thinking; at the same time, students rely on logic and common sense to solve these problems. The knowledge sources they use are not solely grammatical, but nor do they exclude the grammatical. Indeed, the students whose responses were most complete (although not necessarily any more accurate than others) relied upon their knowledge of Latin, their knowledge of language (presumably through their L1), and their knowledge of how things logically work — how they *should* be — to work out what a particular grammatical problem involved. Many of the more discursively oriented students did this quite naturally, but teachers could benefit from enabling other students to explore these approaches by providing some instruction in learner strategies for grammar. While some students might be comfortable with rules-based grammar, the data from this section of the study suggest that allowing learners to talk about what they're learning while they're learning

it has positive implications for learner motivation and comfort. Most likely, these affective gains will positively influence the cognitive domain.

4.3 Journals

If the term "metalanguage" is taken broadly, as I take it in this study, to mean the entire range of thoughts, reflections, and experiences which students talk or write about when discussing language and language learning, then the students' journal entries in this research study are certainly metalinguistic. They can be characterized quite differently, however, from the transcript and assignment data, however, since there is less emphasis on specific linguistic problems and more on the experience of the learning process. Such behaviour is, however, equally valid to a study which aims to draw connections between metalinguistic behaviour and language awareness, since the latter terms encompasses, as section 2.3 shows, certain aspects of linguistic knowledge which have less to do with linguistic structure than with applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, or language pedagogy.

The journal entries submitted in October and December were remarkably similar in content and form. The December batch were shorter (reflecting a heavier workload at that time of year) and fewer in number; however, if anything, the later entries indicated a greater understanding of what was required of the exercise.[13] Journal entries covered topics ranging from the highly general to the very specific. Indeed, from general to specific, the entries can be categorized in the following way:

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[13]Cohen and Scott (1996) question the role of "diaries," noting that the randomness and the volume of the data make it difficult to generalize from the findings. This was not my experience.

(a)   miscellaneous comments on life in general;
(b)   discussion of grammar in general;
(c)   discussion of the learning process in language in general;
(d)   discussion of the learning process in this course;
(e)   discussion of classroom practices and teaching methodology;
(f)   personal comments on successes and failures in this course, including
        discussion of areas of difficulty with the language, and comments on the
        grammar of Latin.

Category (a) is somewhat irrelevant to the study, although comments like these do indicate a

certain level of comfort with the journal-writing process. They can, however, reflect either a

misunderstanding of the point of the journals or a conscious attempt to provide non-language-

related data. The entries in this category focus on problems such as poor health, vacation

plans, and the journal-writing process itself (e.g., "This entry is sort of rushed" or "It will

become obvious that I have not been keeping up with my journals..."). Such comments are a

normal part of the process, since for many students, the concept of a learning journal is quite

new and often intimidating.

To combat such trepidation, students frequently resort to humour or become involved

in the textbook stories. Such strategies are marginally metalinguistic, but they serve an

important comfort-raising function: they help to establish student-teacher rapport, they

demonstrate a sense of connection with the material on a very human (as opposed to overtly

academic) level, and they establish a tone for future entries. Humour in journal entries is an

important indicator of general comfort with the learning environment:

I doubt very much that I'll run into someone who speaks ONLY Latin.

Lately I have been dreaming in a great mixture of languages. As a result, I
don't really know what is being said. It is very strange.

On a more personal note... I've been practising for a few days but still can not roll my "rrr"'s. I don't feel too bad, though - neither can M. (heh, heh, heh).

In addition, because of the rather basic, almost childish nature of some of the textbook stories, students picked up on some of the sarcasm expressed in class about the Cornelius family, whose lives form the basis of the Latin stories. This allowed students to develop a point of contact with the text without always having to discuss language itself. Although arguably not metalinguistic, in terms of overall awareness of the language learning context, such comments are important in the development of greater comfort. Furthermore, when interwoven with true metalinguistic comments, they serve a valuable purpose in contextualizing in a memorable way some of the new technical concepts which are essentially quite dry and abstract for many:

> The tales of Cornelia and Flavia just seem to get more and more enthralling! One minute all they can do is sit under a tree, and the next minute they're being chased by wolves and show promise for all kinds of exciting adventures. I have to admit, it is an enjoyable book to learn from. Following a continuation of events from chapter to chapter, while moving from simple to complex, is really a good technique.[14]

> It appears we've reached the tragic climax of our story. Cornelia has said goodbye to Flavia forever. Well, at least it appears that way. Even worse is that we've been introduced to two new cases: vocative and ablative.

> It doesn't take much to fall behind. For example, not only can the coachman now spur on the horses, but so can I, you, he, she, we, they and so on. It's a bit overwhelming.

It is clearly important for the teacher to foster an environment where this kind of comment can be taken in the proper spirit. While seemingly trivial, the positive implications of good

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[14]In both the journal entries and the questionnaire responses (section 4.4 below), literal transcriptions are used in order to present student comments authentically.

classroom "banter" cannot be ignored, especially when the banter includes explicit attempts at language play, puns, irony, and other metalinguistic features.

The entries in category (b) reflect a very common trend of writing generally about grammar. In both the journals and the questionnaire (see below), students frequently wrote about the lack of grammar instruction they had received in high school, and the extent to which Latin grammar was helping them:

> I have always dreaded prepositions. I think french really scared me off grammar in general. Mostly likely though I've probably always dreaded all grammar because I don't understand it. It feels good to be learning.

> The most trouble I have encountered so far has been learning two new languages at once. I have already begun mixing up Spanish with Latin simply in terms of vocabulary. My French hasn't suffered at all though. In fact, if anything I find my French only helps with the other two.

This preoccupation with grammar in general is not surprising: it reflects a feeling that is echoed in the questionnaires, that the students simply have never been taught grammar as formally as the Latin course requires. Feelings of fear and anger are not uncommon, and journals are the ideal vehicle for expressing these emotions.

Related to category (b) are the entries found in category (c), which cover students' impressions of language learning in general. Students tend to view the language learning process with a mixture of trepidation and awe, injected with flashes of great excitement or boredom:

> It was to be expected: any language course has a very, very, . . .very slow start. . . . This said, let us move on to more interesting stuff. I feel like a cheater! After French, English and Greek, Latin is my fourth language. A lot of things do not scare me anymore: in French I learned to deal with a lot of rules and a lot of exceptions, in English I learned to deal with a lot of

irregularities and linguistic deficiencies, and in Greek I learned to deal with a lot of forms.

. . . I tried to learn Italian on my own. I bought a couple of tapes, a dictionary and a work book. I was doing pretty well but I was *alone*; there was no one to practice with or talk to so there was no re-enforcement. I eventually just gave up.

There is a clear awareness among learners of the challenges which language learners face, and the learners' own experiences prove to be the most valuable of all. As the journal entries progress, they become more focused on relating the new experiences of learning Latin to their earlier experiences, or to what they had been told about learning Latin:

My great uncle . . . told me when he took Latin he always wrote in his text "Latin is a dead language and it's going to kill me too." I thought it was kind of funny, because, as I said before, I think it's going to be the class that does kill me. I'm still having great difficulty with the grammar.

When I tell my dad how much I am enjoying this course he laughs because it was always such a nightmare for him in high school. I assume these Latin books use a fairly recent teaching method. My dad learned Latin only from books written in the times of the Romans. I think that made learning Latin more difficult because he couldn't quite grasp the context of the stories. The way the stories are getting slowly more complex really works well for me.

Learners have a range of reference points, both linguistic and experiential, upon which to draw as they approach language learning. It seems that a useful pedagogical strategy would be to address these issues openly and discuss their implications. Clearly, students' attitude toward the process of language learning is influenced more, at least initially, by what they have absorbed about language learning, and they are certainly not *tabulae rasae* in this respect.

In addition to what I would term a meta-awareness of the language learning process, students are also acutely aware of teaching methodology and classroom techniques. While it

is usually easy to see if teaching methods are working in a class, students' personal journal entries can be most illuminating. In fact, teaching methods were a central topic of discussion in the journal entries in this study. It was re-assuring for the teacher to read that students appreciated and enjoyed the pedagogical approach; more important, however, was the fact that students would use this forum to address such issues. This reinforces the notion that teaching and learning strategies have a huge impact on the learning process and play a key role in the linguistic awareness of the learners. Students' ability to conceptualize teaching strategies, as well as their related ability to conceptualize their own learning strategies, is a sign that such strategies can be discussed explicitly. By their nature, such comments are inherently metalinguistic:

> I'm getting more comfortable speaking Latin in class. I like the fact that the class is small. You get to know people well. It forces me to be less shy. . . . I like the way you make everyone participate in class.

> Also the grammar I think needs to be slowed down. I overheard another LA[tin] 100 student say that things were going to fast - so I'm glad to know that I'm not the only one.

> I suppose I did not expect to be asked to learn the language so quickly, but for that I am thankful. Being treated as a person with a brain instills much more confidence than traditional teaching methods.

> I like your style, you have a very interesting way to introduce new concepts. By the way, when you do grammar points it would be useful to make more parallels with Latin right away even though it might mean introducing new stuff in a more informal way.

> There is only one thing that I don't like about Latin class. I am not sure if this is really relevant, but I'll put it down anyway. When somebody in the class is speaking or reading aloud, and is constantly interrupted and/or prompted by other members of the class, I become very irate. I cannot concentrate on my work when I am being interrupted or prompted, and I know that other members of the class feel the same.

The third extract above demonstrates an awareness of "traditional teaching methods," something which almost suggests a familiarity with applied linguistics and language pedagogy, and more importantly suggests that an overt discussion of language teaching methodology in an introductory language class at this level is not inappropriate. In the fourth extract, the maturity of the teacher-student relationship can also be seen. This student exemplifies a common tendency to engage the teacher in conversation within the journal entries, indicating a clear sense of audience.[15] The journal provides students with a forum not only to express their views on language learning, but also to address comments and concerns to the teacher. Such comments might not ordinarily be voiced, as the final extract would suggest.

The next category, (f), dealing with students' perceptions of their successes and failures in the course, is well represented in the data. Students are extremely concerned about their performance, whether this be measured in terms of marks ("We got an assignment back today. I got a whomping 10/10.") or overall ability ("Wow did my studying help. . . . I know I still have to work on it, but wow I'm actually understanding some of it."). In fact, if there is a generally observable trend in the data, it is that the students consistently monitor their own progress in the course. While they do express their happiness at good marks, new understanding, or a learned concept, students focus most extensively on the gaps in their knowledge and on the things they do not understand. This provides them with a method of highlighting the most problematic areas of the language:

> Looking for agreement in case endings, especially when they are separated by
> another phrase with different case endings, can get confusing. . . . I am still

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[15]Dialogue journals were not used, mainly in order to give students complete freedom to say what they wanted. Even so, many students wrote as if expecting a response from the teacher.

> grappling with the concept of the direct object. . . . Ablatives! I haven't got
> direct objects figured out yet and now I have to deal with ablatives also.

> I still need some practice in figuring out where I should put the stress marks. I
> guess I still need to review part 2. . . . I still need to review the vocabulary list
> in the preceding chapters.

> I am still having a hard time with the ablative stuff and how the endings of "as"
> and "os" work. . . . However I found that the verbs and nouns declensions
> person, cases etc to be fine but again I am lost with the infinitive forms.

These extracts show the students using the journals to identify and explore areas of grammar

which remain unclear. Through this process, they must discuss explicitly what would

normally remain implicit, in which case the actual acknowledgement of a problem or gap

might not take place. Such explicit metalinguistic behaviour raises to learners' consciousness

their particular strengths and weaknesses, and identifies for teachers the concepts which need

more attention and which might not surface in tests or classroom work.

Some students, in fact, use the journals to give themselves instructions for resolving

the problems:

> Some problems with the masculine and feminine endings, and the addition of
> the genitive and accusative cases may complicate things. Identifying the
> gender of certain nouns is not too difficult, but practice on weekend the nouns
> and adjective endings of -as, -os, and -es, and the difference between Nom. and
> Acc. plural, in the 3rd declension. Probably a good idea to find out what a
> declension is. . . .

> Note to self: start doing more 30 minute study time. . . . Definately time to
> buckle down . . . . Time to memorize some tables. . . . Mental note: study
> everything on reading week.

While the first extract above indicates a high level of comfort with the terminology (even

though the student indicates that s/he still needs to *understand* the concepts), the second

extract provides no such evidence. However, students not writing about grammatical

concepts is most unusual in the data. Whenever grammar is discussed, it is in the standard

metalanguage of the textbook and of classroom practice. Grammatical metalanguage

becomes the common jargon of the language learning process, and students express a desire

to become as fluent in the metalanguage as they do in the language itself, almost as if success

in this respect will lead to acceptance into the community of the class. Much of this process

seems tied to the acquisition of a unifying metalanguage with which to communicate with the

teacher, but more importantly with one's peers:

> Still using tables from back of the book to identify words by their case and
> ending. I find it irritating to have to keep turning to the back of the book while
> other students already have it memorized.

> I'll have more time to practice the imp[erfect]. tense orally during reading
> week so that I can astound the class next time we have to read aloud the
> chapters and exercises with my ability to pronounce "portabat" and maybe
> even "appropinquabamus".

This acute awareness of metalinguistic "deficiency" motivates the students to improve their

performance: they feel they owe it to their classmates; but in addition, the process of journal-

writing creates a sense of personal obligation which is possibly the best motivator of all.

In summary, a general division can be seen in the journal entries between course-

/language-specific comments, which tend to be highly metalinguistic in nature, and general

comments. But what unites both types of comment is a sense of interpersonal contact with

one of three audiences: (i) the teacher, (ii) the student him or herself, or (iii) a general

unnamed reader. Regardless of the extent of "true" metalanguage present in the comments, I

would argue that the comments reflect a real meta-awareness of the learning process, and

exhibit an extended metalanguage which allows the students to reflect on their concerns and

problems with the course, which in turn lets them identify areas where they need to work harder. Perhaps this reflection would take place informally or unconsciously, but I imagine the process of "noticing" or consciousness-raising which the journal writing promotes is a valuable part of the language learning process. Most important is the fact that the students are aware of language learning as a system or as a phenomenon instead of as an abstract entity. They can see "from the outside" (i.e., by reflecting on themselves) that they are involved in learning a language: they can discuss and develop strategies in an explicit fashion instead of simply going through the motions in a rote, subconscious, or automatic fashion. Such empowerment enhances motivation, which ultimately can enhance success, and the role of metalanguage in this empowerment is crucial.

4.4 Questionnaires

The questionnaire was designed to provide information to the researcher on students' attitudes toward grammar and language learning at the beginning and end of the term of study. The simple, four-part questionnaire was completed by eight students at the beginning of term (referred to as stage one below) and nine at the end (stage two). While these numbers are not large, the data collected show important trends which, especially when considered in conjunction with the learning journals, have much to say about students' attitudes. I present the results of this section divided by question, and conclude with a synopsis of the results and their implications.

4.4.1 Question One

In response to the first question, "Describe your experiences of learning a second or foreign language (either at home or in a school context)," students at stage one focused on the quality of teachers and students' level of enjoyment or, more typically, frustration with the language learning process. In addition, success in language was frequently linked to comfort level. Overall, responses indicated varied experiences based on students' age, learning environment, and metalinguistic knowledge:

> I didn't really like French. I think it may have been my teachers.

> Latin is difficult, however I am older now and know how to deal with the frustration.

> I did not have difficulty because I was very young when I gradually acquired the second language.

> I had French class pushed upon me for years, and my resulting knowledge of the language was practically non-existent.

By stage two, there were still frustrations, but there was also a much clearer sense of the reasons for good or bad performance:

> I have found that it is not easy. There are way too many things to remember at once.

> Frustrating but encouraged, had to try or I'd be wasting my time in my chosen field. Kept putting it off - now know language acquisition possible.

One student felt that difficulty and confusion were natural parts of the process:

> This year I have enjoyed learning Latin. I still find a second language difficult, but most concepts make sense to me, and if I do experience confusion it is usually short-lived.

Another student very astutely revealed the essential characteristics of the good language learner and the good language-learning environment, at the same time noting her own very strong feelings about situations which are not conducive to learning:

> I find that with learning a language . . . one must have zeal. One must want to learn. . . . Because [I had a horrible French teacher] I was repulsed when it came to French. Spanish, Latin and English are the foreign languages which I have learned in a school context. They are difficult a bit (un poco) but I find that enthusiasm takes it to [a] whole different level.

Another made similar overt comparisons between this language experience and previous, much less beneficial ones:

> In La[tin] 100 . . . I experienced first hand the joys of learning Latin without going through the pains of the categorical method . . . . Seeing the language in context, being exposed to new forms before concentrating on the forms themselves, gave a spark to the language the majority of my predecessors missed out on. Such a method would have made French enjoyable when I was much shorter and less wiser.

These comments reflect not only an explicit sense of the language-learning process, but also a keen awareness of the possible teaching methods which can accompany such a course. The final entry is an example of the much more specific reflections which took place at stage two, where the added context of the Latin course could be compared with past experiences.

4.4.2 Question Two

The second question asked students to "assess [their] level of understanding of [their] first language (mother tongue)." For this question, those who indicated English as their L1 frequently gave answers which focused on the standard ways in which they use their language in general or specifically academic contexts.

> If spelling and punctuation were disregarded I would say I had a good understanding.

> My first language is English, and I feel that I have a very good understanding of it. I never had difficulty reading or writing in English.

> I feel that I understand English fairly well. I am able to converse and write knowing what words to use to convey my point.

Such highly concrete responses are representative of what "first language" or "mother tongue" means to many students. The practical, day-to-day realities of using language are most important, but some students did venture further into the more abstract territory of grammar:

> I can speak english well but my grammar is weak, as is my basic understandings of the english language's uses of verbs, nouns, adverbs, etc.

> I am aweful when it comes to grammar . . . . I am not good at writing essays. I hated English in highschool.

One student took an interesting, more philosophical approach to the issue of L1 knowledge, focusing on the importance of communication rather than accuracy:

> I believe that my level of knowledge of words and phrases for my mother tongue is excellent, top-rate. Putting words and phrases together, not correctly, rather so that a sentence flows, a conversation flows, a speech flows . . . . The day I die is when I will be at the height of understanding language.

A similar reflection is found in a response from stage two:

> English, I don't think can be understood by anyone, fully and compleatly.

More commonly, however, at stage two, students' attention focused almost completely on grammar, reflecting a connection that they were now able to make between English grammar and the grammar of the foreign language under study:

> I believe my understanding of English has improved because I now understand
> the different parts of a sentence and grammatical concepts.

> . . . my grammar has improved but I don't think it has affected my speech,
> maybe only my writing.

The latter reflection shows the practical connection to writing and speaking; others, in fact,

felt that they could not separate themselves from their language well enough to comment:

> I really don't know how to assess the level of understanding of the language I
> speak everyday. . . . I am not good at picking apart sentences for grammatical
> things.

But the most telling comment of all came from a student whose first language was not

English, even though he could speak it fluently:

> My assessment of understanding my first language is that I did not know that
> there was more than speaking and reading your first language. The
> grammatical structure of my first language [Cree] is foreign to me because the
> background on my first language is that it was not written down until recently
> in the early nineteenth hundreds. . . . I am learning to understand how the
> language is structured, the same as what I am doing in studying Latin 100.

This illustrates a common gap in L1 *English* speakers' knowledge of their mother tongue,

something which this Cree speaker shares because of the lack of a literate tradition in his

native culture. In fact, students in earlier research (Krüger and Boyne 1996) reported similar

feelings, that English "didn't have a grammar like foreign languages." Clearly, the comments

made by many students at stage two suggest that the effect of language learning on the

metalinguistic awareness of the L1 grammar is very positive; they suggest further that better

knowledge of the L1 can play a complementary role in relation to metalinguistic behaviour in

L2 learning.

4.4.3 Question Three

The third question focused specifically on students' reaction to the concept of grammar, and it

was here that students became most emotional. From comments such as "Grammar sucks!"

and "Blah!" to more profound expressions of fear and intimidation, students consistently

reported strongly negative reactions to grammar at stage one, and much of this negativity can

be traced to school experiences with grammar, or the lack thereof:

> Fear! . . . I was never really taught any type of grammar. A little bit has been
> attempted in some classes, but the abilities/knowledge of everyone in the class
> was so varied, that the instructors always gave up.

> I hate grammar. I don't think I was taught enough of it in school.

> I still get a little nervous . . .

Others seemed almost awe-struck by the concept, which can lead to a combination of

fascination, respect, and trepidation:

> Grammar is facinating to me. Some of the endings and rules are so weird. It is
> also difficult at times to understand why.

> Grammar, I think, is the correct use of words so that the original meaning is
> conveyed. . . . I am not afraid of grammar!

It is interesting to note, in the latter response, that students were not asked about the concept

of fear. That this and so many other students mentioned fear indicates the extent to which

grammar has been negatively stereotyped among students as something unpleasant, dull, or

terrifying.

By stage two, many (but not all) of these feelings have been affected by the exposure

to contextualized, meaningful grammar and grammar talk in the course. While some students

still found grammar to be confusing or difficult, others reflected on their changing perceptions

of it:

> When taught properly grammar can be easily understood. I never realized this
> before.

> I used to shrink away from grammar. But now, I kind of like it. . . . I now
> think that grammar is essential and it is not as frightening as we generally make
> it out to be.

Reflecting on the utilitarian nature of grammar is, in fact, not uncommon:

> I find grammar to be very dry, but useful. . . . When you understand the
> grammar of your own language, new grammatical concepts in another
> language are not so frightening.

And there is still a call for more grammar to be taught earlier:

> . . . grammar has always been difficult. Only because it is not stressed enough
> in younger life so it takes longer to grasp now.

It is evident that a few months' exposure to grammar within the context of a course can give

students remarkable insights into the role of grammar. And while it certainly does not remove

all anxiety about grammar, it can help to increase both students' awareness of the concepts,

and their meta-awareness in a language-learning context.

4.4.4 Question Four

For the final section of the questionnaire, students were asked to provide examples of their

level of familiarity with grammatical concepts. At stage one, most of these concepts were

basic elements such as subjects, nouns, and verbs, and many found the question difficult to

complete. Most interesting were the explanations which students gave for not providing long

lists of parts of speech. They tended to apologize for their knowledge gaps, as if

acknowledging that they *should* know more, but do not:

> Again, I was part of the generation that was not formally taught grammar. I
> know the very basics. . . And the easy ones. . . . Grammatical concepts are
> blurry for me and quite often hard for me to grasp. . . . it's probably just me!!
> [underlining in original]

> I am awful with clauses and phrases.

> I understand subject, verb, object; the basics. The abstract concepts are where
> I fall off.

This tendency to be apologetic is not unexpected, given the students' general anger toward

their lack of knowledge. They realize that it is probably not their fault, but feel foolish for not

being able to be more explicit.

By stage two, the concepts, predictably, were based more in Latin grammar. Students

listed terms such as declension, case, conjugation, etc., and some even felt a little insulted by

the question itself:

> For Latin I understand things like: declentions, cases, gender, number, voice,
> person, singular and plural verbs, adjectives, nouns as well as little things that
> are so obvious that they are not worth mentioning.

This student is now comfortable with manipulating grammatical concepts, something which

other responses support. Surprisingly, at this stage there was no direct reference to English,

as if the Latin-based metalanguage had completely taken over. This could be a result of the

wording of such a question within the context of the course, but given the numerous

references to English grammar, or to grammar in general, in previous questions, the almost

exclusive Latin focus was remarkable. One student did, however, give an indication that the

comfort with Latin concepts might have had a deeper, more "universal" cognitive effect:

I think that I have always had an invisible understanding of grammatical
concepts. I just did not have an accepted name for them. For example,
relative clauses with relative pronouns and antecedents in the main clause came
easily to me because when I read such sentences I had already formed the habit
(before I knew the terms) of searching for the subject of the relative clause in
the main clause.

This exemplifies the notion of metalinguistic awareness turning implicit knowledge into

explicit. The student identifies the central problem of language learning for many people: the

inaccessibility of terminology. S/he also identifies the potential that exists for explicit

knowledge (and possibly explicit instruction) to tap into students' already quite extensive (but

unconscious) knowledge of language, so that an explicit connection can be made between

universal principles of language based in the L1 and the new and often unfamiliar L2 linguistic

and metalinguistic input.

4.5 Summary

The results from the four data collection methods clearly identify certain key trends in the

language learning process both specifically related to this group and, by implication, of general

application to learners in similar environments and in similar contexts. It can be strongly

suggested that the students' overall ability to use grammatical terminology improved over the

course of the research. This is difficult to assess, mainly because the more complex the

grammar becomes, the more need there is to use advanced metalanguage to discuss it. Yet

conversely, the more complex the terminology, the greater would be the resistance to using it

in a situation of low comfort. This is not the case: students almost relish picking apart

sentences and locating tricky grammatical concepts. In fact, it is almost anticlimactic for them

to be asked to discuss simple concepts such as direct object; furthermore, chapters with little

new grammar are less popular than those which introduce an advanced concept. Of course,

not every student is at the highest level of performance in the course, but there is still a general sense of enthusiasm about not only the language itself, but also the language learning process in which the students are involved on a daily basis. In addition, and perhaps more important, the students' metalinguistic behaviour — broadly defined — seems to reflect a greater sense of (meta)linguistic awareness, as evidenced through language play, humour, and expressions of comfort, facility, and familiarity.

In short, the research findings do suggest that metalinguistic behaviour by both teacher and students has a positive effect on the language learning process. A qualitative research, it can, admittedly, do little more than suggest, yet at the same time it is hoped that this study can illustrate the potential for exploring this issue further. Chapter Five takes the form of a critical evaluation of this study, and then suggests areas and methodology for further research.

Chapter Five

Implications and Recommendations

This chapter opens with a summary of the limitations of the present study, which is followed by an examination of the connections that exist between the empirical research and the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The chapter ends with a series of recommendations for classroom pedagogy, learner strategies, and applied linguistic research.

5.1 Limitations of the Study

The most important limitation of this study was clearly time. With less than three months between the start and end dates of the research, the opportunity to observe growth and change in certain areas was not great. This should not imply that the research period was *too* short; on the contrary, there was ample time to observe some clear trends and to draw tentative conclusions based on this timeframe. Nevertheless, a longer study would be more beneficial since it would afford the researcher more occasions to solicit reactions, record classroom interaction, and track the development of learners' attitudes to grammar. A year-long study would be ideal.

The second limitation was sample size. Again, while certain trends were clearly observable, a larger sample would have given the results some more validity and support. The advantage of a qualitative approach, of course, is that the data from even one subject can be valid under certain circumstances; the "significance" of results is thus more a subjective than an objective or scientific concept. The benefits of a larger sample, however, are clear: there can be more diversity in subjects' background, which can be useful for soliciting a greater

range of responses; and there can also be more evidence of homogeneity in areas where trends are most visible. Both factors can lend further credibility to the study.

The data collection instruments proved to be most appropriate for their purpose. In future studies, however, audiotaped sessions should be planned more carefully so that the activities for that session are appropriate and useful for the purposes of analysis. This does not mean skewing the research; it simply means selecting tasks which provide more metalinguistic data than read-and-translate exercises can do. The present study was constrained to some extent by the fact that the location for only one of the four weekly classes was conducive to audiotaping.

A final limitation of the study was the extent to which participants' backgrounds were taken into consideration when data were analysed. No detailed personal data were collected for this study; the small sample enabled the researcher to discover certain things about mother tongue, age, etc. A future study should track all aspects of the qualitative research procedure for each subject individually, and relate the individual's progress to the general trends and to that individual's background and experiences. In this study, such information was intentionally not considered, although at the analysis stage it proved to be a slight drawback. A neutral researcher (other than the teacher) could conduct such longer-term research more effectively, since it would be clearer to students that their grades would not be affected by the metalinguistic data they provided.

5.2 Implications for SLA Theory and Pedagogy

The literature review in Chapter Two is divided into four sections: focus-on-form, Universal

Grammar, language awareness, and learner strategies. To assess the extent to which this

study corroborates or reflects the findings of earlier empirical and theoretical work, I examine

each section of the literature review in turn.

While the research does not explicitly investigate the role of formal instruction on

second-language learning, it is clear that there is a connection to be made between students'

acquisition of metalinguistic skills and the extent to which they are exposed to these skills

through form-focused instruction. The audiotaped classes illustrate the approach taken by the

instructor to introduce formal grammar. While there is no evidence in the transcripts of

"grammar lessons" as such, grammatical explanations are introduced in context, usually

following student-student or student-teacher interaction on that point. Furthermore, the

students' use of metalinguistic terms to varying degrees in the transcripts shows the influence

that some means of form-focused instruction can have on their metalinguistic development.

The tendency to use standard metalanguage in conjunction with the so-called "coping," or

individualized, metalanguage is perhaps strongest evidence for the need to embrace the recent

calls for an approach to instruction which integrates formal instruction into a communicative

approach. This is now quite clear.

The relationship of this study to UG is less apparent, but no less important. However,

there is an obvious problem in attempting to make claims about access to UG in SLA based

on this research: the nature of the research simply does not provide tangible evidence for

triggering or parameter-switching. Yet we must not forget the assumptions made in the

discussion of UG. Principles of UG are not consciously expressed by learners; as a result, the L2 forms of such principles, if they do indeed exist, are similarly unconscious. Just as L2 input can act as a triggering device to "reset" parameters originally set for the L1, so can metalinguistic input serve as a trigger to raise learners' explicit awareness of the particular differences between the L1 and the L2. This study suggests that the greater the exposure to metalinguistic input *and* output (i.e., teacher talk and student talk about language, as well as learners' reflections on the process), the greater will be the learners' awareness of fundamental principles of language. Students allude in their journals and questionnaires on numerous occasions to the development of a greater awareness of language as a system with universal properties. And while it is clear that nothing concrete can be said about this from a UG perspective, the role of the L1, closely connected to UG thinking, is of great relevance. Therefore, UG should remain an important theoretical component of this type of study. It is evident that metalanguage is highly psycholinguistic in orientation; UG operates on a similar cognitive level and almost certainly forms part of the "multiple knowledge sources" which inform learners' linguistic and metalinguistic development during the second-language learning process.

That said, it is primarily in the area of language awareness that the connections between this study and existing research and theory are to be found. Language awareness, defined broadly, covers consciousness-raising, the role of the L1, and language learner strategies, all of which converge in the metalinguistic behaviour exhibited by students in the study. The highly discursive metalinguistic approach of many of the students, for example, shows a reflective, experiential dimension to language learning which can best be described as

students' raising to consciousness their wide range of linguistic knowledge and metalinguistic

reactions. This involves a consciousness not only of the language itself, but also of the

structure of language, the nature of the learning process, and (on a meta-awareness level) the

connection between present and past experiences. All four data collection instruments display

varying degrees of this discursive metalanguage: in the transcripts, students frequently explore

their metalinguistic knowledge through their longer responses, aided by the scaffolding and

prompting techniques of the instructor; in the assignment and test data, students engage in

negotiation of meaning with themselves in order to arrive at the most complete solution; in

journals, metalinguistic discussions can be divided into a continuum with general to specific

focuses, each one reflecting a level of engagement with the material that is either

"traditionally" metalinguistic or more eclectic; and in the questionnaires, students' responses

illustrate a range of metalinguistic discussions and reflections on their current linguistic

abilities, their reactions to grammar, and their learning strategies. What unites all of these data

is the fact that they all portray students in the process of either having their awareness raised

or, more commonly, working to raise their own awareness of linguistic concepts through an

increasingly comfortable metalanguage. The teacher-student relationship is radically

reformulated. As Færch (1985) has observed,

> this type of meta talk has a positive learning potential. . . . The students will be
> able to establish and try out more hypotheses about FL (including hypotheses
> about transferability from their L1). The teacher's function . . . would be to
> provide relevant input, to steer if groups of students move too far in the wrong
> direction, and to provide feedback . . . [which] need not be in the form of
> explicit rule formulation. (195)

Throughout the entire process, the L1 serves as the vehicle through which the metalinguistic behaviour is exhibited. The L1 can be seen, therefore, as the vital link between learners' linguistic abilities and the challenges of the L2. Moreover, the way in which the L1 contributes most is through its explicit manifestation in metalanguage. Students rely on the L1 to bridge the gap between what they know and what they do not; it is, after all, the only way they can communicate with themselves and their teachers. There is a need, therefore, to see the L1 and the L2, as Poldauf (1995) does, as "allies" in the language learning process. There must be clear recognition on the part of teachers that if metalinguistic behaviour enhances language learning — which it seems to do — then it should be a central component of any pedagogical strategy that is fundamentally learner-centred. Mohammed (1995), despite calling for keeping metalanguage to a minimum, acknowledges that "the kind of grammar presented by both teacher and materials writer can be based on the learners' conscious hypothesis-formation process" (56-57), which suggests a role for students' own metalanguage in the classroom. Trévise (1996) calls for more teacher-student metalinguistic interaction, and sees a need to

> analyse the efficiency of a real contrastive language awareness, endowed with a
> meaningful interactive metadiscourse and taking into account the necessarily
> contrastive metalinguistic transfers, thus acknowledging the long-term role of
> the L1 as a powerful linguistic and metalinguistic structuring filter, which
> teachers can make the most of instead of ignoring. (195)

Learner strategies, whatever their form, will have the L1 as their central linguistic component, especially at the early stages of language learning. An effective language pedagogy, therefore, will recognize this and take it one step further by acknowledging, as Borg (1994) does, that "Learning about language is not the internalization of a definable body of knowledge but the

ongoing investigation of a *dynamic phenomenon*" (62; emphasis mine). The role of

metalanguage in language awareness, therefore, suggests that a form-focused approach to

language teaching must be taken with caution: not because a focus on form is not desirable,

but rather because such a focus needs to be carefully woven into a multifaceted approach that

capitalizes on the metalinguistic strengths of learners and the benefits of their resulting

strategies on the learning process itself.

Finally, the centrality of the learner in the language learning process should not be

downplayed. The results of this study support a learner-centred approach to analysing

metalinguistic behaviour. The learner's experiences in the second-language learning context

are enriched by her own knowledge sources, such as UG, the L1, and other personal and

educational experience. Also contributing to this enrichment is the awareness of learner needs

supplied by the teacher, who also brings the necessary theoretical background and appropriate

pedagogical approaches based in metalinguistic interaction. Equipped with these sources of

enrichment, the learner embarks upon a process of metalinguistic discovery which is

manifested in a range of individual metalanguages: concept-based, reflective/experiential, and

investigative/discursive, among others. The importance of the teacher's recognition of the

value of such metalanguages is expressed well by Besse (1980):

> Si les étudiants ont appris un métalangage (à propos de leur langue maternelle
> ou d'une première langue étrangère) et qu'ils en ont retenu une partie des
> catégorisations et des opérations, on ne peut éviter pédagogiquement de tenir
> compte de ce métalangage, parce que c'est à travers son prisme qu'est perçu et
> interpreté le fonctionnement de la langue cible. (126-27)

Such intervention and facilitation on the part of the teacher can lead, one would suspect, to at

least short-term gains in raised awareness that the learner demonstrates through increased

attention to form, higher levels of metalinguistic discussion and questioning, and greater hypothesis-testing and risk-taking. The positive affective impact on the language learning process is undeniable. What remains to be seen, of course, is the extent of the impact of this model on long-term gains in proficiency.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

As the limitations of this study suggest, examining metalinguistic behaviour over the longer term would offer even greater insight into the role that both teacher- and student-generated metalanguage has on the learning process. A year-long study which could track students' metalinguistic development would shed important light on the individual differences which affect the learning process — factors such as mother tongue, age, gender, literacy level, academic achievement, language-learning experience, etc. An equally important direction for research would be to explore differences in target language, especially as they relate to the L1. For example, are the trends which are observable in this study unique to a primarily written language like Latin, or are they applicable to modern languages too? Would studying a language more linguistically distant from the L1 (as Ringbom discusses) have an impact upon the effects of metalinguistic behaviour? This study also focuses on classroom learning; it would be interesting, therefore, to explore the implications of these findings on independent, self-directed learning of languages: would, for example, the ability to negotiate meaning with oneself on a metalinguistic level in such a context have similar effects to those described here?

The other major direction for research, as alluded to above, is to investigate the actual connection between metalinguistic behaviour and linguistic proficiency. This study

intentionally avoided making that connection both in the research and in the analysis, yet its presence is difficult to ignore. While it is acceptable to draw conclusions about the effect of metalinguistic behaviour on learners' language awareness, it is very difficult to make valid claims about long-term benefits to language learning if there is no concrete evidence that the gains are also reflected in proficiency. An additional component of the long-term study proposed above, then, could be a correlation between qualitative gains in metalinguistic behaviour and quantitative gains in proficiency, measured using standard assessment instruments. While informal observation would suggest that "good" metalinguistic strategies and discursive forms of metalinguistic behaviour lead to gains in proficiency, some recent research suggests the opposite (cf. Alderson *et al.* 1997). In light of that research, what is essential at this stage is further work on the nature of metalanguage itself. Metalanguage remains an abstract concept in many respects, but this need not mean that it is beyond definition. Perhaps once an acceptable definition is produced, the task of establishing standard *qualitative* methods of assessing metalinguistic behaviour can be undertaken. It is hoped that this study has contributed in some way to this endeavour.

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Appendix A
Participant Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research project on language learning being carried out as part of the Latin 100 course in which I am enrolled. The research project is being undertaken in the context of a thesis being completed at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. I understand that, as part of this project, I will be asked to complete a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the first term, to make entries in a journal, and to be audiotaped as part of the regular class.

I understand that this research project is being carried out as a peripheral component of this Latin course, and that neither the teaching of the course nor my assessment in it will be affected in any way by this research. Furthermore, should I choose at any point to opt out of the research project, I may do so freely, and may continue in the course and incur no academic penalty for my non-participation in the research project.

I understand that my name will not be used in conjunction with any part of this research project, and that every attempt will be made by the researcher to make both the subjects and the research site anonymous. Upon request I will have full access to the final report on the research and, where applicable, to any audiotaped material.

I understand that all data collected as part of this research project will be stored in a secure place following this research, and that the researcher alone will have access to such data.

_____   _____
        Name (please print)   Date

_____
        Signature

Appendix B
Transcripts of Classroom Interaction

In the transcripts which follow, "T" refers to the teacher, and "S" to the student. Only when it is necessary to distinguish between individual students is the notation "S1...S2" used.

(1) September 25

T -   So can anyone tell me anything about that sentence? Anything at all?
S -   They're plural?
T -   They look like plural, but are they...?
S -   Is it 'of'?
T -   Yes, that's right, 'of.' And what do we call that case?
[pause]
S -   Genitive case.

. . .

T -   'Occupata' — is there anything you can tell me about that word 'occupata'?
S -   It ends in -a
T -   So that means?
S -   It's feminine singular.

. . .

T -   'Sedentes' is another one of those words like 'laborantes' in the previous chapter - can anyone remember what they're called?
S -   Participles.
T -   Yes, participles - and we'll deal with them in more detail later...

. . .

T -   'facitis, sedetis, laboratis'...we have a new ending here, and the ending is -tis - any ideas what that might be?
S -   you plural?
T -   yes, we're dealing with the second person plural ending 'you'... OK so that's going to be the plural ending of the second person -tis. There's also word in there for 'you'...
S -   'vos'?
T -   Yes, 'vos,' and like the other pronouns you've met, you can see that you don't always need it. The first sentence starts off as 'Cur nihil facitis?' and then we have 'Cur vos ibi sedetis?'... So we have one sentence with it and one without it. So this chapter is going to give us all the endings for the present tense.

. . .

T -   So now we have another ending, and that's the -mus ending, which goes with nos, and that's the first person plural ending. [No comments from students]

. . .

T -   Anything you can say about any of the words there? 'Pueros'?
S -   More than one?
T -   Yes, plural. Subject, object?

S -	Direct object.
T -	OK.

. . .

T -	What is the difference between 'Agite' and 'Age'? It's 'Agite, servi' but 'age, Sexte' so what's the distinction?
S -	Plural?
T -	Which is plural?
S -	'Agite.'
T -	Yes, so when you're addressing one person and that person's familiar to you, you use the singular form, you use 'Age' but when you're addressing more than one person or if it's formal, just like it is in French, German, Spanish or any other language except English it seems, you... Same thing happens when you say hello...
S -	Would you actually say 'Come on' in a formal setting?
T -	Probably not so in this case it wouldn't work, but for other things of a similar nature...it depends on context. SO there's a distinction between singular forms and plural forms. OK, so then we see another first person plural - 'paramus.' So we have 'redimus, paramus' - 'mus mus mus.'
SS -	'Mus mus mus' (in unison, unsolicited)

. . .

S -	Marcus's mother hears but says nothing.
T -	OK, think about it. 'Matrem'? [p] 'Marcus matrem audit?' [p] What is 'matrem'? The -m ending?
S -	Oh, would she be the direct object?
T -	She would, so...
S -	Marcus hears his mother but says nothing.
T -	Right.

. . .

T -	So can you say anything about 'tunicam' and 'togam'?
S -	They're both direct objects.

. . .

T-	Notice the use of 'ego' here - it's absolutely required here. He couldn't just say 'sed volo consulere Marcum'...
S -	...because that would mean 'he wants to consult...'
T -	No, he's still talking about himself, so he says '*ego* volo consulere Marcum' - '*princeps* non vult consulere Marcum, sed *ego* volo consulere Marcum' - '*I* want to consult Marcus, but the *emperor* doesn't...'

. . .

S -	'Cur, Marce, hodie me vexas?' Why does Marcus annoy me today?
T -	No, think about it - 'Marce' - 'Cur, Marce..' [T points to S as he says it]
S -	Why, Marcus, do you annoy me today?
T -	Right. Why else, aside from Marce do we know he's addressing 'you'? What's the sign he's talking *to* Marcus?
S -	Because he says 'vexas'

T -   Right, 'vex*as*.' Because if he was saying 'Why is Marcus annoying me today' he'd say 'Cur Marc*us* hodie me vex*at*?' But he really says 'Cur, Marc*e*, hodie me vex*as*?'....

. . .

T -   Notice 'moleste' is in the vocative, but it's just 'puer'. It's only words ending in -us that are affected by the vocative, so if you wanted to say 'pesky Marcus' you'd have to say 'moleste Marce'

. . .

T -   OK so we have several new endings to introduce... These are going to be your endings for the present tense. In fact you'll find similar endings in other tenses, similar patterns, but here we're only concerned with the present tense. Now trying to memorize them like that is difficult, so the best way to memorize them is to put a real verb in front of it...

. . .

T -   So what we have is 'amo amas amat amamus amatis amant' ... and I promised we were going to be singing, so we're going to sing these endings. So after three... 1 2 3

SS -   [unison] 'amo amas amat amamus amatis amant'

T -   Fun stuff.

. . .

S -   Why isn't it 'amao'?

T -   The reason is that the base form of the verb is 'am' but I've only given you these endings since the vowel is going to change. So for example the verb to sit, will be 'sedes, sedet, sedemus, sedetis sedent.' The verb to prepare follows the same pattern...

. . .

T -   These endings are all given to you on p.54, the verb they use is 'paro' - now learning these like this is useful up to a point but the quicker you can get from this stage to using them in sentences, and recognizing them in sentences, and adding some context, but sometimes you need to start with something like this...

. . .

T -   Just take a quick glance at the imperfect tense, we don't know the imperfect yet but look at the endings, and apart from the first person singular we have -s -t -mus -tis -nt - [at this point some students join in the chorus of endings]. So apart from strange things happening to the stem, the verb endings are the same. So this shows that these endings are just going to keep cropping up and cropping up... If you see a word ending in -mus and you think it's a verb, it's likely to be 'we' something....

S -   What's the imperative?

T -   It's the command form, so if I said to you [points to same S] - 'Para!' it would mean get ready but [to entire group] - 'Parate!'

. . .

T -   We were talking earlier about the verb 'to be'... it's irregular: 'sum es est sumus estis sunt.' And if you know French, there's not much difference. In fact, linguists might say there's no difference. It doesn't sound the same but it looks the same.

. . .

T -	How do we know that the Greeks are doing this and are not having anything done to them?
S -	Because the Greeks are not the direct object.
T -	What would they be if they were the direct object?
S -	'Graecum'?
T -	No.
S -	'Graecos.'

. . .

S -	For ten years the Trojans held off the Greeks.
T -	Right - how did you get to that?
S -	Well, 'decem annos' is for ten years, 'Troiani' is the subject, and 'Graecos' is the direct object.

. . .

S -	[from 'per dolum'] 'dolum' is the direct object.
T -	Not quite a direct object - what is the direct object?
S -	'Urbem.'
T -	Right, 'urbem.'
S -	So 'per dolum' is a preposition.
T -	Yes 'dolum' takes a preposition and the case it takes is the same as the direct object...

(2) October 2

[students are working on combining prepositions with nouns to produce different case endings]

T -	Let's see if we can do some things to these nouns. What do you suggest?
S -	'ad villam'?
T -	OK, why?
S -	Because you're going toward the house and you're doing something to it.
T -	OK, so what case is this taking here?
S -	The direct object.
T -	It's the same case as the direct object.
S2 -	Accusative
T -	Accusative case, alright. Anything else we can do to the house?
S -	'in villa'
T -	Meaning...
S -	In the country house
T -	And the case would be...
S -	Ablative
T -	Yes, because we're in, not moving towards it. Anything else?
S -	'In villam'
T -	Meaning?

S -   Into the house.

T -   OK, so we have up to the house, in the house and into the house.

. . .

T -   Now, let's change the type of noun. Let's try 'arbores'. Going towards the trees would be...

S -   'Arborem.'

T -   'Arborem' would be toward the *tree*.

S -   ooohh... 'arboros'?....

T -   it's just the same thing. Remember the third declension, you can tell this is a third declension because of the -es, the accusative and the nominative are the same in the plural. Let's say we're in the trees. It would be 'in...

SS -   [they get it wrong a couple of times]

T -   What's my favourite ending?

S -   'ibus'!

T -   'Ibus.' 'In arboribus.' 'In the trees' - third declension plurals take the ibus ending. Now 'into the trees'?

S -   [silence]

T -   We're going into the trees, so it's just...

S -   'in arbores'?

T -   Yes, we only really have two choices, don't we? Now, 'out of the trees' would be 'ex...

S -   'arboribus'

T -   yes, and 'sub...under the trees...'

S -   'arboribus'

T -   Yes, 'sub arboribus.'

S -   We really didn't do well on that one.

. . .

T -   So what is the central difference between the use of accusative and the use of ablative with the prepositions we've seen so far?

S -   They're actually affecting the state of the object.

T -   That would be...

S -   Accusative

T -   Yes, whereas ablative would be more...

S -   Has nothing to do with it.

T -   Yes, that's useful, now phrase it in terms of direction and location.

S -   You're already there with the ablative

T -   [repeats it]

S -   and you're going towards with the accusative.

T -   Yes, it's the difference between motion towards and position in.

. . .

T -   Now try 'urbs'

S -   Is that plural?

T -   No, it's singular, it looks plural because of the -s but don't let that confuse you.
        'Towards the city' would be...
S -   'ad urbem'
T -   Yes, what other prepositions would have 'urbem'?
S1 -   'In'
S2 -   'Ex'
T -   'In,' yes, not 'ex.' 'In urbem.' And the other ones would all be...
S -   'Urb[inaudible]
T -   'Urbe.'

. . .

T -   Just indicate the case, translate it and say why it's happening.
S1 -   'Marcus ad arborem sedet.' He's sitting towards the tree?
S2 -   At
S1 -   Oh yeah, at.

. . .

S -   'Puella e silva et in villam ambulat.'
T -   Yes, why?
S-   The first one is a position, and the second one is going towards.
T -   Right.

. . .

T -   'Servus sub...'
S -   'Ramis?'
T -   Yes, 'ramis,' what can you tell us about 'ramis?' Anything you can possible say about
        the word 'ramis.'
S1 -   Plural.
T -   yes,there's a start
S2 -   And it's ablative.
T -   Ablative. [pause] Gender?
S -   Masculine.
T -   Masculine. [p] That's about all we can say. Masculine ablative plural, 'ramis.'

. . .

T -   'Pueri per agros currunt.' Why?
S -   Because they're going through the fields.
T -   Yes, they're going through the fields, they're not in them, not staying in the fields.

. . .

T -   Remember that the genitive singular looks like a nominative plural. So if it's a plural
        ending it could also be a genitive singular.

. . .

T -   ...but when you add that 'Corneliana' part it turns it into an adjective. What's our first
        clue that it's an adjective?
S -   The long -a

T -   Yes, it agrees. So if that ever came up on a reading comprehension passage or translation, that's your first clue that it agrees - look at the ending, it's a long -a and chances are it's an adjective in the ablative.

. . .

T -   Have you noticed anything new so far? There seems to be a new construction which you haven't had yet. [gives examples of new construction from text in Latin] You can order them with a direct object and then an infinitive.

S -   Coming after it right in the sentence, is that what you're saying?

T -   Yeah, think of the number of times you do that in English. 'I ordered him *to stay.*' where the direct object is followed by the infinitive. So this is just telling you that the same thing can happen in Latin, more or less word for word...

. . .

T -   Now this is interesting: 'togam virilem.' 'Togam' is obviously what gender?

S -   Feminine.

T -   Yes because of the -am ending. What about 'virilem'?

[laughter]

T -   Yes it means something pretty masculine. How do you know?

S -   We don't know - from that word on its own, but from 'togam' we know it's feminine.

T -   Yes, the word 'virilem' is feminine. So the word 'virilem,' or 'manly,' is a feminine word here.

S -   [laugh] it's kind of ironic.

T -   This brings up a nice point between biological gender and grammatical gender. This is grammatical gender we're doing here. Manly is only feminine here because 'toga' is feminine, it's grammatically feminine, not biologically. But what's even more interesting is that we've never yet seen adjectives with that ending, we've seen nouns with that ending but not adjectives.... Remember with the word 'urbem' we couldn't tell its gender...here it works the other way around.

. . .

S -   So in the case of a manly city...?

T -   That would be 'urbem virilem...'

S -   But we wouldn't be able to tell.

T -   No, because these are adjectives that belong to the third declension....

. . .

T -   Tell us about the various words in that sentence. Case or gender.... 'Servus'?

S -   Masculine nominative

T -   'Iubet'?

S -   Third person singular.

T -   'Cistas'?

S -   Masculine

T -   Masculine?

S -   It's feminine.

S2 -   Plural

T -   Feminine plural. Case?

S -   Accusative
T -   OK, and 'cubiculis'?
S -   Plural
T -   Plural... and the gender here is...
S -   We don't know.
T -   We can't tell from the word.

. . .

T -   'Viam' is... feminine singular [to inaudible responses] And the case?
S -   Accusative.
T -   'Portare' is what kind of word?
S -   Infinitive
T -   Yes, and what conjugation would that be?
S -   First
T -   First, yes! next sentence...

. . .

(3) October 9

T -   Who can summarize what we did yesterday?
S -   Ablative and genitive forms.
T -   Yes, and specifically with the ablative, what did we discover you could do with the ablative case?
S -   You could use 'cum' with something...
T -   Yes, there's an obvious distinction to make. You can say 'cum baculo,' but that means you were going accompanied with the stick, just as in the previous chapter the slaves were accompanied by the dogs 'cum canibus,' not just 'canibus' because that would mean they were using the dogs as an instrument.
S -   So if you hit someone with a stick, it's just 'baculo...'?
T -   Yes, it makes it easy because you don't have to worry about prepositions, and the case is always the same with instruments, the ablative.

. . .

T -   Now let's work on filling in the gaps and saying why we've done it.

. . .

T -   Now why 'arbore'?
S -   Why? Because it's ablative.
T -   OK.

. . .

T -   Which of the 'area' ones did you choose?
S -   'areae'
T -   'Areae'?
S -   Yes, because they're not sitting towards it, they're sitting in it - so it's the ablative... and that's not it. [general laughter]

T -   So it's...
S -   'areā'
T -   Right.

. . .

T -   Why 'cum canibus'?
S -   Because it's the dogs and it's an ablative plural.
T -   Why not just 'canibus'?
S1 -   Because then he would be using the dogs somehow...using the dogs as a means, instead of with...
S2 -   ... using the dogs as an instrument.

. . .

T -   So tell me something about 'domini boni.'
S -   It's in the genitive.
T -   And why two words?
S -   Two words?
T -   Yes why do the two words look the same?
S -   Because they're part of the same phrase, so they have to match.
T -   Yes, the adjective and noun agree.

. . .

T -   Tell us something about 'baculo'
S -   Ablative
T -   Yes, why not 'cum baculo'?
S -   If it was 'cum baculo' it would be him and the stick both beating the guy.

. . .

(4) October 16

T -   Grammatically what's going on this sentence?
S -   'e fossa' is an ablative.
T -   What case is 'Syre' in?
S -   Vocative.

. . .

T -   Grammatically, what's going on in this sentence?
[silence]
T -   Do we have a direct object?
S -   'Cisium'
T -   It looks like a direct object, why?
S -   Because of the -m.
T -   But if it looks like a direct object why is it not one?
S -   It's neuter.
T -   What conjugation would 'appropinquabat' be?

S - First.
T - And 'dormiebamus'?
S - Third...or fourth
T - What tells you it could be third or fourth
S - The 'i'
T - Yes, in fact it's fourth.

. . .

T - Do we have a direct object
S - No.
T - Yes, we do - 'cisium'
S - But ...
T - Yes, but didn't we say that 'cisium' wasn't a direct object?
S - Yes, so why doesn't it change?
T - Why doesn't it?
S - Well, what's it going to do?
T - In the neuter the nominative and accusative are the same. Where else are they the same?
[general laughter as someone says 'another language']
T - OK, specifically in Latin where are they the same?
S - Third declension
T - Yes, the third declension plural.

. . .

T - So, cases and tenses, etc.?
S - Both verbs in the present. Third person singular. There are some accusatives.
[laughter]
S2 - he's not going to tell you where...
S - I guess 'murmur' is one.
T - By saying 'murmur' is accusative, you're telling us that it's what gender.
S - Neuter
T - Yes, because otherwise it's going to end in -m. 'Murmur' is accusative, it doesn't look like it. Anything else?
S - 'Rotarum' is genitive plural, and 'Marcus,' being the subject is nominative.

. . .

S - That -ne on the end of 'est,' does it make it another tense?
T - No, I suppose you could call it an interrogative, but the tense is still present.

. . .

T - 'is it a wagon?' are you doing anything to the wagon?
S - No.
T - So the verb 'to be' takes the nominative case.

. . .

T - What can you say about the words 'plaustra' and 'onera'?
S - 'Plaustra' is nominative'
T - Yes, they're nominative because they're doing the carrying. What about 'onera'?

S -   It's an object.

. . .

T -   Just bear in mind that the words for this and that will change to agree in number, gender and case with the noun.

. . .

T -   What case is 'duas'?

S -   Accusative

T -   So two is one of those numerals that does change, and it just behaves like an adjective. If you had two slaves, what would it be?

S -   'Dui'?

T -   No, we're still in the accusative.

S -   'Duos.'

. . .

T -   Can you say anything?

S -   'Marce' is vocative, 'cisium' is neuter, ... I guess nominative

T -   Yes, why?

S -   It's not doing anything to anything else.

. . .

T -   Any cases or tenses here?

S -   Is 'praeclarus' anything?

T -   An adjective.

S -   em...

T -   So if you're saying it is a famous man, 'praeclarus' would be...

S -   Is that nominative?

T -   Yes, and 'urbe'?

S -   Ablative?

T -   Yes, and how about 'Neapolim'?   [pause] To Naples?

S -   Accusative.

. . .

(5) November 13

S1 -   Now I have to ask someone something...

S2 -   Be nice.

S1 -   Nice is not in my nature

S2 -   We have that on tape.

[laughter]

S1 -   How about if you can change the conjugated verbs into the perfect tense.

S2 -   Same person?

S1 -   Yeah.

S2 -   'Rogavit,' I believe, right? And 'soluit'... 'tremebat--tremuit.'

[S2 reads and translates]
S1 - Is 'paratus' a verb?
T - It's actually acting as an adjective here. It's formed from a verb but it's not acting as one here, it still needs a conjugated verb to complete its meaning.
S2 - How about, give the uh, the three principal parts to the two verbs
S1 - Aah, talk about being nice
S2 - The three principal parts, you should know...
S3 - [silence]
S2 - Oops
S3 - The three principal parts, I have to look that up if you don't mind. If I can find it. [p] Don't have a clue, sorry.
T - What would be the forms?
SS - First person singular present, infinitive, and uh... first person singular perfect.
[they recite the three principal parts in unison; S3 takes her turn]
S3 - Can someone [she names S4] change that sentence into 'how could I have gotten out of the wicked innkeeper's hands?' Imperfect, no sorry, perfect.
S4 - 'poteram'...didn't you ask for the imperfect?
S3 - No sorry I changed it to perfect.
S4 - Oh, uh, 'pot...
T - Anyone?
S - 'Potui'
S4 - Oh yeah 'potui.'
[S4 takes her turn]
S4 - OK, identify any adjectives and say what noun they modify, and their declension
S5 - Oh my god.
T - Good question...
S5 - OK, so how did you translate that?...[inaudible] 'Scelesti' goes with 'caupones' ...anything else?
T - Yes the question was...[repeats question]
[S5 takes her turn]
[inaudible]
T - Why do 'civis' and 'praeclari' appear not to agree?
S6 - Because 'civis' is third and 'praeclari' is second declension.
[S6 takes his turn]
S6 - Why don't you write a ten-page essay.... [laughter] In Latin.... [laughter] Change the sentence to say that Aulus didn't have any money, but Sextus did.
[S7 translates it as requested and then takes her turn]
T - Not much you can do with this.
[S7 inaudible but something to do with conjugating both verbs]
[S8 conjugates verbs well and takes her turn]
[inaudible]

. . .

S9 - What declension is the 'murem mortuum'?

S10 - Third?

T - Which part is third?

S10 - 'Murem.' And 'mortuum' is usually second, so...

S3 - Can we say the sleeping mouse is beside the dead cat for a change, instead of the cat always beating up on the mouse?

T - So what would that be in Latin?

S3 - 'Prope murem Sextus felem mortuum.'

T - Does that agree?

S11 - No. [she doesn't elaborate]

. . .

[S10 takes her turn]

S10 - Change it from 'it's not necessary' to 'I must hide this' or 'I have to'

[S11 does it as requested]

T - How could we stress that it's *I* who has to do it. It's an impersonal verb phrase so it takes the dative. We don't know the dative but take a guess....

. . .

(6) December 4

S - I always have trouble figuring out just on first sight what conjugation verbs are, especially if you want to turn them into the future, like I don't know if you add -am or -bo -bis -bit or -am -es -et. I don't know, well sometimes I know but it's because I've memorized so many of them, it's not that I can tell what they are and how they're formed, so if there's any way of telling.

T - The infinitives and the present, would be the ones you're most concerned about, how you can tell from an infinitive

S - Like -are you can tell, you can tell whether they're first conjugation, but the rest are all -ere.

[T explains the four conjugations]

T - The infinitive themselves will tell you, but there's not always an infinitive there.

[they go over the conjugations]

S - I think the toughest thing to learn is just differentiating the infinitive between 2 and 3, and I guess it's just a little mark there on the -e.

T - And that long mark changes the pronunciation quite a bit. Also thirds are more common, as you don't see as many seconds as you do thirds.

T - 'Omnes viatores,' what can you tell me about that.

S - Plural...nominative...masculine [separate Ss]

T - Declension?

S - Third.

T - Both?

S - Yes.

. . .

S - If they were different declensions they wouldn't agree, would they?

. . .

T - What would 'the good hand' be?

S1 - 'Bonus manus.'

T - No.

[silence]

T - What declension is 'hand'?

S2 - Fourth

T - Right, so...

S1 - What gender is 'hand'?

T - Well, what gender *is* it?

S2 - Feminine

S1 - That's the tricky one right there.

T - 'Obdormivit' is what tense?

S - uuh

T - With a 'v', that would be what tense?

S - Perfect

. . .

T - 'militis' is what case?

S - so it's story of the soldier..?

T - so 'of' is the...

S - genitive

. . .

S - Back in the first sentence when we said 'de militis,' maybe I heard it wrong, but did
we say that 'militis' was genitive case? Comes after 'de,' wouldn't that mean ablative?

T - Yes, where's the ablative?

S - Oh yeah, OK.

T - Tell us so everyone knows.

S - 'fabula'

T - They've done a switch on us, so that the word that goes with 'de' is not right after it.

T - What conjugation are the two verbs?

S - I think 'obdormivisti' would be fourth, and 'vigilavisti' is first.

T - Right.

. . .

T - What case is 'cubiculo'?

S - I think it's dative, no, ...

T - 'Cubiculo' could be dative, but it could also be...

S - Ablative.

T - Why is it ablative, aside from the ending?

S - Preposition.

T -   Yes, it's not 'to the room' but in it.

. . .

S -   'Did you hear...'
T -   No, before you go any further.
S -   What? It's not 'hear'
T -   Yes, but...
S -   Oh, 'Do you hear...'
T -   No, it's not 'you' anything.
S -   Oh, it's 'he, he heard...'
T -   And who's he?
S -   Marcus, no, Sextus, no... Flavia!
[laughter]

. . .

S -   Oh, 'Did Aulus hear the sound...?'

. . .

T -   What words in that sentence are in the accusative?
S -   'Eum.' Is 'eum' in the accusative?
T -   Yes.
S -   'Sonitum.' 'Sonitum'?
T -   Yes.
S -   Am I missing one?
T -   No, no more accusatives. What tense is 'parabat'?
S -   'Parabat' is...imperfect.
T -   Imperfect. Good.

. . .

T -   What tense is 'fuit'?
S -   Perfect.
T -   What verb does it come from?
S -   'Esse'
T -   yes, 'sum esse fui'

. . .

T -   What case is 'cubiculum'?
S -   Accusative?
T -   And 'Italia'?
S -   Ablative.
T -   What's the difference?
S -   You're going to the room, but you're in Italy.
T -   here's a nasty one - what case is 'Eucleides' in?
S -   Vocative?
T -   Yes, good. . . .Why is 'periculosum' in the neuter?
S -   Because...no. It's a ...
T -   What's the subject? What is dangerous?
S -   'Habitare'
T -   It's an infinitive, and infinitives when they act as nouns are always neuter.

Appendix C
Assignments

(A) Grammatical Description Test (Sept. 30)

1. Translate the following passage into good English. If necessary, put literal translations in parentheses if your translation strays too far from the original.

Multae ancillae ē vīllā currunt et in silvam errant quod hodiē nōn labōrant. Diēs est calidus; in silvā prope rīvum frīgidum igitur sedent.

In vīllā clamat Aurēlia quod ancillās vidēre nōn potest. Gaius Cornēlius abest, et Aurēlia nōn est laeta. Servum petit, eum appropinquat, togam arripit, et "Ubi sunt ancillae ignāvae?" ferociter clamat.
"In silvā sunt," respondet servus perterritus.

Aurēlia īrāta in silvam celeriter ambulat. Ubi ancillās cōnspicit, Aurēlia eās reprehendit. Ancillae tamen neque audiunt neque respondent, sed rīdent quod Aurēliam nōn timent. Aurēlia ancillās molestās nōn iam spectat sed in vīllam redit. In cubiculō sōla lacrimat.

abesse - to be away   **eum** - him (obj.)   **ferociter** - fiercely
eās - them (f., obj.)   **lacrimāre** - to cry

2. Describe (grammatically) the underlined phrases in the passage in as much detail as possible.

(B) Case Identification Assignment (October 9)

[From *Ecce Romani*, vol. 1-A, p. 84]

Genitive Singular or Nominative Plural?

In the 1st and 2nd declensions, the endings of the genitive singular are the same as the endings of the nominative plural. To decide which case is used, you must look for further clues.
Look at these sentences:

1. **Celeriter redeunt servī.**

The genitive usually forms a phrase with another noun. Since servī is the only noun in the sentence, it must be nominative plural.

2. **Puerī pater est senātor Rōmānus.**

The word **puerī** could be genitive singular or nominative plural. It is only when we reach **pater** (which can only be nominative singular) and **est** (which is a singular verb) that we know that **puerī** must be genitive singular, forming a phrase with **pater**, i.e., "the boy's father."

3a. **In agrīs dominī servī strēnuē labōrant.**
3b. **In agrīs dominī servōs habent.**

In 3a **dominī** and **servī** cannot both be nominative plural since they are not linked by **et**. One of them, therefore, must be genitive singular. There is a second clue: the order of the words suggests that **dominī** forms a phrase with **in agrīs** and that **servī** is the subject of **labōrant.**

In 3b **dominī** could be genitive singular or nominative plural, but it makes more sense to take **dominī** as the subject of **habent** than to assume some unspecified subject.

4. **In vīllā puellae sedent.**

Again, **puellae** could be genitive singular or nominative plural. Only the context will help you to decide whether the sentence means *The girls sit in the house*, or *They sit in the girl's house*.

Exercise 11e
Read aloud and translate. Explain the clues that make you decide whether the nouns in boldface are genitive singular or nominative plural:

1. **Puellae** sunt dēfessae.
2. In agrīs **puerī** ambulant.
3. **Puellae** et mātrēs in vīllā sedent.
4. **Puerī** epistulās scrībunt.
5. Pater **Marcī** in vīllā sedet.
6. Pater vōcem **puellae** audit.
7. **Puerī** vōcem **Marcī** audiunt.
8. Frātrēs **puerī** sunt in hortō.
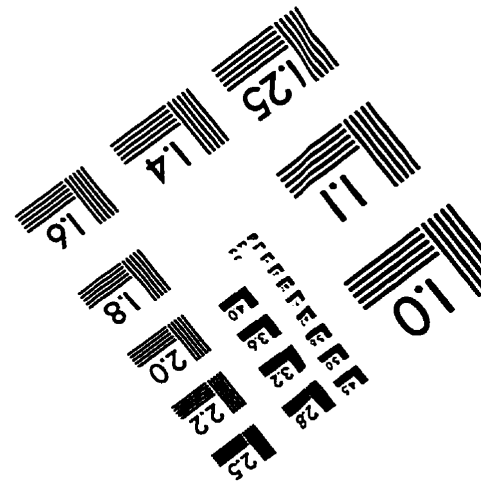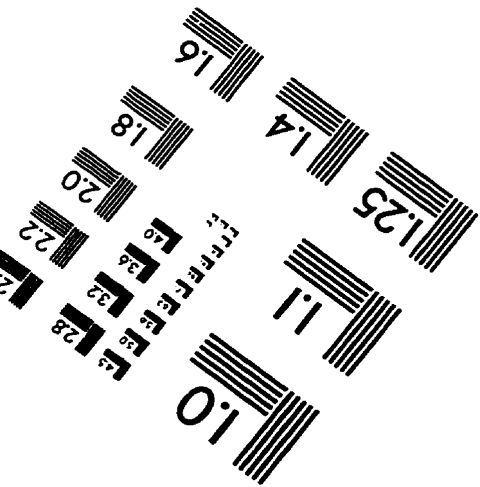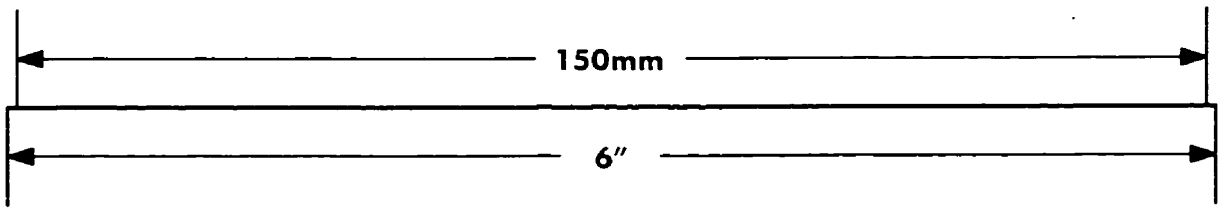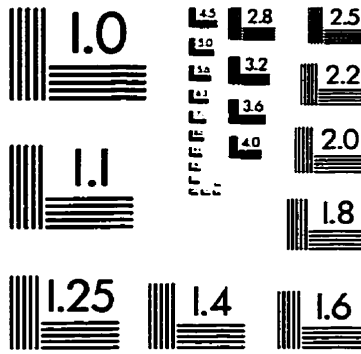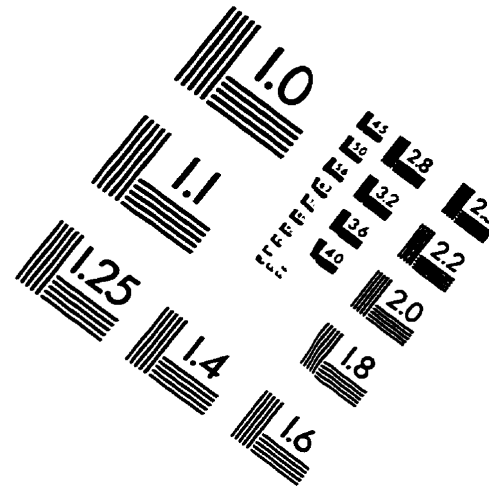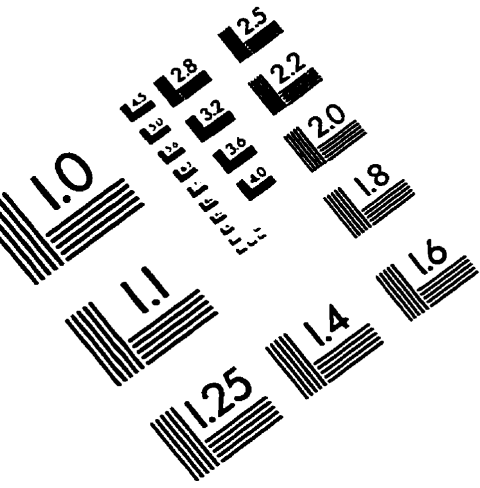9. **Servī** in agrīs fīlium **dominī** petunt.

Appendix D
Participant Questionnaire

This questionnaire was completed by all students in the first and last weeks of the research period (first term). It was designed to elicit general responses about language learning and does not specifically apply to Latin or to the course being taken. It was kept short (two questions on each side of a single page) to make the data manageable and to make students feel comfortable about completing it.

1. Describe your experiences of learning a second or foreign language (either at home or in a school context).

2. Assess your level of understanding of your first language (mother tongue).

3. What is your reaction to the concept of grammar?

4. How familiar are you with grammatical concepts? Provide a few examples.

IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (QA-3)

150mm

6"