The Dynamics of Second Language Learning

A longitudinal and qualitative study of an adult's learning of Swedish

by

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Abstract
An often discussed issue in the field of second language learning is the influence and importance of individual differences, IDs, such as motivation, personality, previous learning experiences and learning strategies. It has been claimed that IDs form a complex system in the learner, but little consensus has been reached as regards definitions of constructs or their relative importance. Taking the individual learner as a starting-point, this dissertation attempts to demonstrate the complexity of individual differences in the single learner by adopting an in-depth holistic approach. For this purpose a longitudinal case study was designed to follow the learning process of a young Greek woman’s acquisition of Swedish during a ten-month intensive course in Sweden. The study is mainly based on self-report and personal diaries, which have been interpreted and analysed qualitatively.

The learning process is extensively described and changes in, for example, strategy use, life situation and learning progress are illustrated. There are indeed many complex factors which have the potential to influence learning. In this particular case, seven factors are indicated as having had a positive influence: previous language learning experiences (especially as regards learning strategies), long-term motivation, metalinguistic awareness, social contacts with L2 speakers, access to English as a mediating language, access to a strict and intensive Swedish course, and a well-needed learning break in the middle of the studies. Negative factors were largely of an emotional nature, especially a period of liminality which created feelings of not belonging, of being betwixt and between.

It is suggested that IDs form a dynamic variable system in the learner. All the IDs are present in the learner, but they seem to change both in substance over time and in importance for the learner at different times in the learning process. Furthermore, IDs appear to be interconnected in a complex and dynamic way. The results of this study strongly emphasise the importance of both an holistic and a longitudinal approach to IDs in second language learning.

Keywords: second language learning, second language acquisition, individual differences, attitude, motivation, learning strategies, communication strategies, identity, liminality, case study, Grounded Theory, hermeneutic, qualitative, holistic, longitudinal, Swedish
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Umeå, April 2001
Nils Granberg
Some comments on the transcriptions

In the quotes from the English interviews, reference is made to the number of the interview and the page in the transcription. Brackets and capital letters are used to indicate laughter, sighs or other extra-linguistic signals. Brackets and capital letters are also used to illustrate speech within speech, i.e. comments by the interlocutor. In the Swedish interviews this is indicated without brackets. Quotes within quotes are specified by single quotation marks, and, finally, square brackets are used for meta-comments, for example translations into English.
Individual Differences in Second Language Learning

With the expanding globalisation and the establishment of a multilingual European Union, as well as the continuous refugee immigration, research into second language learning has become increasingly important. We need to develop our understanding of the complicated process of learning a second language and evolve coherent theories to help us explain these processes. We also need to increase this understanding and knowledge in order to develop our teaching of second languages, effectively and competently.

Learning a second language is not an easy task. It has been shown that for school age-children it can take at least five years to reach native-like competence in school subjects (Cummins 1981). Not only does the learner have to achieve a certain grammatical competence, but he/she also has to acquire a sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence (Canale 1983). Additionally, the learner is expected to adapt socially and emotionally to a new environment.

In the course of my years as a teacher of Swedish as a Second Language to adults, I have come to ponder why some students seem to learn much faster than others and achieve greater proficiency.¹ From a linguistic point of view, explanations such as typological distance between L1 and L2 and educational school background have seemed plausible, but at the same time there have been students with apparently the same background who still differ individually in achievement. This is why I became interested in the

¹ Learning a second language differs from learning a foreign language in that the former usually takes place in the environment where the second language is spoken and that the learner is expected to reach a high level of proficiency, ultimately native-like (e.g. Ellis 1994:11). This distinction is also adhered to here. However, since the learning process has many similarities in foreign and second language learning, generally no distinction is made here as concerns research and its results. Wherever necessary, though, the distinction between foreign and second language learning will be expressed in the text.
The bulk of second language learning research has been directed towards finding similarities and commonalities among learners, but parallel to this, another strand of research has been directed towards the differences between individuals, i.e. the individuality of learning. From an early stage, in the 1950s and 1960s, aptitude (e.g. Carroll 1965) and, in the 1970s, motivation (e.g. Gardner & Lambert 1972) was the focus of research. Subsequently, in the last two decades, there has been an increased interest in the research area of IDs, with more studies and a substantial number of identified factors. One reason for this could be the increasing interest in individualised, communicative and learner-centred learning (e.g. Kramsch 2000, Oxford 1997).

The following factors are often mentioned in connection with IDs: personality, attitudes, motivation, learning strategies, learning styles, age, aptitude, as well as factors viewed from a social, cultural, and emotional perspective (cf. Chapter 1). As can be seen, individual differences have been proposed as being of importance for second language learning, and still more suggestions have been made. This abundance raises difficulties in overviewing the research area.

Not only have a large number of different IDs been proposed, but there is also a considerable difference in the definitions of constructs. As Ellis (1994:471) states in an overview “[t]he constructs [... are often vague and overlap in indeterminate ways“, which complicates the comparison of results among the different ID studies.

Additionally, research on individual differences inevitably involves several different disciplines, i.e. it is by nature cross-disciplinary, which in itself could make it difficult for researchers to overview theories from traditionally separate disciplines, such as Sociology, Psychology, Linguistics, Anthropology and others.

Furthermore, most researchers seem to agree that many different IDs interact in the individual in a highly complex way. Yet most studies have investigated only one or two of these IDs simultaneously. A typical study would choose one or a few IDs, find a measuring instrument (tests, ques-

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2 I have chosen to use the term individual differences, IDs, here, because it seems to be increasingly accepted as a super-ordinate construct. Using this term is not, however, without problems. For instance, it is impossible to talk about the individual differences of a learner. Therefore I will sometimes use individual factors, individual aspects or just individuality.
tionnaires, etc., see Chapter 1), pick out a representatively large population, and then compare the test results to final grades, for example, in order to be able to judge the general importance of the IDs. Very few studies have attempted a whole-person approach where individuals are presented holistically in order to allow us to see the whole complexity of IDs from the individual’s perspective (cf. also Chapter 1). It seems probable that “there are many ways to achieve success and it is not possible to draw up a single profile of the successful learner” (Ellis 1994:524). Thus an in-depth single-case study like the present one could help us discern at least part of this complexity of IDs in the individual and could serve as a starting point for further research on the individuality of second language learning.

Let us imagine, for a moment, an individual who comes to another country and sets out to learn a new, second language. This individual brings his/her experience and his/her individual characteristics into a new environment. What earlier language learning and other learning experiences does this person have? What are the emotional, cultural and social factors brought to and created in this particular language learning situation? What are his/her individual characteristics, as a person and as a learner? What strategies for learning does this person use? How does he/she find motivation for learning, and what results does he/she achieve? What happens longitudinally?

It has been my purpose to search for answers to these questions and find ways of illustrating the complexity of IDs in the individual by adopting an holistic approach to one single adult learner. These questions have thus served as a basis for the design and purpose of this study.

**Purpose**

The main purpose of this dissertation is to study an adult individual second language learner from an holistic perspective, thus exposing and revealing as many individually connected factors in second language learning as possible in order to illuminate the larger picture from one individual’s perspective. One central issue is whether these factors change over time and, furthermore, whether it is possible to relate them to the development of the second language.

With this purpose in mind, the following research questions have been raised.
- What is the character of the intricate make-up of individual differences in the individual?
- How does this individual change over time?
- What are the reasons for the individual’s actions in the learning situation?
- To what extent can a connection with linguistic progress be found?

In other words, this study is discovery oriented, aimed at exploring one learner’s life-world from a learning and an ID perspective. It’s objective is to reach an understanding of a single learner in a particular context; this understanding could then serve as a basis for further assumptions about IDs in second language learning. In addition, it assumes a longitudinal approach, thus taking an interest in changes which could illustrate the processual aspects of IDs. Further, the narrow scope of one single learner allows for an in-depth, wide-ranging study of several different aspects of the individuality of second language learning. This width of scope of IDs does not allow for an in-depth study of each respective ID.
1. Earlier Research on Individual Differences

In this chapter an overview of a number of the individual characteristics which influence language learning will be presented together with some theoretical models. This overview is not intended to be comprehensive. Rather, it describes some of the more salient features of research into individual differences, concentrating on those that are relevant for the present study of a single learner, sometimes only briefly mentioning others. The purpose of this chapter is, in other words, to provide the reader with a stage setting against which the plot of this study can be unfolded.¹

In some overviews the IDs have been grouped together, for example to illustrate causality among others. Three of these will be mentioned here. Skehan (1989) starts off with the research on the Good Language Learner by Naiman et al. (1978, see further below) and proposes what he calls a taxonomic model which contains four independent and two dependent variables (Figure 1a). The independent (causal) variables are social context, classroom and materials, opportunities for target language use and the learner; while the dependent (caused) variables are learning and outcome. The learning variable contains conscious strategies and unconscious processes. According to Skehan’s model, the social context and the classroom and materials both provide opportunities for target language use, which in turn leads to learning, but they can also contribute directly to learning. The fourth independent variable, the learner, consists of two groups of factors, cognitive abilities (intelligence, aptitude and cognitive style) and affective factors (motivation and attitude, and personality) which directly influence the learning, but could also, according to Skehan, interact with the other three independent variables. Skehan sees his model as “a coherent framework for the investigation of quantitative relationships between the variables” (p. 145).

Spolsky (1989) suggests a comprehensive model for second language learning which he calls a preference model. It consists of 74 conditions which are either necessary for or typical of learning. Many of these

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Focus on learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Focus on the learner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area 1</td>
<td>Area 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of learner language</td>
<td>Learner-external factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>errors</td>
<td>social context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acquisition orders and developmental sequences</td>
<td>input and interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>variability</td>
<td>Learning processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pragmatic features</td>
<td>communication strategies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus on the learner

Area 3

Learner-internal mechanisms

Area 4

The language learner

general factors e.g. motivation

learner strategies

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Figure 1a. Skehan’s model (Skehan 1989:120).

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Figure 1c. Explaining second language learning (Ellis 1994:18).

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Figure 1b. Explaining second language learning (Ellis 1994:18).

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Figure 1c. Explaining second language learning (Ellis 1994:18).

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Figure 1d. Individual learner differences (Ellis 1994:473).
provides leads to

**Attitudes**
(of various kinds)

which appear in the learner as

**Motivation**

which joins with other personal characteristics such as

**Age**  **Personality**  **Capabilities**  **Previous knowledge**

all of which explain the use the learner makes of the available

**Learning opportunities** (formal or informal)

the interplay between learner and situation determining

**Linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes for the learner**

*Figure 1b. Spolsky’s model (Spolsky 1989:28).*
conditions are simultaneously graded in the sense that the more a condition is met, the better the learning will be. These conditions are interrelated into clusters, which in turn interact. Thus Spolsky’s model emphasises both the complexity and the interactivity of individual characteristics in second language learning. Two main clusters can be discerned, social context and learner conditions (Figure 1b). The social context both provides learning opportunities and leads to attitudes in the learner. The attitudes lead to development of motivation, which is part of the second cluster of conditions. This cluster contains personal characteristics, such as age, aptitude, styles and strategies, personality and previous knowledge, and it serves to explain the use the learner makes of the learning opportunities. Spolsky emphasises the cyclicity of his model and that the parts have no set order (p. 83). He further speculates whether the second language learning process might not be a sequential, causal process but a parallel process on multiple levels.

Ellis (1994) gives a comprehensive overview of research on second language learning. Taking the learner as a starting point he distinguishes three areas of research aimed at explaining language learning (Figure 1c). The first area consists of learner-external factors, such as social context and interaction, the second area contains learner-internal factors, such as learning processes and universal processes; the third area puts the focus on the individual language learner, explaining differential success in learning. As concerns the last area, Ellis sees the individual learning factors, such as beliefs about language learning, affective states, age, aptitude, learning styles, motivation, personality and learning experience, as the basis for the learner’s choice of strategies which in turn results in language learning outcome (Figure 1d). According to Ellis, individual factors, strategies and learning outcome interact in a complex way.

Although these overviews organise the individual factors somewhat differently, they all emphasise that IDs are important for second language learning, that these IDs are interrelated and interact in a complex way, and that there are differences in both naming and defining the IDs. It is also quite clear that we know very little about how they are important or how they interact. Or as Ellis (1994) puts it:

there is still no comprehensive theory of IDs in SLA research. A full theory will need to identify those IDs that are important for successful learning, indicate the relative contribution of particular IDs to learning, specify how IDs interrelate, account for their influence on the learner’s choice of specific strategies, and account
for the effect that learning outcomes can have on IDs. It will also have to make clear what effect (if any) IDs have on the process of L2 acquisition (Ellis 1994:523).

In the following sections, the most salient results of research into IDs will be summarised to provide a background for this study. First some of the most commonly mentioned IDs will be presented (1.1–1.5), then the Good Language Learner research and two multi-factor studies will be illustrated (1.6–1.7), followed by a presentation of a few single-case studies (1.8).

### 1.1. Contextual Factors

Society in its widest sense is the basic context for all inter-human activity. Human beings form groups, and groups within groups, which are held together by social bonds. Society could be defined as a systematic organisation of human beings, with common cultural patterns, providing its members with protection, continuity and national identity. From this perspective, all the IDs mentioned here belong to, or are influenced by, the social context. Seen from a second language learning perspective, however, it is not society per se which is in focus, but the ‘meeting of societies’, for example in a cross-cultural, cross-linguistic or cross-ethnic perspective. Learning a second language in the second language milieu inevitably means meeting another culture, and subsequently a social and emotional adjustment (Gardner 1985:147). From the individual's perspective this meeting could have a more or less influential on learning. In other words, the learner encounters a cultural situation, a social situation and an emotional situation which is, partly or completely, new, and he/she has to find a way to cope with it.

#### Cultural Situation

A cultural context could be defined as the environment for cultivating; cultivating ideas, values, behaviour and attributes which become common to a group of people. From a second language learning perspective the learners already have a cultural background when they meet the new culture connected with the second language. Each learner could furthermore have several cultural backgrounds: on a general level referring to, for example, the culture of a country, a language group or an ethnic group; or on a sub-
cultural level referring to, for example, youth culture, religious culture or classroom culture.

Schumann (1978) argues in his acculturation model that the degree of social integration into the second language group determines the degree of language learning. He identifies social variables on a group level and individual affective variables which influence learning. Among the social variables he mentions dominance patterns and group patterns (see social situation below) and among the individual variables he mentions language shock and cultural shock. Language shock is the fears resulting from using the second weaker language and cultural shock is described as a disorientation resulting from the meeting of another culture and the anxieties connected with this. Oxford & Ehrman (1993) describe culture shock as a fear of losing oneself in the target culture. “L2 Learners who are living in the target culture frequently experience culture shock, at least initially. Culture shock involves some or all of these symptoms: emotional regression, panic, anger, self-pity, indecision, sadness, alienation, ‘reduced personality’, and physical illness” (Oxford & Ehrman 1993:193f).

To Brown (1994) culture shock is the second of four stages of acculturation. The first is a stage of excitement about the new environment, the second is a stage of shock, as mentioned, the third is a stage of gradual recovery where parts of the new culture are accepted, and the fourth is a stage of near or full recovery comprising either assimilation or adaptation. Söderlindh (1984) omits Brown’s first stage (excitement) and defines the immigration crisis in the following four stages: shock, reaction, repair and reorientation. She describes the shock phase as a series of setbacks and difficulties, where emotions are kept back, eventually leading to a sometimes violent reaction. This reaction phase is characterised by psychological defence mechanisms, like regression, denial, isolation, feelings of guilt etc., but there are also initial stages of repair work. The repair phase, which can last several years, consists of a gradual acceptance of the situation and the new country. Finally, hopefully, the immigrant enters into a phase of a reorientation; a feeling of maturity and biculturalism.

Closely related to the culture context is the issue of identity. The construct of identity has many definitions and its very value has even been questioned (Alsmark 1997). But in connection with second language learning it is useful to talk about identity, especially from an ethnic perspective.
Virta (1994), in a study of the ethnic identity of Finnish pupils living in both Sweden and Finland (including Finns who re-migrated to Finland) defines identity in the following manner. First he makes a distinction between ego-identity, the feeling of being yourself, being an individual, and self-image, your evaluation of being what you are. These together form your personal identity. Virta then differentiates the personal identity from social identity, which contains a feeling of belonging to a group, as well as the evaluation of the group and your belonging to the group. These two types of identity, personal and social identity, as described here, are subjective and should not be confused with how others define the individual’s personal and social identity, which has been called an objective description.

One part of the social identity is ethnic identity, i.e. the feeling of belonging to an ethnic group. According to Edwards’s (1985) definition, ethnic identity

is allegiance to a group – large or small, socially dominant or subordinate – with which one has ancestral links. There is no necessity for a continuation, over generations, of the same socialisation or cultural patterns, but some sense of a group boundary must persist. This can be sustained by shared objective characteristics (language, religion, etc.), or by more subjective contributions to a sense of ‘group-ness’, or by some combination of both (Edwards 1985:10).

One interesting result in Virta’s (1994) study is that a clear majority of the re-migrated pupils reported feeling both Finnish and Swedish in their ethnic identity, for example having a Finnish cultural identity and a Swedish national identity. Some pupils seem to see this ‘double identity’ as problematic whereas others seem to have found a balance between their identities. Gordon & Grosin (1973) discuss the double identity of Jews living in Sweden. They conclude that most Jews suffer from the effects of their double identity which is shown in the form of anxiety, ambivalence and confusion, but both those who involve themselves in Jewish issues and those who completely ignore them, have a fair chance of becoming functionally integrated into society. Borgström (1998), in her study of Spanish-American teenagers in Sweden, found that those who did not identify themselves with Swedish society or with their Spanish-American background, established a third identity characterised by feelings of being in-between (cf. 2.4).
Social Situation
Social factors are considered to influence second language learning indirectly in two ways. First, they are involved in shaping the individual's attitudes towards, for example, the second language and its speakers (cf. 1.3) and second, they can provide opportunities for language use (Spolsky 1989:131). As was mentioned above, Schumann (1976a, 1978) in his acculturation model defines social variables on a group level which influence learning. In short, social differences and similarities between the learner group and the target language group either undermine or support learning. A perceived social distance is seen as a negative factor for second language learning. Schumann suggests that a good language learning situation exists when the second language learning group is non-dominant, small and inter-group oriented, when it intends to remain in the target language area, and, furthermore, when the two groups agree on integration of the learning group, when they are culturally congruent, and want to share social facilities (Schumann 1976a).

Schumann discusses inter-group relations, but from an individual's perspective the amount of social contact with the target language group could have a fundamental influence of the individual's language development, provided that he/she is willing to take advantage of it. Spolsky (1989:166ff) emphasises that exposure to the target language is necessary and that the more the learner is exposed to it, the greater are the opportunities for learning. Outside the language classroom the learner will meet an environment where language is used to communicate, where different dialects and registers are encountered, where language is used in different domains and social contexts, and where the learner is offered the opportunity to further practise the second language, which in turn helps to increase his/her communicative competence and fluency.

Emotional Situation
It is likely that the learner's encounter with a new language and a new culture will induce emotional or affective reactions. The possibility of sustaining a language or culture shock as well as effects on feelings of identity have been discussed above and other emotional aspects such as attitudes and motivation will be discussed below. Another fairly frequently discussed factor in second language learning is anxiety.
Many learners seem to experience anxiety in various situations during their learning. Bailey & Ochsner (1983), in an overview of 11 diary studies including her own learning of French, found that one explanation for feelings of anxiety could lie in competitiveness. She found in the analysis of her own diary that she constantly compared herself to the other students in the group. This created an anxiety which interfered with her learning, i.e. a had debilitating effect. At the same time, she found instances where her competitive anxiety helped her to study harder, i.e. had a facilitating effect. She concludes that if the debilitating anxiety is reduced, the quality of performance improves. Apart from competitive anxiety other types of classroom anxiety have been identified, for example test anxiety (Phillips 1992) and communication apprehension, i.e. stage-fright or speech anxiety (Daly 1991). According to Ellis (1994:483) there is sufficient evidence to regard anxiety as an important factor in second language learning.

Other types of emotional factors, for example homesickness, alienation, family problems or living conditions, which could be said to be part of a learners life-world, have been less widely investigated in second language learning research.

1.2. Personality

In everyday language we can talk about someone as having a certain personality, for instance a second language learner. But within research on second language learning the result of studies on personality are, to put it mildly, inconclusive (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991:192). Ellis (1994:517) call these studies ‘scanty’, ‘unsatisfactory’ and ‘a very mixed bag’. This overview will therefore be based on Ellis and Larsen-Freeman & Long and only briefly summarise some of the factors which it has been claimed reflect personality traits in second language learning.

Extroversion/introversion identifies the learner on a continuum, from outgoing, sociable and active (extroverts) to withdrawn, unsocial and passive (introverts). It has been hypothesised, according to Ellis, that extroverts would be better at learning basic interpersonal skills (BICS) and introverts would reach higher cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP; cf. Cummins & Swain 1986:152) but the results are inconclusive. High self-esteem, the feeling of self-confidence, it has been suggested is influential in second language learning but the results of studies are also inconclusive in this respect. A certain disposition for risk-taking has been seen as positive,
especially in classroom settings. Risk-taking as a willingness to guess, to use complex language, and an acceptance of the possibility of looking foolish seems to support language learning, but taking too many risks might have a hampering effect. Learning a new language also involves encountering confusion, lack of clarity, and other ambiguities in the language. Therefore a certain degree of *tolerance of ambiguity* has been seen as facilitating for the learner.

Judging from the overviews in Ellis (1994) and Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) it seems safe to say that results of studies on personality factors in second language learning are inconclusive, ambiguous and in need of further research (cf. Oxford 1999).

### 1.3. Attitudes and Motivation

Issues on the importance of attitudes and motivation are probably the most investigated area of second language research on individual differences. This is due to the extensive research by R. C. Gardner and his associates (e.g. Gardner & Lambert 1972, Lalonde & Gardner 1984, Gardner 1985 and 1990, Gardner & Tremblay 1994a and 1994b, Gardner et al. 1997).

The central concepts in Gardner’s social-psychological view of second language learning are *attitudes, motivation, and integrative/instrumental orientation*. Gardner defines attitudes as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent” (Gardner 1985:9). In the context of second language learning, Gardner sees attitudes toward learning the second language and attitudes toward the second language community as central. Attitudes are seen as an integrated and influential part of the learner’s motivation, which Gardner defines as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language” (Gardner 1985:10). The reasons for learning the language, i.e. the different goals an individual could have, are reflected in two orientations, integrative and instrumental. The integrative orientation reflects an interest in the people and culture of the second language community, whereas the instrumental orientation reflects a practical reason for learning the language. In other words, motivation as defined by Gardner consists of a desire to learn the language, combined with an effort and favourable attitudes related to an integrative or instrumental orientation.
Most of the studies referred to in Gardner (1985) are made in a French-Canadian environment and point to the advantage of an integrative orientation in order to achieve the goal of learning the language (French). Methodologically, these constructs are generally measured through use of a 7-point Likert scale where the learners are asked to react to a number of statements such as “I would like to know more French Canadians” (attitude), “Studying French can be important for me because it will allow me to be at ease with fellow Canadians who speak French” (integrative orientation), and “Studying French can be important for me only because I’ll need it for my future career” (instrumental orientation). These statements are examples from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery in Gardner (1985: Appendix A).

Gardner’s research has had a considerable impact on second language research into motivation and many studies have supported it. In the 1990s several researchers suggested that the social-psychological scope of the motivation construct was not enough to explain the construct of motivation (e.g. Brown 1994, Crookes & Schmidt 1991, Dörnyei 1994, Gardner & Trembley 1994a & b, Noels et al. 2000, Oxford & Shearin 1994, Spolsky 2000). This resulted in the production of a whole range of theories on motivation, none of which is comprehensive.

Dörnyei (1998) and Dörnyei & Skehan (in press) define four contemporary approaches: Expectancy-value theories, goal theories, self-determination theories and social-psychological theories of action. Expectancy-value theories concern the expectancy of success and the value of this success from the individual’s perspective. Three sub-theories are suggested: Attribution theory emphasises the processing of past achievements, self-efficacy theory emphasises the individual’s judgement of his/her capabilities, and self-worth theory emphasises the individual’s self-acceptance. Goal theories concern the properties of the individual’s goal concerning a certain action, self-determination theories concern the individual’s sense of autonomy, and social-psychological theories of action concern the importance of the individual’s attitudes.

1.4. Strategies and Styles
Apart from social, cultural and emotional effects on second language learning, there has been extensive interest in what learners actually do to learn the second language and how they overcome difficulties in using the
second language to communicate. These two aspects have been called learning strategies and communication strategies, respectively. Furthermore, there has been an interest in finding out whether different learners prefer different ways of learning, i.e. learning styles. These three aspects of IDs in second language will be presented in this chapter.

Learning Strategies

Naiman et al. (1978), in their interview study, found five learner strategies and several learning techniques which characterise good language learners. The strategies identified were: An active task approach, realisation of language as a system, realisation of language as a means of communication, management of affective demands, monitoring L2 performance. These strategies and techniques together with the assumptions in, for example, Rubin (1975) and Rubin & Thompson (1982) have served as a basis for subsequent research on language learning strategies. Eventually, several taxonomies were suggested (O’Malley & Chamot 1990, Oxford 1990, Poulisse 1989, Wenden 1991, and Wenden & Rubin 1987).

In the present context, the taxonomy suggested by Oxford (1990) summarises fairly well the learner strategies which have been identified in research. Oxford divides the language learning strategies into two main groups; direct and indirect strategies. The direct strategies are techniques which the learners use in direct manipulation of the second language, whereas the indirect strategies concern how the learners regulate their learning. Direct strategies are memory strategies used for storing and retrieving information through creating mental linkages, applying images and reviewing, cognitive strategies used for practising, reasoning and creating structure, and compensation strategies, used to overcome limitations in speaking and writing.\(^4\) Indirect strategies are metacognitive strategies used for

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\(^4\) By defining compensation strategies in this context, Oxford evidently confuses learning strategies with communication strategies which are used for achieving a communicative goal (Bialystok 1990, Faerch & Kasper 1983a, Kasper & Kellerman 1997, Palmberg 1983). Oxford argues (p.243, footnote 25) that it is often difficult to decide whether a learner uses a strategy to communicate or learn. True, there is a connection in the sense that a successful use of communication strategies can help to keep a conversation going which provides more opportunities for input which in turn can lead to learning, but the primary function of communication strategies is to communicate, not to learn. In a later book, written together with Robin C. Scarcella (Scarcella & Oxford 1992), Oxford separates communication strategies from learning strategies (pp. 63 and 72–74).
planning, analysing, organising, monitoring and evaluating one’s learning, affective strategies, used to regulate emotions in the learning process, and social strategies, used to create opportunities for language use. These strategy groups are further subdivided in her taxonomy (see Appendix A).

Much of the research on language learning strategies is descriptive and oriented towards finding out how good learners use these strategies. In an extensive research overview, Oxford & Burry-Stock (1995), in examining the use of Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, SILL (Oxford 1990, see Appendix B), concluded that more advanced or proficient learners use strategies more frequently than less advanced learners. This was also confirmed in a study by Wharton (2000) who tested 678 university students in Singapore. Wharton found that bilinguals prefer social strategies and use comparatively few affective strategies. Ellis (1994:558) implies that it might not be a question of quantity but of quality. In other words, good strategy users might be good at deploying the right strategies for the right task, but very little is known about this. He concludes that longitudinal case studies are needed to find out more about how strategies are deployed over time.

Communication Strategies

Communication strategies have been defined as potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal (Faerch & Kasper 1983a:36).

According to this definition, communication strategies are plans which are goal oriented, problem oriented and potentially conscious. Faerch & Kasper (1983a) take the individual as a starting point. They suggest a general psycholinguistic speech production model containing two main phases: a planning phase and an execution phase (Faerch & Kasper 1983a:22ff.). Whenever the individual in the execution phase experiences a problem in communicating his/her goal, he/she uses communication strategies. Faerch & Kasper distinguish two kinds of communication strategies: reduction strategies and achievement strategies. The reduction strategies have the character of avoidance behaviour which generally leads to a change of communicative goal, while the consequences of the achievement strategies are that the individual maintains his/her goal and develops alternative plans to achieve this goal. They point out that strategies must, at some level at least, be conscious; otherwise they cannot
be called strategic. According to Faerch & Kasper there are plans which are always consciously employed by all language users, but there are also plans which are consciously employed by some language users but not by others, and/or plans which are only used in some situations. Furthermore, they point to the possible existence of once consciously employed plans that have been automatised. Consequently, they define communication strategies as 'potentially conscious' plans.

From a process-oriented perspective, Bialystok (1990) criticises the criterion of problematicity as the basis for the definition of communication strategies. In a sense, Bialystok says, all communication can be said to be problem-solving and even if there is one side of a continuum where the communication could be seen as more problematic, it is still very difficult to distinguish the boundary between problematic and non-problematic communication which is fundamental for a definition.

This criticism of problematicity as a criterion is in line with discussions in pragmatics (for example Levinson 1983) and in rhetoric (for example Sigrell 2001), where it is claimed that all language use is strategic in the sense that all language use is a matter of choice among a certain amount of available resources. This is also in line with my own assumptions about language use, but when it concerns second language learning it can sometimes be useful to define a certain group of communication strategies because of the learning perspective. In other words, if inadequate linguistic knowledge creates a problem in communicating an intended message, then the solution to this problem becomes interesting for second language research. Second language learners possess a limited linguistic system compared to native speakers, and in order to communicate they sometimes have to manipulate or 'stretch' this language to convey their message, for example by using communication strategies. These strategies can resemble or be exactly the same as strategies found among native speakers, but seen from a language learning perspective they are, on the one hand, indicators of proficiency-related difficulties, and, on the other, as concerns achievement strategies, examples of a willingness to communicate, and subsequently, to learn. This latter point, that the use of communication strategies might lead to learning, has two sides. First the use of communication strategies ideally helps to keep the conversation going thus providing more input (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991:126). Second, the use of communication strategies in experiencing a communication problem contributes to a 'pushed' output, i.e. "toward the delivery of a message that
is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately" (Swain 1985:249). By noticing a gap in their present knowledge of the second language, by trying to convey their message in spite of this gap, the learners stretch their interlanguage to test new hypotheses which, in turn, is the basis for learning (Swain & Lapkin 1995).

Therefore, even if we can only discern communication strategies that are very obviously problem-oriented, on the one side of Bialystok's continuum mentioned above, it is still of interest to investigate them from a language learning perspective.

All in all, there seems to be a consensus among researchers in second language learning about the form communication strategies take in learner language. Differing opinions are found regarding which psycholinguistic model to put communication strategies into and the organisational structure of taxonomies, i.e. definition and classification issues (see Gullberg 1998:12-32 and Dörnyei & Scott 1997 for overviews).

Learning Styles

Whereas the learning and communication strategies presented above could be characterised as the methods learners apply to learn a second language, learning styles can be seen as the general preferences within the learners for learning. They could also be described as learners' general pre-dispositions for processing information. Learning styles are considered to be relatively fixed and thus fairly immune to change. For pedagogical purposes they have been used to make learners more aware of their own learning preferences in the belief that this will enhance the learners' possibilities of finding more efficient and individual ways of learning.

As in strategy research, there are a fair number of studies which discuss learning styles, so this presentation is therefore mainly based on a comprehensive and recent overview of learning styles for second language learning, namely Oxford & Anderson (1995).

Usually language learner styles are presented as dimensions or continua along which learners can be found. Furthermore, many different style dimensions are present in each learner, focussing on, for example, cognitive, affective, social or physiological aspects of the individual. Oxford & Anderson (1995) define eight dimensions which they consider to be the most significant for second language learning; global vs. analytical learners, field dependent vs. field independent learners, feeling vs. thinking learners,
impulsive vs. reflective learners, intuitive-random vs. concrete-sequential learners, closure-oriented vs. open learners, extroverted vs. introverted learners, visual vs. auditory vs. hands-on learners.

The global learner tends to begin with the whole, whereas the analytic learner tends to begin with the parts. It is speculated that the global learner would be more prone to use communicative learning whereas the analytic learner would be more interested in formal language learning. The field-dependent learner tends to be more holistic, having difficulties in discerning details from the background information, whereas the field-independent learner concentrates on details and tends to value autonomy. The feeling learner tends to be sensitive to emotional and social aspects of learning, whereas the thinking learner tends to prefer logical and analytic aspects. The impulsive learner tends to be in a hurry and can thus be error-prone, whereas the reflected learner works slowly and tends to be more accurate in performance. The intuitive-random learner tends to prefer abstract, non-linear learning and is not afraid of guessing, hypothesising and reacting intuitively, whereas the concrete-sequential learner prefers sequential, linear learning and wants to have everything in order. The closure-oriented learner tends to plan carefully and dislikes ambiguities and uncertainties, whereas the open learner tends to have a high tolerance for ambiguity and might see language learning more like a game. The extroverted learner tends to enjoy interactive activities, whereas the introverted learners prefer to work alone (cf. 1.2). Finally the visual learner tends to learn from visualised activities, the auditory learner tends to learn from oral stimuli, whereas the hands-on learner tends to learn from physical activities.

Oxford & Anderson (1995) conclude that learners should be helped to discover their own learning styles to make their language learning easier and more effective, and that teachers should learn more about their own learning and teaching style (cf. also the discussion on reflective teaching in Richards & Lockhart 1994).

1.5. Age and Aptitude
The IDs of age and aptitude differ from the other IDs in that they are practically unchangeable; the learner has a certain age and is equipped with a certain aptitude in the language learning situation. Thus, from the individual learner’s point of view, they can be considered to be of less importance since the learner has no influence upon them. However, an
increased knowledge about age-related learner differences could have implication for practice, for example as regards the planning of language programmes and at what age to start language learning. Similarly, an increased knowledge about aptitude could have implications for the prediction of language learning outcomes.

Within second language learning research there has been an ongoing debate about age-related learner differences connected to maturation. It has been observed that the ability of reaching high levels in a second language seems to decrease with increasing age, from childhood to puberty. In a research overview, Long (1990) finds that most researchers agree that there are some kinds of maturational constraints on the ability of reaching native-like proficiency in a second language. He says that there are sensitive periods, i.e. periods with no clear-cut beginning or end boundaries, during which there is a cumulative decline in the ability to reach native-like competence. For example, Long’s overview suggests that children, but not adults, can reach a native-like pronunciation of the second language and that the sensitive period for phonology falls off around the age of 6. Furthermore, Long hypothesises that there is a sensitive period for morphology and syntax which ends around the age of 15. In the search for explanations for these age-related differences, Long concludes that neurological rather than input and social/psychological factors appear to explain the decline in language learning ability. In other words, as the human brain loses its plasticity step by step until puberty, the ability to reach native-like ultimate proficiency in a second language declines.

In a recent overview, covering also research up to the present time, Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson (in press) refer to several studies which show that there are in fact a few individual late learners, starting their learning after puberty, who have been able to reach overall levels of proficiency in the second language high enough to let them pass as native speakers to native judges, although closer linguistic analyses show that they are close to native, or near-native, rather than native-like. These studies together cover all kinds of proficiency aspects, including pronunciation. In other words, it is possible to reach near-native as opposed to native-like levels of proficiency in spite of maturational constraints. Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson suggest that maturation explains the general decline in learning ability for all learners, whereas non-maturational factors explain the success of these exceptional learners. According to Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, these non-maturational factors seem to be social/psychological in character, for exam-
people high motivation, high aptitude and high-quality instruction. In other words, exceptionally good social/psychological circumstances can compensate for maturation and can allow for near-native proficiency also after puberty.

Second language aptitude has not been in focus for research nearly as much as maturational factors. This is probably due to the difficulty of defining the construct and measuring it. The most well-known definition, and mostly used, stems from Carroll (1965, cited in Skehan 1989). Carroll suggests that foreign language aptitude consists of phonemic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, inductive language learning ability, and rote memorisation (Skehan 1989:26ff.). In other words, according to this definition, aptitude consists of an analytic ability to discriminate sounds and grammatical functions, to identify patterns and to remember. The mostly used testing instrument is the MLAT (the Modern Language Aptitude Test) which, most often, is used to predict foreign language learning outcomes (see Skehan 1989:28 for a description of the test).

This definition of aptitude has been criticised for its emphasis on analytical/cognitive abilities to predict language learning. Language learning is also a matter of abilities to develop global skills, like communicative competence and, furthermore, a matter of learner’s attitudes and motivation, styles and strategies, personality, as well as pedagogical circumstances (see the articles in Parry & Stansfield 1990).

1.6. The Good Language Learner Research

In an early multi-method study which has had considerable impact on subsequent research on individual differences, Naiman et al. (1978) investigated what constitutes the good language learner. Their study comprised two main parts; an adult interview study, and a classroom study.

In the first part, aimed at interviewing good language learners in detail, 34 interviewees participated. They were recommended to the researchers as highly proficient in at least one foreign language. They were interviewed for 1–2 hours on one occasion, based on a questionnaire containing directed and semi-directed questions. In these interviews they were asked to rate their own proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading and writing on a three-point scale; elementary proficiency, working knowledge, and advanced native-like knowledge. Those who rated themselves as advanced or as having a working knowledge on at least three of the skills were
considered to be highly proficient. Furthermore, they were asked questions about what they considered to have been important for their learning, and also about how they prefer to learn. From these questions the researchers could infer factors like motivation, attitude and personality, as well as strategies for learning. One question concerned having a “gift” for languages, i.e. aptitude, and less than half of these highly proficient learners judged themselves as being strong in languages.

The results in general show that each language learning career is unique, which is reiterated repeatedly in the report. However, there are some general characteristics which describe the good language learner:

In general, the good language learner is someone who actively involves himself in the language learning process, either right from the beginning or later; he also finds ways to overcome obstacles, whether linguistic, affective or environmental; he monitors his own performance; he studies, practises, and involves himself in communication (Naiman et al. 1978:17).

In other words, the good language learner is active, inventive and conscientious in his/her language learning, a characteristic which could be interpreted as applying on a majority of learners.

Based on a comparison of the answers from these 34 learners, the researchers draw the conclusion that (perceived) aptitude, long exposure and early starting age appear to be less significant for foreign language learning than strong motivation, positive attitudes, favourable learning circumstances (e.g. immersion), some personality characteristics, and learning strategies. A case study of three of the learners, based on the interviews mentioned above, confirms that good language learners use an active approach to their learning:

In sum the three case studies show that good language learners take advantage of potentially useful learning situations, and if necessary create them. They develop learning techniques and strategies appropriate to their individual needs. They demonstrate that, contrary to popular belief, language success is not so much attributable to an ‘innate gift’, as to a conscious effort and constant involvement (Naiman et al. 1978:25).

In the second part of the study, 72 Canadian pupils in grades 8, 10, and 12 were observed for several hours in class for the purpose of registering language learning strategies, and were interviewed for 15–20 minutes. They were also given a battery of tests measuring, among other things, cognitive

5 The authors base their assumption about early starting age on the fact that as many as 41% of the languages in which a high proficiency level was reported to have been reached were begun after the normal high school age level.
style, personality and attitudes, which were compared to proficiency as measured by a listening comprehension test and an imitation task. The results show that the best predictor for language learning success was overall or general attitude towards language learning, “how a student perceives his individual language situation and his general attitude towards learning the language in this particular situation” (p. 66f.), and the authors also suggest that a brief but carefully designed interview could extract this type of information better than the tests used in their study. Furthermore, they found that tolerance of ambiguity and field independence were also important for success.

Naiman et al. conclude that language learning is a long and complex process and therefore

a longitudinal case study approach is needed to investigate the learning process. Such research could combine the periodic collection of language production data with case study procedures, such as have been employed in the present main study (Naiman et al. 1978:101).

Finally, they advocate the use of interviewing as a method, instead of tests, since their results indicate

the possible advantage of research into the use of the interview as an alternative means of obtaining the same information as standardized tests of personality and attitude, but at greater depth and without the disadvantage of test procedures (Naiman et al. 1978:101).

There has been an ongoing discussion since 1978 about what constitutes a good language learner. For example, Nation & McLaughlin (1986) suggest a process-oriented approach to distinguish between novices and experts, indicating that expert learners have strategies that help them allocate processing resources more efficiently. Mostly, however, the Naiman et al. study, together with some earlier studies, such as Rubin (1975), have served as background of studies on language learning strategies (see above), not of other individual aspects of second language learning (cf. Granberg 1994). As has been shown here, the study by Naiman et al. contains other interesting results apart from their findings on language learning strategies, and one general conclusion from their adult interview study can serve as inspiration for a more holistic approach to the individuality of the second language learner.

[It] would be unwise to attempt to focus exclusively on learning strategies and techniques. This study, as well as other language learning research, has confirmed the conviction that strategies and techniques form only a part of language learning. It is therefore important to relate them to personality and motivational factors in
the learner, and to other less obvious aspects of the learning process (Naiman et al. 1978:99).

1.7 Multi-Factor Studies

Since individual factors can provide explanations for differential success, as Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991:153ff) among others posit, most of the studies in research on individual differences in second language learning have used measures of proficiency (usually course results) in comparison with measures of one or a few individual factors, predominantly with the aim of discovering which factor(s) most influences proficiency.

Concluding their chapter on individual differences, Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991) criticise the research design of many of the studies on individual factors and ask for more multivariate analyses.

While on the one hand it is agreed that language learning is a complex process, on the other hand researchers sometimes continue to employ rather simple univariate analyses, such as simple correlations between a single individual variable and learner performance on some proficiency measure. As d'Anglejan and Renaud (1985) rightly point out, language learner variables inevitably overlap and interact with others, suggesting that we are not getting a true measure of a factor if we isolate it from all the others. More powerful multivariate statistical techniques do exist and can provide means for examining the relationship among learners' characteristics (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991:214).

Two such large-scale multifactor empirical studies on individual differences in second language learning were carried out in the 1990s; Ehrman & Oxford (1995) and Gardner et al. (1997).

Both these studies use scales and tests on IDs which are correlated to achievement, and differ from most earlier studies in that many more individual differences are investigated simultaneously.

Ehrman & Oxford (1995) used seven different test instruments to investigate mainly the following individual differences: aptitude, age, sex, 

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6d’Anglejan & Renaud (1985) examined second language learners of French using factor analysis to identify nine predictor variables which were weighed against two criterion variables, a French achievement test and teacher evaluation, using multivariate analysis. The nine predictor variables were nonverbal reasoning, cognitive style, age, literacy, competence in English, anxiety, use of French outside school and social contacts with Francophones. Their results indicate that “subjects who have more schooling, a higher degree of nonverbal reasoning ability, make greater use of French outside the classroom, are more competent in English, and display a greater degree of field independence are more likely to benefit from formal language instruction” (p.1).
motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, tolerance of ambiguity, risk-taking, language learning strategies and language learning styles.\(^7\) Their sample of learners consisted of 855 American civil servants, mean age 39, participating in training courses in 34 different languages. The test results were correlated to language proficiency ratings at the end of the course. These ratings were made on a scale of 0–5 for speaking and for reading. The results show that the highest correlation to learning success was language aptitude, as measured by the Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT). However, their results also point to some other important variables, e.g. motivation, self-confidence, cognitive flexibility, openness to new data, and disposition to conceptualise. Furthermore, their results indicate that younger students with previous experience of language learning, who are intuitive, flexible and questioning in the language learning situation, are more likely to succeed. Ehrman & Oxford conclude that their investigation points to three basic echelons for success in learning a second language: cognition, affective factors and personality variables.

Gardner et al. (1997) used questionnaires to elicit 34 measurements of attitudes, motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, aptitude and learning strategies from 102 university students of French. Five of the measurements concerned French achievement.\(^8\) The main purpose of their study was to find relationships between the different measures of individual factors, i.e. how the factors correlate to each other, not to language learning success. Using correlation and component analyses, they found five factors which best accounted for the correlations among the variables, factors which they defined as: Self-Confidence with French (Factor 1), Language Learning Strategies (Factor 2), Motivation to Learn French (Factor 3), Language Aptitude (Factor 4), and Orientation to Learn French (Factor 5).

\(^7\)They used the following test instruments: Affective survey (developed by themselves), The Hartmann Boundary Questionnaire, The National Association of Secondary Schools Principals' Learning Style Profile, The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, The Type Differentiation Indicator, The Modern Language Aptitude Test, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, and the 0–5-point final assessment scores. (For further references to these test instruments, see the article by Ehrman & Oxford 1995.)

\(^8\)The following tests were used: A French Achievement Test, a multiple choice test which measures knowledge of verbs, adjectives, pronouns, and prepositions; a Cloze Test where every fifth word is omitted in a text, measuring knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and inferencing skills; a Thing Category Test where the testee produces as many items as possible within a category, measuring vocabulary knowledge and production; a Theme test, where the testee writes a composition which is scored by a bilingual on a five-point scale; and finally the Grades in French which shows the final grades from the course.
Apart from self-confidence measures, Factor 1 correlated negatively with anxiety, and positively with a motivational variable, indicating that learners with great self-confidence are less anxious and have a stronger desire to learn the language. Apart from language learning strategies measures, Factor 2 also correlated with, among others, motivational intensity, which indicates that a frequent use of strategies is associated with a high motivation. Apart from several motivational measures, Factor 3 also correlated with attitudes towards course and teacher, indicating that high levels of motivation are connected to positive attitudes towards the learning situation. Apart from aptitude measures, Factor 4 also correlated with measures of field independence and strategies for compensating for lack of knowledge. Finally, Factor 5 indicates that students with high levels of both integrative and instrumental orientation are also positive to the speakers of the target language.

This part of their study points to complex connections between these variables, thus illustrating one aspect of the complexity of individual factors in second language learning: There is a considerable overlap between factors and they seem to interact in a complicated way.

On the basis of the socio-cultural model in Gardner (1985) and the results of the above mentioned study, Gardner et al. (1997) go on to propose a causal model linking seven variables: Language Attitudes, Language Aptitude, Field Independence, Motivation, Learning Strategies, Self-Confidence, and Language Achievement. This model was tested using a causal modelling program which resulted in a causal model where all the coefficients between the variables are significant (Figure 4). The model implies that Language Attitudes cause Motivation and that Motivation causes both Self-Confidence and Language Learning Strategies. Furthermore, Motivation, Language Learning Strategies and Language Aptitude together cause Language Achievement. Additionally, there is a correlation between Language Aptitude and Field Independence.

A comparison of the results of the studies by Ehrman & Oxford (1995) and Gardner et al. (1997) yields both similarities and dissimilarities. They are similar in that they see language aptitude, motivation and self-confidence as important variables for language learning success. They are dissimilar in that Ehrman & Oxford emphasise personality variables, like tolerance of ambiguity and an intuitive, questioning and flexible approach,
while Gardner et al. do not consider personality variables. Interestingly enough, neither of the studies found significant correlations between language learning strategies and achievement (except for one strategy type, cognitive strategies, in Ehrman & Oxford).

Figure 2. A causal model of second language learning (Gardner et al. 1997:354).

One reason for excluding personality factors in this model could be that personality factors are considered to be causally linked to attitudes and motivation, not to achievement (Lalonde & Gardner 1984).
A comparison between these studies can, however, be somewhat complicated because the definitions of constructs differ, as was also indicated at the beginning of Part I. In the two studies above, for example, the construct of motivation is defined somewhat differently. Gardner et al. use measurements of (a) attitudes toward learning the language, (b) desire to learn the language, and (c) motivational intensity, while Ehrman & Oxford use measurements of (a) desire to use the language, (b) effort (motivational intensity) and (c) extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (which are said to resemble Gardner's [1985] instrumental and integrative motivation). Gardner et al., on the other hand, separate out integrative motivation (which they call integrative orientation) as a measurement of attitudes, which in turn causes motivation (in their causal model). This example illustrates how different researchers define individual factors differently, rendering comparisons between studies difficult.

These two studies can also serve as an illustration of the major directions individual differences research is taking, i.e. towards a collection of larger and larger samples, concatenating more and more factors, in order to draw conclusions and generalise about how each defined individual factor correlates with achievement. Methodologically, they rely on scales, such as 5 or 7 point Likert scales, and/or tests, such as the MLAT, and measurements of achievement. Studies like these start from an individual factor perspective, not an individual perspective, to discover which factors correlate most with achievement or how these factors interact among themselves. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to relate any one single language learner to the results of studies of this kind. Studies like these are less interested in the individuality of each individual learner, his/her route into the new language or the interrelations of individual factors in the individual himself/herself.

Another direction in the individual differences research, albeit less frequent, is more ethnographic and more attuned to the individual learner. In his survey of developments in aptitude, motivation, learner strategies and learner styles research, Skehan (1991) discusses research methods, and concludes that most research on individual differences has used research tools such as scales and tests to accumulate more and more variables. Instead, he suggests a change to more individually oriented approaches which take the individual learner as a starting point.

Basically, ID research seems to be moving toward a greater reliance on ethnographic approaches. These would allow such research to capture the
individuality of the learner more fairly, rather than simply to categorise him or her more finely. It might place the individual firmly in center stage and accept the uniqueness of each individual learner, following whatever categories or constructs are necessary for that learner and in whatever patterns. This implies that the attempt to identify basic categories of variation is misleading and distorting of reality from the perspective of any particular individual (Skehan 1991:293).

Ellis (1994) agrees with Skehan, and points out that such methods can also show the dynamic nature of the interaction between the more malleable aspects of individual difference (for example, anxiety and motivation) and learners’ learning experiences (Ellis 1994: 524).

1.8 Case Studies

In this section three longitudinal case studies of background relevance to the present study will be presented. The first two studies (Schumann and Schmidt) are mainly concerned with social and psychological IDs in their discussion of the acculturation model, whereas the third (Gillette) mainly discusses motivation and language learning strategies.

Schumann (1976b, 1978) followed a Costa Rican 33-year-old immigrant worker, Alberto, and his language development for a period of ten months. Alberto lived in a Costa Rican community and did not participate in any teaching of English. Alberto’s spoken language developed very little during this period as measured at a morphological and syntactic level. For example, towards the end of the investigated period, the negation was still placed pre-verbally, there was no inversion in wh-questions, no regular past endings and an unmarked possessive (Schumann 1976b:393). Schumann suggests that the social and psychological distance from speakers of the target language could explain Alberto’s slow development (cf. 1.1 Social Situation). Alberto belongs to a non-dominant subordinate working-class group of Latin Americans with tendencies towards preservation as regards desired integration, according to Schumann. Furthermore, members of this group often live together in Latin American communities, where only the first language and a basic knowledge of the second language are needed to manage. In belonging to a group that has a large social distance from the target language group, Alberto does not have a good language learning situation, according to Schumann. As regards psychological distance, Schumann asked Alberto to fill out a questionnaire on attitude and motivation. The answers pointed to a positive attitude and good motivation. Since Alberto’s way of living contradicted his answers on
the questionnaire, Schumann believes that the results were an effect of Alberto’s wish to please by giving the answers he thought the researcher wanted to hear. Based on this and other studies, Schumann eventually developed the acculturation model mentioned in 1.1 (e.g. Schumann 1978).

Schmidt (1983) wanted to find evidence for the acculturation model by investigating a learner with low social and psychological distance from speakers of the target language. His learner, Wes, a 33-year-old artist and speaker of Japanese was followed for three years, from his first shorter visits to Hawaii until he received permanent residency. When he first arrived, his ability to communicate in English was minimal, but towards the end of the 3-year period he lived in an English-speaking world, with a wide circle of monolingual English-speaking friends, including an American roommate. Schmidt estimates that he communicated in English about 70–90% of his time.

In order to test the predictability of the acculturation model, Schmidt maps out Wes’s social and psychological distance factors. Taken together they predict successful acquisition of English for Wes according to the acculturation model.

Wes’s social and psychological profile (Schmidt 1983:143)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social and psychological factors</th>
<th>Wes</th>
<th>Predicted influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Neutral if other factors positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal study of L2</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language aptitude</td>
<td>Possibly low</td>
<td>Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicative need</td>
<td>High, increasing</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction, type and amount</td>
<td>Varied, increasing</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social dominance pattern</td>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction pattern</td>
<td>Adaptive</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enclosure, cohesiveness</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarity of cultures</td>
<td>Different</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward L2 group</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended length of residence</td>
<td>Indefinite/permanent</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture shock</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language shock</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy, social outreach</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhibition, fear of appearing foolish</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation type</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation, drive for communication</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for formal language study</td>
<td>Very low</td>
<td>Possibly negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred learning style</td>
<td>Natural acquisition</td>
<td>Facilitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of Wes’s development during the three years investigated shows that he increased his global communicative ability radically. He could handle difficult communicative situations and he could carry on sustained conversations. He was, however still limited in that he did not
write or read English, and his grammatical control had hardly improved at all. A closer analysis, based on 18 one-hour taped monologues, a three hour tape recording containing conversations with native speakers, and Schmidt's extensive field notes, shows that Wes's change regarding grammatical rule competence was minimal and almost insignificant. His sociolinguistic competence seemed to have increased, however, as measured in his ability to use directives, such as orders, requests and pleas. Schmidt found the greatest improvement in Wes's discourse competence. Wes had developed into a good conversationalist with well-formed narratives and a near-native use of feed-back signals in conversations. Furthermore, Wes had developed his strategic competence so that he could almost always repair communication breakdowns by using communication strategies. Schmidt describes him as having a persistence and willingness to communicate what was on his mind. Schmidt concludes that if language is seen as a means of maintaining relationships and managing everyday life, then Wes could be seen as a good learner. But if language is seen as a system of syntax and other grammatical relations, then Wes is a poor learner. Furthermore, Wes's low social distance, his positive attitudes and his high integrative motivation had improved his overall communicative competence considerably, but had not improved his grammatical competence. Schmidt thus refutes the hypothesis that the degree of acculturation, as defined in the acculturation model, accounts for linguistic achievement. He suggests that Wes's failure to learn grammar depends more on factors connected with style, personality and attitudes. Schmidt concludes that adult learners cannot learn grammar through interaction alone, and that a necessary condition, if not instruction, is

conscious attentions to form, which could be accomplished through self-study, using conscious learning strategies [...] which Wes does not make use of: asking questions of native speakers, consulting available sources and actively using deductive reasoning to look for general rules and exceptions (Schmidt 1983:172).

Gillette (1990) studied IDs in the case of three ‘effective’ and three ‘ineffective’ foreign language learners taking a French course in the USA, in what she calls a longitudinal and whole-person perspective. Gillette’s starting point is that foreign language learning is a goal-driven activity, and learners who feel the desire to learn, act differently from those who study only to fulfil a requirement. The students’ goals are shaped by their earlier experiences as language learners as well as by their sociocultural background. What the individual sees as a valid life goal will influence the
effort put into learning the second language, which, in turn, will influence the outcome, according to Gillette. Gillette also sees other individual factors, such as aptitude, learning strategies, attitudes and affective variables, as influential, depending on the learning situation, in her view but motivation remains crucial for language learning success.

In order to investigate this, Gillette advocates a whole-person approach to infer the character of the learners’ goals and how these goals are reflected in their approach. For this purpose, Gillette collected information about earlier language learning experiences, asked the six students to keep language learning journals (about general language learning approaches and strategies for learning) and assembled the notes that the students had taken in class over one term. Furthermore, the journals were discussed during bi-weekly unstructured interviews and the students were observed in class the whole term. A thirteen-item attitude and strategy questionnaire was also completed by the students. This material was then analysed using a non-specified interpretative approach.

The results show that effective learners have a study-supportive social background, positive experiences of foreign language learning, favourable attitudes towards education and view the foreign language as useful; the inefficient learners come from a background where making money and success at sports is more important than education. This latter group sees college studies as an obligation and foreign language study as non-useful for either their present or future lives. Gillette concludes that the students’ basic, long-term goal, to learn or not to learn a foreign language, overshadows whatever temporary positive or negative experiences they may have in their learning. In other words, Gillette means that even if foreign language learners meet good teachers or have successful encounters with a foreign language, the basic orientation of the learners can only truly change if their social environment is changed to become more supportive.

Furthermore, Gillette reports that the effective learners put greater effort into the learning task, are more ambitious, take charge of their learning, and show responsibility for their progress, while the ineffective learners only aim to fulfil the course requirements, showing effort but being less productive, more frustrated and anxious, and displaying lower self-confidence. As concerns language learning strategies, the effective learners use more diverse strategies, monitoring their learning, practising functionally, inferencing, and elaborating, while the ineffective learners use more mechanical means, e.g. rote memorisation and translation. Gillette
concludes that strategy use is not an explanation of achievement in itself. Instead she advocates that the learners’ motivational goal in deploying a given strategy as determining the effectiveness of the strategy, and, consequently, that learners with high motivation intuitively use positive and productive strategies. Thus she challenges the belief that strategy training automatically leads to learning, although she hints that strategy training could be indirectly positive for learning because it emphasises the learner’s own responsibility.

Gillette’s study is interesting for my study because it emphasises the need to see the learner as a whole person, with a history, in the learning situation. She provides six case studies which many foreign language learners and teachers recognise. Her study is, however, less relevant for the present study for several reasons.

Firstly, Gillette’s study was conducted in a foreign language learning situation. In a second language learning context, learning the second language is not merely a matter of academic choice, it is usually a necessity for the learner to be able to participate in the surrounding society. The target language is heard everywhere and there are natural opportunities for using the language outside the classroom. Thus the language is relevant in the context of everyday life, which might also influence the learners’ motivation and effort to learn.

Secondly, although Gillette defines her study as longitudinal, very little is mentioned about the different processes a learner goes through in the course of learning, for example emotional changes, personal changes or strategy changes.

Thirdly, Gillette describes her study as having a whole-person approach and states that it establishes a complete picture of each learner’s approach to their learning. Apart from the fact that it is impossible to get a complete picture of each learner’s approach, there are several aspects which could have been more thoroughly examined in order to gain a whole-person perspective. For example, very little is said about the present language learning classroom or the teacher, about the current social environment of the students, about workload in other subjects, or about emotional experiences outside the classroom.
1.9 Conclusion

This research overview shows that much of the research on individual differences in second language learning is still in its infancy. Some of the IDs mentioned have been more thoroughly examined, for example strategies and motivation, and have been assumed to play an important role in the rate of second language learning, but at the same time it is unclear how and to what extent. Other ID aspects, especially the co-variance of IDs, have not been so widely investigated. For example contextual factors, such as culture, emotions, identity and personality are suspected of playing a role in second language learning, but study results are inconclusive. Furthermore, research has pointed to some important characteristics of the Good Language Learner as being actively involved in the learning process, conscientious and inventive, but these constructs are also vague and difficult to define. Methodologically, several researchers have therefore recommended the use of individual case studies which would allow us to study IDs from the individual’s perspective rather than from a group perspective.

Although there are, of course, many more studies than I have been able to describe here, the tendency seems quite clear. There are no comprehensive theories about the influence of individual differences in second language learning, there is considerable confusion regarding the definition of constructs, and, above all, we know very little about the individuality of each learner, especially the complex interaction of IDs, as well as longitudinal effects. Therefore I believe that an in-depth study of one single second language learner could make a valuable contribution to furthering our understanding of individual differences in second language learning.
2. Methodology and Theoretical Considerations

In this chapter, the methodological and theoretical basis for this study is discussed. The characteristics of qualitative methods are presented (2.1) and theoretical issues about their validity, reliability and generalisability are examined (2.2). Additionally, Grounded Theory and a general hermeneutic interpretation method are introduced as the primary tools for the analysis of the material of this study (2.3).

In the research process, during the analysis phase, a salient social-anthropological theory with great explicatory power for the results of the present study was discovered. This theory concerns the sociocultural transition from one social state to another through a phase of liminality (Turner 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1995). Since the construct of liminality reoccurs as an interpretative framework throughout the present study, I have chosen to present it here, at the end of this chapter (2.4).

The first step towards finding answers to the research questions is to establish methods for data collection and methods for discussing and analysing the data.

Judging from the research overview, various self-report data collection techniques have been used to elicit information from the learners.\textsuperscript{10} For example, research on attitudes/motivation has used different types of questionnaires (e.g. Gardner et al. 1997; cf. 1.3), research on learning strategies has used different kinds of introspection (e.g. Faerch & Kasper 1983; cf. 1.4), and research on anxiety has used diaries in the form of participant observation (e.g. Bailey & Ochsner 1983; cf. 1.1 Emotional Situation). Furthermore, different types of more or less established tests have been used, usually in multiple choice form (on personality, field independence, style preferences, etc.; see Ellis 1994 for an overview) or a combination of self-report data, such as tests combined with controlled interviews (Naiman et al. 1978; cf. 1.6). The goal of some of these studies is to refine the definition of factors or to find more factors, such as some of the strategy re-

\textsuperscript{10}Here the term self-report is used in its general meaning including responses to questionnaires or preference judgements (cf. Ehrman & Oxford 1995:73; Ellis 1994:670), not defined as one type of verbal report “characterized by generalized statements about learning behavior” (Cohen 1998:34).
search, but most of the studies aim to evaluate the significance and the relevance of individual factors for successful second language learning.

It is obvious that some kind of self-report data gathering technique has to be used, but the technique of data collection does not constitute a method, although it is connected to methodological considerations, as will be further exemplified below. Instead, the method is defined by how the researcher handles and interprets data. Most of the studies mentioned in the research overview have quantified data, i.e. have tried to find ways to measure the individual factors in order to compare, establish systematic relations, study causality, and investigate large populations to pick out the generally most salient factors for language learning success.

However, a quantitative approach does not allow us to discover other aspects than those we have already chosen to investigate. Neither does it help to deepen our understanding of the intricate make-up of individual factors in the individual. Furthermore, it does not permit us to understand how the learner understands his/her own learning. In other words, quantitative methods are less suitable for answering the research questions in this study. Instead, I believe that a more viable route in this case is to take a qualitative research approach.

2.1 Qualitative Methods

The characteristics of qualitative methods have been described and defined in numerous ways; within disciplines, between disciplines, among theoreticians and philosophers, etc. (For overviews, see for example Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994, Bryman 1988, Denzin & Lincoln 1994, Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991, Miles & Huberman, 1994.) The term 'qualitative' has become an umbrella term for a wide variety of methods, ranging from areas such as discourse analysis to phenomenology, from ethnography to hermeneutics. Qualitative methods have also been described as paradigmatically opposed to quantitative methods, or just as another tool complementing other methods. Within second language acquisition research, qualitative methods were used rather sparingly until the 1990s, excluding some of the diary and other case studies, although qualitative streaks can be found here and there, for example in some

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11For a discussion concerning the value of self-report and introspection, see for example Ericsson & Simon 1980, the papers in Faerch & Kasper 1987, and Pritchard 1990.

It is not possible to give a full account of the characteristics of qualitative research here. In the following I will instead first outline some theoretical and practical basics of qualitative research, then discuss the implications of qualitative data, before moving on to a discussion of the methods used on a general level. Finally, the research design of this particular study is presented. This outline serves as a guide or an introduction to the fundamental of this study; the practical application will hopefully further clarify my intentions.

Generally speaking, qualitative studies are most often based on naturalistic data, i.e. investigations are made in natural settings into naturally occurring phenomena. Sources for data collection are found in various kinds of interviews, field observations and documents, e.g. diaries, archive material etc. In order to illustrate what characterises qualitative studies I have chosen to discuss them on the basis of some salient keywords, keywords which I see as typical of a qualitative approach, and which have sometimes been used to differentiate qualitative from quantitative research (cf. also Granberg 1996). Qualitative studies are said to be insider oriented, holistic, exploratory, aimed at understanding, and process oriented. These aspects will be presented below in that order.

Qualitative studies tend to take an insider (emic) perspective rather than an outsider (epic) perspective, to understand actors’ meanings for actions (Davis 1995). Qualitative researchers believe that it is possible to recreate, or tap, the actors’ interpretation of the world they live in. Depending on the qualitative paradigm followed, the researcher can be satisfied with a description of the actors’ life-world, as in some anthropological research, or he/she can, for example, choose to analyse and interpret it in a political or social scenario, as in some of the gender or critical research.

Qualitative studies tend to be holistic rather than particularistic in that they strive to include the whole picture of each case.12 Behind this lies the awareness that every case is imbedded in a context - be it cultural, social or

12 A “case” is defined by the boundaries of each qualitative study as defined by the researcher, and could consist of a single person case as well as, for example, the context of a classroom, a school or a community.
psychological (for example) - and that this context is part of the case in question. Based on this holistic perspective, qualitative studies can exemplify and reveal complexity (Miles & Huberman 1994:10).

Qualitative studies tend to be exploratory rather than confirmatory in that they assume an attitude of openness to new data (Bryman 1988:66ff). Generally, the researcher is expected to 'bracket', or momentarily postpone, whatever preconceptions and ideas he/she brings to the case in order to be able to discover new aspects. Furthermore, it is quite common to report studies descriptively, or to let theory develop in the research process, rather than use theories to confirm suppositions.

Qualitative studies tend to be oriented towards understanding rather than explanation, the goal being to create an understanding of the reasons, the meanings and the connections behind the observed behaviour. In other words, qualitative studies seek to reach an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). To achieve this understanding, multiple method approaches are common in qualitative research, and the researcher is often regarded as the primary instrument for the elicitation of information.

Against the background of the naturalistic, holistic, exploratory, insider and understanding perspective, together with an inherent prolonged and intensive contact with the actors, qualitative studies are better suited to capture processes in human life, for example emotional, social and cultural changes that human beings go through. Miles and Huberman (1994:1) describe qualitative data in the following way:

They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led to which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations.

Simplified, the general difference between quantitative and qualitative methods is that quantitative methods mainly rely on measurements and numbers as data while qualitative methods mainly rely on words. In learner language research, e.g. the development of the learner’s interlanguage, quantitative methods have dominated, partly because the close connection to other linguistic research, but mainly because quantitative methods are better suited for this kind of analysis. An example will illustrate this. Axelsson (1994) set out to study the acquisition of two particularities in Swedish learner language; definiteness in the noun phrase and adjective development, from a functional and process oriented perspective. She
designed a longitudinal and cross-sectional study of 60 learners based on two naturalistically recorded interviews for each learner. By using quantitative methods and comparing frequencies Axelsson suggests that there are three stages in the acquisition of the NP and definiteness, and that the first acquired adjectives belong to basic semantic fields. Axelsson’s quantitative study gives us valuable insights not only into acquisitional sequences, but also explanations about Swedish learner language as well as the structure of Swedish. It would not have been possible to achieve these kinds of insights with using a qualitative research design.

Axelsson also had access to some individual background data, and she concludes that individual factors, such as learning style, personality, educational background, private situation and L1, have influenced the data these learners produced. She leaves it at that, but Axelsson’s study could serve as an illustration of the differences between quantitative and qualitative research. In my opinion Axelsson’s conclusions could form a starting point for a qualitative study which, through an holistic insider perspective, could increase our understanding of the individual learner and even explain the reasons behind the variations in learner language that Axelsson encountered. Such a study would ask substantially different research questions, such as, in this case for example, “Why were these particular NPs and adjectives produced?“, and it would also be based on different data and a more interpretative method.

This example illustrates that different research questions need different methods and that the answers denote different kinds of knowledge.

Certain questions cannot be answered by quantitative methods, while others cannot be answered by qualitative ones. (Walker 1985:6, as quoted in Bryman 1988:106).

Within the qualitative research tradition there is an ongoing discussion about paradigms and epistemology as concerns qualitative and quantitative research. On the one side are those researcher who take a pragmatic perspective and claim that qualitative and quantitative methods are the two ends of a continuum (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991), or that a combination of methods in one study is possible and that the research question determines method to be used (e.g. Bryman 1988, Johnson 1991, Miles & Huberman 1994). On the other side are those researchers who take a more epistemological perspective and claim that qualitative and quantitative methods are incompatible, i.e. that they are paradigms in the Kuhnian sense, denoting a fundamentally opposed ontological,
epistemological and methodological ideology from positivist quantitative methods (e.g. Guba & Lincoln 1994). As can be understood from the example mentioned above, I believe that these two traditions, quantitative and qualitative, can be seen as opposite sides of a coin; they show different things but they are both valid instruments for research. When it comes to researching human qualities, ideas, feelings, impressions and experiences, qualitative methods are more suitable (Barbosa da Silva & Wahlberg 1994).

2.2 Validity, Reliability and Generalisability
A frequently discussed issue is the question of what characterises good research, i.e. how we can evaluate or substantiate the quality of the findings. Generally this entails showing that the research process and the findings are well-grounded (internally valid), that they are applicable to other contexts (generalisable/externally valid), and that they are trustworthy (reliable). In qualitative research the constructs of validity, generalisability and reliability are often renamed using more transparent terms, i.e. credibility, transferability, and dependability, because it is felt that, although they refer to the same thing, the connotations of these constructs have been ‘coloured’ from a quantitative perspective.

To ensure credibility/validity from a qualitative perspective, the researcher strives to show that the findings make sense, are plausible and reasonable by providing the reader with a thick description (e.g. Geertz 1973), i.e. presenting enough data to make the explanations credible. Furthermore, a prolonged involvement allows the researcher to establish trust on the part of the research participants, thus coming closer to the realities of their life-world. It also allows the researcher to study the multiple influences on the phenomenon (Davis 1995:606). Additionally, credibility/validity can be enhanced through the use of triangulation, i.e. using different sources and different methods (Miles & Huberman 1994:266ff). Another way of doing this is to use member checks, i.e. returning to the research participants and presenting the findings to them, thus checking the credibility with the participants. Kvale (1989, 1994) describes the qualitative researcher as a skilled craftsman who continually checks, questions and theorises, about data, methods and interpretations. In other words, validation is a built-in part of the research process, much the same way it has been applied in Grounded Theory (see below).
Since qualitative research emphasises the time and context boundedness of each case, transferability/generalisability is not self-evident. However, the provision of a thick, detailed description of the whole research process, gives the reader the opportunity and the chance to judge whether the findings apply in other similar contexts (Davis 1992). In other words, a specification of each step of the research process, from data collection to working hypotheses, facilitates comparison with other cases. Furthermore, the researcher’s own experience and knowledge of the research area opens up opportunities for reflection and speculation about possible transfer of the findings.

The dependability/reliability of a qualitative study, its trustworthyness, is a matter of quality control. In other words: “Have things been done with reasonable care?” (Miles & Huberman 1994:278). This issue is connected with the whole research design of a study, for example whether there is a consistent and balanced relation between the research question, the phenomenon, the data collection, and the method for analysis. By openly and clearly displaying these issues, including the role of the researcher, reliability/dependability is enhanced. Furthermore, colleague reviews, i.e. letting research colleagues check the reasonableness of conclusions in the context of research seminars for example, can accordingly strengthen the quality of a study. If the researcher leaves an audit trail (Miles & Huberman 1994:281ff), i.e. retains the field notes, tapes and transcriptions, diaries etc., this could serve as a basis for replicability and confirmability.

2.3 Analysis
The main qualitative method used in this study is in part based on Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss 1967, Strauss & Corbin 1990, 1994). More specifically it is inspired by the revised version of Grounded Theory by Strauss & Corbin (1990). Grounded Theory has served as a helpful tool in the analysis, especially as concerns the sorting and categorisation of data, however it has not been strictly adhered to (see further below). Grounded Theory is a methodology which is designed to generate theory grounded in data. It was mainly designed to describe and theorise about social-psychological phenomena, for instance, the consequences of shutting down a factory, cases of racism in school, etc. First I will give an overview of the analysis procedure of Grounded Theory, then discuss implications, limitations and complications in connection with the present study.
Grounded Theory analysis, as described by Strauss & Corbin (1990), is a detailed, step by step, parallel coding procedure. After the establishment of research questions, the first pieces of data are collected, for example interviews, which are transcribed. These first interviews are analysed in detail through coding procedures, i.e. "operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways" (Strauss & Corbin 1990:57). This open coding starts with an intense, close reading of the text, whereby minor or major incidents or ideas are conceptualised by asking questions such as: "What is this?" and "What does this represent?". This procedure can result in hundreds of concepts in the first phase, therefore the texts are re-examined again and again, comparing the concepts in order to label the same phenomena with the same concept. Throughout the research process, the researcher moves forwards and backwards in the same manner. This is an illustration of another central theme in Grounded Theory; the cyclicity of the process.

The second step in the analysis is to group the concepts into categories on a higher level of abstraction. These categories have certain properties in common. After this first analysis new data can be gathered. The third step is the axial coding where a connection between categories is hypothesised in terms of causality, context etc. Finally, a selective coding results in the selection of main categories to which other categories are related. Parallel, continuously after the first analysis, a cumulative theoretical sampling is undertaken, for example in the form of more interviews, concentrating on the concepts which have proved to be of theoretical relevance, i.e. those that are repeatedly present or notably absent, or those that have earned the status of categories (Strauss & Corbin 1990:177). This sampling continues until theoretical saturation of each category is reached, in other words, until no new data emerges regarding a category and the relationship between categories are well established. There is a constant comparison in the interplay between analysis and data with "an explicit mandate to strive toward verification of its resulting hypotheses (statements of relationships between concepts)" (Strauss & Corbin 1994:274).

The present study is mainly a qualitative study, based on qualitative data which are analysed qualitatively. It was designed on the basis of my earlier experiences in teaching and my acquaintance with the research area (cf. the research overview), from which the research questions emanated. Grounded Theory seemed at the time to be a powerful tool for the subsequent analysis of data.
The Grounded Theory approach had to be modified, however, for several reasons. Firstly, Grounded Theory stems from the social sciences and is attuned to the study of social (or psychological) phenomena, i.e. human interaction. Language learning is from one perspective a social phenomenon, but it could also, from other perspectives, be seen as, for example, a pedagogical, intellectual, psychological, and, as in the present study, an individual phenomenon.

Secondly, although Grounded Theory research concerns and builds on individuals, it is not primarily intended to be used for constructing theory in single person case studies:

Theoretical conceptualization means that grounded theory researchers are interested in patterns of action and interaction between and among various types of social units (i.e. 'actors'). So they are not especially interested in creating theory about individual actors as such (unless perhaps they are psychologists or psychiatrists) (Strauss & Corbin 1994:278).

Thirdly, full use of Grounded Theory is rather time-consuming both for the researcher and the research participants. In the present study there was a strict time frame within which this work had to be completed. This particular language learning session lasted one academic year (in practice 8–9 months), after which the final test was given and the student group scattered. Furthermore, for ethical reasons it was not judged feasible to burden someone in the middle of an important language learning process with interviews more than two to four times a month. With the width of the research questions, it was consequently difficult to reach saturation in categories within these time limits as well as build substantial social theory.

In spite of these limitations, Grounded Theory proved to be of great value for large parts of the analysis, especially the coding procedure (this procedure will not be discussed in detail here; see Granberg 1996 for a concrete example of coding). The procedure led to a model of the resulting seven main categories and their subcategories presented at the beginning of Part II of this study.

In order to further deepen the analysis of the interviews and the diaries a general hermeneutic interpretation method was also used, inspired by Kvale (1996). Kvale (1996:48ff.) postulates seven canons for a hermeneutic interpretation of interviews, adapted and extended from Radnitzky (1970). The first canon refers to the typical hermeneutic circle; a cyclical switch between parts and the whole, between interview themes and global meaning. The second canon states that the interpretation ends when a good
Gestalt is reached, i.e. when sensible patterns and coherence are achieved between the interview themes. The third canon consists of a testing procedure, where interpretations of single statements are compared to the global meaning, other background information about the interviewee or a clarification in a re-interview. The fourth canon indicates that the interviewee’s statements are central for an understanding of the subject’s life-world. The fifth canon emphasises that the interviewer must have an extensive knowledge of the themes of the interview in order to be able to be sensitive to meanings. The sixth canon stresses that it is necessary for the interviewer to be aware of his/her own presuppositions and possible subsequent influences on the interview and take this into consideration in the interpretation. The seventh canon, finally, emphasises that the researcher’s creativity takes the interpretation further than the immediate meaning of the interview.

Furthermore, it is preferable that all the fieldwork, the transcription of recordings as well as interpretations are done by the researcher personally. This was done here.

This ‘fusion’ of two qualitative methods, Grounded Theory and hermeneutics, might be unusual but has been proved to work efficiently in the present study. Both methods are discovery-oriented and have similar interviewing processes. The purpose of Grounded Theory is to describe and explain social-psychological processes, whereas the purpose of hermeneutics is to interpret and understand the experiences of individuals, to unveil the life-world of individuals. Grounded Theory furthermore provides a systematic method of analysing interviews in detail and also offers the opportunity to study longitudinal effects. Hermeneutics, on the other hand, emphasises the importance of acknowledging and taking advantage of the researcher’s presuppositions and pre-knowledge. These two methods fit very well into the design of the present study of IDs in an individual learner, since I have seen it as important to be able to both describe and explain the longitudinal, processual aspects of IDs in learning, but also to understand and interpret the individual’s perspective in order to establish a holistic view. Additionally, it was important to find an efficient tool for handling extensive interview transcriptions, while at the same time recognising my own competence as a learner, teacher and teacher educator.

More concretely, my analysis started with a preliminary coding procedure after each interview based on Grounded Theory (Granberg 1996). Eventually all the material was coded and categorised this way, step
by step, in parallel, or with a slight time-delay, and the canons mentioned above gradually took over more and more of the analysis. In the final conclusive stage, the hermeneutic viewpoint dominated the analysis.

2.4 Liminality

As was mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 2, the notion of liminality has been used as a research tool in this study. Thus a background to this construct will be presented here, and some examples of its application will be given.

Early in the 20th century, Arnold van Gennep (1909, as quoted in Turner 1982a:24ff) investigated tribal rites and found that almost all rites of passage, i.e. rituals accompanying life-cycle changes, such as, for instance, passages into adulthood, marriage or death, consisted of three phases; a separation phase, a transition phase and an incorporation phase. In the separation phase the subjects are detached from a relatively stable social and cultural status to enter the transition phase, where they exist in what seems to be a social and cultural limbo, a state which is characterised by ambiguity. Finally, in the incorporation phase they return to society, usually assuming a higher social status. Arnold van Gennep also called these phases pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal, from Latin limen, threshold.13

A typical example of tribal rites of passage are the puberty rites. Here the children are separated from their parents, sometimes removed far away to a hut in the forest where normal social and cultural relations are turned upside down, where ambiguity reigns, and where sacred rituals are performed. As liminars they are marginalised, sometimes exposed to physical pain or treated as if non-existent. They are forced to maintain silent and total obedience, and are stripped of rank and social identity. Through liminality the child is transformed into an adult. It passes the threshold between childhood and adulthood and is then reincorporated into society, now as an adult. These rites are usually obligatory, undertaken

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13 Accordingly these rites are sometimes called threshold rites. In other words, whenever people cross boundaries, of space, of time, or of social status, rites of passage can occur. There seems to be two related uses and interpretations of the construct of liminality. One emphasises the threshold and the passage across it. The other emphasises the borderline margin of the threshold as an area of influence from both sides. In the present discussion on second-language learning, liminality is seen as a part of a passage.
in groups, and their overriding purpose is to maintain the social order (Turner 1982a).

Rites of this kind also exist in our Western societies, actively or as reminders of the past, for example in the form of initiation rites into colleges or secret societies, marriage rites, or different kinds of religious rites.\(^{14}\)

In his theoretical works, Victor Turner (e.g. 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1995) has concentrated on van Gennep's transitional passage phase and has developed the construct of *liminality* to extend it, as a metaphor, to other kinds of cultural action, beyond the traditionally ritual. In other words, instead of focusing only on the ritual perspective of transition, Turner underlines the transformative power of liminality. In one of his earlier works (1995, first published in 1969) he defines people in liminality in the following manner.

Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial (Turner 1995:95).

This betwixt and between position, an interstitial and ambiguous moment of varying length, typically characterises liminality, according to Turner. Turner emphasises the processual aspects of liminality. Liminality is a temporary state beyond time and space, a stage in the sociocultural process, the kernel of which is "when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun, an instant of pure potentiality when everything, as it were, trembles in the balance" (Turner 1982a:44).

In industrialised, more complex societies, liminal and liminoid (liminal-like) social phenomena exist side by side, where the liminoid situations tend to be found among marginal or marginalised individuals and groups who are betwixt and between the established social order.\(^{15}\) Here liminality is not an obligatory part of the social process, but more freely chosen, idiosyncratic, and more continuously generated than in the cyclical rituals.

\(^{14}\)Turner (1982b:80ff) separates ceremony from ritual. Ceremony is a confirmation of the social order, whereas ritual must contain liminality which is a "transformative self-immolation of order as presently constituted" (p. 83). Thus what once was considered ritual can today be ceremonial.

\(^{15}\)Turner describes how individuals in a complex society search for liminal moments by involving themselves in leisure genres such as theatre and sports. Here the performance is a ritual and the audience can experience moments in and out of time, feelings of betwixt and between, i.e. liminality (as well as communitas, see below).
Furthermore, each and every individual can experience liminal-like moments in the interstices of their everyday life, moments of uncertainty and ambiguity in the social process, usually resulting in a reaggregation into society. However, some people or groups tend to remain in liminality for longer periods of time; for example Turner mentions the hippie movement.\footnote{Because of the continuous social change, groups of this kind tend to become institutionalised with time, to become societies within societies, as for example some newer religious movements have, according to Turner. They establish a normative structure, which in turn can give rise to ritual liminality which is concerned with preservation in much the same way as the tribal rites.}

Turner describes the transition process as containing both structure and anti-structure; structure being the normative social structure before and after the transition phase, and anti-structure the potential of the transition phase. Anti-structure is “the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints“ (Turner 1982a:44), and thus, at least implicitly, contains the seeds of cultural transformation.

Two major variables can be found in Turner’s anti-structure; liminality, as described above, and the effect of liminality, communitas. While liminality essentially stands for uncertainty and ambiguity, communitas stands for the special bond which can arise between liminarians, a feeling of communion, equality and solidarity within the liminal group, a bond which transcends social structure. According to Turner, communitas is essentially “a relationship between concrete, historical, idiosynchratic individuals“ (Turner 1995:131) which can be both socially conservative and serve as a basis for societal change.

To summarise so far: As I interpret it, the sociocultural transition process according to Turner can be observed from three different perspectives; its form/content, its function/purpose, and its effect on the individual. The form of the process consists of three phases; a separation phase, a liminal phase, and an incorporation phase, where the liminal phase constitutes the core. These phases can be accompanied by rituals, or symbolic behaviour of various kinds, intensity, and discernability. The function of the process is mainly to maintain and support the continuity of the society in question, to transfer knowledge about it and fit the individual into it, although it can sometimes be the stepping stone to societal change. From the individual’s perspective, the process functions as an acceptance of
full membership in society. As regards the effect of the process on the individual, all the three phases have emotional influence. First separation constitutes a break with what the individual is used to, instigating feelings of loss and loneliness, then liminality creates a feeling of ambiguity, of being betwixt and between, of not belonging, and finally incorporation induces feelings of relief, that the process is over, as well as satisfaction, that the transition was successful.

It should be pointed out that this is a generalised description, in reality this ritual transition process is very complex and multi-layered, with all its parts intertwined. For example, different aspects of the three-stage process are sometimes more or less vague, depending on the context. Furthermore, sometimes the ritual side of the process is inconspicuous, other times it is distinctly prominent. Sometimes liminality is found only among borderline and marginal people, other times liminality is a collective experience. Sometimes the passing of boundaries/thresholds is highlighted, other times the whole process is accentuated. Sometimes people can be seen as existing in permanent liminality, other times the liminal moments last only a short time. Sometimes the anti-structural or revolutionary side of liminality and communitas dominates, other times the conformative and conservative side has the upper hand.

This complexity is also reflected in research on liminality and the transition process. Apart from the obvious application in anthropological studies, the construct has been utilised in a variety of disciplines, emphasising various parts of the process. A few recent examples will be given here.

Westum (1999), in a cognitive-semantic study of folk categorisation of children’s illnesses, found that the illnesses were considered to have been caused by liminal, marginalised people such as women of loose morals, or by liminal, supernatural beings like trolls and gnomes. The remedies often consisted of rituals alluding to these two causes. Dyrssen (1995), in a cultural study of architecture and music, describes the concert performance as a liminal experience, part of a transition process, the purpose of which is to transform the audience mentally/existentially. She sees the concert as a ritual of which the concert hall architecture is part. Deegan & Hill (1991) define the writing of a doctoral dissertation as a liminal journey, a transition from student amateur writing to professional writing. They criticise the technical formulaic writing common within their discipline, sociology, and emphasise that the ambiguity and danger, the creativity and
challenge of liminality is necessary for a transformed, professionalised self. Borgström (1998), in her longitudinal study of Latin-American youths in Rinkeby, Sweden, found that some of the youths felt integrated into Swedish society, some felt segregated, while some experienced a feeling of being in-between (i.e. in a type of liminality). A final example is Rampton (1995) who investigated the cross-linguistic code switching among Afro-Caribbean Creole, Punjabi and Asian English-speaking adolescents in the suburbs of London. Crossing, i.e. the use of the language variety of other minority groups, took place when “the ordered flow of social life was loosened and normal social relations could not be taken for granted“ (p.193). In other words, crossing to the language of the other groups occurred at interstitial and ambiguous moments, i.e. moments of liminality.

Generally, the construct of liminality seems to have been used mostly within the literary sciences to describe marginalised people, but hardly at all within second language learning research or linguistics. In section 4.6 the construct of liminality will be further discussed in connection to the present study.
3. Research Design

This chapter outlines the design of the study will be outlined, i.e. it presents the research participants, as well as a description of data and how it was gathered. The methodology for analysing the data is described in Chapter 2.

The research questions led to two kinds of data gathering; individually related data on the individual factors mentioned in the introduction, and linguistic data on linguistic performance in Swedish. The individually related data are analysed qualitatively, whereas the performance data are primarily analysed quantitatively.

3.1 Research Participants

A longitudinal study was designed, based on a group of six adult second language learners who participated for ten months in the same university preparatory course in Swedish in the middle of the 1990s. One of these learners, Sofia, will be examined in this dissertation in the form of a case study. The procedures for data collection were the same for all six learners, but in the present study, these procedures will be described as if they concern only one person, Sofia. Sofia was chosen as a case in herself, but also as a case representing others in similar contexts, i.e. (young) adults with an academic background (Upper Secondary Class) who voluntarily choose to move to another country to study a second language in the environment where it is spoken.

Sofia, who is Greek, was 19 years old when she started her studies. She comes from a city in northern Greece, from a middle-class family, her father is a lorry driver and her mother works in a dry cleaner’s. Sofia graduated from Upper Secondary School with a grade average of 17.5 out of 20. Her first language is Greek and she studied English and French in a private school, English for 7 years and French for 4 years. She has passed the Cambridge First Certificate in English (Grade A). Furthermore, she has taken extra courses in different subjects after leaving school, in order to be able to go to medical school in Greece. Failing to meet the entrance

\[\text{Her name is fictive, chosen however by herself.}\]
requirements, she applied for and was admitted to medical school in Sweden as a guest student. In order to be allowed to start her studies, she had to take a one-year preparatory course in Swedish; she did not know any Swedish before the course started.

The language learning group takes an intensive preparatory course in Swedish for a little more than nine months, September to June. The course prepares the students for subsequent academic studies at university level. The students are not expected to know any Swedish beforehand, but an adequate level of English is required, for example TOEFL or Cambridge Certificate. Basically, the students apply from their home countries for admission to an academic professional education as guest students, and once their study background is evaluated and accepted, they are placed in one of the five university preparatory courses given in Sweden to those who need to learn Swedish, in order to be able to study in Swedish. Towards the end of this year of study, they take the national two-day language proficiency test, the Rikstest. If they pass the test, they are admitted to the university programme of study, which they had chosen earlier, in the following autumn term.

The first day of the national Rikstest has three parts, vocabulary, reading comprehension and listening comprehension. The vocabulary test consists of a popular science text, like all texts in the Rikstest, with 50 words omitted. The learners are given four alternatives per word to choose from. The correct word and the distractor words are very close in meaning. They must have 35 out of 50 to pass. The reading comprehension test comprises a text followed by 20 content questions, each with three alternatives. The learner needs 15 correct answers to pass. The listening comprehension test consists of a recording of an authentic interview from radio. The learners are given 20 questions with three alternative answers, and 15 correct answers are needed to pass. The learners who pass all three tests the first day are allowed to continue to the next day which contains a written composition in the form of a summary and commentaries to a given text, and an oral interview based on a content text given to the learners 30 minutes before the interview. The compositions and the interviews are marked by at least two teachers on a scale of 1–5, where 3 is the pass mark.

This particular preparatory class had their teaching in the university buildings, close to the department of Swedish, and received a total of 415
hours of teaching, i.e. a little more than 200 hours per term. The group had 11 participants during the autumn term and 25 during the spring term.\(^{18}\)

The study of Sofia's linguistic development during these ten months has been limited to the production of Swedish, i.e. oral and written language development, mainly because production data were considered suitable for describing her linguistic development, but also because the inclusion of reading and listening/understanding development would have required a more elaborate testing apparatus. However, reception aspects of language learning will be reported on; these were discussed by Sofia in the qualitative interviews on individual factors.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the research overview (Chapter 1) was not primarily used as the main basis for the design of this study. This study is meant to be exploratory without too many preconceptions. Instead, the overview should be seen as a background source for me as a researcher, a pre-understanding, or, metaphorically speaking, a discussion partner together with whom I could test ideas for the design and relate impressions from the exploratory, qualitative interviews.\(^{19}\)

This pre-understanding has naturally exerted its influence on the author as researcher in the design and interpretation of Sofia's case. However, to avoid bias as much as possible, the interpretations have been discussed in the form of peer-reviews and presentations to research seminars. Furthermore, my background as a language learner, a language teacher and a teacher educator within the Swedish school and university system has mainly been advantageous, supportive and even indispensable for the interpretation, thus adding to the validity of the study, but at the same time it has sometimes led me to jump into pre-emptive conclusions and categorisations. The cyclicity of the qualitative methods has then helped me to reconsider and re-evaluate these conclusions. Additionally, the intensive contact and the sensitivity of some of the discussions we had (without the tape recorder), created a certain emotional bond between Sofia and myself where it was sometimes difficult to maintain the distance. For example, on some occasions, when she asked for advice about her studies, it would have been unnatural and even detrimental for the continued contact not to

\(^{18}\)During the second term, students from the immigrant and refugee community who had a basic knowledge of Swedish were admitted.

\(^{19}\)Ample reference to research within the area of this study will of course be given in the course of this report.
answer, but at the same time this might have influenced her subsequent behavioural.

3.2 Data on Performance
The performance data were gathered in three ways; oral interviews which were recorded, written compositions in Swedish and results from the tests given during the course. The purpose in gathering performance data was, on the one hand, to analyse the use of communication strategies (Chapter 10) and, on the other, to analyse Sofia's language development in order to compare it to other learners of Swedish. This comparison was made in order to register whether the IDs had had any influence on her learning rate (Chapter 11).

Nine oral interviews in Swedish (Swedish Interview 1–9) of between 15 and 20 minutes in length on average, were recorded, from October to June, 4–5 weeks apart, beginning after four weeks of study. The first few interviews were conducted in the classroom where it was expected that Sofia would feel most comfortable; later on, most of the recordings were made in my office at the university. The longitudinal distribution of these interviews is presented in Table 1 (Appendix C).

As regards content, the interviews were semi-structured in the sense that I had an idea beforehand of what we were going to talk about, for instance issues related to her recent experiences (sometimes in connection with the qualitative interviews, see below) or to events in the world, aimed at creating a natural language use situation (cf. Ellis 1994:669ff). The first three interviews contained three different picture descriptions (comic strips) which were repeated in Swedish Interviews 6, 7 and 9 during the spring term. I conducted all the interviews myself, except for Swedish Interview 2 and 8 which were carried out by a student teacher. Swedish Interview 8 was the only interview recorded on video with the specific aim of also registering non-verbal communication strategies. I transcribed the interviews

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20 In order not to confuse these interviews with the interviews made for elicitation of data on the individual factors, I considered calling them talks, conversations or dialogues, for example, but they have the character of interviews, with questions from the NS and answers from the NNS. Therefore these interviews in Swedish will hereafter be referred to as, for example, Swedish Interview 2, with capital initial letters. The qualitative interviews will be referred to as, for example, Interview 2. When there is no risk of misunderstanding, both are referred to simply as interviews.
orthographically as normalised spoken language (cf. Bolander 1985), for subsequent analysis.

In the course of their studies, the students were expected to write and hand in compositions in Swedish. A total of 19 compositions written by Sofia were thus collected (see further Chapter 11). The longitudinal distribution of the compositions is shown in Table 1 (Appendix C). Finally, the teacher gave a number of different kinds of proficiency tests (grammar, vocabulary etc.) during the course. The results of these tests were also gathered. The performance data were analysed parallel with earlier existing longitudinal studies on Swedish interlanguage and were confined to syntactical development (see further Chapter 11).

3.3 Data on Individual Factors

In order to elicit information about the individual factors, multiple-source data collection was used; interviews, diaries, questionnaires and tests, and observations. The interviews and the diaries form the backbone of this study; the other information is used for triangulation (see 2.2). To the same end, Sofia has read and commented on this report before its publication. Some of these comments are given in footnotes. For further information about theoretical and methodological standpoints as concerns qualitative data, see Chapter 2.

Interviews

A total of ten interviews were conducted during the study year, from October to June, with an extra interview after Interview 7 (called Interview 7.5, see below). Table 1 gives the longitudinal distribution of these interviews. As I do not speak Greek, and Sofia did not speak Swedish in the beginning, we used English as a mediating language. To ensure that her proficiency was high enough, she was given a TOEFL-test before we started to verify the reliability of her English score on the Cambridge Certificate.21

I recorded these interviews on a tape recorder and carefully transcribed them in English, using normal orthography. Hesitations and repetitions

21My first language is Swedish, but I had eight years of English in school, two years at the university, and was educated to become a teacher of English; I have taught English for ten years and I also use English for research purposes.
were marked, as well as extralinguistic signals, such as laughter and sighs. In total there are more than six hours of interviews with Sofia.

Initially, the interviews were recorded in the classroom, but as we learned to know each other better, Sofia suggested that she should come to my office instead, for reasons of convenience. All the interviews were conducted in private, with just Sofia and myself and the tape recorder, except for Interview 1 where two other students were also present to encourage a feeling of ease.

The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that I had prepared one or several focuses or themes for the interview, based on my research questions, my previous knowledge or, regarding later interviews, the analysis of earlier interviews. However, whenever Sofia raised subjects of her own, I followed her lead, encouraging her to continue. When I felt that we were straying too far from the research issues, I carefully steered her back to the prepared themes.

This steering procedure is one salient feature of the qualitative research interview, one aspect of the qualification criteria for the interviewer. In qualitative research interviews the researcher is his or her own only research tool, a tool which has to be honed, whetted and made functional for the interview. Kvale (1997:136ff) postulates that, in the interview situation, the interviewer should have extensive knowledge of the interview theme in order to be able to steer the course of the interview, but at the same time must be gentle and permissive to allow the interviewee to finish his/her thoughts without interrupting, keeping his or her talk to a minimum, as well as sensitive to nuances and empathetic to emotions. Furthermore, the interviewer is expected to be open to new aspects which might turn up in the interview, but also critical enough to test the reliability and validity of the interviewee’s statements. During the interview the interviewer should interpret what is said in order to be able to clarify and verify. One very important aspect is that the interviewer should keep his or her speech to a minimum.

These rather rigorous demands on the interviewer stem from the goal of the qualitative interview; to recreate the interviewee’s life world as thoroughly as possible. In this case the focus is on Sofia’s life world in connection with this particular language learning situation. Kvale (1997:34ff) describes the qualitative interview as a search for the meanings of central themes, emphasising the qualitative and descriptive aspects of specific actions, accepting ambiguity and change. The qualitative interview
is an interpersonal interaction which can be a positive experience for both the interviewer and the interviewee.

In the interviews I have tried to follow these general guidelines as closely as possible. A good rapport was created from early on, as I joined the language groups' work from the first week in order to observe (see below). This observation often resulted in my participating in exercises and classroom conversations, more or less assisting the teacher as the only other fluent Swedish speaker, which allowed us to learn to know each other more quickly. Accordingly, participation in coffee breaks, welcome parties and occasional dinners with the group, served to build their confidence and trust in me. Through this participation I also learned to know and trust them.

In studies of this kind ethical considerations take on added importance. At an early stage I therefore told Sofia about the purpose of the study and the foreseeable demands all the interviews might make on her time and energy. She was promised confidentiality and chose to be called Sofia. I also informed her that the material would be used for research purposes only and that her anonymity would also be protected in the future. As Sofia might feel that some of the subjects in this study are sensitive, she has read the manuscript and we have discussed the content.

This is not the place to describe in detail the qualitative interviews in this study — their content is shown in Part II — but their main themes as well as some of the thoughts behind their structure will be presented here.

Based on my earlier experiences, my main strategy for the ten interviews was to start off on more neutral ground in the first few interviews, i.e. introducing themes such as strategies for learning (which already was one of my special interests; cf. Granberg 1994), earlier learning experiences, and learning progress, and little by little to introduce more sensitive areas, such as emotional reactions, personal changes, and other more intimate themes. A second strategy was to notice and return to not only major but also minor themes actualised in the interviews, with the idea that a minor theme in one interview could very well develop into a major theme in later interviews. A third strategy for the questions in the interviews could be described as a constant criss-crossing backwards and forwards in time, from

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22 All the other people mentioned in this study have been referred to by a capital letter, except Solveig, the teacher, who consented to the use of her real name.
23 This strategy turned out to be rather superfluous with Sofia since she herself introduced similar discussions from an early stage.
reflections about earlier experiences to expectations of the future, as well as between information from diaries, questionnaires, tests, observations and private talks on the one hand, and the interviews on the other.

The main themes for each interview are listed briefly and chronologically below to provide an overview.

Interview 1. Language learning background, study technique.
Interview 2. Learning in class, especially learning strategies.
Interview 3. Learning out of class, strategies, relations.
Interview 4. Learning and progress.
Interview 5. Personal changes, the curve (see Questionnaires).
Interview 6. Experiences from the autumn term, expectations.
Interview 7. Diary from the autumn term (see Diary).
Interview 7.5. Discussion of SILL test (see Tests).
Interview 8. Motivation, personality.
Interview 9. Language use, personality, the curve (see Questionnaires)
Interview 10. Look back and forwards, the Riktest, Diary from spring term.

The main theme for Interview 1 (September) was earlier experiences of from language learning compared to the present, and a discussion about techniques for learning languages. After this interview the Diary was introduced (see below). In Interview 2 (October) the matter of study technique was discussed again in the form of different strategies for learning in class. Other types of classroom activities were also discussed. The theme of strategies returned in Interview 3 (early November), this time in connection with learning and learning strategies out of class. Sofia’s social and general life situation also developed into a theme in this interview. Sofia was invited to reflect more on her own learning in Interview 4 (late November). She reported her progress, her beliefs and attitudes towards language learning, as well as strategies and social contacts, themes that returned in later interviews. Before Interview 5 (December) Sofia filled out Questionnaire 2 (see below) which contained reflective questions about experiences from learning Swedish so far. This questionnaire was used as a starting point for the subsequent interview, which thus adopted a retrospective character, airing language progress, personal changes, and Sofia’s general life situation.

Interview 6 took place at the beginning of February, after the month long break around Christmas, during which Sofia returned to her family in...
Greece. The main theme was retrospective and directed towards the changes that Sofia could discern as having occurred during the autumn term. She discussed her progress, especially after Christmas, the changes in her life situation and social situation, and her revised feelings about language learning. In connection with Interview 6 Sofia gave me her diary from the autumn term, which was subsequently translated and analysed. The diary thus became the main theme of Interview 7 (March), with a concentration on emotional factors. Sofia's present and future progress and life situation were also part of this interview. Soon after Interview 7 Sofia took the SILL test on language learning strategies (see below). It was judged necessary to discuss orally with Sofia the implications of the test results, so an extra interview occasion was arranged in late March (Interview 7.5). The main themes of Interview 8 (April) were a return to emotional factors, especially motivation, but her social situation, her cultural experiences, and her personality were also discussed. Before Interview 9 (May) Sofia completed Questionnaire 3, which was subsequently reviewed during the interview. Other themes concerned learning strategies, language use and other earlier general themes. Before Interview 10 (June) her diary for the spring term was handed in, and it became a starting point for her reflection during the interview, touching on recurrent themes such as personal changes, language learning, language use. This interview also gave her an opportunity to reflect upon the future regarding her language learning and life situation. The results of the obligatory Rikstest, the final proficiency test, were also reviewed. Finally, the Follow-up interview, consisted of a retrospective talk about the study year.

Diary

Even if you are fluent in your second language, it can be difficult to express your inner feelings in that language. Since emotions can play an important role in second language learning, I therefore gave Sofia a diary and asked her to keep it, suggesting that she could write down, in Greek, whatever feelings, reflections or comments she had as concerned herself in this language learning situation (cf. Bailey & Ochsner 1983). In order to start the writing, I was given permission by the teacher to come towards the end of class, 5–6 times for 10 minutes, to encourage her (and the others) to write at the spot. Sofia however mostly wrote in her diary at home. Towards the end of each term I asked permission to copy the diary in order
to have it translated. The diary was translated into Swedish. In a subsequent interview, the content of the diary was further discussed (cf. 3.3 Interviews). The autumn diary was thus discussed at the beginning of March, and the spring term diary was discussed in June. There is thus a time-delay between the actual writing about the events and the retrospective reflection about the events.

**Questionnaires and Tests**

Three short questionnaires were designed and given, Questionnaire 1 at the beginning of the course in September, Questionnaire 2 towards the end of the autumn term, and Questionnaire 3 towards the end of the spring term. Questionnaire 1 was more detailed in order to obtain information about first and second language background, feelings about earlier language studies and feelings about studying Swedish. Questionnaires 2 and 3 both contained the same questions and were given to obtain Sofia's reflections about her language learning process and her personal changes. The questions were: 1. Try to describe as a curve your ups and downs in succeeding to learn Swedish this term. 2. Can you recall what caused/causes the curve to look like this? 3. Do you feel that you have changed in some way during these four months, for example on a personal level, or in your way of learning, or your ideas of Sweden and the Swedes? The information on these questionnaires was also subsequently discussed during an interview.

Sofia was also asked to take a strategy test, the SILL test, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford 1990, cf. appendix) for further triangulation. The experiences from this test were also discussed during an interview (Interview 7.5). The test will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

**Observation**

During the first two months of their studies, I regularly (at least once a week) participated in a few of the study group's lessons, taking notes on their behaviour. The reason for this was twofold; first I wanted to observe

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24The diary should, of course, have been translated into English, but I could not find a Greek interpreter who knew English well enough. Instead I have translated the passages used here into English myself, after checking with Sofia and the interpreter that I had arrived at the correct meaning.
how the research participants and the teacher acted in the classroom, and, second, I wanted them to get used to me as a person to reduce possible apprehensions. It should be pointed out, however, that at the beginning of the project I made it very clear to the research participants not only how the material was going to be used, but also that I had no connection with the course or the course results, and that I was not going to discuss our talks with their teacher. Occasional visits were then made throughout the remainder of the study year.

### The Teacher and her Teaching

Their teacher, Solveig, has worked as a teacher of Swedish as a second language to adults for almost twenty years.\(^{25}\) Her basic education was in Swedish and History, but she has continued her studies throughout the years to acquire theoretical competence in both Swedish as a second language and English. She has been teaching the preparatory courses since they started, at the beginning of the 1980s. In addition, she works part-time as a university lecturer within teacher education in Swedish as a Second Language, specialising in the didactic part.

Based on her long experience as a teacher, she designs her own course.\(^{26}\) She is well acquainted with theories about language learning as well as teaching methods discussed, but says that she has not found any one method that works better than any others.\(^{27}\) Instead she uses a combination of methods from which she has picked out the salient features that she feels fit with her personality, her language study group and the goals of the course. Fundamentally she believes in interaction and communication as means for consolidating language learning. At the same time she believes

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\(^{25}\) Solveig is the teacher's first name. It is customary in Sweden for teachers and pupils to address each other on first name basis. This custom was practised here.

\(^{26}\) It should be pointed out that the five course arrangers in Sweden have regular meetings to co-ordinate and equalise the general content and the main goal of their courses, as well as the standards of the Rikstest. Consequently, some of the textbooks, the exercise books and other teaching materials are used by several arrangers. The material is mostly produced by the IES, Institute for English-speaking Students, Stockholm University. There is still ample opportunity for each course arranger to design their courses individually.

\(^{27}\) Incidentally, this is in agreement with Ellis overview of teaching methods where he concludes: "With the exception of the TPR studies, then, comparative method studies have failed to produce evidence that one method results in more successful learning than the other." (Ellis 1994:572).
that it is important to support each individual’s ability to reflect upon their language learning, thus increasing their awareness and subsequently their learner autonomy. Solveig also emphasises homework and formal instruction, for instance in grammar, while at the same time encouraging the students to use their language as much as possible in the Swedish speaking community. She takes advantage of this learning group’s intellectual and academic background, and also finds time to individualise. All in all, hers is a varied classroom which gives opportunities for different learners to find their own way into the new language, albeit using a basic academic approach.
Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Part II of this study is organised into eight chapters, Chapters 4–11. The structure of Chapters 4–9 originates in the analysis of the qualitative part of this study (cf. 3.3), i.e. it emanates from the establishment of categories and main categories as a result of the coding procedure in accordance with Grounded Theory (cf. 2.3). Chapters 10–11 are mainly based on the data in Swedish and are basically quantitatively oriented (cf. 3.2).

As was mentioned in Section 2.3, Grounded Theory was used to sort out basic concepts, categories and main categories in this study of Sofia’s learning of the Swedish language. In this course of this sorting process, five main categories were distinguished, Learning, Language Use, Person, Situation, and Culture, which are further presented below. These categories could be seen as encompassing the whole qualitative analysis of Sofia’s learning of Swedish. In order to illustrate Sofia’s case in a more holistic way, I have depicted it as resting in the drawer of a filing cabinet as is shown in Figure 3 on the next page. This drawer contains files on all the self-report information that Sofia has provided, and the files are sorted longitudinally, month by month. The five main categories mentioned above, are found on the front of the drawer.

The main category Learning comprises different aspects of Sofia’s approach to her studies and her learning, for example categories such as her use of language learning strategies, her self-report on her studies and progress, and her motivation. The main category Language Use accounts for Sofia’s report about her actual experiences of using Swedish, whereas the main category Person includes her individuality as a learner, i.e. her history and matters connected with her identity and personality. The main category Situation summarises aspects of Sofia’s experiences of being in this particular situation, for example her social contacts, her life situation in general, and aspects of her classroom language learning as compared to learning out of class. Finally, the main category Culture contains her ideas about cultural similarities and differences.

At an early stage of the analysis, two other salient characteristics emerged, characteristics salient enough to merit the definition of categories in themselves, namely Emotions and Change (as was suggested in Granberg 1996:108). Subsequent analyses showed, however, that both Emotions and
Figure 3. Categories and main categories.

Change were intricately interwoven with most of the other categories making them hard to distinguish, so I felt that they had to be re-evaluated. Instead of defining them as categories I decided to consider them to be ‘aspects’ or ‘viewpoints’ or ‘angles’ in relation to the categories. In other words, most of the categories found on the front of the drawer in Figure 3 could be examined from both an emotional and a change perspective. For example, it seems obvious that emotions, feelings, and opinions must be present in a second language learning situation like this, i.e. in most of the categories and main categories. Sofia expresses her viewpoints and evaluations, sometimes more and sometimes less strongly, about most of the issues that are discussed. Thus, in order to illustrate this overall prevalence of feelings connected with her language learning experience, Emotion is introduced as the handle of the drawer, affecting the drawer as a whole. Furthermore, in most areas, a salient and recurring feature of Sofia’s
development during this study year is development and change. The longitudinal structure of the study allows us to discern changes in, for example, Sofia’s use of learning strategies, her life situation and her identity. I have tried to capture this aspect in Figure 3 by means of a three-dimensional reiteration of the files over time. Supposedly, each file, then, contains information on the five main categories and their relation to emotion.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the naming of categories does not fully correspond to the naming of individual differences, IDs, discussed in Chapter 1. This is a natural result of the qualitative analysis. Since this study is discovery-oriented, set on finding an understanding of the individual’s life-world, the concepts usually grow out of the analysis. Often already established concepts fit into the analysis, but occasionally they might obscure the view, thus precluding new interpretations. In this study this has not been seen as a great problem since most of the ID concepts in Chapter 1 are also applicable in this study and can be found in Figure 3. Figure 3 thus illustrates categories which can be identified as IDs, for instance strategies, motivation and culture, but also categories which cannot, for instance Sofia’s self-report on her studies and progress as well as on her language use. Together they are meant to depict an holistic view of Sofia as a language learner. This holistic view is also further discussed in Part III.

The main categories and categories in Figure 3 have served as the basis for the structure of Chapters 4–9 in Part II. The chapters in Part II are organised in the following manner. Metaphorically speaking, they are funnel-shaped, moving from a general description of Sofia’s life situation (Chapter 4), via her own experience of the second language learning process (Chapters 7–9), and narrowing down towards part of her actual linguistic development in Swedish (Chapters 10–11). Consequently, Chapters 4–9 are mainly based on the qualitative self-report data (i.e. the interviews, diaries, etc.), whereas the last two chapters, Chapter 10 and 11, are mainly based on the Swedish interviews, the written compositions and the test results from the course. Chapter 4 takes a more holistic perspective than the other chapters in that it epitomises the course of events during Sofia’s study year and their emotional consequences for her.

The typical feature of change is also mirrored in the structure of each chapter in Part II. Most of the chapters are time-ordered, or sequential, following Sofia’s development from month to month, from interview to interview, in order to emphasise not only the linguistic change which
characterises second language learning, but also the individual and personal changes which Sofia goes through. Each chapter in Part II ends by a conclusion. I have chosen to name these sections ‘conclusions’ although they could be seen as representing various degrees of conclusiveness. In those cases where there has been an obvious connection to ongoing theoretical debate references to earlier research are made. In others the salient features of the chapter are summarised.

Inherent in statements of events is the fact that they could be interpreted differently depending on who interprets them and from what perspective they are observed. As was discussed earlier, the qualitative researcher uses thick description to make his or her interpretations plausible to the reader in order to achieve an holistic understanding of the case in question (2.2). One consequence of this is that qualitative studies contain more direct quotations than other types of studies. Another consequence is that the same quotations are sometimes reiterated because they are analysed from a different perspective.

As was also mentioned in 2.2, triangulating member checks are often used to ensure validity in qualitative research. Accordingly, Sofia has read and commented on the analysis.

One final remark to the reader. This study is carried forward in what can be characterised as a cyclical interchange between Sofia’s statements (in the form of quotations) and my commentaries and interpretations, both of equal importance for the understanding. For reasons of clarity they are marked differently orthographically, but I would like to point out that they are, in a sense, symbiotic; one has little meaning without the other.
4. Life Situation

In this chapter, Sofia’s life situation is described, i.e. the shape of her life on a general level during this study year. More specifically, this chapter captures the events and the emotional consequences of these events as Sofia sees them, from her arrival, through her sometimes troublesome experiences, to an equilibrium towards the end of the language course. Furthermore, some social aspects are described, i.e. her relationship with her old friends in Greece as well as her new acquaintances in Sweden.

Sofia is 19 years old. She’s leaving home to study medicine in Sweden, but first she has to take a year of Swedish. All her life she has dreamt of becoming a physician and has twice tried to be admitted to medical school in Greece. To qualify she has even taken extra courses in Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Composition after Upper Secondary School. Waiting for the results from the last test in June she has applied to study abroad:

I chose Sweden as the last solution, in case I wouldn’t pass the exams in Greece (Questionnaire 1).

I could study in a country like Bulgaria or Rumania or, but then, except from the fact that I would have to pay much money there and my life wouldn’t be as it is now, and the fact that things are not so well down there, I had to choose between Italy and Sweden. So, I chose Sweden because, yeah, my parents knew how life is here and I had relatives and friends up here, and... (Interview 8:2).

For the first time in her life she is leaving her parents, her friends and her boyfriend to live in a foreign country. But it will not be for long, she thinks, because she believes that she will get positive results from the Greek medical school in October.

Sofia’s life situation is quite good at the time; she is self-confident and she has quite a few friends:

[Before I left, I had, like, a life, I had friends, I was playing handball, there were many people that knew me, I was like, I don’t know, I was kind of, I had many people around me all the time. I wasn’t just someone, I was a

28Sofia’s parents worked as guest workers in Sweden for a few years. She was actually born in Sweden, but lived her first year with her grandmother in Greece, came back when she was one year old, stayed in Sweden for one and a half years, after which her parents moved back to Greece.
person most people knew in my city, it was kind of a small city, so...
(Interview 9:4).

A few years earlier, however, she had been a lonely 14-year-old:

I wasn’t the kind of girl that had many friends or... was so popular in
Greece. At the beginning it was very hard for me to make friends or to meet
boys and things like that. But ever since I started playing handball I started
making friends, I started travelling, I started meeting people. And the last
four or five years I actually built up my entire life, like my thoughts, my
dreams, what I had around me, the people I had around me. And I
appreciated that. It was very important to me. Because at the beginning it
was really hard for me to do that (Interview 7:5).

4.1 In Between
At first when she arrived in Sweden everything was fine. She was registered
at a university, found a couple of other Greeks in her Swedish class, had a
nice teacher and got a good apartment. And, after all, she was only going to
stay until she was admitted to medical school in Greece. She regarded her
stay as something of a late holiday (Interview 7:1). In her diary at the
beginning of October she writes about good classes, about her interest and
motivation and she reveals a confidence in her ability to learn Swedish
(Diary 1; cf. 6.1). However, when it comes to her life situation, she seems
to have been living in a state of ambivalence:

For me, the first month was: ‘Should I stay or should I go?’ I didn’t know
what to do, so I was like this all the time. And that’s what made me feel
bad. I didn’t know what I wanted to do, I didn’t want to hurt people, I
didn’t know what was best for me. It was complicated. (LAUGHS) Awful
(Interview 4:5).

In other words, she knows that she will be getting a good education in
Sweden, but she cannot stop thinking about going home. She dutifully
goes to school, does her homework, relying on her past experiences of
learning a language, acting, metaphorically, more or less like a tourist
visiting the obligatory sights.
4.2 Going Down

On the 15th of October her results from the last entrance test arrive from Greece. Again she has failed the test.

/.../ but then, after 15th of October I got my results and I didn’t get into medical school so I realised that I had to stay here. So, that’s when the problems began for me (SIGHS) because instead of trying to adjust all this month, I was just thinking about how I’m gonna go back. And then it was kind of sad that I had to stay here, and it would go pretty fast with school and everything, and I wasn’t, I became kind of sad and I wasn’t ready for it. That’s why I was feeling so bad (Interview 7:1).

She is not prepared, so her failure to enter the Greek medical school comes as a shock to her, and in a short time her situation becomes more and more complicated and frustrated. Her increasing despair is manifested step-by-step in her diary.

15 October. /.../ I want to be good and I wish I could learn Swedish at once. So many things move in my head. Everything is doubtful and I cannot concentrate. That’s alright, I guess, but I have to pull myself together, which I will do in a couple of days (Diary 1).

21 October. /.../ I feel worse and I’m too lazy to study, even if I wanted to. I don’t know if I can cope with this and what I should do, everything feels so hard and I feel bloody awful. The only thing I can do is to keep waiting, which is both hard and boring (Diary 1).

29 October. /.../ No! This is going too far. I didn’t go to school today and last Monday I wanted to pack all my things and leave. /.../ The problem is that I no longer care. I woke up this morning and decided not to go to school because I was so tired. How I could learn Swedish acting like this is a good question. I’m sure I won’t be able to handle anything, and then we’ll see what I will do.

Long live the cleaning ladies!²⁹ My parents send me loads of money and I keep bundling up. I hate myself, my despair, my pessimism and my indifference.

I have never felt like this.

Despair, pessimism and indifference were never in me, at least not for the last two years. To hell with everything (Diary 1).

²⁹Sofía refers to the fact that her mother (and her father) worked hard to save money to let her study.
These diary notes reveal how Sofia step by step loses her foothold in an emotional turmoil. She starts to realise by the end of October that she does not really have any options: “[A]t the beginning I couldn’t adjust here and then I couldn’t go back to Greece because there was nothing there for me to do. So, I felt like I was in the middle of two places without knowing what to do“ (Interview 7:5). She cannot go back so she stays on in Sweden. However, she still has a door open: It is possible to take the entrance tests in June. The decision to stay has a somewhat positive influence; at least she does not have to worry about what to do.

Yeah, I feel much better. Even though there are times that I wish that I was in Greece, of course, but I think it’s much better now. I’m just... I’m just living normally. Before it was like stress, every time my phone was ringing I would say: ‘Oh, my God! My results!’ And I, there was a time that I said that: ‘I’m not gonna decide until the day I get my results’, because I couldn’t stand it any more, it was like needles in my mind, like that (LAUGHS). I didn’t know what to do. But now that things are like that I just say that: ‘At least this year I’m gonna be here in Sweden so I might as well enjoy it’ (Interview 3:11).

She likes her teacher very much; Sofia thinks that Solveig is a good teacher, helpful, caring and devoted to her job. Sofia is also satisfied with the cooperation in her study group. But in spite of her decision to stay, her life situation is still characterised by ambivalence. Even though she keeps going to school most of the time, she does not do her homework any more, she does not care, she is paralysed.

I wanted to do many things but I just, I couldn’t. I wanted to start studying, because I realised that if I study now Swedish, next year I’m gonna be in medical school, which is what I wanna do. And I wanted to play handball, and I wanted to go out, but it just, I felt like I was stuck on the ground and I couldn’t move, I couldn’t do anything (Interview 7:2).

At the beginning of November she feels like a failure and her only hope at the time lies is the thought that she is going home for Christmas:

2 November. /.../ Yesterday a girl asked me what I’m doing here, how I study, if I pay for everything myself, and so on. She asked: ‘So the money you spend here is from you work or something?’ And I answered: ‘No, it’s my parents who send me money. The last few years I didn’t have time to work. I was too busy studying and failing in my exams’. I felt very bad. It felt like I didn’t have any place at all, as if I don’t do anything. Oh, God! Let the days until Christmas go fast (Diary 1).
She feels cast out into the middle of nowhere, alienated from the world, feeling very, very lonely, with just a tiny note of hope in her diary a week later:

7 November. /.../ Alone again, there is nothing worse. I have stopped longing, feeling bad about being here. I want to be here, but everything is so difficult. It took me four years to get my life together in Greece, and now I have to start from scratch again.

The loneliness frightens me and it seems to have stuck on me. I need some help. I have already gone through this and believe me, it wasn’t easy. I didn’t think I would end up in the same situation again. But life is full of surprises and I’m only in the beginning. I feel tired although I’m only 19 years old and I must find the strength. It is hidden somewhere but I will find it (Diary 1).

At the same time that she experiences these strong feelings of loneliness and alienation reported in her diary, ten days later in Interview 4 she says that she is able to discern a change in her attitude towards her studies after her decision to stay on in Sweden.

Yeah, before I was coming to school and I was studying because I had to. I felt like I had to, in case. Because I wanted to go back and I was just thinking in case I stay I have to be prepared. And also it was something to do with my time. I mean, the weekends, for they were so horrible, because I had nothing, absolutely nothing to do. Afterwards it was different. I had a different motivation. I said: ‘I’m gonna stay here, at least for this year, so I’m gonna study medicine here, I have to learn Swedish’ and I started to enjoy it (Interview 4:2).

Socially, she has learned to know some of the other Greeks in town as well as some of the people living in the same block as her. Furthermore, at the beginning of November she joins a handball team where she meets some girls “that are really nice to me. I have something to do with my free time“ (Interview 3:12). Around the middle of November she establishes a relationship with another man. In December she writes:

14 December. I don’t feel like going to school and I don’t know what to do. I can’t take any more and I’m tired with everything. I don’t only mean school but other things too, which I haven’t told and which break me down (Diary 1).

She reveals these other things retrospectively in Interview 7; her boyfriend in Greece had been unfaithful to her.
Just before I went back to Greece... eh, my boyfriend at that time did... no, actually, he did something really stupid long ago, a while after I came here. And... he was involved with someone else while we were together and things like that, so I found out, somehow. And I called him and I told him, that's what people tell me, and he promised me and swore to me that he loves me and all that rubbish (LAUGHS), so he was... /.../ So, it was kind of irritating at the time, because he kept calling me afterwards and tell me: 'It's not true' 'Please forgive me', and all that stuff. And I was really sick of it. Now, I was with X at that time, here, that was a bit difficult, too. And I had... I had many things in my mind, many things that I didn't like, just wanted them out, and as long as I got rid of them, I started feeling much better (Interview 7:10).

4.3 Going Home

She does not write very much in her diary for three weeks in November. She is counting the days until she can go home to Greece. At the same time she is somewhat apprehensive with regard to the people she knew; some of them have kept contact while others have not even sent letters.

When she goes home to Greece, her premonition that things might be more different than she expects comes true at first. Many of her old friends are not comfortable with her, making her feel like an alien sometimes (Interview 6:13) and she feels very awkward.

I would meet people in the street that I have known for years, that we've been for years together, from the team, maybe some girls from the team, and they would look at me like I was someone who's been away for, I don't know, like ten or fifteen years. And they: 'Oh, my God, you're back!' or like something strange, someone that, like I had something written in my face or something. It was so strange. But I was the same, I just wanted to say hi, to say all the ordinary things that we said, the jokes and everything. Just be normal. I could see that they were like holding themselves, like I was a stranger to them (Interview 9:4—5).

She wants to be the same and she wants everything else to be the same, but eventually she comes to realise that there must have been changes. One of the consequences of her stay in Greece is that she changes her opinion about friends and friendship.

It was the worst thing that I don't think I'm gonna forget it, is that I actually realised that I don't have so many friends. And that there are not so many people that really care for me, except for my family, my best friend (Interview 9:4).
She is quite disappointed with all the people she thought were her friends and she finds it difficult to understand why they behave so differently.

[W]hen I went back I just, I actually wanted to be the person I was before I left. All these months that I was here, feeling depressed and everything, missing everybody. When I went home I just said: ‘Yes, I’m gonna be myself again, I’m gonna be what I was’. But it seemed like many people didn’t want it to be this way, they expected me to be something different, maybe. I don’t know (Interview 9:5–6).

The second two weeks of her stay in Greece seem to have been quite pleasant, however.

I hadn’t stayed in Sweden for such a long time as to change completely. And then I was back in Greece for a long enough time to start getting used to all the things that I was doing, again. When I was here I had changed in a few things, and I started little by little to follow the way of life i Sweden. But then I wasn’t totally changed, and then when I went back, the first two weeks were like, a bit strange, seemed a bit strange, but then it was natural, I was like I was before (Interview 6:13–14).

But just before she leaves Greece to go back to Sweden she has a big quarrel with her mother, mostly about staying in or going out. “After I came back from Greece I was pretty depressed, really“ (Interview 6:4). Then the first few weeks in Sweden were difficult, but not as difficult as before Christmas, mainly because she got some help from her friends.

Yeah, they were kind of surprising again (LAUGHS), even though I knew where I was coming, I knew what I was gonna do, but it was, the adjustment was easier, much easier this time. But I had a few friends to help me, also I talk more, we’re getting closer with S. and the other Greek people [here]“ (Interview 6:14).

She writes in her diary about her ambivalent emotions:

4 February. /.../ And when I came back everything was crap, as usual in other words. /.../ The time when I went [to Sweden] was hopeless, because I came back to darkness the first few months. When I finally started to adjust here, I went to Greece for a whole month, and I lost myself completely again (Diary 2).

The visit to Greece has thus been both aggravating and revealing for Sofia. On the one hand she has realised that she has relatively few friends whom she can trust. On the other, she has understood that her four months in Sweden have changed her and that Greece has less to offer her than she earlier believed.
4.4 Optimism and Motivation

In February she feels more optimistic and starts to think about a future in Sweden, although her feelings are contradictory.

I'm feeling much more relaxed now. I'm just... yeah, enjoying being here, I guess. /.../ But things were pretty bad the first week when I came back, but then it was normal. I saw that, when I was back in Greece I saw that it was nothing really special there. Now I realise that I'm actually doing something here. There I wasn't doing anything, I was like, even at Christmas I wasn't doing anything: I was going out meeting friends, yeah, of course I hadn't seen everybody for such long time and I was there only for a month, but here I have something to do. I sometimes... today is one of my good days! (LAUGHS) I'm kind of optimistic, and I say: ‘Oh, I'm gonna meet new people, I'm gonna learn something new, I'm gonna go back to Greece to see everything that I love and everybody’. But it's a challenge sometimes. Sometimes I can't stand it! (Interview 16:4.)

Her ambivalence remains but its force seems to be waning:

It's not like before Christmas, that I would say: I wanna go back and things like that. It's the same, but sometimes I actually wanna stay here (Interview 6:12).

In later interviews she was asked if she could evaluate what had happened between her despair in November and her growing optimism in February; whether she could discern the turning-point.

The turning-point... It was I think a little before Christmas. It wasn't really a turning-point. I was still feeling pretty bad, but I started accepting the fact that I was gonna stay here, so I felt that I might as well make it useful. The real turning-point came after I came back from home, on Christmas. I was changed, I mean, now I'm feeling really... Now I don't wanna go back. I've no problem at all (Interview 7:2–3).

Yeah, because I saw that things are not really bad here, and they're not so good in Greece either. So... I made a choice and my choice was to stay here, so I decided to make the best out of it (Interview 9:6).

In other words, it seems to have taken a rather long time for her to really accept the fact that she is going to stay in Sweden, and to accept it enough to start enjoying it. The process lasted more than three months from October, including a one-month break at Christmas, until February.

Although she hates the cold weather in February and keeps longing for her family, she has arrived at a somewhat different view of her life situation,
feeling much better. One of the reasons she gives to explain why she feels better is that she can use the Swedish language more competently (cf. Chapter 8), and also that she can handle her crises better.

Yeah, I have some bad days. It’s better now, I can control them, I’m not getting crazy (LAUGHS) anymore. Yeah, it’s under control now. I say: ‘Okay, its my crises again, in two hours its gonna pass!’ (Interview 6:5).

It seems as if she is starting to find a balance, or in other words, she is more able to see her problems from a distance.

Socially, she has got to know a few new friends and has come closer to some of the old ones, but she lacks a really close friend with whom she can talk about anything.

But there are some times when I miss home and, or when I have a problem or anything, and then I can’t talk to anybody. Because, you know, when you’re at home there is always someone, you call him: ‘I wanna talk to you’, or your parents or your brother somewhere. Here it’s something, you have to have someone you really trust, to talk to him. /.../ I mean, my best friend, I would call her at two o’clock in the morning and say: ‘Get a taxi and come over here, I’m not feeling well’. But I cannot do that here (Interview 6:5).

4.5 Coming to Terms

In March she seems to be balanced enough to be able to feel well, which is reflected in her diary.

3 March. I haven’t written for a long time and that can only mean one thing, I feel very, very good. [last entry 7 February] Really, everything went like clockwork this month. /.../ I don’t know exactly what has happened but my needs have changed fundamentally. It’s a long time since I felt like this. I believe it was when I was 17, when I felt no misery (Diary 2).

She is able to put the past six months in perspective and she can draw conclusions from her experiences.

Right now, I feel real lucky that I came here, because if I were in Greece I wouldn’t experience the things that I have. I have changed very much since the time I came here. All this loneliness and difficulties and all the things that I’ve been through the past six months have been very useful to me. I realise now that what I had in Greece was really wonderful, all the people I met there and my friends and my family and everything, this is really important to me, everything is really great, but I’m here now. And I can
start else, I have the opportunity to start something new, it’s a challenge and I wanna take it (Interview 7:7).

Her friend is very excited about going back to Greece for the Easter holidays, but Sofia is not interested.

I don’t wanna go. Even if my parents would beg me to go, I wouldn’t go. Because it’s useless, why should I go? I mean, I’m having... I’m having so much fun, actually. I can’t believe it! There are some times I wonder: ‘What was I doing for four months, why couldn’t I see all the beautiful things around me?’ (SMILES) And I’m doing pretty good (Interview 7:11).

In April and May she seems to have achieved equilibrium with regard to her life situation. She feels satisfied with her decision to study in Sweden, she is working hard to pass the final test in June and she has found a few close friends. Sofia is enjoying her new life, she feels confident that she will pass her exams and she is looking forward to her medical studies in Sweden the coming autumn.

4.6 Conclusion

Judging from her description of the sequence of events during this study year, Sofia shows some of the typical symptoms of a person who is going through the different phases of a traumatic crisis, as seen from an individual-psychological perspective. In psychology it is common to divide a crisis of this kind into four phases: the shock phase, the reaction phase, the repair phase, and the reorientation phase (e.g. Sigrell 1985, Söderlindh 1984). These phases are interposed and both their expression and their length vary from one individual to another. The shock phase is usually fairly short and is typically characterised by a blocking of emotions. Soon after, there is an emotional reaction, often characterised by very painful feelings, for example anger, frustration, loneliness, hostility, and a sense of meaninglessness. A variety of defence mechanisms can be applied during this reaction phase, for example repression, isolation, rejection, regression, and denial. To what degree this reaction is reflected outwardly varies from person to person and this phase can last from days to weeks or even months. Little by little, however, the individual typically starts to labour with his/her reactions, repairing the damage, gradually accepting the traumatic event, turning his/her energy forwards. Eventually, maybe after six months or a year sometimes, the crisis is over, the event has been reoriented from a trauma to an experience, a life experience which may
increase the individual’s understanding of himself/herself and his/her readiness for future events.

Seen from an individual-psychological perspective, Sofia is shocked when she finds out that she will not be able to study medicine in Greece. Fairly soon her reaction phase is reflected in her diary, where she talks about wanting to be good but feeling awful, tired, full of despair, pessimism and indifference. She is paralysed, feeling guilty for not working, expressing loneliness, frustration, disorientation and estrangement. This reaction phase is reflected only in her diary; there is no evidence for the strength of these feelings in the interviews which took place during this period (Interviews 3 and 4), only a general homesickness and tiredness just before Christmas. This could be an indication of a need to keep up appearances, or a difficulty in expressing these feelings openly, or a type of defence mechanism. On the other hand, it could also be the sign of the beginning of a repair phase; in October she takes a decision to stay for one year, finding comfort in the possibility of taking the Greek tests in June, she joins the handball team, she does not isolate herself completely from her social contacts, she keeps going to school, however reluctantly, and she sees that she is progressing in Swedish. In Interview 4 in late November, she even says:

Yeah, I feel like I actually started living here. Because that’s when you know... when you have friends and when you go out and when you do several things, that’s when you start having a life (Interview 4:4).

The fact that there is a discrepancy between the interviews and the diary is also interesting from a methodological perspective. It shows that triangulation can be essential for the total understanding of a case. By having access to both interview and diary statements it is possible to delve deeper into the individual’s life-world, as has been done here. Furthermore, it emphasises that learners’ diaries can provide the researcher with valuable information. Diaries have the advantage of giving the learners time for reflection, and if a mutual trust is established between researcher and learner, the learner also feels confident about revealing sensitive information.

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30 In reading this section, Sofia informs me that she did not say much during the interviews about her feelings because she was not asked. Had I asked, she would have answered. Furthermore, she says that in writing her diary, she had decided to be honest, first because it felt nice to know that somebody else would eventually read what she had written and, second, because she had promised to be of assistance in a research project.
There is an obvious composite complexity in this crisis for Sofia. Her diary seems to have developed into a confidante to whom she expresses her inner feelings on the days when she is feeling bad, while her decision to stay and her daily activities, together with other aspects of her life, seem to keep her going, repairing her shock. A certain tenacity in Sofia can be traced in the following interchange between us just before Christmas when she says that she finds her language learning boring:

Interviewer: So, there is nothing really that would stop you from coming back after Christmas?

Sofia: No. No.

Interviewer: No fears, or?

Sofia: No, I’m coming back, for sure!

Interviewer: Even if it’s boring?

Sofia: I’m coming back (Interview 5:9).

When she does come back, there is a fundamental change in her. It seems as if her visit to Greece has helped her to see her life in a different light, which seems to have been beneficial to her in the repair phase, and made it possible for her to move into a reorientation phase, although traces of ambivalence still remain. The break over Christmas has thus had a positive psychological effect on her.

Towards the middle and the end of the spring term she has regained her balance, is looking forward to the future in a positive manner, and can see how this crisis has helped her develop personally. She says that this time has been useful to her and now sees life in Sweden as a challenge, an opportunity to start something new.

All in all, during this period Sofia seems to have gone through a transition, from one relatively stable social state to another, via a period of instability. Before she starts her studies and during her first period in Sweden she feels that her social relations are good, with family, friends and boyfriend. Likewise, towards the middle and end of the second term, she has passed the threshold to new good relations as well as re-established some of the old ones. The period in between, however, is characterised by ambiguity, uncertainty, and a discontinuity of social relations. She expresses feelings of loneliness and describes herself as stuck in a period of transition: “I felt like I was in the middle of two places without knowing what to do“ (Interview 7:5). She does not have access to her old life; neither does she
have access to a new one, yet. Furthermore, when she goes back to Greece she finds that in her old life many social relations have changed qualitatively. In other words, she is caught in an irreversible process, a state of transitional alienation, where she is able to look backwards and forwards, but without a sense of belonging anywhere.

Sofia’s description of her changing social world fits very well with the social-anthropological construct of liminality introduced in 2.4. This construct sheds a different light on her experiences. The traumatic crisis model mentioned at the beginning of this chapter shows many similarities with the three-stage passage model, but, whereas the traumatic crisis model illustrates and explains the chain of events from an individual, inside perspective, the three-stage passage model helps to explain the events from a collective, socio-structural perspective. In other words, the traumatic crisis model focuses on the individual, while the three-stage passage model focuses on the social context, thus shifting the ‘blame’ for the reaction from the individual to transitional circumstances in society. It is even possible to say that the crisis model fits into, or is a part of, the passage model, illustrating the effect of the transitional process on the individual as discussed above. The advantage of using the construct of liminality here is that it emphasises the process aspects, the transition, the transformation, the qualitative changes, which are very much present in Sofia’s case.

So far only the social side of Sofia’s language learning period have been discussed as a passage, mainly because it is the most obvious choice. In the separation phase she leaves her habitual social environment in Greece, in the liminal phase she expresses feelings of uncertainty and ambiguity about living in a foreign country, and in the incorporation phase she has reached a new social position as Swedish-speaking with a small but growing group of Swedish-speaking friends. The ritual side of this passage is less accentuated here, but traces can be found. A clear example of symbolic behaviour is the fact that Sofia’s father accompanies her on the first day to introduce her to Sweden, her new environment. Furthermore, in contrast to the diary’s solemn and expressive description of her liminal feelings, Sofia keeps going to school, barely fulfilling her homework assignments, keeps coming regularly to the interviews, and keeps writing in her diary, her confidante. These examples could be interpreted as symbolic acts, rites which she performs without a distinct purpose.

In fact, the whole process of learning a second language in the environment where the language is spoken could be seen as a transition at
different levels. It consists of a transition from one social position to another, from one cultural situation to another, from one identity to another, as well as a transition from one language to another, or, to be more precise, from one monolingual/bilingual state to another bilingual state; one language added. Generally speaking, adult second language learning can entail a physical movement for the learner, a border crossing from one country to another, be it as a refugee, a gastarbeiter, or a student, thus encountering a different culture and a different language. As a result of the process of learning the new language, he/she is expected to be integrated into the new culture, to become both bilingual and bicultural. Once this is achieved, there is a possibility of being accepted as something other than a learner, of assuming a different social position, closer to being a full member of society. Accordingly, the interjacent period could very well be interpreted as a betwixt and between, neither-nor, interstitial, ambiguous liminality state, more or less pronounced.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{31}\) In reading this section, Sofia recognises that this description corresponds well with what she experienced then, and says that it feels good to get an explanation.
5. Personal Circumstances

While Chapter 4 illustrated the emotional consequences for Sofia of the chain of events during the course of this study year, Chapter 5 aims to present Sofia's personal development, i.e. changes in her approach to life in general, in her attitudes to her life situation and her feelings of belonging, as well as to people in this new culture. Concurrently, this chapter also aims to capture Sofia as a person, i.e. her individuality with regard to more enduring traits, which are sometimes called personality (cf. 1.2).

5.1 Personal Changes

During the autumn term Sofia revises her ideas about friends and friendship, especially with regard to her Greek friends, as was also illustrated in Chapter 4.

I have changed my opinion about many of my friends in Greece. (SIGHS) It's like, when you need them then you can understand who is really close to you and who cares for you and... (Interview 5:5–6).

Growing Up

Living alone means that she has had to take more responsibility, which she believes has changed her, made her grow up a little. When she lived at home her family took all the responsibility, now she has to manage her economy, pay her rent and her telephone bills, and do all her shopping herself.

My whole life, all my activities, they are up to me now. I have to think about everything /.../ I believe that when I was in Greece I was a teenager that was studying, playing handball, meeting friends, having a good time. Here, it's like I'm in the next level. I don't know, I can't say that I'm an adult, I'm not a teenager either (Interview 5:6–7).

Looking back at the period just before Christmas, she describes how she has begun to think about herself to a greater extent now because of the situation, and how she also has started to value personal relations more.

Well, I became a little bit more selfish. /.../ Like, and I think it's natural because I came in a foreign country, completely on my own, I didn't know
anybody, so I felt like I had to protect myself, I don’t know from what. /.../ Yeah, trying to protect myself, even though it could be, sometimes it could be hurting to other people (Interview 5:5).

Well, I started to appreciate things that I didn’t know they existed! (LAUGHS) /.../ Well, like... just maybe saying good morning when you wake up, when you see someone, and... I don’t know. Friends. Maybe people that, if I was in Greece, I would never be related to, now they are very close to me. Some little, little things (Interview 5:5).

Another Culture

Before she came to Sweden, she had an idea that the Swedes would be cold and rejective, and her first impressions were not very favourable.

The most strange thing that I noticed was that when you talk with a Swede you see no expression in his face. It’s like, and I was talking about it with a friend of mine, and you talk and you talk and you don’t see if he’s really interested or if he’s bored of you or... (Interview 5:8).

However, after a while when she got to know people these first impressions changed, at least as far as the people she knows are concerned.

I don’t know, but I think that’s just the first impression you get, if you start living, if you talk to them and you get to know them they’re very nice people actually! Well, all my Swedish friends are very nice people! I don’t know about the rest (Interview 5:8).

Encountering a new culture has also made it difficult for her to feel at home during this first term. She says that, because she does not speak the language, she has had difficulties identifying with the new environment, she feels as if there is a wall between her and the Swedes.

I couldn’t understand many things, I couldn’t talk very well, so I felt like during the movies and when you see someone on the screen and I’m just sitting in the audience (17:11–12).

2 November. /.../ I still feel like a stranger in Sweden. I cannot enter their society. I’m outside watching them but it’s impossible to get in. Maybe if I learn the language it will work, who knows (Diary 1).
A Lost Identity

Not only does she have difficulties with the new culture. In connection with her liminal crisis towards the end of the autumn term, she also feels that she had lost her own identity, an identity she had worked to establish for four years. This is yet another example of how she experiences the feeling of being betwixt and between, in a state of liminality (cf. Chapter 4).

Expressing her alienation at the beginning of November, she quotes, in English, a poem (or a song) about self-confidence, which she connects with her own feelings of lost identity.

7 November /.../ Hang on to your hopes my friend. That’s an easy thing to say. But if your hopes should pass away, simply pretend that you can build them again. And! Be yourself no matter what they say!!

The problem is that I don’t know myself anymore. I don’t know who I am and where I belong. Nothing! But things will get better. I know they will. They have to get better. I can’t stand this situation. They have to get BETTER (Diary 1).

She does not know herself any more, she does not know who she is or where she belongs. She is in an ambiguous situation, feeling uncertain and stripped of her identity, i.e. in the middle of liminality.

However, she wants to change her situation and she needs to find strength. She tries to find solace in poetry, which has helped her before. In her diary on the 7 November, the same day that she writes about failing and loneliness, she copies a whole poem by the Greek poet Kabaphes.\(^{32}\)

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\(^{32}\)This poem was quoted in Greek by Sofia in her diary. The English translation has been copied from *The Complete Poems of Cavafy*. Translated by Rae Dalven, with an Introduction by W.H. Auden. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. New York, 1961.
Σάν έξαφνα, ὡρα μεσάνυχτί, ἀκουσθεὶ
ἀδώτατος θίασος νὰ περνά
μὲ μουσικὲς ἐξαίσεις, μὲ φωνὲς —
tὴν τύχη σου ποὺ ἐνδίδει πιὰ, τὰ ἔργα σου
ποὺ ἃπετυχαν, τὰ σχέδια τῆς ζωῆς σου
ποὺ βγήκαν ὄλα πλάνες, μὴ ἀνωφέλετα θρηνήσεις.
Σάν ἐτοιμὸς ἀπὸ καίρο, σὰς θαρραλέος,
ἀποχαιρέτα τῆν, τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρεια ποὺ φεύγει.
Πρὸ πάντων νὰ μὴ γελασθεῖς, μὴν πεῖς πὼς ἦταν
ἐνα ὀνειρο, πῶς ἀπατήθηκεν ἡ ἄκοι σου
μᾶταις ἐπιδές τέτοιες μὴν καταδεχθεῖς.
Σάν ἐτοιμὸς ἀπὸ καίρο, σὰς θαρραλέος,
σάν ποὺ ταχιράζει σε ποὺ ἀξιώθηκες μιὰ τέτοια πόλι,
πλησίασε σταθερὰ πρὸς τὸ παράθυρος,
κὶ ἀκούσε μὲ συγκίνησιν, ἀλλὰ δῆχ
μὲ τῶν δειλῶν τὰ παρακάλεια καὶ παράπονα,
ὡς τελευταία ἀπόλαυσι τοὺς ἠχοὺς,
τὰ ἐξαίσια δρόγκα τοῦ μυστικοῦ θίασου,
κὶ ἀποχαιρέτα τὴν, τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρεια ποὺ χάνεις.

[1911]

THE GOD FORSAKES ANTONY

When suddenly at the midnight hour
an invisible troupe is heard passing
with exquisite music, with shouts -
do not mourn in vain you fortune failing you now,
your works that have failed, the plans of your life
that have all turned out to be illusions.
As if long prepared for this, as if courageous,
bid her farewell, the Alexandria that is leaving.
Above all do not be fooled, do not tell yourself
it was only a dream, that your ears deceived you;
do not stoop to such vain hopes.
As if long prepared for this, as if courageous,
as it becomes you who are worthy of such a city;
approach the window with firm step,
and listen with emotion, but not
with the entreaties and complaints of the coward,
as a last enjoyment listen to the sounds,
the exquisite instruments of the mystical troupe,
and bid her farewell, the Alexandria you are losing.
C.P. Cavafy (Konstantinos P. Kabaphes)
This poem is about failure, about breaking up and starting anew. In her retrospective interpretation of this poem, Sofia says that it is her favourite poem because it is so optimistic, and that she would want her attitude to life to be just that: Learn from your experiences and carry on forwards.

[In ancient years when Rome had this great empire, this king was from Rome and he was in Egypt, Alexandria. There was a time when he had to go, they kicked him out, so the poet here tells to that king: ‘Don’t be sad about what you lose, this beautiful city and all the money and everything that you have, because it’s good enough what you have experienced during all those years. Just be brave and be happy about what you had, and now accept this situation as it is and try to make something good out of it.’ That’s what I think is the poem. Like ‘Don’t hang on and don’t cry about what you have lost. Just be happy that you have experienced it, and start all over again.’ /.../ It’s my favourite poem. Every time I read it, I just come to my senses, when I have those crises (Interview 7:6–7).

She finds comfort in reading poetry, and she even writes that she has herself decided to become a ‘poet’; in this case she means a poet who strives to see only the positive sides of life.

30 November. /.../ There are so many things that I want to do, but now everything keeps turning in my head. I have stopped accusing myself and my destiny, I have decided to become a poet. It will take time but I will do it:

‘If your everyday life is boring and grey,
don’t complain.
Complain about yourself who’s not enough of a poet to see what’s beautiful in life’ (Diary 1).

This is something I read in a book somewhere, in school. This guy says that for every day... you read the... I thought that he is right, I mean, every day has got something special, all you have to do is find it, imagine it. Yeah, I think it’s wise (Interview 7:7–8).

All in all, in this passage she expresses a wish to change her attitude to life, to start thinking more positively, to leave behind what has been and look to the future, to take advantage of and appreciate the bright sides of life. Concurrently, these wishes could also illustrate how she works with herself during the repair phase after the shock (cf. Chapter 4). In other words, she seeks comfort and inspiration to help her handle her trauma. From a transitional perspective, the reading of poetry could be interpreted as a
ritual, an automatised behavioural pattern to exit the liminal state. As she expresses it: “Every time I read it, I just come to my senses, when I have those crises” (Interview 7:6–7).

New Perspectives

After Christmas, at the beginning of the spring term, she describes how she has changed her attitude and become more open and more pleasant to people and that she is even starting to lose some of her Greek temper (Interview 6:12). In her diary she writes that she really would like to show her family how she has changed.

4 March /.../ I miss my family terribly. I want to show them that I have changed and make them happy, because, to be truthful, I haven’t been so good or cooperative (Diary 2).

Later during the term, she points out how this study year has made her more mature and how she is more able to see things from different perspectives. If she had stayed in Greece, all these things would never have happened.

Yeah, it’s much different. I grew up a little bit here. And met other people, I saw how people think. I saw what it was like to be away from your relatives and your friends and your family. And I saw how other Greeks live here, the differences between us, because there are many differences. Greeks that grew up here and us, that live back in Greece. I saw how Swedes live. And all that. That did me good, I think. I don’t regret staying here, no (Interview 8:13).

Her view on Swedes is more complex now, although she can find them very strange sometimes (Interview 8:3). She sees the differences and says that some of them are connected with culture, while others have more to do with individual personalities which are the result of social background, upbringing and other idiosynchastic phenomena. But she also emphasises that all people have things in common. There are two main culturally determined characteristics in Swedes that she has discerned.

Well, I told you, the thing that I like very much is that people are very helpful here. Everything that I don’t like is that they drink too much. It’s those two things, the big differences that I noticed (Interview 8:3).
Another thing that she has noticed is that Swedes are somewhat more apprehensive in their social contacts; there is a threshold and a stage of reluctance in Swedes that you have to pass first. After that it is easy to become friends (Interview 8:4).

In May she writes about her fundamental change in attitude towards life, how she has at last learned to see the beautiful things around her and how she has accepted the circumstances in which she lives (Questionnaire 3).

There is one thing that I realised this last four months. That having a good time is not particularly difficult. All you have to do is be a little bit of a poet and try to enjoy the small things that everyday life gives you. I realised that I’m just 20 years old, that there’s going to be plenty of time for me to cry and feel sad, so for now its better to seize the day. /.../ I’m just trying to live with the situation because it’s probably going to be the same for many years and that’s a long time to feel sad and depressed. I can’t say that I’m totally on my feet again but I’m getting there pretty soon, I hope (Questionnaire 3; verbatim).

In other words, she can see herself in a different light and has thus found a more mature balance in her life.

A New Identity

Furthermore, the fact that she has learned the language, has found new friends, and has arrived at a multifaceted view of her life situation (see Chapter 4) has also created a sense of belonging in her. She is adapting to the situation although she still sees herself as Greek. She does not want to adjust.

And there are a few things here in Sweden that I can’t get used to, but I’m trying to accept them and learn to live with them, not adjust [adjust], I don’t want to do that (Questionnaire 3, verbatim).

In other words, she has been able to establish at least an embryo of Swedish identity beside her Greek identity. She is well on her way out of liminality, on the road to becoming a bilingual, bicultural member of society.

Just after she has passed the Rikstest in June, she is in no hurry to leave Sweden for the summer holidays in Greece. She says that it does not matter if she cannot go home directly because of the pending air company strike, and was asked whether she feels at home in Sweden, too:
Interviewer: So you feel more or less at home now, here? (YEAH) This is your home? (I DO, MMM) That’s nice.

Sofia: I do, and I’m really excited. I think that in the beginning I’m actually gonna miss being here, with everybody. And I think it’s gonna be easier also when I come back. Because when I left home at Christmas, it was very, very bad. But now it’s like I’m excited because I’m gonna start with medicine, and I found an apartment and... So I think it’s gonna be better. I think I’m gonna have a very good beginning, this year (Interview 10:2).

She is looking forward to her coming study year in Sweden; she has started to build something new: “Yeah, I do. I actually have plans for the future now here in Sweden. (LAUGHS) I don’t see myself in Greece any more” (Interview 9:7). At long last, her goal of studying medicine is within her grasp, but the thought of spending so many years studying makes her a bit apprehensive, although she knows that this is her first choice.

[It] is kind of scary, what you’re gonna do. It’s so many years, it’s so much studying and sometimes you ask yourself if it’s worth it. Spending six-seven years of you life just sitting in front of books. And it’s not... medical school is important to me but it’s not everything for my life. I wanna have a family and... I wanna live a normal life. /.../ But, I mean, you have to choose, you don’t know what’s gonna happen in the future, you have to choose, so I chose to go through with it (Interview 10:7).

Although she suspects that her medical studies might be the beginning of another liminal journey, she has decided to continue, to take the chance, maybe strengthened by her successful transition this year.

Throughout the interviews she seems to have reflected about her personal changes during this year, and she provide explanations and interpretations. For example, it seems as if many of her personal changes evolve around the long break at Christmas, and she believes that the reason is that she has idealised conditions in Greece and denigrated conditions in Sweden. She summarises her year in the following manner.

Because before Christmas it was like, I had this image in my head... about my friends and my family and the situation in Greece like it was before, or like I wanted it to be before I left. So when I came here everything was different. It was not what I expected, it was not what I wanted, so I just said: ‘No, I don’t want it, I want what I left back’. But when I went back to Greece I realised it was not what I planned or what I expected. Things were not the way I wanted them to be there. So, I realised that even if I would go back, I wouldn’t be pleased with the situation there, that it was not really what I wanted to do. So, it was then that I really decided that: ‘Yes, I’m gonna stay here’. Before, I still had doubts and ‘What if I’m wrong?’ and...
still have doubts, but now I know that it's my decision and I'm gonna have to make it work (Interview 10:3–4).

In sum, Sofia has gone through several important changes in a short period of time, some connected with a general growing up, some induced by the circumstances of her life situation, for example her experiences of being in a state of liminality. She has learned to take responsibility for her life, she is on the way to finding a balanced double identity and she is looking forward to continuing her life in Sweden.

5.2 Personal Traits

Parallel to the changes and the emotional eruptions that Sofia experiences during this study year, some more enduring personal traits are discerned. These traits concern Sofia's general approach to life issues and to social issues as well as some of her general attitudes towards language learning (cf. Chapter 8). Her own general assumptions about herself as a language learner are also important.

To get to know a person thoroughly takes time, often years of close contact. Based on such a limited period as in this case, personal traits are of course difficult to discern. Therefore the following description is sometimes somewhat sketchy in character, but nevertheless it is a contribution to a comprehensive interpretation of Sofia and her world, which will be disclosed step by step in the course of this book.

**Tenacity**

In the interviews, Sofia gives the overall impression of being socially open and talkative. She readily answers any questions and she is prepared to discuss and reflect on her life and her learning. My impression of her as a learner is that she does not give up easily and that she is willing to devote time to studying. For example, she remembers her English studies:

> Because I really liked English. There was a time when I was thinking I wanted to become a teacher. And I was so stubborn, and whenever something was difficult, I would just sit there and study it, until I learned it or understood it (Interview 1:16).

The same thing seems to apply to her studies today:

> On Sunday I was studying, and it was like, I was writing, learning words for fifteen minutes, then I would go into the kitchen for five minutes, then I
would come back another fifteen minutes. I couldn’t otherwise, it was so boring for me. If I would just stay and study for one hour then I would close the book and watch TV, but like this I was studying most of the day (Interview 4:8).

These quotes indicate that Sofia has a certain tenacity, that she can summon up a determination to engage herself in what she is doing, at least as far as her language learning is concerned, whether it is ‘boring’ or not. Even during her liminal period she does not completely give up her studies.33

**Extroversion/Introversion**

As is shown in Chapter 7, Sofia does not experience any anxiety in the classroom, she does not feel embarrassed about making mistakes. Socially, however, in conversations, she needs to be certain about the correct ways of saying things, both linguistically and content-wise. She wants to be perfect.

I’m not afraid of making mistakes. It’s like I told you, I usually don’t say anything if I’m not certain or almost certain that it’s right. I say that I like to be perfect, nobody can be perfect but I try to, I don’t know, it’s like that. Even in a discussion when I don’t know about something I usually don’t speak, I just listen to what people have to say. And then if I... Or, even if I know about the subject, I still wanna listen first to see what they think about, and then I say my opinion. It’s kind of diplomatic but it works (BOTH LAUGH) (Interview 7.5:14).

In order to find out whether she views herself as being extrovert or introvert, she was asked if she was the kind of person who, in a group of new people, sits quietly on the sofa or if she walks up to a stranger to strike up a conversation.

Eh, the one who sits in the sofa at the beginning and listens. I’m kind of conservative, yeah. I... I introduce myself to everyone, but I wouldn’t be too open. I would be friendly, I would smile and... But I’m the kind of person who first wants to see what all the other persons are all about and then start talking about myself and start showing who I am (Interview 10:14).

This could be described as introverted risk-avoiding behaviour (Beebe 1983), but on the other hand it could also be a sign of apprehension in unfamiliar situations, since she finally participates in the discussion.

33 After reading this section, Sofia said that this is a typical feature of hers; she does not give up easily.
Judging from her description of her language use (Chapter 9) she willingly participates in discussions with people that she knows. This extrovert behaviour is also quite obvious in our talks. She says, however, that she is not a spontaneous person in general, because the uncertainty of spontaneity makes her feel uncomfortable.

Ah, what I can say about myself is that I’m not spontaneous. I could be, but then when I just do something without thinking about it, then all the time when I do it, I wonder: ‘I might be wrong, I might be wrong’, so I don’t really enjoy it (Interview 8:5).

In other words, whether Sofia could be regarded as extrovert or introvert depends on the situation. From a social point of view she seems to be apprehensive at first, but can later be rather talkative. From a language-use point of view she is not anxious about making mistakes. She regards mistakes as a way of learning (cf. quote in 7.1).

Trust

The impression of Sofia as somewhat shy, introverted or afraid of taking risks, is connected with her need to be able to trust people around her.

Like, when I see a person, I’m friendly, I smile and try to make them feel comfortable with me, but then, inside of me I don’t really talk to him, trust him. I can be friends with many people but there are gonna be very few people that I’m gonna trust, and tell things. Because I’m, I don’t know, I don’t trust people very easily, I’m pretty scared. There are many times when I trusted people and they hurt me pretty bad. So I don’t take chances any more (Interview 8:5–6).

She defines the difference between socialising, being friendly, and really talking. In order to talk to someone, she has to trust this person. The question of trusting people seems to be very important to her; she needs to have someone close to talk to, but then she also needs to trust this person. She mentions this several times in our talks. For example, when reflecting about her first few months in Sweden she discusses one of her peers who is married to a Swedish woman.

I was all alone, I didn’t have anybody, at least he had someone to talk to when he was feeling bad, or when he was homesick, if he was. For me it was completely different. I had to meet a few people first, I had to trust them, and I had to get close to them, and then start talking, and acting the way I always do (Interview 4:5).
Another time we were talking about her feelings of loneliness during her liminal period, when she again mentioned trust.

Here it’s something, you have to have someone that you really trust, to talk to him. /.../ Yeah, I don’t have someone to feel so comfortable with so that I could call him so late and say that I have this problem, come, I wanna talk to you, or anything (Interview 6:5).

Learning Style

Sofia sees herself as being able to be a fast learner, but only on the condition that she studies (cf. Chapter 7 and 8).

I’m not a slow learner, but, I can be a fast learner but only if I study. I mean, I’m not like those people that just listen to something and remember it. I have to work on that. If I don’t study at all, then I won’t learn. If I study just a little bit then it goes slowly. It all depends on how much I study, how much work I do. If I study regularly, not too much, but just what I have to do, what Solveig says that we have to do, then it goes normal, I don’t have difficulty, something particularly difficult (Interview 9:17).

As a learner, she is not very fond of ambiguous situations. She wants to have control over her learning, which is also entangled in her life situation. Soon after she had passed the final Rikstest, she described the events a month earlier.

I want to have everything clear. (YEAH) That’s why I was, I was feeling so bad about a month before the test. Because I didn’t have anything clear. It was nothing certain in my life. I didn’t know if I was gonna go in medical school, I didn’t know what I was gonna do if I was not going in medical school, ah, I didn’t know where I was gonna go with my personal life, I didn’t know anything, absolutely nothing! I was like, I felt like I was sitting, eh, in the middle of nowhere, and didn’t know which place to go, and there was nothing. It’s like being in the desert and having illusions about water and stuff like that! They’re not really there. So I want to have everything clear. That’s why, this past week I’ve been running like crazy just to arrange everything by today, finish everything today so that next week I will not have anything to do. Just, like, to finish as quickly as possible so I will be calm (Interview 10:16).

This chaotic situation seems to have created feelings in her which are reminiscent of her liminal period a few months earlier. Again she feels in-between, in the middle of a desert, without anything to hold on to in her
life. This period lasted about three weeks this time, but one week before the test she was able to pull herself together. Although she runs into difficulties in chaotic situations like this, she still believes that she can accept a certain amount of ambiguity and chaos, as long as some parts of her life situation are in order.

Yes, yes. Now... I don't say that I have all the answers now, but at least I have one more thing – I know what I'm gonna do next year. That's very important. I mean, my personal life is not better, and my... I don't have any money and I still have many problems and I know it's gonna be very difficult next year, but at least I know that I'm accepted in medical school and that this is what I'm gonna do. The rest it's coming, it's just like it's surrounded. Of course, everybody has problems, I didn't expect everything to be fine. Yeah, I can accept a little bit of chaos, yeah. As soon as I have... not as soon as I have... ah... See, I'm forgetting my English now... (AS LONG AS I HAVE) as long as I have one thing that is stable, that I know... where my steps go or what I'm stepping on (Interview 10:17-18).

Sofia prefers an auditory learning style. If she was offered a choice between three different ways of learning a language, by reading, by listening or by doing, she would choose listening.34

Well, the third one would be really interesting. (LAUGHS) It's like I would learn the language by... subconsciously. (YEAH) But I think I would choose the second. (LISTENING?) Listening, yeah. But it depends, of course, how you wanna use the language. I mean, if you just wanna learn how to talk and communicate with people I think it's, yeah, listening, definitely. But if you like... It's like what we were talking about last night, if you wanna go to university or something you need everything. /.../ But I think listening. It's a very good way to learn (Interview 10:21-22).

Here Sofia says that she prefers auditory learning, but at the same time she shows flexibility in that she realises that all kinds of learning are needed in order to achieve higher levels of proficiency.

Sofia describes herself as being 'responsibly irresponsible' in her language learning. She is neither a hard-working learner nor someone who only sees language learning as a game. She is somewhere in between.

I think I'm somewhere in the middle. I think... that... I told you something once, I think that I am responsibly irresponsible. That I can, like, be lazy and play with what I have, like the books, seeing it as a game, like having

34Reid (1987) identifies four preferences: visual learning, auditory learning, kinaesthetic learning, and tactile learning.
fun with it. But when I see that this is where it stops, I can be a hard, I can study hard (Interview 10:29).

She gives a few examples which illustrate the humorous side of language learning.

Yeah. Well, with the sammansatta ord [compounds] I was really, it was really funny. I mean, I would just, maybe I would open books just sometimes to see, to find the longest word. I would compare: 'Ah, this is three words, no this is four words, no this is real big!' (LAUGHS) It was like, yeah, that is a good example about having fun with language (Interview 10:30).³⁵

Phrasal verbs, with ambiguous meanings, are also very funny, according to Sofia.

Ah! That was real funny! [...] So, maybe I would say that I wanna go out and I would say: "Jag ska gå bort en stund" (I am going away/passing away for a while) (LAUGHS), or ch... at the beginning, when I wanted to say 'he threw water, I was telling something, I was saying a story that happened in Greece for a guy. He was like after this girl, and at the moment she was really mad and she just threw the water in his face, and I: "kasta vatten" [throw water/pee], but at this time I know exactly what it means. (LAUGHS) Stuff like that. Even now, in the end in my report, I wrote that ah... in my report I have a few examples and theories that I found in a few books, and I wrote that jag har hittat på [found/invented], not a book, it's not what I... what I did, of course. It can be really funny sometimes (Interview 10:30).

A good sense of humour seems to be one of Sofia’s main characteristics. Throughout both the English and Swedish interviews she laughs a lot. She laughs at her mistakes, she laughs at her misunderstandings and she laughs at other awkward situations. Thus she gives the impression of having a good portion of self-distance in her approach to the learning of Swedish.

5.3 Conclusion

The step-by-step process of personal changes has been illustrated in this chapter. In a longitudinal perspective the most significant conclusion is that Sofia seems to have undergone several fundamental personal changes during this relatively short period of ten months. She has been forced to grow up and take more responsibility for her whole life, not only in going

³⁵Very long compound nouns can be created in Swedish. For example: järnvägsstationsföreståndarebostad [railway station manager flat]
to school, but also with regard to her daily routines, her social life, her emotions and her future. This seems to have changed her into a wiser, more reflective person. She has changed her values in several spheres. For example, she has attained a more composite view of her future profession, she has learned to value personal relations more, and she has changed her ideas about her background and her present situation. She is also well on the road to learning how to combine two cultures, and thus to establishing a positive double identity.

Several explanations for these changes in her life can be suggested. They may be a result of growing up and taking responsibility for her own life, and Sofia is also far away from home and thus forced to manage on her own. Meeting a new language and a new culture can also cause personal changes. There are two special circumstances which seem to have had a more profound influence: the period of liminality and the Christmas break. During the strenuous period of liminality, with feelings of alienation and loneliness, she is not totally pacified. Apart from going to school, doing her homework, she searches for ways out, for example by reading poetry which inspires her. After this period, she changes her opinion about the important things in life. The break over Christmas accentuates her development, for instance by making her realise that it is impossible to go back to life as it were before.

As a learner, Sofia seems to be moderately extrovert and willing to take risks, ready to use her second language in conversations after a short apprehensive period. To her it is important to feel trust for people before she talks freely to them. Furthermore, she gives the impression of being tenacious in her studies, ready to spend time with her books, a trait which presumably helps her learning. She is not fond of too much ambiguity in her life, but if one part of her life is stable, she can accept a certain degree of chaos in other parts. She prefers an auditory learning style if she has to choose, but she points out that a variety of learning styles is needed to attain high levels of proficiency. Additionally, she seems to approach her learning from a humorous point of view, ready to laugh at mistakes and funny situations.

Above all, however painful it was, her successful journey through liminality, from alienation to inclusion, from single identity to double identity, has made her more mature, more self-assured, more confident and more optimistic about the future.
6. Attitude and Motivation

As was implicated in 1.3, there are several complementary definitions of the complex and multi-faceted construct of motivation, some more and some less often empirically applied in second language learning research. In the present context the operational definition suggested by Gardner (1985) will be used as a starting point, because it is well-known and often used in the second language learning context. Gardner defines learner motivation as “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language” (Gardner 1985:10), and the goal for learning as being either instrumental or integrative. In other words, second language learning motivation consists of desire and effort supported by favourable attitudes in order to reach the goal of either being integrated into the second language society, or using the second language as an instrument to achieve other goals, such as better jobs, higher status, etc. Gardner furthermore defines attitude as “an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual’s beliefs or opinions about the referent” (Gardner 1985:9).

As was indicated in 1.3, there is a concurrent discussion of the adequacy of regarding motivation in the second language learning context only from a social/psychological perspective, as either integrative or instrumental (e.g. Crookes & Schmidt 1991, Dörnyei 1994, and Oxford & Shearin 1994). It has been suggested, for example, that more individual drives, such as curiosity, interest, intellectual stimulation, and personal challenge, also serve as viable motivational factors in the learning of second languages.

An explanation for this more individually oriented type of motivation can be found in the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 1985, as cited in Noels et al. 1999, 2000). According to this theory

motivational style or orientation is influenced by those factors in the social environment that affect self-perceptions of competence and autonomy (Noels et al. 1999:26).

In other words, self-determination theory sees motivation as a continuum, from more self-determined, i.e. chosen and decided upon by the learner, to less self-determined, i.e. imposed on the learner by others. This theory divides motivation into two types, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation consists of an individual-internal interest
in the activity as such, performed for pleasure and satisfaction, whereas extrinsic motivation is based on different kinds of rewards external to the activity. It is suggested that increased intrinsic motivation makes it easier to attain the intended goal. Noels et al. (2000:61, referring to Vallerand and colleagues) present three kinds of intrinsic, more self-determined, motivation: motivation to develop knowledge and exploring new ideas, motivation to accomplish a task, and motivation to be stimulated by a task. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is associated more with receiving an award or avoiding a punishment, but also means that the learner understands and accepts the value of learning in order to achieve a more instrumental goal. Self-determination theory does not include attitudes in its format, as does Gardner’s social/psychological model. So far, there has been very little empirical research into self-determination theory in second language learning (Noels et al. 1999:25, 2000:63). Therefore, it could be of interest to present Sofia’s attitudes and motivation against the background of both the social/psychological and the self-determination perspectives.

The analysis shows that Sofia’s motivation could be described as both straightforward and complex, both global and local. Since the intensity of her motivation seems to vary along the lines detected in Chapter 4, as far as her life situation is concerned, the changes in Sofia’s motivation have roughly been divided into three periods during this study year; the first two months, the next two months and, finally, the remaining five months. This division served as a basis for the structure of the sections of this chapter.

6.1 Excitement

For a long time Sofia has had the long-term goal of entering medical school to become a physician. This overarching goal has motivated her to study hard in school and also to take extra courses in order to pass the entrance tests in Greece. While waiting for the last test scores, she actively chose to apply to study medicine in Sweden and was accepted.

The long-term goal of medical studies has provided her with basic instrumental motivation in her language studies which seems to remain with her for the whole study-year in Sweden, too. Whenever asked for her motivation to continue, she answers “medical school”. At the beginning of the year, however, in Interview 1, she seems to be less motivated when it comes to studying Swedish.
And it’s like I had to come here, because I really want to study in medical school, but right now I feel like I’m, kind of, I’m not moving on, I’ve stopped. I have to stop for a year and then do what I want (Interview 1:21).

She does not feel like learning a new language but she hopes that her wish to become a physician will give her enough motivation to learn Swedish, too.

I don’t know, it’s... I think I’m gonna work, it’s a good motivation medical school for me to learn Swedish, maybe it’s just because it is the beginning, I’ve only been here less than a month, and things are not so good for me, I’m alone and everything (Interview 1:21–22).

Although her attitudes towards learning a new language are not very positive, she shows favourable attitudes towards the learning group and her teacher: “she’s really good, you know” (Interview 1:21).

Interview 2 discussed language learning strategies and there was not much talk about motivation. However, Sofia’s extensive use of learning strategies right from the start implies that she puts a lot of effort into the task of learning, which could be an indication of motivational intensity. She uses cognitive strategies such as practising, taking notes, making grammar and word lists, and metacognitive strategies such as organising and planning her studies. The classroom observations also show that she is active in the classroom, participating in exercises and asking questions. (For a more extensive description of Sofia’s learning strategies, see Chapter 7.) This engagement could thus be a reflection of a certain motivation to learn. Within the self-determination framework this could be seen as an example of a motivation to increase her knowledge. At the same time, she says that she was studying only because she felt that she had to. She wanted to go back to Greece, but in case she failed the entrance test, she needed to be prepared (Interview 4:2; cf. full quote in 4.2).

At the beginning of October she writes positively in her diary about stimulation and motivation after class.

7 October. /.../ I felt like I could have learned anything today and that’s a nice feeling. I can follow the lessons and I learn and time just flies. Maybe I have become more interested and motivated now (Diary 1).

8 October. Unbelievable! Today was just as good as yesterday and I have energy and lust for everything. This is the first time I feel that I’m learning and I believe that I will eventually learn to handle the Swedish language (Diary 1).
This could be seen as an example of intrinsic motivation illustrating the interplay between positive experiences and encouragement in the form of motivation. These diary entrances were made only about one week before she found out that she had not passed the tests in Greece, the time when she loses her foothold and enters the period of liminality (cf. 4.6).

6.2 Disappointment

As was described in Sections 4.2 and 4.3 she becomes very disappointed when she learns in October that she has not passed the test in Greece. She feels paralysed, pessimistic and lazy. She is generally indifferent and has very little motivation to continue her studies; sometimes she does not even bother to go to school.

However, because she feels that she cannot go back to Greece, she decides towards the end of October that she might as well stay on in Sweden and make the best of it. This decision makes her feel a little bit better and little by little she increases her motivation to study, although she still expresses great disappointment in her failure, as well as loneliness and alienation in her diary (Diary 1).

Her attitudes towards her study group are still very positive: “I think we’re a great group” (Interview 3:8), and she is very satisfied with her teacher.

I think she’s very helpful and she shows that she really wants us to, she cares. And that’s very important. She... We know that she can help us any time, even in her free time. And, I don’t know, she must be doing a good job if we can speak Swedish in two months! (LAUGHS) She must be doing a good job. No, I like Solveig very much (Interview 3:10).

It appears that the teacher can play an important role in enhancing the learner’s motivation. Noels et al. (1999), in a study of immersion students, suggest that the teacher’s communicative style can support the learners’ self-determined intrinsic motivation by providing feedback in a positive, informative manner and not just by exerting control over the learner.

During this period she expresses a certain satisfaction with her accomplishment so far in learning Swedish (cf. 7.3, 8.3 and 8.4). Although she feels as if she is standing still on a language learning plateau, she can see that she has made progress, that she has done all her homework and passed the course tests. This satisfaction in accomplishing the task thus gives her
an incentive, an intrinsic type of motivation, to continue her studies the next term.

Just before the Christmas break she describes how her long-term instrumental motivation, to enter medical school, is beginning to change to include a wish to satisfy other goals in life.

And also my priorities have changed. /.../ Eh, like what was important to me. I mean, when I was, maybe a year or two ago, my whole life was medical school. /.../ ‘If I don’t succeed, my life is over!’ (LAUGHS) But now I think that there are other things important in life, like, medical school is half my life, half my mind, this part. The other part is something else, maybe I don’t know, meeting people, experiencing things (Interview 5:5).

This could be interpreted as both a change from instrumental to more integrative motivation, as seen in the social/psychological framework, as well as intrinsic motivation containing the goal of finding stimulation, as seen in the self-determination theory framework.

6.3 Involvement

When Sofia comes back from her holiday in Greece, she experiences a fundamental boost in her proficiency (Interview 6; cf. 8.5). She feels that she can actually speak Swedish now and that she has reached the point of learning where “you just hear and collect”(Interview 6:2; cf. full quote in 8.5), which makes learning so much easier and more pleasant in her opinion. She has also adopted a more relaxed attitude towards her learning.

I just say: ‘Now I’m gonna learn, even if I don’t read those twenty or fifty words today, it’s no big deal, because I’m gonna listen so much, and something’s gonna come to me’ (Interview 6:3).

This relaxed attitude, together with her experience of learning success, and her more positive life situation (4.4) seems to give her an intrinsic motivational boost.

Yeah. Yes, because I saw that things started to get better. I’m learning and I’m feeling much better, and I really wanna pass the Rikstest, I really wanna succeed on the Rikstest, to have a chance to study. Because if I don’t I’m not sure what I’m gonna do! (LAUGHS) But no, no, things are much better and I’m really feeling motivated (Interview 6:12).

She describes how she made a conscious choice to stay in Sweden, a choice to study hard in order to accomplish what she has set out to do, and make
the best of the situation. In other words, she is displaying an autonomous self-determined intrinsic motivation.

But when I went back to Greece I realised it was not what I planned or what I expected. Things were not the way I wanted them to be there. So, I realised that even if I would go back, I wouldn’t be pleased with the situation there, that it was not really what I wanted to do. So, it was then that I really decided that: ‘Yes, I’m gonna stay here’. Before, I still had doubts and ‘What if I’m wrong?’ and... I still have doubts, but now I know that it’s my decision and I’m gonna have to make it work (Interview 6:4).

Later during the second term (March) Sofia further illustrates how her motivation is increasing when she realises that she is making progress.

Interviewer: Does it make you excited when you realise that you learned a lot?

Sofia: It does. It does. That’s why I study. (BOTH LAUGH) I try to study, because I get really excited when I understand what everybody says and more when I speak and people tell me: ‘Wow! You speak very well!’ That’s when I feel good. And if I could study at that moment exactly would be perfect (Interview 7.5:22).

She also expresses great satisfaction in what she has accomplished during the spring term, a satisfaction which may have further increased her intrinsic motivation to continue.

But it went good, I mean, I’m quite satisfied with myself the last four months. I fulfilled all the obligations, I mean I did all the things I had to do during these four months, maybe a little delayed, maybe not, they weren’t perfect, but at least I tried. I spent time on everything I had to do. It went good (Interview 9:8).

In April Sofia once again adamantly declares that her main motivation is still medical school. She has a self-imposed pressure to work as hard as she can on her Swedish in order to achieve this goal.

Yeah. Because it’s been three years now that I’ve been trying somehow to get in. I can’t, so this is one of my last chances. I’m twenty years old, I can’t keep trying, I have to start (Interview 8:1).

She sees getting to know Swedish people and being integrated into Swedish culture and Swedish society as subordinate to this overarching instrumental goal, even if she admits that these goals are also important since she is going to remain in Sweden for quite a while.
Although the goal of studying medicine is her own, her motivation is also influenced by her relationship with her parents. They have been very supportive and “dreaming, you know, that like all those years that they have worked for us it won’t go wasted” (Interview 8:11). This has exerted a certain indirect pressure on her to succeed, not because they would be angry or disappointed if she does not succeed, but because they want to support her in life and be proud of her.

Yeah, I want to please them. It’s like paying them back. I have no money, I can’t work to pay them back, and somehow it’s the only way I know how. So, it’s first for myself and then for them (Interview 8:11).

But it’s something that they can’t understand, not that I blame them or something, but when my mum calls me she says: ‘Oh, honey! Next year we’re gonna see you studying, and I’m gonna be so proud of you!’ and everything. She doesn’t say it to make me feel pressured, to show me that: ‘You have to study, you have to pass the test’, she just says it because she is so happy about it. She’s excited. But then it’s not, it’s an indirect kind of pressure that comes to my mind (Interview 8:11).

Even if she does not pass the test, she is certain that her parents would never blame her for her failure.

Pretty disappointed, I think. But I don’t think that they’re gonna blame me. They never do. They didn’t blame me when I didn’t succeed the first year, and the next year. They kind of, they try to understand. Because they’ve been to school, but only for a few years, they didn’t study, they didn’t really study, they’re not into books and all this. They started working when they were very young. So, they don’t really know so many things about what I do, and how I feel. But they really try to understand (Interview 8:12).

Instead Sofia seems to blame herself when she does not succeed. At the same time her attitude to life appears to be that failure is also something which is part of human development.

I do blame myself. I don’t know why. If I don’t pass this test I am gonna blame myself. I am. I even blame myself for not, I used to at least, for not passing university in Greece. Even though it was not totally my fault. /.../ But now I see that I’m having a great time here, something new, and maybe it was for my best to come here. One never knows. We have a saying in Greece that says: ‘Every difficulty is for your best. Everything that is difficult in you life comes... something else happens, that’s better for you’ (Interview 8:12–13).
The relationship between Sofia’s motivation and the influence from her parents is complex and difficult to fit into the theories presented here. On the one hand, it might be regarded as an example of extrinsic motivation which will give Sofia the external award of her parents’ satisfaction. On the other hand, Sofia’s wish to pay back and make her parents happy, might also be seen as a self-determined intrinsic type of motivation, which will give Sofia and internal reward in the form of her own satisfaction.

6.4 Conclusion

According to Gardner (1985) Sofia would be characterised as having an instrumental orientation in that she needs Swedish to reach her overarching goal of studying medicine, a goal which she has had for a long time. Her desire to achieve this goal is very strong. In her earlier studies she has shown that she is ready to work hard in order to reach her goal, and she repeats this desire during the whole study year in Sweden. At the same time, this desire seems to change character and become more composite. For instance, in Interview 10, she expresses a few apprehensions about her future medical studies (see quote in 5.1, A New Identity). Furthermore, just before Christmas she says that medical school is only half her life and that she has become more interested in meeting people and experiencing things, which might be seen as an integrative rather than an instrumental motivation. This also illustrates the variability of her motivation.

Sofia’s attitudes towards her teacher, her peers, and Swedes (cf. 5.1) seem to be favourable throughout the study year. At the beginning, her attitude towards learning a new language is fairly negative, but it appears that the actual learning process in the long run makes her more positive. As regards her effort to study, her motivational intensity, it seems to divide up into three stages. At first she dutifully does what she is expected to do, just in case she will have to stay in Sweden (6.1). In the second phase she does not seem to be able to put very much effort into her studies, mainly because of her period of liminality (6.2). In the third phase, after the break at Christmas, she discovers that she has actually learned a lot of Swedish, and this insight seems to stimulate her to put more effort into her studies. For the rest of the spring term there seems to be an interaction between outcomes and effort.

Gardner’s social-psychological model thus appears to offer an explanation to part of Sofia’s motivation for learning Swedish; she learns Swedish in order to use it as an instrument to achieve the goal of becoming
a physician. However, this applies only at the level of long-term, global goals of learning. It is difficult to use this model to explain short-term and more individual-specific goals for Sofia. Her motivation also seems to contain, for example, stimulation from the task of learning, satisfaction with the success of solving the task, and an active choice in the approach to learning. Here the self-determination theory seems to provide some explanations through the importance it attaches to the learner’s intrinsic goals for performing an action. Intrinsic motivation entails accepting a challenge voluntarily, using creative abilities for the purpose of finding satisfaction in the action itself. Accordingly, intrinsically motivated language learners are interested in the activity itself, and in succeeding they are internally rewarded by feelings of competence and satisfaction.

Sofia seems to have an instrumental motivation in her long-term goal to study medicine. At the same time, different activities and different tasks during the study year are undertaken by Sofia because of intrinsic motivation seen as, for example, an interplay between positive experiences and encouragement, satisfaction with her own studies, and a wish for finding stimulation. This intrinsic motivation also seems to increase with time. In other words, a developing knowledge of Swedish and a successful, interesting learning situation appears to increase Sofia’s intrinsic motivation, which in turn probably enhances her learning.

The results of this chapter emphasise the value of individually oriented longitudinal studies like the present. It has been possible to illustrate the difficulty of applying general theories on motivation to the experiences of individual learners. It has also been shown that motivation in second language learning is more complex than, for instance, a division between instrumental and integrative orientation. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that motivation seems to be a multi-faceted and dynamic concept which is difficult to capture.
7. Language Learning Strategies

Language learning strategies are techniques, actions or behaviour that the learners use to enhance their learning, more specifically to comprehend, learn and retain information. Strategies for learning were discussed on several occasions, a little during Interview 1 (September), quite a lot during Interviews 2 and 3 (October and early November) and again during Interview 6 (February). The subject of learning strategies also came up from time to time during some of the other interviews.

My line of questioning followed the guidelines presented in 3.3 (cf. Kvale 1997). The questions were open-ended and learning strategies were not mentioned, either by name or by definition. A typical question was: "How do you do to remember new words?".

Sofia's report on her use of language learning strategies will be presented chronologically in order to demonstrate how, with increasing proficiency, she automatises her learning and also how she varies her use of strategies over time. In order to illustrate this, all the strategies have been given a classification which is indicated within brackets in the text. This classification is based on the detailed taxonomy suggested by Oxford (1990; see Appendix A). Sofia’s language learning strategies are thus divided into five types: Memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies, shortened to MEM, COGN, META, AFF and SOC in the text. Furthermore, these types of strategies are divided into sub-groups in accordance with Oxford (1990). For example, the cognitive strategies are subdivided into groups such as practising, analysing and creating structure (see Appendix A).

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36 Some of the interviews were retrospective in character, which would preclude a chronological 'shuffling' of her description of strategies. However, the only instances where she talks about strategies used earlier are those where a comparison with present strategies is made.

37 With the exception of Oxford's group of compensation strategies, which I consider to be communication strategies (see 3.4).

38 It could be argued that memory strategies are also cognitive strategies (O’Malley & Chamot 1990) but I have decided to follow Oxford’s classification for reasons of conveniency.
Oxford (1990) has also included in her book a language learning test, the SILL test (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning). I found it convenient to use this test to supplement the information given in the interviews and to see what conclusions could be drawn from a test of this kind. The test was given in February, between Interviews 6 and 7 and was followed up in an extra unplanned interview a few weeks later (Interview 7.5). \(^{39}\) Sofia's test results are presented below, within the chronological order of this chapter.

The SILL test (Version 7.0, see Appendix B) is a 5-point Likert scale test containing 50 items in the form of statements, in which the testees are asked to tick off to what degree each statement is true for their language learning. Through a simple calculation the testees are given a profile of their own use of language learning strategies on a scale from 1 to 5, which is compared to a key. In this key, the testees are defined as low, medium or high users of strategies.

The SILL test has been used extensively across the world (for an overview, see Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995) and has been tested for reliability and validity (Oxford & Burry-Stock 1995). The test was administered according to the instructions (Oxford 1990:277–281).

7.1 An Experienced Learner

Sofia seems to be a rather experienced language learner. She has studied two foreign languages, English for seven years (from the age of 10) and French for four years (from the age of 12). During the course of these studies she has developed several language learning strategies. In the first interview (September) she relates how she writes down new words several times (COGN PRACTICE) in order to remember them, but fewer times compared to when she learned English, when she would write each word up to ten times. She practices by copying the whole text from school, but also by trying to use her Swedish in the student corridor\(^{40}\) and in shops. But mostly she listens. For example, she keeps her TV set going all the time at home in order to listen to as much Swedish as possible. She finds it difficult to

\(^{39}\)The SILL test was administered by permission of the author: e-mail reference 1994.

\(^{40}\)Sofia lived in a typical student corridor with 10–15 apartments, which look like rooms in a hotel, sharing a kitchen at one end of the corridor.
organise her learning (META PLANNING) but still she feels optimistic about being able to organise i eventually.

Interview 2 (October) had as its main theme strategies used in class. At first we talked about the language laboratory and pronunciation. In the language laboratory she uses a combination of strategies, many of which are governed by the learning situation. She repeats the texts on the tape (COGN PRACTICE) while at the same time monitoring her pronunciation (META EVALUATING). In order to remember, for example, Swedish word-stress after class, she associates it with her L1 by marking the different stresses (MEM LINKING), and using her notes while reading and repeating the texts at home (COGN PRACTICE). She also listens carefully to native speakers (META CENTERING) trying to hear the stress. At the same time, after two months of study, she seems to have automatised parts of her listening; she does not have to focus as much:

But now that I began to understand a bit Swedish, and understand what people say, and also on television, I just... I’m getting used to this... you know, the way you’re talking, this Swedish accent. I’m starting to get used to it. I mean, it would seem unnatural to me if I heard somewhere a verb which needs Accent 2 to be said as Accent 1, my hearing is starting to get used to this accent (Interview 2:2—3).

She monitors her pronunciation and can often hear when she makes mistakes (META EVALUATION). Then her strategy is to repeat the correct pronunciation, using revision to remember:

I will just try to repeat it at that time, and maybe I will make the same mistake again, but after the third time or the fourth I will start remembering it (Interview 2:4).

To remember words she connects them either to her first language or to English or French (MEM LINK). She also remembers better if she can connect the words to an image, like the picture of a room or a page in her book or her notes (MEM IMAGERY). For example, in class she was asked to describe a picture of a room:

I had many unknown words, I couldn’t talk very easily, but it was because I used them while I was... It was the first time I was hearing them and I used them at the same time, and when I went home I remember many of them, most of them. It’s like that, when I use the word at the same time, I usually remember it (Interview 2:5–6).

Her main strategies for remembering, however, seem to be, on the one hand to repeat, re-read and review, and, on the other, to use and hear the
words several times. These two strategies would be classified as cognitive practise strategies in Oxford’s terms.

Sofia seldom uses her dictionary, mostly because it takes time and because she does not like it (Cogn. receiving). Instead, she spends time writing her own wordlists (mem. grouping), where she lists nouns and their gender, verbs and their tenses, and adjectives. In class she takes notes, silently repeating what the teacher says (Cogn. structuring). She is also active in class, asking questions (soc). She does not display any anxiety in the learning situation; it does not bother her to make mistakes (aff):

I’m not embarrassed, if that’s what you mean, I’m not embarrassed at all. And I feel like it’s okay, it’s a way of learning, making mistakes is a way of learning (Interview 2:4).

It’s been a long time since I stopped feeling embarrassed about asking questions and making mistakes, it’s a long time ago (Interview 2:10).

In interview 3 (early November) she reveals that she has changed her way of learning new words. Apart from writing words and sometimes whole texts a few times, she has begun to prepare texts for the next day at home on her teacher’s recommendation (Meta. planning). She reads the text, underlines new words and writes down their meaning in the text (Cogn. structure):

And then we come to school the next day, and I kind of know a few of them, kind of remember them, so when I actually have to study those words in the text, it’s easier for me to learn them and I saw that I can remember them after a while. It’s like I do the same kind of work twice (Interview 3:1).

She thinks that this works better (Meta. evaluating) and that she remembers the words better (mem.) and has extended them to comprise special phrases, particle verbs and adverbs.

7.2 Learning Words

With regard to the learning of words, and the subsequent use of them, she wants to distinguish between two kinds of knowledge which she describes in her own words as ‘learning’ words and ‘knowing’ words (compare the distinction between competence and control, Sharwood Smith 1986, and also the idea of the process of restructuring, McLaughlin, 1995). She has
words that she has learned which automatically come to her mind when she wants to use them, and words which she understands but which are difficult to retrieve for production.

I don’t have to think what the word is, it just comes [...] but [...] there are words that... I can understand them when someone is talking to me, I can understand immediately what it means, but when I have to use it I have to think... how to use it. [...] Yeah, I know that I know them, but I can’t say that I’ve actually learned them (Interview 3:2–3).

When asked how she tries to retrieve the words that she is aware that she knows, she describes several strategies:

Eh, sometimes I try to remember a sentence, maybe where I met, where I have seen the word. Usually I have in my mind like the texts or the sentences that we have, pictures like, I have pictures in my mind. [...] Or, sometimes I connect the words, like the sound of the word with the sound of a Greek word or an English word and everything like that. Or, if it’s written in a special way like that reminds me of something. I try every way. [...] I mean, for instance... We used the word today, *kallas* [to be called], ‘kallas’ in Greek is a kind of salt, a mark of salt, something like that. It’s the same sound or a similar sound that reminds me of a Greek word, and I remember it like that. [...] I mean, we say, *kallas* is a verb, right? We say the verb and it comes to my mind: ‘Oh, it’s like this kind of salt we have in Greece’. The next time I wanna use the verb I say: ‘Oh, what is it?’ and then the salt comes into my mind, because it’s peculiar to me that it’s the same word. And then I remember the word! Of course, it’s not for every word. But some, and I work that way. [...] It just seems strange to me or funny that, most of the time funny, that this Swedish word is like some other Greek or English word that’s completely different, completely different meaning. And it comes to my mind, it’s like a joke or a game, something like that (Interview 3:3–5).

Sofia uses the context, she associates with other languages, she uses imagery and keywords to retrieve words from her memory. Retrieval strategies are classified by Faerch & Kasper (1983a) as communication strategies (cf. Chapter 10). Similarly Glahn (1980) reports that sometimes her learner group also knew that the terms were there and that they had to retrieve them somehow. She reported the following communication strategies: waiting, appealing to formal similarity, using semantic fields, using other languages and using the learning situation or sensory procedures. At the same time, Sofia’s retrieval strategies for communication are identical with what has been described as learning strategies in the literature, ‘creating mental linkages’ and ‘applying images and sounds’ (Oxford 1990).
retrieving words that are within her competence but not easily accessed for performance, Sofia mirrors the learning strategies she used to put them there in the first place. Thus Sofia’s example illustrates how she returns to the learning process in order to retrieve words for communication (see Chapter 10). In other words, what have been classified as learning strategies here are used as retrieval strategies for communication, too.

In his presentation of a cognitive model for language learning, McLaughlin (1987) discusses controlled and automatic processing. Controlled processes are under the attentional control of the subject and thus slow, while automatic processes are fast and hard to suppress. Part of Sofia’s lexicon is automatized, while another part demands attention, the words that she knows that she knows.

In the same interview she furthermore reports how easy it is to work with the other learners in the group (SOC COOPERATING). Sometimes she prepares for a language task, for example a visit to the bank (META PLANNING), but she does not have to do that in class, since she is still not afraid of making mistakes (AFF ANXIETY).

She evaluates her learning (META EVALUATION) and sees her progress, although there is a dualism in her feelings which illustrates the learning process.

Well, there are some times when I’m really impressed with myself! (LAUGHS) I say: ‘Yes! I can speak Swedish!’ and there are some times that I say: ‘Oh, I’m never gonna learn it!’, but I think that I have learned quite a few things, and I think that until Christmas I will know much more. I mean, I’m improving every day (Interview 3:8).

She says that she can understand quite a lot of what the teacher is saying and she fills in the blanks (GUESSING), and she identifies her main problem as being the difficulty to speak Swedish (META EVALUATING); she often resorts to English.

7.3 Self-Evaluation

From a learning strategy perspective, interview 4 (late November) and 5 (December) are highly characterised by Sofia’s global self-assessment (META SELF-EVALUATING), triggered by the main themes of the interviews: her present learning situation (Interview 4) and her progress and development so far
This strategy of self-evaluation is characteristic of Interviews 6–10, too. In November she describes herself as an average learner and says that she has to study in order to progress:

But I think that, I can’t say that I learn too fast. I need to study to learn, I need to study, if I don’t study I don’t learn, but I can’t say that it’s hard for me to learn, no. Without too much studying, just the normal studying [...] it’s just the normal thing. I think it’s normal, not too fast and not too slow (Interview 4:7).

She describes how at first her learning was very slow, and then it increased rather rapidly, but now she feels that she is not progressing any longer, the reason being, as she says, that her class has left Swedish grammar behind, devoting their time to vocabulary, twenty or thirty new words per day (cf. 8.4). This could also be an effect of her time in liminality. Still she knows that she is progressing; she can see that she is learning new vocabulary (META EVALUATING).

She can understand what people are talking about on the radio and on television, she understands her teacher very well, but she has difficulties understanding colloquial language because people talk too fast. At the same time she is very frustrated because she feels that she cannot use the language she knows, and she does not speak very much.

I learn the words and then when I hear them I know what they mean. But I can’t use them. I wanna say much more (Interview 4:9).

When asked about what she thinks her proficiency will be like around Christmas, a month later, she is modestly optimistic:

I think I will be able to... talk a bit more, like communicate more easily, I will be able to use the language more free, freely, like now I wanna say something and it just doesn’t come out so easily. I think that by Christmas I’ll start talking... and understanding more (Interview 4:9).

In reply to a direct question about how she assesses her Swedish compared to that of the others in the group, she places herself in the middle and reveals an insight into her own learning (META EVALUATING).

I’m not the best but I’m not the worse. I think it’s... I’m actually satisfied with myself. I don’t know if it’s right for me to say that, but I’m satisfied with myself. And when I don’t remember a few things, I don’t worry about it. I don’t say: ‘Oh God, why didn’t you remember that!’ It’s... I feel it’s

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41 Only the evaluation aspects are considered here. Further references to her progress and language use are discussed in Chapters 8 and 9.
natural, maybe because I learned English and French and had the same
difficulties then [...] So, I just take it easy. I don't stress myself too much. I
say: 'You are gonna learn them. It's no problem. You're gonna be in
Sweden for a year, it's impossible not to learn them. If you study every day
for an hour or so and you keep your programme' (Interview 4:11).

Apart from the metacognitive strategy of evaluation, this quotation also
illustrates her beliefs about language learning and her attitudes to the
learning situation. She believes that studying and following a programme
lead to learning, and her attitude is not to worry about forgetting.
She speaks more Swedish just before Christmas (Interview 5), but finds
it difficult to endure, tracing the ups and downs in her language use,
another example of the dualistic nature of her situation.
About a month. But not all the time, I mean, maybe I start speaking
Swedish and I can speak for about fifteen minutes, and then I start
Swedish-English and then maybe, if things get serious, only English!
(Interview 5:3).
There are times when I think that I can speak Swedish beautifully, great.
I'm impressed with myself. There are days when I feel I'm never gonna
learn Swedish (Interview 5:2).

In interview 6 (February) we ended up talking about some metacognitive
strategies that Sofia uses. She is still constantly evaluating her learning
(META SELF-EVALUATION). For example, she feels that she has to speak more,
extend her vocabulary and pay attention to her word order in Swedish
(16:6). Her strategy is to be observant (META ATTENTION):
I'm just trying to listen to people, listen very carefully to the way they talk,
and to Solveig [teacher] and from the books so that I will start speaking the
way they do, and writing the way they do (Interview 6:3).

She monitors her speech production and even if she does not correct herself
directly as she used to, she learns from her mistakes (META SELF-MONITORING):
I listen, but I listen after I finish. I say something and when I finish I think
about it and say: 'No, this was wrong, how could I...' I realise my mistakes.
(...) Yeah, I'm trying, sometimes it comes to me the same time when I'm
speaking and I correct it, but sometimes it doesn't...
Interviewer: And then it's too late to go back and say...?
Yeah, but if you keep doing remarks with yourself, there is gonna be a time
when you're gonna start talking the right way (Interview 6:6-7).

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She describes how she now speaks Swedish automatically and even thinks in Swedish. She sees that she has speeded up her acquisition of words, automatising her learning (MEM):

[But] I learn from hearing people speaking and from television or newspapers or... anywhere. I just, I hear a word and I remember it afterwards, and the next time that I hear it I will understand it, maybe not be able to use it, but then I will be able to use it myself. Even if I don’t sit there and write the word three or four or five times, only by seeing it once in a lexicon or somewhere, I will remember it next time. It’s just... it’s starting... I’m getting into this part of learning a language where you just hear and collect (Interview 6:1-2).

7.4 The SILL Test
Towards the end of February Sofia took the SILL test. Her results placed her in the medium range, except for the social strategies, which were in the high range.42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A low user averages 1.0 to 2.4, where 1.0 to 1.4 stands for ‘never or almost never used’, and 1.5 to 2.4 stands for ‘generally not used’ (Oxford 1990:300). A medium user averages 2.5 to 3.4 ‘sometimes used’, while a high user averages 3.4 to 5.0, where 3.4 to 4.4 stands for ‘usually used’ and 4.5 to 5.0 stands for ‘always or almost always used’.

Judging from Sofia’s individual profile, she is an average user of language learning strategies, somewhat lower than average for memory strategies and a lot higher for social strategies. These results, and also an evaluation of the test, will be discussed further below.

42 Here Oxford’s strategy type Compensation is included in the test. As was mentioned earlier, this type is not used in the rest of the analysis in this chapter.
In March, a few weeks after the test was administered, an interview about the test results was recorded. My aim for the interview was to pick out some salient items where her scores were particularly low or where my earlier impressions of her strategy use were different. This interview provided information of two kinds: direct information about the test and the test results (see 7.8), and further information about her strategy use. As usual, she was encouraged to develop her statements freely. Some of Sofia’s comments from that interview will be presented here.

7.5 More on Remembering

In the test interview (Interview 7.5), Sofia confirms that she uses pictures a lot to remember (MEM IMAGERY). When she sees a new word and someone explains it to me but doesn’t know the exact word in English to explain it to me, and tries to give me an example or something, usually I remember it by the image, or by seeing it without knowing the word in Greek or English. Because sometimes I don’t even remember the word in Greek. And I do it, yeah, very often. Many of the words I know I just picture them in my mind (Interview 7.5:3).

Her use of imagery has now been extended and changed to encompass not only concrete pictures of a room or a page in the book, but also situations and second language internal abstract concepts.

No, not only. This too, but not only this. Just imagine, know about what it means, and then maybe wait for someone to use the word somehow, so that I can understand exactly what it means. There are many Swedish words that I learned and I don’t know what they mean in Greek, or I don’t remember the exact word in Greek. [---] There is no word for it, I don’t know a word for it. So I just know the Swedish word (Interview 7.5:3–4).

She has also limited her use of imagery to the initial stages of learning, automatising the process to unload her cognitive burden.

Interviewer: If there is a new word which (CONCERNS SOMETHING, YEAH), do you see the kitchen when you see the word?

Sometimes, yeah. At least at first. I mean, if I hear a word the second time I say: ‘Mmm, yeah, kitchen!’ Maybe the third time, until I know that I have learned the word so then it’s not necessary any more for me to do it. It’s just a waste of... mental (LAUGHS) energy (Interview 17.5:5).

43 The following items were picked out: 1, 3, 7, 8, 13, 16, 26, 33, 35, 39, 40, 41, 50 (cf. Appendix B)
She does not resort to her first language so much any more in order to remember, except for similar sounding words sometimes (MEM LINKING):

But now that I can speak better and I understand more, I usually avoid trying to think in Greek, for instance, and then say it in Swedish, because it usually doesn’t work (Interview 7.5:1).

Just with the sounds, because we have different, much different rules, about grammar and everything in Greek. So it doesn’t really help, it confuses you more. That’s why I told you I’m trying to skip Greek, just let it go when I’m speaking Swedish, because the difference is huge (Interview 7.5:4).

Instead she elaborates and groups words in Swedish, language internally (MEM GROUPING).

I try to put everything I know in a group, especially with verbs and grammar, it’s always like that, because it’s easier to learn it (Interview 7.5:2).

She describes a step-wise automatised vocabulary learning process again, which she finds more effective than rote memorisation. She notices or registers a new word which is stored and ‘forgotten’, i.e. not automatically retrievable. Then, when the same word reappears she recalls it, associating with e.g. context. Either she remembers/learns it directly then, or after hearing it in context a few more times.

I noticed that I started picking up words from people, words that I hear, and then I hear it once and I put it in my mind, then if I hear it the second time I say: ‘Oh, I’ve seen it before, where have I seen it before? I heard it there, I remember.’ And then, I learn the word without studying it, just by hearing (Interview 7.5:16).

Her strategy then is to relax, not to be stressed by her slow progress, knowing that the words will come to her eventually (AFF).

7.6 Self-Talk

She likes to be busy but she does not like to be stressed by the language learning task. If she is overwhelmed by her studies she usually takes a break or goes for a walk. But when her time is running out, for example before a test, she uses the technique of self-persuasion (META PLANNING), self-talk, which is illustrated by the following event from Interview 8, when she really did not feel that she would pass a test.
I woke up around nine, so I know that we were gonna write the test, so I thought: 'There is no use in going. Just take the test and do it at home.' So, I said that I should study, a little bit. But I had many things to do, I had things [= homework] to do for tomorrow, and I had things that were left from other days that I didn’t do. So I had to choose which ones to do, and I thought that if I do what I have to do for tomorrow, and leave the other ones for the afternoon, I’m not gonna do them. But if I do the other things now, then in the afternoon I will have no choice but to study things for tomorrow. So that’s, I try to, I have some little games with myself, like ‘trap him so he cannot escape’, because I know that I, last couple of years, I have too much time to do a few things, and then at the end I don’t do anything. The more you have, the more you do, I think (Interview 8:8).

She can see her progress, and knows what she needs to do to go forward (META EVALUATING). She finds it important to read more – she is reading a book in Swedish, she reads the subtitles on television and whenever she sees a piece of paper she picks it up and reads it. She estimates that she speaks Swedish about half her time and she listens, as much as she can, to programmes on television and to people around her, and she feels that she understands most of it. She also makes fewer mistakes when writing and these mistakes themselves are now different. In the beginning she mostly made grammar mistakes, now there are more vocabulary mistakes, she says.

### 7.7 Automatisation

Interview 9 (May) took as staring-point Questionnaire 2, Evaluate your progress. Sofia can see great progress in her learning, especially during the last month (META EVALUATING). She has changed tactics with regard to her listening and understanding. Earlier she was hampered by her attempts to understand every word, but now she uses the context much more.

I just listen and I don’t really try. I mean, if I hear a word and I don’t remember what it is, or if I know I’ve seen this word somewhere, I don’t try at the moment to understand, to remember exactly what it means, I just keep listening to what they say. And usually it comes to me later from what they say afterwards or from the whole discussion (Interview 9:2).

There are always unknown words when I listen or when I talk with someone, always. But I just try to, like, let them talk through the whole thing and then, if I don’t understand everything, I ask again (Interview 9:2).

She describes how it has become easier to learn new things, her learning is becoming more automatised, it goes faster and faster.
Like, the more I learn, the easier I learn the things that I don’t know (Interview 9:9).

She has automated at least part of her acquisition and she has outlined how she can continue to learn (META PLANNING).

I think the best thing I have to do, I mean, from now on that I know a few things, is just listen. [...] If you hear something, and you hear it over and over again without understanding it, next time you’re gonna use it the right way. You don’t have to work on that, you don’t have to do something special to do that, it just comes to you. It doesn’t really worry me, that part (Interview 9:19).

In her language production she feels that she can communicate the meaning of what she wants to say. For example she feels capable of explaining things in another way when she cannot find the right vocabulary. At the same time she still monitors parts of her grammar when speaking (META EVALUATION), especially word order rules for main and subordinate clauses, adverb placement, etc. At those times she feels her production slowing down (Interview 9:19–20, cf. Chapter 8).

She evaluates her proficiency as a little above average in her language learning group, but ‘kind of low’ compared to native speakers (META EVALUATION). She is satisfied with her learning so far, she has done what was expected of her the last four months (Interview 19:8), but she knows that she has to continue working with her language (cf. Chapter 7).

I think it’s going good, I think I have the basis. I can’t say that I know so much Swedish now to understand everything and to say whatever I want to say, to express myself completely, but I think that it’s going good, and I have this feeling that next year is the year when I’m really going to learn Swedish (Interview 19:14).

Her use of cognitive strategies is about the same, she writes down new words from school, she works through the exercises in the books, she takes notes, but she has become more efficient (COGN).

Yeah, yeah, it’s about the same, the same way. I haven’t changed technique or something, I study the same way. But it’s going faster. It’s easier for me to learn now (Interview 9:10).

However, when it comes to vocabulary learning, she finds it much easier to remember when she sees the words in use (MEM). The old method of learning vocabulary by repetition (COGN REPEATING) is not so efficient, mainly due to the large number of new words, she says. Instead she finds it more effective when she hears or reads these new words in context,
especially those with a high frequency of use. As regards her retrieval
strategies, she describes how she searches for the meaning of words that
seem familiar by using the language context of the utterance or by putting
them into contexts where she might have heard them before. She still
experiences a discrepancy between the words that she knows and the words
that she can use in production.

I know many, many words if I see them written or if I hear them, but when
it comes to using them, it's more difficult (Interview 9:13).

She still does not read very much Swedish, apart from the books from
school (which include one novel), she does not like newspapers and she
wants to attain a high proficiency before she reads books on her own
initiative in Swedish (COGN PRACTICE).

[Really, you're trying to understand what's going on and then you miss the
whole beauty. So I thought that maybe I can wait a little bit longer, or read
something easier, now in the summer maybe (Interview 10:13).

She has, however, taken advantage of the system of subtitling on Swedish
television. Whenever there is a programme in English with Swedish
subtitles, she listens to the English and reads the Swedish translation at the
same time. She says that this strategy has been extremely helpful to her.

So actually I learned quite a few words from television. Words we never,
not never, before we would do them at school I knew what they meant
(Interview 10:12).

She speaks Swedish more freely without letting her monitoring impede her
fluency (META MONITORING).

Yeah, I think I do that. It's not that I don't realise that I make mistakes, I
do. But when I don't have to, I don't stop to make it right, the mistake
(Interview 10:27).

She also describes how her learning process has been automatised further
(MEM).

And my head is accepting things easier now, more easily. I mean, I can just
hear something once and learn it, in my head (Interview 10:31).

7.8 Conclusion
Judging from the first two interviews, Sofia brings with her an array of
language learning strategies and study techniques to the study of Swedish.
She has studied all her life, among other things two foreign languages, and she feels confident that she will be able to learn another language, this time in its own natural environment. She uses cognitive strategies such as writing words and texts, taking notes, trying to use the language, repeating and structuring. She uses memory strategies such as associating to what she already knows, grouping new words, using imagery and elaboration. She uses metacognitive strategies such as monitoring her production and centring her learning, and she does not feel the need for affective strategies because she is not embarrassed in class.

Looking at Sofia’s language learning strategies separately, a salient characteristic during this study year is change and automatisation. Strategies are used differently and she automatises her learning. Her study technique seems to be the same, but it becomes more efficient.

At first she formally manipulates the new language through writing, copying, repeating and studying, i.e. traditional study techniques, but eventually she seeks a more naturalistic way of practising. She feels that hearing new words in context enhances her learning. She hears or reads a word and notices it, she hears it again and understands it from the context, and eventually she can learn to use the word. In the end (Interview 10) she says that it is enough for her to hear a word once to remember it. This can be seen as an illustration of how her word learning is being automatised, from overt manipulation to covert acquisition. Wenden (1987) points out that strategies can be automatised, thus being below consciousness or potentially conscious. O’Malley & Chamot (1990:52) also suggest that strategies “may be conscious in early stages of learning and later be performed without the person’s awareness”.

It is important to distinguish between consciousness and automatisation in this context. Consciousness has to do with noticing, attention and awareness of an object (Schmidt 1994), whereas automatisation relates to processing (McLaughlin 1987). In the present context this means that Sofia is bound to be conscious or aware of the strategies that she reports using; a prerequisite for this study. On the other hand, the claim that she automatises and routinises her application of strategies pertains to an unloading of her cognitive processing capacity and increased processing speed. These processes can be either conscious or not, according to McLaughlin (1987:153). In other words, Sofia’s automatisation of her

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44 It is, however, possible that she uses strategies subconsciously, which would not show in a self-report study like the present one.
learning presumably also includes an automatisation of her learning strategies, but this has not been possible to study here.

Another example of automatisation concerns Sofia’s use of imagery to remember. At first the images are very concrete, later she can imagine situations or abstract nouns. There is another example of automatisation when she says that she uses imagery only in the initial stages of word learning, because she does not want to overload her memory. In the beginning she also used phonological clues (cf. the example kallas above) to remember new words, but eventually they became more semantic and contextual.

She also seems to reflect more and more on her learning situation, especially with regard to the metacognitive strategy of self-evaluation. She evaluates her progress, sees herself in contrast to the target group as well as her peers. Furthermore, based on her evaluation she sets up goals, for example to speak more, to read more and to learn more vocabulary. She monitors her performance, but there is now a change in reactions to the monitoring. The effect is no longer one of inhibition, resulting in slower production, but rather the mere registration of her mistakes.

There may be a number of reasons for these changes in the use of strategies, none of which stand out in the data; they can only be speculated upon. One reason could be that Sofia adjusts her strategies to the level she has reached in the learning process and the learning task. As her learning of Swedish becomes more advanced she needs strategies of a different character. Another reason could be the invitation to reflection in our talks, and yet another could be that the teacher partly uses an intellectual method for approaching the learning, i.e. a consciousness-raising method.

The SILL test might be good for finding general tendencies in large groups of learners, as has also been indicated by Oxford & Burry-Stock (1995). But seen at an individual level it seems as if this test can only provide a hint of the real individual learner. Judging from the interview with Sofia about her choices in the test, she had some difficulties interpreting the items. For example, for item 8, ‘I review Swedish lessons often’, Sofia had difficulties in defining ‘often’ (cf. Appendix B):

> Often for me is like every week, maybe two times a month. That’s often. /-- / Regularly is what I’d like to do, so that I would be peaceful with myself, but I don’t do it that often (Interview 7.5:6).

The cultural background for learning could also be influential for the choice of scale. For example, Sofia did not know what flash-cards were
(Question 6) and the idea of physically acting out new words (7) was unfamiliar to her. Furthermore, the affective items in (43) ‘writing a diary’, and (44), ‘talking to someone about feelings’, were given high scores by Sofia, but the background is that those strategies are not Sofia’s by choice, but were imposed by me, the researcher. Finally, the social strategy ‘I try to learn about the culture of Swedish speakers’ (50) was given a fairly low score by Sofia, because her motivation in learning the language lies in the instrumental goal of becoming a physician (cf. Chapter 6).

It seems as if many of the questions in the test have been chosen from a culturally different teaching and learning perspective, which sometimes seems alien in our culture. LoCastro (1994) found a similar cultural discrepancy in the SILL test given to Japanese learners as compared to interviews with the same learners.

My conclusion with regard to the SILL test, then, is that if it is to be used it should be adapted to local conditions, at least culturally. Still, it can only provide hints about learning strategies; in order to find out an individual’s use of strategies, an interview, maybe combined with think-aloud techniques, would yield more reliable information.

Sofia seems to have a basic starting-point in her study technique, which she has learned when studying foreign languages in school. Although she is well aware of what she is doing, how she manipulates herself and the second language, she seems to do it automatically, i.e. she believes that this is the way you study languages, and, consequently, she applies this basic study technique throughout the year, come rain or come shine.

Furthermore, she seems to be able to adjust to the changing situation, i.e. with increasing proficiency she changes her use of language learning strategies. This has been said to be one of the characteristics of good language learners (O’Malley & Chamot 1990:222).

In addition, Sofia appears to have a high degree of awareness about her learning. She constantly evaluates her progress, she reflects upon her learning strategies, and she sets up goals that she wants to achieve.

45In class they used TPR, Total Physical Response, during the first few weeks, but Sofia felt ridiculous, although she also noticed that she learned a few new words that way.
8. Studies and Progress

This chapter deals with Sofia’s self-report on her study process and on her progress in learning Swedish. Process and progress go hand in hand. The study process is defined here as the everyday process of learning a language, i.e. the difficulties of the actual handiwork, from which, for example, some of the earlier mentioned language learning strategies have been inferred. Included in the analysis of her study progress there is a judgmental factor where Sofia evaluates her progress both internally, for herself, and in comparison with others.

It is sometimes very difficult to separate in a clearcut manner the artificial structural components that scaffold a study like the present. In this chapter, on Sofia’s study process and progress, there is, for example, considerable overlap with language learning strategies, in the sense that they both have partly the same content. In other words, Sofia’s statements have been used both to elicit strategies and to illustrate her learning process and her progress, i.e. by looking at the same thing from different angles. In these cases, only short extracts are given here of the validative quotations given in the chapter on strategies. Sometimes, however, for particularly salient quotations, extracts are repeated intact. Furthermore, there are several connections with her social situation and personal development, as well as attitudes and motivation, which are reported on in other chapters. Finally, I would like to point out that more concrete examples of Sofia’s progress will be given in the next chapter, Chapter 9.

8.1 Step by Step

In the first interview (September) Sofia talks about her school background: she studied at a private foreign language learning school (which almost everyone seems to do in the bigger cities in Greece according to Sofia) where she learned some techniques for studying. Subsequently, in the Upper secondary school, she developed an ability to study hard due to strict examination requirements. Now, studying Swedish in Sweden, she finds herself in an uncertain situation.

And, I don’t know, it’s kind of difficult, it doesn’t remind me at all of when I was learning English or French. It’s difficult for me to organise everything.
Even though Solveig [teacher], she’s really good, you know, those rules that she gives us. And, I don’t know, it’s a little bit hard for me (Interview 1:20–21).

However, even though she feels somewhat uncertain and alone, there is still an optimistic tone with respect to learning Swedish.

But, I think that as I move on, I’ll figure out a way to study and a way to organise everything. Yeah, I think I’ll be able to learn it (Interview 1:22).

In fact, she has learned enough in a month to speak Swedish in shops (cf. Chapter 9) although she usually ends up saying ‘I don’t speak Swedish’ when they answer back in Swedish.

Interviews 2 and 3 (October and early November) had as a main theme strategies for learning, in and out of class. These interviews reveal slow, step-by-step progress using language learning strategies. In class she participates in conversations and group discussions, she asks questions, she takes notes and she uses the language laboratory. Out of class she keeps up with her homework, she tries to use Swedish in shops and other places, she listens to Swedish on the radio and television and listens and talks (a little) to her Swedish-speaking peers in the student corridor. But when she wants to say something important, like in the bank, she resorts to English.

She reports that she is making progress during this period and she is also rather satisfied with her progress, which can be inferred from some short statements. For example, talking about learning words with different stress patterns, she says: “I don’t remember all of them, of course, but... I am quite pleased with myself” (Interview 2:2). She says that she is getting used to hearing the Swedish accent and is quite confident that she will learn pronunciation, too: “I think it’s gonna come in time, I don’t worry about that, right now.” (Interview 2:3). Furthermore, when asked if she is good at remembering words, she says: “I’m not bad. I don’t know if I’m good, but I’m not bad” (Interview 3:5) and she has no problem with her peer group in class: “I feel nice when I’m in the class. I have no problem. I can talk and I can make a mistake and I don’t feel bad.” (Interview 3:8)

She seems optimistic about her progress even though the learning process can sometimes be quite frustrating.

Well, there are some times when I’m really impressed with myself! (LAUGHS) I say: ‘Yes! I can speak Swedish!’ and there are some times that I say: ‘Oh, I’m never gonna learn it’, but I think that I have learned quite a few things, and I think that until Christmas I will know much more. I mean, I’m improving every day (Interview 3:8).
Her main difficulty lies in speaking Swedish – it is so much easier to resort to English whenever it gets difficult. When asked to compare herself to the rest of her language learning group she illustrates this dualism and sees herself as a middle-way learner.

I think I’m about in the middle. I can understand everything, or almost everything. I mean, when Solveig is talking I don’t understand every word that she says, but I know what she’s talking about. I can understand everything, but the difficulty is that I can’t talk. If you’ve noticed sometimes even when I ask a question to Solveig, even though I can say it in Swedish, I use English (Interview 3:9).

8.2 Effects of Liminality

Interviews 2 and 3 (October and early November) took place about two weeks before, and two weeks after, the date (15 October) when Sofia found out that she had not passed the tests in Greece that she had hoped for. In her diary and in subsequent interviews Sofia reveals that her first period in Sweden was a time of ambiguity (Chapters 4 and 5) and that the period after the 15th was something of a catastrophe as far as her life situation was concerned, the focal point being, according to her diary, the three weeks after the 15th, where she talks about ‘despair, pessimism and indifference’ (cf. 4.2). This liminal period lasted quite a long time; the real turning-point did not come until well after Christmas (Interview 7:2–3). Still, very little of this is reflected in these two interviews, except for a reference to how much better she feels at the beginning of November after her decision to stay.

In a later interview, Interview 7, Sofia sees these events and their connection to language learning from two angles. On the one hand, she feels hampered in her learning by her experiences of liminality.

Oh, it was pretty bad, it was pretty bad. I couldn’t study. I didn’t feel like studying and I knew that I had to study. /.../ I could just sit there for five hours, maybe six, without doing anything, really. /.../ And... it was going kind of slow, not the way I wanted it to go. I wouldn’t enjoy studying (Interview 7:8).

On the other hand, she does not feel that she has missed much with regard to her language learning:

Not a lot. Because there were times when I was studying. I mean, when I felt like... I wanted to study, because if I didn’t want to think about
anything else, then I would study really hard, good. I think that... no, I haven’t lost that much. Maybe a little bit of the vocabulary and things that you have to do every day. Maybe a little bit of that. But in grammar and things like that I don’t think I have missed (Interview 7:9).

8.3 Slow Progress

In Interview 4 (late November) Sofia summarises her progress so far: first a slow improvement, then a fast one and then again a slow one.

I feel like my learning is going... like it was at zero, and then it very, very slowly increased, very slowly, and then it was a time that it started increasing faster, and now I’m in a period when I... I... It increases, but very, very slowly again. It’s like, at first we learned the basic things, and then we started doing all this grammar and new words, so it was kind of fast, I could suddenly talk in Swedish. And now it’s kind of stabled again, because we have done almost everything in grammar and just learn words. So, it’s very, very hard for me to learn, I mean, twenty or thirty words a day. I learn much less, and I have to repeat every day, so I feel like I’m... I am at the same thing, I don’t feel like I’m progressing. Which I am, in fact, because I’m learning a few words every day. But it doesn’t show so much, I don’t feel like it so much. (Interview 4:1)

I think there is a progress, but it just goes up really slow, but it develops, I think, because we keep doing them over and over again (Interview 4:9).

These two quotations show that she knows that she is progressing but, as was mentioned above, it is not so obvious as when the class studying grammar rules; she does not feel that she is progressing. As before she spends a couple of hours per day on her studies, but now she finds them more boring and more tiring because she feels that she has to study words all the time. Still she does not give up, which reflects a certain tenacity.

I have a bunch of words in front of me and I have to repeat them over and over again. On Sunday I was studying, and it was like- I was writing, learning words for fifteen minutes, then I would go into the kitchen for five minutes, then I would come back another fifteen minutes. I couldn’t otherwise, it was so boring for me. If I would just stay and study for one hour, then I would close the book and watch TV, but like this I was studying most of the day. /.../ I can study one hour and learn less than I was doing about a month ago, because it’s always the same thing (Interview 4:8).
She understands better and she speaks more Swedish, but she still finds it difficult to use the language as she wants. She describes how her motivation has increased after her decision to stay, which has enhanced her learning.

And I started to enjoy it. I studied more... I was more concentrated on what I was doing. It was better. I learned more, I think (Interview 4:2).

In comparison to the other students in her group she feels satisfied with her studies, although she knows that she has to study hard in order to progress.

I’m not the best but I’m not the worst. I think it’s... I’m actually satisfied with myself. I don’t know if it’s right for me to say that, but I’m satisfied with myself (Interview 4:11).

I can’t say that I learn too fast, I need to study to learn. I need to study, if I don’t study I don’t learn, but I can’t say that it’s hard for me to learn, no (Interview 4:7).

Speculating about her improved proficiency forwards one month later, she believes that she will make progress, especially with respect to speaking.

Eh, I think I will be able to... talk a bit more, like communicate more easily, I will be able to use the language more free, freely... /.../ I think by Christmas I’ll start talking... and understanding more (Interview 4:9).

8.4 A Learning Plateau

Before Interview 5 (December) Sofia was asked to draw a curve on a questionnaire (Figure 4; Questionnaire 1) of her ups and downs in learning Swedish since the beginning. In this questionnaire she wrote a comment on the curve and the questionnaire was discussed further during Interview 5. In reply to the question “Can you recall what caused/causes the curve to look like this?” she wrote:

At the beginning we were learning the basic thing so my learning was going quite slow. Of course it was also the fact that I didn’t know if I was going to stay or not. After the middle of October, when I made up my mind, I started learning many thing. October was also the time when we were learning lots of grammar and words so it was then that I began to be able to talk Swedish. In November it was only words. So my learning was quite the same; maybe it went down a bit because I was feeling, and I still am, a little bore of studing nothing but words all the time (Questionnaire 1, verbatim).
From the beginning of November, after the steep improvement in October, she drew a fairly level or even somewhat downward-slanting curve. She appears to have reached a language learning plateau, a levelling off of her progress.

Yeah, just a little bit. I feel like I’m staying in the same level, maybe a bit down. But I talked to Solveig about it yesterday and she said that most people feel like that, at the end of the semester. There is no problem really, you know them, it’s just that you haven’t used them yet, those words and these things that you know, so... (Interview 5:2).

Still she feels a certain with regard to her proficiency. Sometimes she experiences fluency, other times only difficulties. When asked whether she thinks that the curve will turn after Christmas and go up again, she seems somewhat optimistic, however.

There are times when I think that I can speak Swedish beautifully, great, I’m impressed with myself, there are days when I feel I’m never gonna learn Swedish (Interview 5:2).

Mmm. Maybe a bit slowly at the beginning when I come back, because I’m gonna be in Greece for a month. Yeah, I think it’s gonna go up (Interview 5:3).

She finds it quite boring sometimes just to study Swedish – she is more used to being busy with many different things.

Eh, it’s just that it’s the same thing all the time. The same thing. /.../ And usually I’ve been doing many things at the same time, like I was going to
school, I was learning English and French, I was playing handball. I didn’t have time to think what I was doing. Sometimes I was just looking at the watch and running all the time, but I was enjoying it. And now it’s just Swedish, and studying does not take me like eight hours a day, just maybe two, three at the most, and then the rest of the day: ‘What should I do? Okay, maybe I should just take a look at the books again. And then you see them: ‘Oh, no. I’m bored with them’. It’s like I have plenty of free time (Interview 5:7).

Towards the end of the autumn term her study group was given a big test on everything they had learned during the term, vocabulary and grammar. She passed the test but was not expecting the best grades because she had not studied very much, only vocabulary. She was not very satisfied with some of her results, because she knew her difficulties and did not spend enough time on them, and was thus reminded of the relation between studies and results.

And with vocabulary I did very, very well. Because I studied it. But with the rest it was... My main problem I told you is adjectives and prepositions, not that much with prepositions, but adjectives and adjektiv, substantiv, bestämd obestämd form. [adjective, noun, definite indefinite form] Puh! But the thing is that I was really careless when I was writing. I don’t know why, I was very careless. I mean, when I saw the test and saw my mistakes, at lest half of them shouldn’t be there. /.../

Interviewer: So you noticed a close connection between studies and...

Yeah! (LAUGHS) Yes (Interview 5:10).

8.5 Eureka!

The first question in Interview 6 (February) concerned changes since the last interview in December. Sofia gave a very straightforward and enthusiastic description, which will be given here in extenso.

I can speak Swedish now! It’s a big difference. At the beginning there was a time when I was learning really fast and then, as I told you before, I just stopped, I felt that I stopped, and when I came back here after Christmas, and I looked around, I was listening. I said: ‘Oh, my God! I have forgotten everything I know. I can’t believe I’m gonna get it back again!’ But after a couple of weeks it just came to me. And... not only came to me, but I was more... I was speaking, I didn’t have any problems. Because before Christmas I wanted to say something in Swedish but it just wouldn’t come out, but now I find myself sometimes, without thinking at all, speaking in Swedish, or thinking, even thinking in Swedish. And that’s the big
difference. And now I see also that I’m not only learning from my books, I
don’t learn so many things from my books, because I told you it’s kind of
boring and I don’t feel like studying so much, but I learn from hearing
people speaking and from television or newspapers or... anywhere. I just, I
hear a word and I remember it afterwards, and the next time that I hear it I
will understand it, maybe not be able to use it, but then I will be able to use
it myself. Even if I don’t sit there and write the word three or four or five
times, only by seeing it once, in a lexicon or somewhere, I will remember it
the next time. It’s just... it’s starting... I’m getting into this part of learning
a language where you just hear and collect. That’s much easier and more
pleasant, I think (Interview 6:1–2).

She definitely sees a giant leap forward in her language learning process, a
qualitative change. She finds it unproblematic to use Swedish
automatically, she is even thinking in Swedish. She also feels that her
learning has been facilitated and automatised. As she describes it, she is
more or less acquiring Swedish without too much effort.

One of the explanations she gives for this fundamental change is the
long break when she went back to Greece.

Maybe I needed some time off, you know, no Swedish at all, nothing, and
then you suddenly realise that you know more than you think (Interview
6:2).

Another reason for the change, according to Sofia, could be that she came
back with a basic understanding of Swedish which allowed her to relax.

...and also the fact that... eh... I know a few things in Swedish. And then it’s
easier for me to learn more without trying so hard. /.../ I’m not so stressed...
now. I just relax and I say... I don’t worry anymore, I just say: ‘Now I’m
gonna learn, even if I don’t read those twenty or fifty words today, it’s no
big deal, because I’m gonna listen so much, and something’s gonna come to
me’ (Interview 6:3).

Furthermore, she is getting more positive feedback from her Swedish-
speaking surrounding.

I was talking with this Swedish friend of mine on the phone, and she was
speaking Swedish and I was speaking Swedish, and then she stopped for a
minute and she said: ‘What happened to you? You speak so good! Before
Christmas you were like, you couldn’t say anything. You were talking for
fifteen minutes and then you would say: “Sorry, that’s English from now
on!”’. It’s pretty good (Interview 6:3).
8.6 An Average Learner

In Interview 8 (April) Sofia again classifies herself as an average student compared to her peers. She finds it satisfying just to pass the courses.

Eh, not the best, not the worst. Somewhere in the middle, I think. I’m not bad, but I don’t really care if I’m the best, I just want to pass the courses and go on. And that’s because I don’t like to stress myself. I don’t like to feel stressed. Because when I feel stressed I don’t really do anything. I can’t study. So, I might have many, many things to study, and I start feeling: ‘Oh, my God, how am I gonna do all that?’ So at that point, instead of starting to study, I just take a break, go for a walk. Like that. I don’t really worry, I don’t like to worry about things. I like to keep it calm. But when I say that I will study, I can. I can do it (Interview 8:7).

But she also modifies her description of how she feels average.

Mmm. I think that, I don’t know, there are other people in the group that know more words than I do, know more things. Like, I know with Ma I’m amazed. Of course he’s German and most of the words they are, well, they are similar. But he knows so many words. And Bo, she knows many, many words that she can use. She just can’t talk. There are people that know more than I do. But then when it comes to speaking and communicating and make myself understood, I think I’m a little more over the middle. I think, I don’t know. I hope I’m right. I don’t find it very difficult to communicate in Swedish. There are some times it just flows, it just goes on and on, but there are some times I just PFT (SOUND AND GESTURE) black (Interview 8:18).

In comparison with her peer group she feels that she is an average learner, but at the same time she seems to assume that she could be better than average. Her goal is only to pass her courses, not to be the best in the class, because she does not want to feel stress or worry. In contrast to her description of her progress before Christmas, when she had such great difficulties in speaking Swedish, she now considers herself to be above average orally.

8.7 Stable Increase

Before Interview 9 (May) she was again asked to draw a curve of her language learning progress (since January) and fill in a questionnaire (Questionnaire 3). The curve is totally straight, steadily going upwards (Figure 5). She writes on the questionnaire:
After Christmas I was feeling much better in general which means that I was studying more and effectively. We had more work to do but it was more ‘fun’ because we had many different books and we were doing different things. Especially after March when we started with ‘vårdspråk’ things were much better. After Christmas I felt like my mind was more ‘open’ to accept much more thing than before. So all that cause this stable increase in my language learning (Questionnaire 3, verbatim).

Figure 5. Learning curve according to Sofia, spring term

She feels that she is progressing, slowly but steadily.

So, I think it’s going up. Not very fast but it is... going up.

Interviewer: You see the progress?

Yeah. Especially the last month I really see progress. Like I can watch a Swedish movie on television or programmes, discussions about stuff, and I understand. I wouldn’t dare to... I actually wouldn’t dare to do that, before. (LAUGHS) I just, if there was a Swedish programme on television, I just: ‘Ah, no.’ Because I would get tired very easily. At first it would go fine trying to understand what they said, but after a while I just couldn’t follow it anymore. But now it’s okay, I just listen. There are words that I don’t understand, but I get the main subject (Interview 9:1–2).

The students were divided into small groups according to what subject they were going to take the next term. Sofia was in a group called ‘vårdspråk’ (health-care language) which for about a month devoted 8 lessons per week to studying the language of the health care domain, and which was taught by an experienced teacher.
But it went quite good, I mean, I’m quite satisfied with myself the last four months. I fulfilled all the obligations, I mean I did all the things I had to do during these four months, maybe a little delayed, maybe not, they weren’t perfect, but at least I tried. I spent time on everything I had to do. It went good (Interview 9:8).

She points again to the break at Christmas as one of the reasons for her progress.

[A]round about a month after I came, I started, all the things I learned came to my mind /.../ And it was easier for me to learn new things, because at the beginning everything came together, like grammar and words and all the things, they came together and I didn’t feel that I had any space in my head (Interview 9:9–10).

8.8 Learning without Trying

She also feels that her learning is more efficient and that it is going faster.

Yeah. Like the more I learn, the easier I learn the things that I don’t know. I can just hear a word on television or when of my friends talk, and I can learn it at that moment without writing it or without trying to learn. Sometimes I don’t even know how to write the word but I know how to use it. It’s like that (Interview 9:9).

During this interview she was again asked to evaluate her proficiency, this time compared to native speakers. Here, too, she can see progress.

To a Swedish person? (LAUGHS) Ah, it’s hard to say, actually. Eh, compared to the others, maybe somewhere in the middle, I think, maybe a little bit higher, I don’t know. But compared to Swedish I’m kind of low. But there are a few people, I’ve talked to a few people, I had a composition, I wrote a composition once and I just showed it to a girl in my corridor. I told her: ‘Just read it. Don’t tell me if I have any mistakes, just tell me if you understand what I say’. And she read it and she was, like: ‘You write much better than many Swedes that I know!’ (Interview 9:14.)

At the beginning of June Sofia took the Rikstest, the final language test before the students are allowed to take up their university studies (cf. 3.1). She passed it, but she had a hard time before.

A week before the test I was, I was a mess. I was really a mess, I said: ‘No way, I’m not gonna do it’. I had this feeling, I always have feeling about important things, I didn’t think I would do it (Interview 10:7).
She had planned how and what to do, but a week before she did not feel that she had the time to finish. But she started to study anyway.

But then, Saturday-Sunday before the test it was a better. A little bit better. I was stressed about the test, but it was better because I had studied everything and it was okay.

Interviewer: You actually had time to do everything you had decided before?

Yeah, I did. Exactly the way I wanted to do it. But it was pretty hard because I was so bored in the end. About Thursday-Friday I was so bored, and I just, I had many invitations for parties, and just going out because it was this brännboll\(^7\) thing and... I just, I wanted to go but I knew that if I would go I wouldn’t study. I knew that I would stay at home, maybe I wouldn’t study either, but at least I had a chance to open the books. So, I was just, for a week I was in my room, I didn’t go anywhere, anywhere at all. It went good so it’s... no problem (Interview 10:8).

The first day of the test, she barely passed the listening comprehension, found the reading comprehension easy and achieved satisfying result in the vocabulary test.

I wasn’t doing very well the whole year with this [vocabulary], the maximum I had was 35, then it was 30, 33... So, I just wanted to have 35. But it was quite easy, and the thing is, the thing that make me feel good is that many of the things I studied the past week and the things that we did at school the last week, it was in the test. /.../ And then the other ones from talking or remembering a few words and stuff, and then some of them were just luck. I didn’t know the words, so... So, I had 40. And it went very, very good. It wasn’t really hard (Interview 10:9).

She was very happy when she passed the first day and did not worry very much about the second, which consisted of a composition and an interview.

Towards the end of Interview 10 (June) she was asked to recapitulate her language learning progress for the spring term. She again describes her leap in the period from February to March and how her learning becomes more or less automatised.

Oh, it was like, I was going like this (GESTURE: UPWARDS MOVEMENT) for a while, then it was PFT like this (GESTURE: STEEP UPWARDS MOVEMENT). I mean, I... (YEAH) Yeah. I came home from

\(^7\) Sofia is referring to a week-long student tournament of brännboll (similar to ‘rounders’) towards the end of the spring term, which is accompanied by different kinds of festivities.
Christmas, and then about the end of February, when, at the beginning it was confusing again after Christmas, because before Christmas we had only a couple of books and we were doing... easy stuff comparing with what we did after Christmas. When I came back we had about five books or something, and she said: 'Okay, for tomorrow you read from this book, from this, from this, and this and this' and that: 'Oh! What am I gonna do?'. But after a month when I started getting in order, making everything to be in order, I realised that I knew more than I thought, and from things that I learned before Christmas that I felt I didn’t know them. So it just came to me, at that time. I mean, the words that I had learned, that I didn’t remember, they were just coming to me automatically, I could speak, I could understand. I was really surprised, cause for a long period I thought that I couldn’t, and suddenly I realised that I can actually communicate with people very, very well. It was... it felt very good (Interview 10:27).

Although she is impressed by her progress during these two terms, she feels that her real learning phase will come later.

[F]or later on it’s gonna be more things will be needed. But I know that, it’s okay, too, because I know that the Swedish I learned this year it was just the basis for what I’m gonna learn the other years I’m gonna be here. So I really expect to learn from now on. Cause this year it was really stressed, we had to fix everything in ten months, I didn’t think it would happen, in the beginning. I didn’t think that someone could learn to speak in just ten months. So we were like trying to make it, we were competing with time, I think. So from now on is when I’m gonna start learning... Swedish I think (Interview 10:27).

In other words, she is quite satisfied with her studies and progress as well as with the competence she has attained. She is thus confidently looking forward to continuing to learn Swedish.

8.9 Conclusion

Sofia sees an increase in her learning during the initial stages, but the progress is slow. In October she seems quite satisfied with her progress, and towards the end of October there is a rapid increase after her decision to stay. However, from November on she feels that she has stopped learning, and has reached a plateau, maybe a sign of her entrenchment in liminality. At the same time there is a constant fluctuation between feelings of satisfaction and despair with respect to her progress. However, regardless of this ambivalence, she basically seems to have a certain amount of optimism as regards her progress and a certain degree of determination not to give up.
Her description here of the events in October, her liminal period when she found out that she had not passed the test in Greece, stands in obvious contrast to the description in her diary which reveals much more about her feelings (cf. 4.2). The reasons for this contrast can only be speculated upon. One reason could be that we did not know each other well enough as interviewer and interviewee at that point of time, which prevented Sofia from talking about it, thus inducing her to keep up appearances. Still, it was possible for her to write about it in the diary which seems to have functioned as a confidante (cf. 4.6). It was also possible for her to talk about it later on, which might reflect an increasing confidence me as a close acquaintance and/or that time allows us to see things in a different light. Another possible reason could be that Sofia wanted to separate the language-learning part from the life-situation part. In spite of these strong feelings, she still seems to keep on learning, albeit slowly and reluctantly. A reason for this might be found in her background. She has an awareness of what is needed to learn a second language which is based on her earlier experiences, she is tenacious enough to study after class up to two hours a day, and she uses a diversity of language learning strategies (Chapter 7).

After the break at Christmas, she sees a strong increase in her progress. She relates this increase to the break but also to her realisation that she has really made progress, an understanding which calms her. Furthermore, she receives positive feedback from people around her. This break seems to have come at the perfect time for Sofia’s progress. Before Christmas she saw little progress, she was bored with learning, she was sad and longing to go home. During the break she did not speak Swedish, she did not study Swedish, nor did she read in Swedish. After the break she seems to take a linguistic leap forwards, which is most clearly reflected in her use of syntax (Chapter 11). One of the reasons for this sudden increase in competence could be the advantage of a cognitive break in the learning process, which allows for a restructuring of many of the linguistic impressions from the last few months (for a further discussion of the break, see Chapter 14.2).

During the rest of the spring term there is steady progress, which Sofia again attributes to the effects of the break, but also to the fact that she has reached a level which is high enough for her to continue to learn automatically.

Finally, as regards the content of her studies, she liked the initial study of grammar, had difficulties with vocabulary learning, while the variation during the spring term appealed to her.
9. Language Use

Whereas Chapter 8 concentrated on Sofia's experiences connected with the process of learning and her perception of her progress in Swedish, this chapter concerns Sofia's self-report on her use of Swedish. In other words, the primary aim of this chapter is to expose Sofia's use and development of the four traditional language skills, listening, reading, writing, and speaking.

In order to provide some background to Sofia's self-report, a short general summary of language use in the classroom is given first (9.1). Then Sofia's language use is presented chronologically (9.2).

9.1 Language Use in the Classroom

As an observer I participated in Sofia's language learning group, more frequently at the beginning and more occasionally towards the end of the study year (cf. 3.3 Observation). The following description of language use in the classroom is based on the observations I made, the discussions I have had with the teacher and an examination the total study and learning material used for this course, generously provided by the teacher. As was pointed out in 3.1, this particular preparatory class received a total of 415 hours of teaching during two terms.

The Four Language Skills

In the beginning, the first few weeks, the teacher uses mainly English to communicate in the classroom. With time, she code-switches more and more frequently into Swedish. After three weeks the language used is mainly Swedish with some confirmations and checks in English. From the start, parts of the lessons are used for TPR, Total Physical Response (e.g. Asher 1977), a method which is more or less abandoned after a month (cf. 3.3 The teacher and her teaching). The first few weeks contain an intensive Swedish grammar course in English, covering the most salient features of Swedish grammar supported by exercises, and compared contrastively to English and to other first languages in the group. Parallel to grammar, several lessons per week are devoted to pronunciation theory and exercises.
in class and in the language laboratory. Thus a basic knowledge and a metalanguage is established. Grammar and pronunciation lessons continue during the whole course, with less and less frequency and with more and more specified content. For those students who need extra help, individualised sessions are also provided.

Another part of the course consists of what could be called social knowledge. Students read and talk about Swedish society, the Swedish education system, Swedish history and traditions, as well as Swedish geography. During the second term a textbook on Social Science aimed for the upper secondary classes in Sweden, *Leva i samhället* ["Living in society"], (Nilsson et al. 1992), is used. Different aspects of Swedish culture are thus discussed, from body language and teacher/learner roles to principles of democracy.

More specifically, the four language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, are part of the classroom from the beginning and throughout the year.

**Reading.** The students read texts in several different ways. The texts are used for grammar reflection, for discussions, in class or in groups, and as a basis for writing. At first, a few standard second language learning textbooks are used, for example *Svenska först* ["Swedish first"] and *Görans lott* ["Göran's lottery ticket"] but eventually more authentic texts are read, mostly newspaper and magazine articles. During the spring term the texts are more content oriented in the sense that they treat subjects dealing more with popular-science, thus preparing students for subsequent university studies, and taking advantage of their interests.

**Writing.** Almost every week the students are asked to write a composition on a topic usually given in connection to something already discussed in class. The composition is handed in to the teacher the week after. The teacher provides written feedback and corrects the composition. During the second term she only indicates the type of correction she wants, after which the composition is handed back to the student who rewrites/corrects it and hands it in again for control. The first term, most of the topics are of a general kind (e.g. 'My room', 'A trip' or 'Christmas'), but during the second term the topics are based on articles, and the students are trained to write argumentative compositions of the kind expected at university level. Towards the middle of the second term, a guest lecturer

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48 This book is rewritten and updated every second year. The 1992 version was used in this particular course.
from the Swedish Department gives lectures on university-level report writing, which serve as a basis for the students' writing of a short scientific report on a subject they choose themselves, preferably connected with the domain of their future studies. This report is then discussed in the learning group with one of the peers acting as an opponent, thus imitating a scientific report session.

**Listening.** Apart from listening to the teacher, the students are given listening comprehension exercises regularly, on different subjects and with different voices recorded, including speakers of regional varieties of Swedish. Mostly the students are asked to answer a few content questions and then the texts are discussed. During the first term, the texts are taken from listening comprehension textbooks, and in the second term recorded live programmes from Swedish radio are used. Furthermore, the students are encouraged to listen actively to spoken Swedish and collect expressions and words from television, from radio or from Swedes they meet. These words and expressions are then discussed in class.

**Speaking.** As was pointed out earlier the teacher aims to establish an interactive classroom. In the beginning this interaction consists of traditional questions and answers, but gradually pair discussions, group discussions and other oral activities are introduced. Sometimes the students are asked to prepare short presentations, for example about their home-country school system when Swedish schools are studied, and sometimes the students are responsible for a presentation and introduction to a discussion. Furthermore, a kind of mentorship system is introduced early on. Swedish students studying to become teachers of Swedish as a Second Language participate during some of the lessons and are then (voluntarily) assigned responsibility for one of the foreign students, i.e. they are encouraged to introduce the students to this particular university, let them practise their Swedish and generally be on hand for questions and help. In exchange, the Swedish students can utilise the foreign students for various tasks, such as recordings of interlanguage, which they have been given in their Swedish as a Second Language course.

The foreign students are constantly encouraged to create opportunities for language use outside the classroom, and some of the oral exercises build on the students' interview with Swedish-speaking people on different subjects. For example, they interview a student adviser in the department where they plan to continue their studies.
In order to let the students prepare themselves for their future studies, the students are divided into groups during the spring term (three days per week for seven weeks) according to their choice of university programme, where they are offered the opportunity of participating in one of the university courses they plan to take later on, meeting older peers and listening to lectures. For those planning to become nurses or doctors, a special caretaker-language course was offered the year of this study.

All in all, the course provides ample opportunity for practising the four language skills.

9.2 Sofia’s Language Use

Sofia’s self-report on her language use contains less about reading and writing and more about listening/understanding and speaking. The four language skills, of course, develop in parallel and in interaction and interdependence, but in order to discuss them they have been separated. Since this is a longitudinal study, it is also of interest to see how these skills change over time. Therefore, I have chosen to present Sofia’s language use chronologically month by month reporting on the skills in parallel, generally in the order they are presented above, i.e. first reading and writing, then listening and speaking. Furthermore, I have found it convenient to describe Sofia’s language choice (general code switching \(^{49}\)) and her few verbalisations about what she finds difficult in Swedish to this chapter.

September

In Interview 1 (September) one example connected with writing is mentioned when Sofia relates how she uses writing as a learning strategy (cf. Section 7.1). She copies the texts from school:

They’re not that big the ones we do now in Swedish. I, sometimes when I have time I write them down and I remember them better when I write them (Interview 1:17).

Living in a student corridor she gets the opportunity to listen to Swedish and she is encouraged by her Swedish peers.

\(^{49}\)Code switching as a communication strategy will be treated in Chapter 10.
Yes, there is a girl that, when she talks to me she always speaks Swedish, and if she sees that I don’t understand, then she says it in English. And I’ve met all the other people in my corridor, and they are really good, they really wanna help (Interview 1:22).

Furthermore, she keeps her TV on most of the day, even when she is studying, thus hearing spoken Swedish, although she does not always listen to it. As regards speaking, she tries to use her Swedish in shops even if she cannot keep up a conversation.

When I go shopping I usually don’t speak English, and they start talking to me and I don’t understand what they say. For instance, I say phrases that we have learned, and sometimes they start talking to me in Swedish, and the only thing I say is jag talar inte svenska [I don’t speak Swedish]. But no, I don’t speak English when I can speak Swedish (Interview 1:24).

October
In connection with a discussion during Interview 2 (October) about remembering (see Chapter 7) she describes how she re-reads the texts from school during the weekend.

I read the texts almost every weekend, for instance, right now every weekend I read them all, because there are not too many, just tiny texts. Less than an hour. Probably later I won’t read them at all, just the last ten or so (Interview 2:8).

When she writes her homework compositions, she usually starts writing in Swedish immediately, looking up words that she is not sure about. Sometimes she also uses her knowledge of English.

In Swedish. For instance when Solveig says to write an composition, I... What I’m sure is right, what comes in my head, I think it in Swedish, but when it’s something difficult, that I have to think about, I usually use English, because it’s more similar, the way, with Greek it’s different, very different. So, I think it in English, and then I try to put the right words in Swedish and then find the order and... (Interview 2:9).

When she uses the language laboratory at school she gets the opportunity to compare her own pronunciation to a native speaker’s. Sometimes she also monitors her own pronunciation when speaking.

Interviewer: Can you hear when you make a mistake in pronunciation? /.../

Sofia: Sometimes.

Interviewer: What do you do then?
Sofia: Just say it right, and try to say it many times (Interview 2:3).

She describes how she finds it fairly easy to understand Swedish because she can interpret a great deal from people's body language.

It's... most of the time it's also how your face looks when you say it, so I can understand easily. /.../ So now I use this, and after a while, maybe when I start speaking and I start talking to Swedish people more and see how they act. We were talking the other day about the body language, and everything, all that (Interview 2:3).

In a later interview, when talking about the early phases of her learning process, she emphasises the importance of seeing a person's face in order to understand what is being said.

At the beginning everything was new for me, the words, the pronunciation, the grammar. I even had to worry about getting to know people, how the Swedes act. Look at their faces... I could never understand what someone was saying if I wouldn't look at him. Because then I would wanna see his face, how, his eyes or... to understand if he liked what he was talking about or not, or if he was negative or positive. I had to... everything was new (Interview 6:3).

Furthermore, she explains that she simplifies her pronunciation to make herself understood.

Now I just use the sounds that I'm sure that Swedish people can understand, because we, of course, we have some common things but there are some others that are different (Interview 2:3).

In connection with a study visit to the town library in October she writes positively in her diary about her language use.

12 October. /.../ It is incredible but true that I have started to use my Swedish and even made myself understood even though my Swedish is rusty. I understand a lot but I can't say very much. I understood everything that the librarian said today. Bravo! Bravo! (Diary 1.)

She exemplifies a couple of difficulties in Swedish that she has at this point in time; compounds and prepositions.

I find a bit difficult those... compound words, like, when in English we say a phrase, like, it's a... like in English we use two words, for instance... what can I say... In Swedish you usually just put words together and make longer and longer... that's what's difficult for me to remember, and to pronounce also. That's... I find it the most difficult. And also, I find difficult prepositions, I still don't have the idea how to use på [on], of course I have some rules, but I don't have them clear in my head yet (Interview 2:6—7).
Early November

In Interview 3 (early November) she talks about her difficulties, which sometimes gave rise to irritation, in understanding the teacher when she switched her teaching language from English to Swedish towards the beginning of October. She also illustrates how she learned to understand and that she now understands everything the teacher says.

Well, at first I was a bit... nervous when she first started speaking only Swedish, I wasn’t used to it, I could not follow her all the time, I mean, and I was a bit irritated because she would speak Swedish all the time and she would never explain what she was saying, so there were times when I couldn’t understand what she was talking about, like, she was giving us some homework and I didn’t know what it was all about, or when we were talking about grammar, I could understand a few things, but I had many, many questions, that I couldn’t understand what she was saying. But it just... in the end I could understand, but I had gaps, and then she was saying something else that I wouldn’t understand and I would guess that the other thing was like that. So, that’s the way I learned them, it was difficult to follow. I learned anyway, but it was difficult, so I was kind of irritated, and nervous in class, because I couldn’t understand. But now I have no problems because I understand what she says (Interview 3:10–11).

By this time, after a little more than a month, she says that she understands fairly well, and identifies speaking as her greatest difficulty. She does not speak Swedish in class even if she can; it is much easier to resort to English (cf. Section 7.3).

I know I can say a certain sentence in Swedish, but it just comes out in English, I don’t know... (LAUGHS) (Interview 3:9).

The only thing is that, I, I’m not... I can’t actually use Swedish that much, I mean, ch... Even in my corridor, the people in my corridor, even if I told them that we should speak Swedish from now on, and they do speak Swedish, I can’t, it just doesn’t come out. I mean, when I talk I just... I feel like talking English. And it’s like that everywhere. And, of course it’s gonna come by time, I mean, but that’s my only problem I think now, is that I don’t feel sometimes like using, it’s not that I don’t like it, it just doesn’t come out, when I wanna say something, English comes out of my mouth, not Swedish (Interview 3:9).

She rarely rehearses what to say in Swedish when she has things to do in town; when it is important she uses English anyway.
Sometimes I do, sometimes I don’t. Usually when I go to a bank or to some place like that I ask them if they speak English: ‘Kan du prata engelska?’ [Do you speak English?], because usually if I speak Swedish, if I ask them something in Swedish, then they think that I can speak Swedish and they start talking to me very fast, like ordinary people and I can’t understand anything, so I ask them anyway if they can tell me in English! So, I usually speak in English, but if it’s simple, I mean, like in the supermarket I use Swedish. And no, I don’t practice, not really, sometimes only (Interview 3:6).

**Late November**

A few weeks later (Interview 4, late November) she can see her progress with respect to listening and understanding but she cannot use what she understands for production.

Yeah, yeah. I can speak more and I can understand many things, I can understand many, many things now, I mean, if I read a text I can understand, but the thing is that the words that I know I can understand them when I read them and when I hear them, but I cannot use them. So, I have to see a word or to hear it quite a few times, you know, to understand how to use it and to be able to use it myself. But I can understand many things (Interview 4:2).

For example, she understands everything that the teacher says, and she also finds it quite easy to understand the radio.

I can understand everything at the radio, when I listen to the radio, very well. I don’t know, I think they talk so clear, on the radio. Very clear. The news, when I hear the news on the radio I can understand it more, better than I do on television (Interview 4:10).

Apart from listening to the radio and her teacher, she feels that she has increased her understanding of Swedish by participating in the discussions in her student corridor, thus familiarising herself with listening to Swedish.

And it’s good because... at least the people that stay in my corridor, they always speak Swedish, and they started speaking Swedish to me, too. So, it’s like I have to... I mean, when we gather and they are talking and I wanna say something or I wanna be in this conversation, I have to understand, I have to listen very carefully to what they say and try to understand. /.../ and that has helped a lot, has helped me a lot to get used to the language, like to hear it. I hear Swedish now and it doesn’t seem strange to me. At first, like: ‘What is this?’ (LAUGHS) Like Greek! I’m more familiar with the language now (Interview 4:3).

But sometimes there are limits to her understanding.
But maybe, I don’t know, people in my corridor, when they talk, I think they talk so fast, it’s like they swallow half the words. (LAUGHS) They had a conversation yesterday, something about women, they were looking at a program about cars, and then a boy said, like, a girl was interested in that program, and then I think a boy said: ‘What! Are you interested? This is a man’s thing.’ And... they started fighting, and the more they were talking, the more faster they were speaking, at the beginning I could follow what they were saying, I mean about, I could understand why they were fighting, but in the end I was just looking at them like that and they were talking so fast, blblblblbl, say from now on I can’t understand anything! (Interview 4:10.)

She does not find the pronunciation of Swedish particularly difficult now, but it is hard to use stress and prosody correctly.

I’m able to read and unknown word and be able to pronounce it right, even though I’ve never seen it before. I’m beginning to understand the sounds. But the problem is that, when I say a sentence, I don’t know where to stress, because it’s different than Greek and English. And that’s what difficult for me. I mean, I can say something to a Swedish person and he understands what I mean, but I don’t have this Swedish way of saying it (Interview 4:11).

Therefore she has adopted a strategy of listening actively to the way in which people stress words and phrases (cf. Chapter 7).

Yeah, mmm, when I can understand what they say. When they say simple things, then I try to listen to the stress (14:12).

December

In Interview 5 (December) there is just one occasion where we talk about the four language skills, this time speaking, which she has more opportunities of practising now.

Eh, it’s more now. Because I know more Swedish people. Many of my friends are Swedish. And, yeah, I mean, I train now with the girls and they speak Swedish to me and I try to speak Swedish. And... with the other people living in my corridor and some other Swedish people that I know (Interview 5:3).

She has been using Swedish for some time now, and can speak for about fifteen minutes before code switching.

About a month. But not all the time, I mean, maybe I start speaking Swedish and I can speak for about fifteen minutes, and then I start
Swedish-English and then maybe, if things get serious, only English!
(Interview 5:3.)

February

In February (Interview 6) she describes some of her reading experiences when she talks about one of the new books they are reading at school, *Leva i samhället*, and how uninteresting she finds it.

I don’t feel so optimistic about this book... I don’t know, it’s boring, and it seems like whenever I read it, I’m here and I say that: ‘Oh, I’m gonna go home and I have the whole afternoon, I’m gonna, it’s ten pages, I’m just gonna read it, I feel like reading it’ and then I go home and I open the book: ‘Oh, good, I’m gonna go through it’. And then I read it so quickly, and I remember, I can understand what it says, it’s not so difficult. But then I don’t really pay attention to what it says, and maybe next day or next week I don’t remember anything at all from what I read. So, I don’t remember what it said, I forget, nothing. /.../ If I go on like that, when I’m gonna finish we’re going to have this test, I’m not gonna be able to remember anything, and I don’t wanna read it all over again. (Interview 6:7)

She does not read very much except for school material.

I don’t read that much newspapers, just a little bit. But the articles that Solveig gives us are really interesting, and they are easy I think, I don’t have any problem understanding what they say (Interview 6:8).

As for writing, she seems to have reached an appropriate level, which is illustrated by the following anecdote. She was expected to prepare a speech for class, and when she showed it to one of her Swedish-speaking peers she was greatly encouraged and her speech gave her great satisfaction.

I felt great! Because yesterday I wrote this, what’s it called *rapport* [report], and I was in a hurry because we would have *fika* [tea/coffee] then, and I wanted to finish it before. (LAUGHS) So I didn’t take in lexicon or anything at all, I would just write whatever came to my mind, with the statistics that I had, and I would just start writing, writing, I didn’t even check it the second time. And then when, at eleven o’clock when I came back to my room, I was so tired I didn’t want to look at it again. So I took the paper and I gave it to a girl and said: ‘Just read it and tell me if you understand what I wanna say, if it has many mistakes I will do it again. Don’t tell me what my mistakes are, just tell me if it’s okay’. And she read it and she said: ‘It’s very, very, very good, *jätte-jättebra* [very good]’ she says, ‘You can write better than many Swedes!’ and I just: ‘Okay!’ (LAUGHS),
I'm gonna present it tomorrow in class!' And she was impressed because she said that: 'Your speaking is not sometimes so good as your writing, because you do some mistakes, you have mistakes, that's natural, but I didn't think that you could speak so well, that you could handle Swedish so well. And I was pretty glad last night (Interview 6:10–11).

As regards listening, she has the strategy of an active listener (cf. Chapter 7), trying to imitate native speakers.

I'm just trying to listen to people, listen very carefully to the way they talk, and to Solveig and from the books so that I will start speaking the way they do, and writing the way they do (Interview 6:6).

This interview (Interview 6) took place in February after the long Christmas break. When asked about changes since the last time we had met, the first thing she exclaims in this interview is: “I can speak Swedish now!” and later: “[N]ow I find myself sometimes, without thinking at all, speaking in Swedish, or thinking, even thinking in Swedish” (Interview 6:1, full quote in Section 8.5). She has furthermore begun to like taking part in discussions and conversations. Earlier she felt more of an obligation to participate, although she could not follow the gist of the conversation.

I really enjoy our conversations, speaking to other people, I really do. And that's because, of course, I understand what they say and I can talk too. In the beginning it was, whenever we had this korridorsfika [tea/coffee together with the rest of the people living in her student corridor], I was just looking at the time: 'When am I gonna go, in my room?' But now, yesterday we were speaking for, I don't know, three hours maybe, and it was nice, I had a nice time (Interview 6:8).

She still takes advantage of the possibility of code-switching into English, especially when she is tired.

Yeah. Yes, I do, I do. Sometimes I just can't speak any more. It's hard even to understand what they say. Because if you speak Swedish all day and if you hear Swedish all day, you come to a point when you just can't speak any more (Interview 6:8).

She is well aware of the necessity of speaking Swedish and would like to do so automatically and naturally, but sometimes she has to force herself to do it.

Eh, sometimes I force myself to use Swedish. Sometimes I start speaking in English without any reason at all, then I say: ‘No, ursäkta mig, Jag måste prata svenska [Sorry. I have to speak Swedish.’. And sometimes I don't press myself at all, I just speak Swedish whenever I feel like I wanna speak
Swedish. Because if you keep pressing yourself, pressing, so that it's something that you have to do, it's not something that you wanna do. And it's gonna be like, how do you call it... it would be something *obligatorisk* (LAUGHS), exactly! (Interview 6:9.)

She calculates that she uses Swedish about half the time.

Well, half the day I'm in school, and then training.... I think most, most of the time in Swedish. Except from the time when I'm with Greek friends, like yesterday, the whole afternoon, I was with a friend and we were speaking Greek. And sometimes when I can't think anymore then I speak English. But I think more than 50 per cent, 50 per cent I would say, 50 per cent of my days in Swedish (Interview 6:11–12).

March

In March (Interview 7.5) she admits that she does not read Swedish very much for pleasure.

No, I don't, I don't read at all for pleasure. Maybe a magazine or if something comes to my head that I think is interesting. I don't read books yet in Swedish, or newspapers. Because, then, for pleasure I like to rest, and if I read Swedish then I get more tired, because I'm trying to understand what it says. It's not like what I read in English. Even in English sometimes it is no pleasure for me to read a book in English because I have difficulty reading. So I don't... (Interview 7.5:8).

By now she is able to use Swedish when she is shopping, but she still uses English with some people she knows well.

When I go... to shop something or downtown I use Swedish. 'Cause I don't have to ask people: 'Do you speak English?' any more. My Swedish is enough to make them understand what I want, even though it sometimes is not right. Ah, but there are a few people that... when I see them, I speak English with them because that's the way we started from the beginning. My best friend /.../ when I see him we start speaking Swedish, then after a while, not only me but he also starts to speak English, and says: 'I just can't speak Swedish with you, I just can't' (Interview 7.5:13).

April

In April (Interview 8) she reflects upon writing and finds it more difficult than speaking, because of its permanence and its official character.
Writing is a bit different. Because when you speak you can say something and the other one can understand and just didn’t notice that you made a mistake. But with writing everything you write it stays there, so you have to be more careful. And writing is also more official, you have to use other kind of words, so you have to know more. And it is a bit more difficult for me to write (Interview 8:18).

She has also noticed that she makes different kinds of mistakes now compared to her early stages of writing, from word order and morphology to choice and transfer of expressions, and she sees the progress (cf. Chapter 11).

But usually when I write something I have mistakes, but they’re not so many, at least not so many as they were at the beginning. I don’t make the kind of mistakes that I used to. Like, in the beginning it was bestämd-obestämd form [definite-indefinite form], and the order in the sentence. Many, many mistakes like that. But now maybe I have a few words that I don’t know, or a couple of sentences that I forgot to check, I didn’t notice a mistake. Or something that I think I can say in Swedish, and I can, something that is like that in English or in Greek, and I think that I might be able to say it in Swedish, but it doesn’t go. That kind of mistakes, not the kind I had before. So it’s going better (Interview 8:19).

She also seems to have increased her reading of Swedish, as a result of her need to learn more.

Interviewer: And what is the important thing in your language learning right now?

Reading, mostly, I read.

Interviewer: What do you read?

Oh, I have this book in Swedish and (SIGHS) articles that Solveig gives us, and the newspaper sometimes, not always because I don’t really enjoy reading the newspaper. And... I don’t know, I just take papers, when I see a paper on a table I just take it and read it. [---] But I mean, what is closer to my studying is reading stuff so that I see words and sentences and things. Even when I watch television and it’s in English, I read the subtitles. I have learned many words from there (Interview 8:14-15).

She speaks about half Swedish and half English/Greek a few hours each day and she listens to spoken Swedish quite a lot.

Eh, I don’t know. Maybe, per day if we say, sometimes it’s three, four hours per day, sometimes it’s two, one. But I do speak Swedish every day, even a little bit, I do. And then I listen also. I started watching Swedish programmes on television. That’s really nice because I understand what
they say. At first I wanted to see something, but then I got tired because I couldn’t understand exactly what they were saying. But now it’s really nice and I enjoy it. I enjoy seeing programmes (Interview 8:16).

May

In Interview 9 (May) Sofia gives examples of her language use and what is difficult for her right now. She describes how the context decides what language she speaks and that she can use Swedish for the better part of a day.

It depends on who I meet. Because if I am with my Greek friends I usually speak Greek, although we sometimes speak Swedish, or they speak Swedish and I just listen. But if I’m not with them, and with someone else, I speak Swedish mostly. I mean, last Sunday I was at home all day, and then this friend called me, she’s Swedish, and we thought we would go and have some ice cream or something. And it was her and me and another girl, and I was with her the whole afternoon and then I came home and studied. And I chatted with my friends in the corridor, so I didn’t speak any Greek or English at all, just the whole day was Swedish (Interview 9:15–16).

She says that she is learning a lot more now although her language is not good enough to participate in all types of conversation, for example when the topic of the conversation concerns specific domains.

Well, if we have a conversation about something in general, I can understand almost everything and I can say a couple of things. But if it’s like, if people are talking about politics or economy or something, I don’t know, I mean special subjects when you need special vocabularies, that’s where I don’t really know (Interview 9:15).

When asked which of the four language skills she finds more difficult, she singles out the production skills.

Speaking is I think, no, not maybe, I mean, like using the words that you learn. Speaking and writing, writing is even more difficult, because then whatever you write is on the paper. Speech is like you say something and then it goes away, the one might not have noticed it. But hearing is kind of easy, and understanding and everything, but then using the language yourself it takes time (Interview 9:18).

From the point of view of correctness she finds Swedish word order most difficult, i.e. the fine tuning of word-order rules.
"Yeah, ordföljd [word order]. I mean not about that the verb has to be in the second place of the sentence or that, the simple stuff I know them now, I can do them right. But like the adverb, maybe, for example when I talk and when I write I always write, for example if I say: 'Han också kom igår'[he also came yesterday], when it’s like ‘han kom också igår'[he came also yesterday], it goes after the verb but I use it before the verb, and that comes from English: ‘he also came yesterday’. So, that’s the small things that I try to learn and to use right (Interview 9:20).

June

Judging from the earlier interviews, Sofia reads very little in Swedish outside the mandatory reading in school. For instance, the novel in Swedish she was talking about in Interview 8 (see above), was a homework assignment. In Interview 10 (June) she gives the reason for this.

No, not really. I read a few Greek books but that’s because, I didn’t read so many books because it was difficult for me to... follow. Not to understand what the book is all about, but for me, when I read a book, I wanna, like, understand everything, take everything out of it. So if you don’t know, if you can’t speak, if you cannot understand the language so well, it’s... really you’re trying to understand what’s going on and then you miss the whole beauty (Interview 10:13).

She likes to read when she understands well, and she has read some books in Greek during her study year, books that her mother sent her.

Yeah, yeah. And there were times, it depends on what kind of book I was reading. If it was really interesting, maybe I would stay up until three o’clock at night and finish the book or something. But now actually I haven’t read in Greek for about a month and a half maybe. With all the studying and everything, an then with the house, I was running all day (Interview 10:14).

She does not like to read newspapers, not even in Greek.

Ah, just a little bit. (NOT VERY MUCH?) Not very much. I don’t enjoy reading newspapers, in general. I don’t read the Greek newspapers either. And when I go to the library here, I just see the titles and go (PCH, PCH, PCH,, GESTURE: TURNING OVER PAGES). I think it’s boring too. (JUST FIVE? Yeah, just five minutes, just see what’s going on and... I didn’t read, no (Interview 10:12).

She has, however, developed an ability to take advantage of the subtitles on television. She says that she has learned quite a few new words and
expressions this way, especially when the programme is in English; she can read and listen at the same time.

It’s very easy. If you know both languages it’s very easy. You just listen and then you just see what they write, and it’s easy to understand (Interview 10:13).

By now she also finds it fairly easy to understand even if the programme is not in English. She can follow it just by reading the subtitles in Swedish.

Yeah, I mean, the last month when I would see a film, a programme, talking about the war in... former Yugoslavia. And there were different people from languages that I cannot understand, but with the Swedish subtitles I could understand what they were talking about (Interview 10:13).

Interview 10 took place soon after Sofia passed the Rikstest. In connection with a discussion about the test, Sofia acknowledges that she is not very fond of this kind of writing.50

Second day was boring actually. Because writing compositions is always boring for me (Interview 10:10).

At this time, in June, it seems as if she has no problems at all to understand spoken Swedish.

And I don’t have to anstränga mig [exert myself] to listen and understand what the Swedes are saying. I just understand it. It goes right into my head, it’s very good (Interview 10:28).

When it comes to speaking, she sometimes finds it difficult to express herself, especially if she is not in the right mood or if she is not prepared, as the following anecdote illustrates.

Yesterday I was in town, and I was shopping, I was alone, so I was thinking. And when I think, I think in Greek. So I was just thinking, I was walking. And there was this friend of mine, she’s a Swede, and she saw me in the street and we just: ‘Hej. Hur är det?’ [Hello. How are you?] and so, but the thing is that I was so in my thoughts in Greek that it was really difficult that suddenly I had to speak Swedish, so I couldn’t, I said everything wrong. I was surprised that she understood what I said. (LAUGHS) I was like: ‘What am I saying here?’ She was, like, looking at me: ‘What’s wrong with you?’. So, it depends (Interview 10:28).

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50This part of the test consists of one or two texts where the testees are expected to summarise the texts and give their own comments on the contents of the texts.
At other times, when she's better prepared for Swedish, she finds it really easy to speak. This became very clear on one occasion when the whole group was invited to my home.

But yesterday, that I knew that I would be in your house and that I knew that I was gonna be speaking Swedish all night, it went good. I didn’t have any problems.

Interviewer: Yeah, I was impressed. We were talking Swedish for six hours with no problem.

Sofia: Yeah, yeah. And I wasn’t even tired of speaking, I mean, I could... (Interview 10:28).

9.3 Conclusion

Sofia does not read many books during these 10 months, except for what is mandatory in school. In Interview 10 she gives the reason. She likes to read Greek, but if she cannot understand everything, she does not want to read because ‘you miss the whole beauty’. However, she does not seem to have any problems reading the mandatory texts in class from the start, and she eventually has no problem reading the subtitles in Swedish on television for instance.

She writes her homework directly in Swedish from an early stage, and towards February she is able to write well enough to be complemented by a Swedish-speaking peer. She considers writing to be more difficult in the sense that it is permanent and you therefore have to be more careful. She can see a change in her mistakes in her compositions, a change from grammar problems to difficulties with expressions.

Outside class she tries to expose herself to as much spoken Swedish as possible from the beginning. She listens to people in her corridor and to television, using body language to facilitate understanding. By the beginning of November she says that she understands her teacher well, and towards the end of November she can see progress in understanding others. She understands almost everything on the radio and the discussions in her corridor, except when her Swedish peers become too agitated. In February she describes how she is an active listener, listening in order to speak and write better. She seems to have few problems with the understanding of
spoken Swedish for the rest of the term. In June she does not even have to make an effort to understand; she understands automatically.

She tries to speak Swedish from the start, too, and she sees some progress in October. However, at the beginning of November she points out that speaking Swedish constitutes the greatest difficulty and that she still uses English in class. She has made a decision to try to speak Swedish and she has also asked her peers in her student corridor to speak Swedish to her, but she finds it difficult to respond in Swedish. By the end of November her pronunciation seems adequate, but, although she sees progress, she still feels that she cannot speak.

Interview 6 in February reveals a fundamental change in Sofia with regard to speaking. Although she sometimes uses English and sometimes has to force herself to use Swedish, she says that she can speak Swedish now. For the rest of the spring term she seems to progress rapidly. She uses English only with some people, and in April she judges that she uses half Swedish and half English, or Greek, on average. In May she can use Swedish for the better part of the day, even if she has problems in certain domains. In June she sees speaking as easy, although it can sometimes be a strain if she is not in the mood. On two occasions Sofia mentions difficulties with the Swedish language. In October she emphasises compounds and prepositions as difficult; in May she identifies word order.

If the four language skills are compared in Sofia’s case from a longitudinal perspective, it seems as if understanding of spoken Swedish comes first, followed by reading comprehension. In other words, her reception skills appear to develop first. She understands her teacher well after two months and she has few problems in understanding after four.

Speaking seems to be the most difficult thing for Sofia. There is a fundamental positive change in her ability to speak Swedish after the Christmas break, but she still experiences some difficulties in speaking even after eight months. One reason for what seems to be a delay in the development of her speaking skills could be the easy access to English. Although she has made a decision to try to use Swedish, she can, whenever she has a communication difficulty, always code-switch into English, which she uses a lot during the autumn term (cf. Chapter 10). Another reason might be the effects of her period in liminality (cf. Chapter 4). From October well into January she feels like an outsider, which could very well put a check on her willingness to practise her oral language use.
10. Communication Strategies

This chapter describes Sofia's use of communication strategies in Swedish, for example the way she tries to solve problems encountered in her Swedish language production. As has been illustrated in earlier chapters, e.g. Chapters 7, 8 and 9, Sofia's access to English both facilitates and hampers her learning of Swedish. Since English is defined as a lingua franca in Sweden, it is almost always possible to solve communication problems in Swedish by resorting to English. Consequently, as will be shown in this chapter, Sofia's single most used communication strategy is code switching into English.

The overall aim of this chapter is thus to define, display and analyse how Sofia solves communication problems through the use of communication strategies. This will be done in section 10.1–4. First in this Chapter, however, the basis for the analysis will be presented: the choice of taxonomy for communication strategies, the method of collecting data, and the method of identifying strategies in the data.

Based on learner language, Faerch & Kasper (1983a) and Tarone (1983) established taxonomies of communication strategies. These taxonomies have been chosen to serve as a basis for the present investigation (see further specification below). Faerch & Kasper use a psycholinguistic perspective, whereas Tarone adopts an interactional perspective. The two taxonomies, it seems, overlap and contain similar strategies — there is a difference in terminology and in the number of identified strategies — so, in my opinion, it is rather a matter of a difference in perspective. In this case, I believe that it is important to distinguish between form and function. A deviating linguistic form can be noticed in the learner language and be identified as a strategy, but the function of the strategy can vary (cf. the discussion on

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51 Other taxonomies have been suggested in later proposals (see for example Dörnyeyi & Scott 1997 and Kasper & Kellerman 1997 for overviews). These taxonomies, however, are basically similar in substance to those presented here, albeit differing in terminology and systematisation. In other words, the identified strategies have basically remained the same. The main difference lies in the amount of diversity and the general approach. Yule & Tarone (1997) describe this difference in approach as either a focus on the language produced by learners (as Faerch & Kasper and Tarone here) or a focus on the description of the cognitive processing of strategies. For the present purpose, the identification of Sofia's use of strategies, the earlier taxonomies can thus be considered as being sufficient.
learning strategies in Chapter 7). Say, for example, that a communication strategy takes the form of a paraphrase, a circumlocution where the searched-for word is described by means of other words. From a psycholinguistic cognitive perspective this strategy functions as a circumvention of a linguistic problem in order for the speaker to convey an intended message. From an interactional conversational perspective this strategy functions as a means to keep the conversation going and could furthermore function as a starting-point for a negotiation of meaning,\textsuperscript{52}. In other words, the same linguistic form can have different functions.

For the purpose of the present investigation, however, I see no reason to distinguish between psycholinguistic and interactional communication strategies as defined by these two groups of researchers\textsuperscript{53}. A psycholinguistic definition, including interactional aspects, as defined by Faerch & Kasper, suffices to display the individual’s use of communication strategies in the present case.

There are several ways to collect data on the use of communication strategies, for example non-participant observation in communication situations, overt or covert tape-recordings as well as video recordings. In order to make the learners use communication strategies there are also several ways elicitation methods. In an overview, Bialystok (1990:50) mentions picture description, picture reconstruction, translation, sentence completion, conversation, narration, instruction, word transmission and interview as procedures for eliciting communication strategies. These different tasks elicit different types of communication strategies. For example, a picture description narrows down the choices for the learners, which could force them to use communication strategies, while an interview provides an opportunity to circumnavigate communication difficulties without using strategies.

The purpose of the present investigation has not been to investigate communication strategies \textit{per se}. Communication strategies are connected

\textsuperscript{52}More typical and obvious initiators of negotiation are, for example, appeals for assistance (Yule & Tarone 1991).

\textsuperscript{53}Later research on interactional communication strategies has also emphasised the socio-linguistic use of strategies. For example, to Wagner & Firth (1997) communication strategies are only the ones overtly flagged in conversation, not the ones hidden in cognitive processes. Rampton (1997) emphasises that strategy use has to be considered in a socio-political context; for example, he illustrates how code switching is not always used because of linguistic inadequacies. Instead, he shows how code switching is sometimes used for marking solidarity.
with proficiency, language use, personal aims and other individual factors, which together make up the individual learner, i.e. both separated and integrated parts in the holistic perspective. Therefore, no specific procedures aimed at eliciting different types of strategies have been used. Instead, Sofia’s use of communication strategies is seen as part of both establishing and developing communicative competence in the second language, and thus these strategies are also seen as part of establishing and developing the second language.

I mainly used the recorded interviews in Swedish to elicit the use of communication strategies. As was mentioned before these interviews were semi-structured. In order to provoke more difficult language production, i.e. creating a more ‘problematic’ communicative situation, I sometimes introduced subjects for discussion from domains that I knew would be less familiar to Sofia, hoping that this would ‘force’ her to stretch her competence and consequently also use more communication strategies. Furthermore, three different picture description tasks were done during the interviews, and repeated after six months, for the same reason. The use of communication strategies was also included in the SILL test (see the discussion in Chapter 7) and was further discussed in some of the interviews in English.

To identify communication strategies in learner language, except for the most obvious ones, like code-switching, the researcher has to rely on inferences, for example using the context and/or discourse markers such as hesitation phenomena. Faerch & Kasper (1983b) mention performance features such as temporal variables, slips and self-repair as strategy markers. These markers can be used to make qualitative guesses about communication strategies. Furthermore, in order to ensure that these inferences are close to the learners’ intended use of a strategy, a retrospection procedure can be used, where the learners themselves comment on the recording (for an overview, see, for example, Faerch & Kasper, eds, 1987). Yet another method can be the use of triangulation, e.g. letting someone else repeat the elicitation procedure.

To elicit communication strategies in the present data, I based my interpretation on three questions in accordance with a method used by Poulisse et al. (1987:216): 1. Was there a problem? 2. Was this problem linguistic in nature? 3. What was the speaker's originally intended meaning?

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54 One of the interviews (Interview 8) was video-recorded in order to see the use of non-linguistic communication strategies.
Question number three was only used for compensatory strategies (see the taxonomy below), where an intended meaning could be inferred. For reduction strategies (avoidance behaviour) and retrieval strategies (for example waiting) this question does not apply; instead only qualitative guesses were made. No retrospection procedure was undertaken, but a kind of triangulation was used, since a research colleague was asked to elicit communication strategies from the data which were then compared to my elicitation. The result showed only minor deviations.

The taxonomy used in this investigation is based on the taxonomy of Faerch & Kasper (1983a:52–53), which is still one of the most comprehensive taxonomies. In a compressed and somewhat modified form it looks like this:

**Reduction Strategies**

- Formal Reduction Strategies
- Functional Reduction Strategies

**Achievement Strategies**

- **Compensatory Strategies:**
  - Code switching
  - Transfer
- IL based strategies:
  - generalisation
  - paraphrase
  - word coinage
  - restructuring
- Co-operative strategies
- Non-linguistic strategies

**Retrieval Strategies**

As was mentioned earlier, Faerch & Kasper define two types of communication strategies, reduction strategies and achievement strategies. They distinguish between two kinds of reduction strategies, formal and functional strategies. Formal reductions are characterised by the learners choosing a reduced application of their language system, only using what they know well while functional reductions are characterised by for example topic avoidance, message abandonment or message reduction. In other words, formal reductions are reductions in form, while functional reductions are reductions in (intended) meaning. It is not too difficult to infer functional reductions from the context, especially in conversations, but it is almost impossible to distinguish formal reductions of language as strategies from limitations in the learners' competence in the interlanguage.

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55Formal reduction strategies have been called production strategies by Tarone (1983:66).
(Viberg 1987:45). Therefore, only the functional reduction strategies have been considered here.

Faerch & Kasper furthermore distinguish between two subtypes of achievement strategies, compensatory and retrieval strategies. Compensatory strategies are used to compensate for missing knowledge about the target language, while retrieval strategies are used to retrieve L2 items from the learners' own knowledge (cf. the discussion about learning strategies in Chapter 7). The compensatory strategies are further subdivided into code switching – changing into another language; transfer\(^56\) – using information about other languages and adapting this to the L2 (containing, for example, foreignising, borrowing or literal translation), i.e. L1/L3-based strategies; interlanguage (L2-) based strategies – using knowledge about the interlanguage for generalisations, for example by using approximations, semantic contiguity or super-ordinates; paraphrase, for example through circumlocutions or descriptions; word coinage, i.e. constructing new words, for restructuring, i.e. going back and changing the form of an utterance; cooperative strategies – appealing to the interlocutor for help;\(^57\) and, finally, non-linguistic strategies – using e.g. mime or gesture to convey the message. Further illustrations of the content of these strategies will be given in the analysis below.

10.1 Sofia’s Use of Communication Strategies

The analysis of Sofia’s use of communication strategies is based on nine of the ten interviews which took place in Swedish (September to May).\(^58\) While all the interviews in English were conducted by me, and most of the interviews/conversations in Swedish, one of the latter was in fact conducted by a student, on my instructions, as part of her teacher education in Swedish as a Second Language. One interview in the autumn (Swedish

\(^{56}\) Faerch & Kasper distinguish interlingual transfer from inter-/intralingual transfer, where the latter consists of the use of L1 rules, for example regular temporal markers, to generalize a similar rule in the L2. This division was not considered to be of importance here.

\(^{57}\) This is one of the instances which explains why Faerch & Kasper claim that Tarone’s (1983) interaction definition is included in their model.

\(^{58}\) The tenth interview was the Rikstest examination and was of a different nature from the others; it took the form of a conversation between two native and two non-native speakers, while the first nine interviews had a one-to-one interview structure.
Interview 2 in October) was recorded this way. The analysis is thus in part based on the analysis made by this student.\(^{59}\)

The results will be displayed quantitatively and discussed qualitatively. First, all the strategies are quantified in Figure 6, which is discussed subsequently. Since this is a single-case study, the quantitative measures are sometimes quite low. The result should therefore be seen as mainly indicative. Then, Sofia’s code switching is analysed thoroughly from the point of view of content and quality, with connections to the holistic aim of the study. After that, the other strategies are exemplified and commented upon, some more and some less (see further 10.3). Finally, towards the end of this chapter I will summarise the results. Not all the instances will be displayed here because of limited space; instead, salient, typical or atypical, examples will be given.

Figure 6 shows that Sofia produced a total of 148 tokens of the nine types of strategies in these nine interviews. The largest group consists of the L1/L3 strategies, i.e. code switching and transfer, followed by the L2-based strategies, i.e. generalisation, paraphrase and restructuring, and finally the co-operative strategies.\(^{60}\) The most important single strategy is code switching; about one third of all the tokens of communication strategies in the data are code switches, mainly because this possibility exists.

Sofia uses comparatively few reduction strategies. Most of the strategies are achievement strategies, which could be interpreted as a willingness to try to communicate, using achievement strategies to overcome linguistic obstacles. Furthermore, the L1/L3-based strategies, code switching and transfer, are more frequent in the first five to six interviews and less frequent in the last three interviews. The L2-based strategies, generalisation, paraphrase and restructuring, are less frequent in the beginning and more frequent in the last three interviews, especially the strategy of restructuring. This could be interpreted as an illustration of how Sofia’s competence increases; she has more access to the second language, more choices, and she does not have to use other languages to communicate by using code switching or transfer, she can use the second language to explain what she wants to say. Consequently, she does not have to ask for help as much either, which is illustrated by the decrease in her use of co-operative strategies towards the last few interviews.

\(^{59}\) I want to thank Anna Nilsson for her valuable help. 

\(^{60}\) L2-based strategies are based on the target language, whereas L1/L3-strategies are based on the first language or other earlier learned second languages.
Another way of looking at the increase in L2-based strategies is to say that Sofia becomes more skilled in the L2, using types of communication strategies, such as restructuring and paraphrase, which are also common in native discourse. However, her strategies still have a non-native form, which will be illustrated by the examples below.

Looking at the interviews separately, the total number of strategies in each interview is about the same, except for Swedish Interviews 1 and 6,
which contain more strategies than the others. Considering that Swedish Interview 1 is about half as long as the others, it is evident that this interview contains relatively speaking most strategies. About half of the strategies in Swedish Interview 1 are also code switches. Swedish Interview 6 contains more L2-based strategies, e.g. paraphrases and restructuring. While it is quite natural that there are linguistic difficulties at the beginning of second language learning, which would demand more communication strategies, it is more difficult to explain why Sofia uses so many strategies, relatively, in Swedish Interview 6. A closer qualitative look at the content of Swedish Interview 6, however, reveals that Sofia’s use of communication strategies is restricted only to parts of the interview. These parts are connected with the complicated subject of the conversation, which consisted of a lengthy discussion of the economy and politics, the consequences of membership in the European Union and Macedonia’s declaration of independence from Yugoslavia. The last subject in particular, was an emotionally sensitive subject for Sofia. Thus, the use of communication strategies illustrates a clash between a wish to say something important and a limitation in proficiency in certain domains. This connection with the domain of the conversation is also evident in some of the other interviews, where there are clusters of many communication strategies: In Swedish Interviews 1 and 2 she is asked to retell a cartoon, in Swedish Interview 3 she describes a poster that she has bought, and in Swedish Interview 4 she talks about politics in Greece.

If the use of communication strategies is connected to a linguistic problem, one would expect, with increasing proficiency, that the use of communication strategies would diminish with time. Gullberg (1998:26ff.) accordingly refers to several studies which show that more advanced learners use fewer strategies. On the other hand, she points out, there are studies which show that advanced learners use more strategies, but that these strategies are less obvious, such as avoidance strategies, and thus less detectable. More advanced learners can foresee an imminent communication problem and change the course of their speech, thus avoiding the problem (Poulisse et al. 1987:216). In order to elicit strategies of this kind, methods such as retrospection have to be used. It has not been possible, therefore, to detect these types of strategies in the present investigation.

However, Sofia seems to use the same number of strategies per interview during the whole study year, except for Swedish Interviews 1 and 6 as
mentioned above, at least for the strategies detected by means of the present method. Although there is a change in type of strategies, from L1/L3-based strategies to L2-based strategies, the number of strategies remains the same even when her proficiency increases, in contrast to the studies mentioned by Gullberg (1998:26ff.). In my view, there could be a third alternative explanation. This explanation is connected with the learning situation and the learner as an individual. If the learner is intent on learning and communicating, he/she is also willing to take risks and stretch his/her interlanguage to more advanced levels, close to his/her proficiency limits. This will probably call for the use of communication strategies. In other words, a detected high use of communication strategies could be a sign of a learner who is willing to learn.

Apart from learning aspects, the use of compensatory strategies could be an indication of creative language use and a willingness to give higher priority to conveying the message (Lindberg 1995:62). In addition, the longitudinal design makes Sofia more confident with her interlocutor, which in turn allows her to feel comfortable enough to take risks in her interlanguage.

In sum, the quantitative analyses of Sofia’s use of communication strategies hint a willingness to communicate, a change in character of the strategy use over time and a connection with lack of proficiency in certain domains. Furthermore, the constant number of strategies could be said to reflect a willingness to take risks and to stretch her interlanguage.

10.2 Code Switching

In total, code switching is the most commonly used communication strategy; Sofia code switches single words, phrases and sentences. There are no code switches from Greek, her first language; all the code switches are English-based, and not L1-based, since Sofia knows that her interlocutor understands English, and that Sofia and her interlocutor have another language in common to which they can resort.\(^6\) To make herself understood she knows that she has the option of using code switches from English, which is an easy way out compared to the use of, for example, L2-based strategies (see further below).

\(^6\) In fact, the interviewer code switches on some occasions, too, for example when Sofia does not understand the question.
The fact that she switches from English is well in line with the idea of a default supplier language (Williams & Hammarberg 1998). Williams & Hammarberg discuss third language learning and the influence of previously learned languages. They suggest that in the case of third language learning it is sometimes possible to distinguish between a supplier language and an instrumental language. The supplier language serves as a default, as background and starting point for construction attempts in the third language, especially in the early stages of learning, while the instrumental language is code switched to for metalinguistic comments, requests for help, etc. In their case, a longitudinal study of S with English as her first language, German as her second, previously learned language, and Swedish as her third, currently learned language, German served as a supplier language and English was used instrumentally. In Sofia’s case, English is the default supplier language, which is indicated not only by her code switches but also by the fact that all her transfers are English-based (see below) and by her own introspective comments about her use of Greek. When asked whether she uses Greek for anything else than remembering certain words, she says:

Not really. Just with the sounds, because we have different, much different rules, about grammar and everything in Greek. So, it doesn’t really help, it confuses you more. That’s why I told you I’m trying to skip Greek, just let it go when I’m speaking Swedish, because the difference is huge (Interview 7.5:4).

While S used her first language instrumentally, Sofia also uses English, her second language, as instrumental language. Williams and Hammarberg (1998) claim that the role of default supplier language depends on four factors, proficiency, typology, recency and status of the previously learned language. In S’s case, she is proficient in German which she still uses occasionally and which is typologically close to Swedish. German therefore

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62 Where the fact that the learner knows other second languages might influence the learning of an additional second language, it is common to define the earlier learned second languages as L2s, and the present language as the L3, i.e. third language learning as is the case for Williams & Hammarberg. As was mentioned before, the present study is an investigation of the learning of a third language according to this definition. However, since the aim and focus of the study is not primarily to investigate L2 learning compared to L3 learning in this sense, I have chosen to call Sofia’s learning of Swedish second language learning, L2-learning, in line with the distinction between first and second language learning. Thus, English and French, in Sofia’s case, are called earlier learned second languages, earlier L2s.
assumes the status of default language, not her first language, English, the reason being different acquisition processes for first and second languages and a strategic decision on the part of the individual to suppress the first language which is considered non-foreign.

Eventually the roles of instrumental and supplier language are taken over by the currently learned language, and, in S’s case, the occurrence of English code switches decrease after eight months, and German code switches after four months. As can be seen in Figure 6, Sofia’s code switching decreases rapidly after seven months.

As was mentioned above, Sofia code switches single words, phrases and whole sentences. The code switches will be further exemplified, characterised and sorted below, therefore only the quantitative number of switches and the change over time will be given here.

There are 30 single word switches belonging to five word classes: nouns (11), verbs (7), adjectives (6), adverbs (5) and subordinators (1). They are fairly evenly spread over the year, although Swedish Interview 1 contains more (9) and Swedish Interviews 7–9 contain only one.

The phrases and sentences have been divided into two groups, one with phrases and expressions and the other with frames and other metalinguistic comments. The phrases, for example and then it finished, and the expressions, for example for a while, are used on a total of 10 occasions and they are only found at the beginning of the learning process; after Swedish Interview 3 there is only one example. Furthermore, Sofia signals that she does not know a particular word or that she wants her interlocutor to provide it by surrounding it with a frame, for example I don’t know the word, anyway boring or how do we say strange (the frame is indicated in italics and the searched-for word is underlined). The frames are used in 14 cases. Five of the 14 frames are found in Swedish Interview 1. At the beginning these frames are in English, but in Swedish Interview 3 there is the first example of frames both in Swedish and in English: jag vet inte hur de säger det på svenska have sex [I don’t know how they say it in Swedish have sex], which is a little later in the interview followed by the same frame in English: how do you say it have sex. This is an indication of her increasing proficiency in Swedish, and the remaining three frames with code switches (Swedish Interview 4, 6 and 9) are, accordingly, all in Swedish: jag vet inte hur de säger complicated, profit [I don’t know how they say complicated, profit] vad heter det, vad heter det! take care [what is it, what is it! take
Finally, there is only one example of a meta-comment; in Swedish Interview 1 Sofia asks: *we say stannar is stop, the verb, how is the noun?*

Most of the long code switches disappear after Christmas, i.e. after four months of studies: the remaining frames are said in Swedish, the phrases and expressions are also said in Swedish. Only single word switches remain during the spring term, nine out of eleven code switches after Christmas are single words. This dramatic decrease in code switches is due, at least in part, to her increasing proficiency; whenever there is a communication difficulty she is able to use Swedish-based strategies. However, it would be possible for her to continue to code switch to make herself understood in these interviews, too. The fact that she does not, reflects a willingness and a wish to speak Swedish, which can also be seen when she talks about her language use (see Chapter 9). Also, in one of the Swedish interviews, Swedish Interview 8, she was asked whether it was not easier to use English than to try to express herself in Swedish, and she answered:

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jo, jag har gjort det där eh / till / ända till // nej // jo före jul jag gjorde det / om jag inte kunde säga något på svenska skulle jag säga då på / nej skulle jag säg det på engelska / men nu försöker jag prata svenska hela tiden / men ibland går det inte
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(Yes I have done that until, no, yes, before Christmas I did it. If I couldn’t say something in Swedish I would say it in English, but now I try to speak Swedish all the time, but sometimes it doesn’t work [my own slightly modified translation])

**Code Switching in Context**

So far, Sofia’s use of code switching has been discussed separately, out of context. From a contextual point of view the code switches are

- accompanied by other communication strategies
- confirmative
- connected with interaction and learning

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63 It should be pointed out that the frames in Swedish have not, of course, been counted as code switches and that they are elicited here only because they frame a code switch. It is, furthermore, possible that these expressions without code switches are to be found elsewhere in the data, especially since the last one, *vad heter det* (what’s it called), is a commonly used filler in Swedish to gain time.
Accompanied by Other Strategies

It is most obvious in the present data that a large number of the code switches are accompanied by the cooperation strategy appeal for assistance; 21 of the 46 code switches are accompanied by appeals. These appeals are either direct, marked by intonation, or indirect. The direct and indirect appeals are formed with the help of the frames and meta-comments mentioned above, while the intonation appeals are signalled by a question tone only. Besides the examples mentioned above, the eight direct appeals are illustrated by the following examples. The interlocutor’s speech is given in capital letters, extra-linguistic signals, like laughter, are marked by capital letters within brackets, and the English translation is given within brackets after each example.

och dom prata hög och eh dom skratta mycke dom yell how is it SKRIKER skriker mycket

[and they speak loudly and eh they laugh much they yell how is it YELL yell a lot]

när jag lärde mig franska / det var en eh / ja vad heter det? / excursion / STUDIERESA / ja studieres.a just det

[when I learned French/there was a eh / yes, what is it? / excursion STUDY TOUR / yes study tour that’s right]

men jag tror inte jag kan / ah / vad heter det / leta efter eller nej take SE EFTER se efter? take care TA HAND OM ta hand om om en katt eller en hund

[but I don’t think I can / ah / what is it / look for or no take LOOK AFTER look after? take care TAKE CARE OF take care of of a cat or a dog]

These appeals take the form of direct questions to the interlocutor and they are also all responded to with a Swedish expression, thus inducing an interaction. The last example, which was recorded during Swedish Interview 9, furthermore illustrates how the search for an expression results in a short negotiation: Sofia searches in her mind and finds look for but she is doubtful and retracts it (no) and starts to code switch. The interviewer offers a suitable expression, look after, but Sofia does not seem to accept this

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64 I have chosen to use the term ‘direct and indirect appeals’ following Faerch & Kasper (1983a:51). They have no discussion about intonation signals in general, but I would place the question tones in this material somewhere in between their direct and indirect appeals. Question tone questions are less direct, or more polite, marked only by the tone, but they are interpreted by the interlocutor as questions.

65 Slashes are used to indicate pauses; single slashes one second, double slashes two seconds, and numbers between slashes indicate longer pauses, in seconds.
proposal. So she goes ahead with her code switch and is immediately offered an alternative expression *take care of*, which she accepts.

From an interactive perspective, the *question tone appeals* seem to be just as efficient as the direct appeals for eliciting help from the interlocutor. All of the seven question tone appeals result in responses. The following two examples illustrate these question tone appeals.

jag läste och sen jag ah // baked? BAKADE ja bakade
[and he is eh /11/ he's late? he is eh HE IS LATE he is late yes]

The six *indirect appeals* are characterised by frames expressing uncertainty. This is illustrated by the following examples.

det ä (PFT) ah /8/ (SKRATT) / I don’t know the word, anyway TRÅKIGT TRIST boring TRÅKIGT tråkigt
[eh /12/ (VISKNING) samma /9/ (SKRATT) I don’t know the words, sorry]

These appeals contain expressions such as: *I don’t know* or *I don’t remember*. They are thus more open-ended and appeal less to the interlocutor, who therefore is less obligated to assist. These indirect appeals are in this sense analogous to indirect speech acts (Searle 1979). Faerch & Kasper (1983b) refer to Beneke (1975), who calls these kinds of indirect appeals *handicap signals* expressing uncertainty. The interpretation of these signals is handed over to the interlocutor, who then chooses to answer or ignore.

The three examples above consequently result in three different responses. In the first example, Sofia is offered two expressions in Swedish, which the interlocutor infers from the preceding conversation, in which Sofia talks about how she likes some sports but how she dislikes jogging. Then she code switches a single word and gets one alternative, which she
accepts. In the second example, Sofia has just said that she likes Sweden because it is not the same as Greece and has probably intended to say more about the difference. Instead, she sends a handicap signal, the result of which is the reduction strategy of abandoning her message. The interlocutor cannot infer anything to help and changes the subject instead, and asks her what she thinks about the weather(!). In the third example, which is a part of a picture description in Swedish Interview 2, the interviewer points to a picture and says *and here there are*... When Sofia cannot find words to describe the part of the picture she has chosen, the interviewer, instead of supplying her with Swedish words, asks a ‘pedagogical’ question which does not help Sofia to continue her intended message. Instead this communication act offers her a chance to start anew.

There are a few examples of other types of communication strategies that accompany the code switches. Besides the reduction strategy just mentioned, there is one more example (Swedish Interview 1) of how a code switch is followed by the abandonment of the message. Sofia retells the story a Greek film she has seen on television about a Greek man and a Swedish woman living together in Sweden, but he wants to go back to Greece and:

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han ville eh flickan gå me me han me hans // and then it finished (SKRATT)
[he wanted eh the girl go with with him with his // and then it finished (LAUGHTER)]
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Furthermore, there are two examples where a code switch is preceded by an attempt to transfer an English expression into Swedish. The attempt fails, so Sofia code switches instead (for clarity, the Swedish word is given in italics here).

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men det går bra JA sen since now? sen TILL NU
[but it’s alright YES since since now? since UNTIL NOW]

så ja kan / titt- nej titta eh /4/ yeah watch over NO JAHA him honom
[so I can / loo- no look eh /4/ yeah watch over NO OH him him]
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**Confirmative Code Switching**

Some of the code switches are characterised by what I have chosen to call ‘double switching’ which functions as a confirmation. Sofia uses a Swedish
word, then says the English equivalent directly, which, in some of the cases is followed again by the Swedish word. This is illustrated by the following three examples (out of a total of six; the Swedish word is in italics in the translation).

vädret byter eh mycke /3/ fort fort fast fast (MHM) /6/ (SKRATT) [the weather changes eh very /3/ fast fast fast (MHM) /6/ (LAUGHTER)]

jo kanske ah eh öar the islands öar ÖAR JA ÖARNA [yes maybe ah eh islands the islands ISLANDS YES THE ISLANDS]

ja ja hoppa/1 wish HOPPAS hoppas [yes yes hope / I wish HOPE hope]

These switches seem to function as confirmation checks; Sofia wants to check with her interlocutor to make sure that she has chosen the correct expression. She does this by translating into English. Further support for this interpretation is that all these six double switches are followed by a confirmation on the part of the interlocutor, either in the form of a repetition of the chosen expression, or an extralinguistic agreement. These confirmative code switches are possible only when the interlocutors have another language in common, as here or as in a foreign language learning classroom.

Interaction and Learning

Sofia’s code switches can also be viewed from an interactional perspective. As mentioned above, most of the appeals for assistance result in a response from the interlocutor, which is not surprising. However, out of the total number of code switches (46) as many as 34 (i.e. more than 70%) are followed by both a response and a suggestion from the interlocutor. The code switches are obvious signals to the interlocutor that there is a problem in communication. Indeed, it seems inherent in code switches, at least in

66A closer scrutiny of the remaining twelve code switches reveals that they are either simply confirmed by the interlocutor non-linguistically (four cases), or are found in a context where it is more difficult to respond; smooth switches (three cases), indirect appeals (two cases), reductions (1 case) or tag-like final remarks (two cases: ‘not any more’ followed by a laugh, and ‘she collapses like she is dust’, rounding off a description).
this context, that they serve as indicators of help. There is thus an open invitation in the code switches to assist.

Furthermore, since they both speak English, Sofia knows that she can use her interlocutor as a dictionary, getting the correct expressions in a more direct way. The sizeable number of code switches also indicates that this is the case, especially in the direct appeals, the question tone appeals, and the double switches. However, most of the code switches are preceded by hesitation markers and pauses, which could indicate, apart from the presence of a linguistic problem, a certain reluctance to resort to code switching. This in turn is in agreement with the general impression that Sofia is keen on trying to use Swedish as much as possible. Seen in a longitudinal perspective, there is also a definite change from code switching to Swedish-based communication strategies.

Another interesting aspect of the responses from the interlocutor is Sofia’s reaction. In 26 of the 34 cases Sofia responds by repeating the word or expression supplied by the interlocutor. This is illustrated by the following example (cf. other examples above).

```
och dom prata hög och eh dom skratta mycke dom yell how is it SKRIKER skriker mycket
[and they speak loudly and eh they laugh much they yell how is it YELL yell a lot]
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This repetition of the supplied expression could function as an acknowledgement to the interlocutor that she has received the information, but it could also serve as a learning strategy; by repeating, Sofia increases the possibility of remembering the expression. Repetition is one of the learning strategies Sofia prefers to use (see Chapter 7). This could, furthermore, be seen as an example which illustrates the auto-input hypothesis (Schmidt & Frota 1986). According to this hypothesis “the learner’s own input is a very significant part of his or her input, which affects the course of language learning” (Schmidt & Frota 1986:316). In other words, by noticing the expression and by consistently repeating it, Sofia enhances the chance of learning it correctly.

In the following, the different aspects of code switching in this study will be shortly summarised. All of the code switches are, naturally, in English. Taken out of context the code switches consist of either single words, frames, or phrases and expressions. The single-word switches are fairly evenly spread over the year, whereas the others eventually decrease. From a
contextual point of view, the switches have been divided into three groups, accompanied by other communication strategies, confirmative or connected to interaction and learning. About half of the code switches that are accompanied by other strategies are found together with appeals for assistance (cooperation strategies in Figure 6). These appeals are either direct, indirect or marked by a question tone. The appeals containing code switches diminish during the spring term and are replaced by appeals in Swedish (cf. 10.3). There are also a few examples of code switches accompanied by reduction strategies and transfer strategies. In the confirmative code switching Sofia gives both the Swedish and the English word, sometimes several times, thus searching for a confirmation from the interlocutor that she has chosen the correct expression. Finally, most of the code switches result in an interaction between Sofia and her interlocutor, and Sofia’s way of repeating expressions supplied by the interlocutor indicates a learning aspect in her use of code switches.

10.3 Other Communication Strategies

Sofia’s use of other communication strategies than code switching will be presented in the same order as in Figure 6, i.e. reduction, transfer, generalisation, paraphrase, restructuring, co-operative, non-linguistic and retrieval strategies. Each strategy type will be exemplified, but the examples will not all be given. If applicable, the extent to which the strategies are found together with other strategies will be reported on and connections with code switching will be made.

Sofia uses comparatively few reduction strategies, as was mentioned earlier. They are all message abandonments; she starts talking about something and stops all of a sudden, often mid-sentence. They are often accompanied by laughter and sighs (six of nine cases) signalling an awareness of the reduction, an acknowledgement of the difficulty and a moment of awkwardness. In four cases the abandons are followed by an indirect appeal, such as I don’t know or no I can’t.

The six transfer strategies are all transfers from English. In five cases she translates English expressions into Swedish, e.g. först av allt (first of all; should be först och främst) or semester (should be termin), and in one case she borrows an English word, drink, and gives it a Swedish pronunciation and morphology, drinka. Two of the transfers are accompanied by code switches. I have not been able to detect any transfers from Greek.
Sofia uses generalisation strategies, or approximations, in ten cases. They are all based on either semantic or formal similarities, i.e. the approximated word or expression is either semantically close to the intended word or sounds similarly. An example of the former is when she uses tror instead of tycker or a super-ordinate like in the following example: dom tänker äta hela grekiska Makedonien [they are going to eat all of Greek Macedonia], where she uses the superordinate eat instead of a hyponym like devour. An example of the latter, formal similarity, is when she uses anställd instead of anmäld [employed/registered] or sammanträde instead of sammanslagning [meeting/merger]. None of the generalisations are connected to other communication strategies.

The six paraphrase strategies consist of descriptions of the searched-for word, for example andra platser inte öarna men runt i Grekland som [other places not the islands but around in Greece as] where she is looking for the word mainland, which she is also offered by the interlocutor. In two cases the paraphrase is accompanied by a direct appeal, vad heter det? [what's it called?] and in 1 case by an indirect appeal, jag vet inte vad dom heter [I don't know what they are called].

Sofia uses restructuring strategies, or self-repair, a lot, especially in last few interviews. Characteristic for restructuring is that the speaker stops, reverses and restarts an utterance, for example: ah det är - det finns - det sku- det ska bli några länder som... [ah there is - there are - there wou- there will be some countries which...]. The restructuring keeps the conversation going, on the one hand, and allows the speaker to put across the intended message on the other. An extreme example of several instances of self-repairs in a row, which finally result in the interlocutor understanding, is found in Swedish Interview 7. In a discussion about what Swedes are like, Sofia is asked whether she finds it difficult to interpret feelings in a conversation with Swedes. She wants to say that at first she could not interpret their reactions, but once you get to know them they are the same as everybody else. For the sake of clarity, her answer is divided into sentences based on her restructuring procedure.

jag tror när man ser en svensk när var glad eller sur eller dom var /
[I think when you see a swede when were happy or sulking or they were /

Swedish has a language specific threefold differentiation of the cognitive verbs for 'believe' and 'think' (and other meanings, like the future tense) in tycka, tänka, tro, which is difficult for second language learners.
jag såg en svenskarna första gången jag trodde / 
[I saw a swedes the first time I thought /
det var liksom dom / 
[it was like they /]
ah jag visste inte om dom var intresserade av jag pratade om /
[ah I didn’t know if they were interested in what I talked about /]
dom bara / 
[they only /]
ja pratade dom lyssnade / 
[I talked they listened /]
det var som här som visste inte om dom lyssnade på mig som en / 
[it was like here as didn’t know if they listened to me as a /
om du kommer att känna någon då kommer du förstår / 
(if you come to know someone then you see /)
du kan ser hur man är / 
[you can see how you are /]
så det är samma tror jag 
[so it is the same I think]

That her communication strategy worked in this case is illustrated by the re-phrasal of her answer in the question asked by the interlocutor.

så du tycker det är lättare att se hur svenskar reagerar? Du har liksom lärt dig hur man ska tolka svenskarna? Så då är man ganska lika, det är bara utsidan som är olika, det som syns (Swedish Interview 7).

[so you think it is easier to see how Swedes react? You have, like, learned how to interpret the Swedes? So, then we are rather alike, it is just the outside that is different, what is visible.]

There are a total of 38 examples of co-operative strategies in the data. In connection to the discussion about code switching above, 21 of these were discussed, i.e. the co-operative strategies that contain code switching. It was found that they were appeals for assistance; either direct, marked by question tone, or indirect. Out of the remaining seventeen co-operative strategies, nine are direct appeals with frames in Swedish, and eight question tone appeals. There are no indirect appeals only in Swedish. Apparently all the indirect appeals are found in combination with a code switch. Here are two examples of the remaining appeals, first a direct appeal, then a question tone appeal.
If all the 38 co-operative appeals are viewed together, there is an obvious difference between Sofia’s use in the early stages of her learning compared to the later stages. During the autumn term there are seventeen appeals with code switching and three without. During the spring term there are only four appeals with code switching, compared to fourteen without. Furthermore, nine out of the fourteen appeals in Swedish during the spring term are direct appeals. This indicates that Sofia changes from code switching to Swedish-based appeals, which in turn could be seen as a sign of increasing proficiency. The dominance of direct appeals during the spring term, together with the fact that there are no indirect appeals, is an indication of increasing confidence in the interview situation - she can ask for help directly.

As was the case with code switching appeals, all the Swedish-based appeals are responded to by the interlocutor. However, while the answers to code switching appeals were in the form of a Swedish word or expression, six of the seventeen Swedish-based appeals are only acknowledged extralinguistically, with an *mm*. This is quite natural since these answers confirm that the chosen word is correct.

There is only one example of a *non-linguistic communication strategy*:

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eh den vav vav [om en hund]
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*[eh it vav vav (about a dog)]*

It is quite natural that so few non-linguistic strategies were found, since the analysis is based on eight tape recordings and only one video recording. My own impression from the Swedish interviews is that Sofia used fairly few non-linguistic strategies (although this was not noted down), but that there were more than the one found in the transcriptions, at least a few ostensive strategies. Interestingly enough, no non-linguistic strategies were found in the video recording, although Sofia sometimes supports her speech with
body language, for example by drumming on the table. This could be due to the situation, namely that Sofia feels inhibited by the camera, but it is more likely, in my opinion, that she does not use very many non-linguistic communication strategies.

Most of the retrieval strategies are of the kind Dörney & Scott (1997) describe as “a series of incomplete or wrong forms or structures” (p. 189). In 10 of the 12 cases Sofia uses retrieval strategies of this kind, for example:

- ba- baons- ba- balans- BALLADER
  - [ba- baons- ba- balance BALLADS]
- det var mer int- intress- intresserat? INTRESSANT
  - [it was more int- interest- interested? INTERESTING]

There are two examples of the retrieval strategy of waiting, i.e. making a pause, waiting for the word to come to you, for example:

- men jag tror att universitetet är bättre och / eh / jo det / vad heter det? (LOOKING AT THE CEILING)
  - [but I think that the university is better and / eh / yes it / what is it? (LOOKING AT THE CEILING)]

All the retrieval strategies are followed by a suggestion by the interlocutor, which indicates that they are triggers for assistance.

10.4 Conclusion
Predominantly, Sofia uses achievement communication strategies, which has been interpreted as a willingness to communicate. The biggest single strategy is code switching, followed by restructuring and cooperation. The abundant use of code switching is due to the interview situation; both Sofia and her interlocutor are fluent in English and Sofia knows that she can make herself understood by code switching. She thus takes advantage of the possibility of code switching. One might expect that this bilingual situation would tempt her to use code switching over time, too. But the number of code switches decreases rapidly after six months, which, together with

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68It could be argued, as Gullberg (1998) does, that gestures supporting second language speech are also a communication strategy. This has, however, not been investigated here.
Sofia’s own comments, has been interpreted as indicating a willingness and a wish to speak Swedish.

Furthermore, the \textit{L2-based strategies}, especially restructuring, increase with time, which is an illustration of her increasing proficiency. With increasing proficiency, a decrease in the number of communication strategies might be expected, i.e. that the problematic communication situations would diminish while at the same time Sofia finds other ways of conveying her message without having to use communication strategies. Sofia has a constant number of strategies throughout the interviews and this was interpreted as a willingness to take risks and to stretch her interlanguage. Furthermore, looking at the interviews qualitatively, it was shown that the use of communication strategies is connected with a lack of proficiency in certain domains.

Sofia’s code switching has been thoroughly examined. All her code switches are into English, which reflects an awareness of the advantage of a bilingual interlocutor. She switches single words, phrases and expressions, as well as meta-linguistic frames. From a contextual perspective, her code switches are sometimes accompanied by other strategies, especially co-operative strategies, sometimes they serve as confirmation checks, and sometimes they are connected with interaction and learning.

All the achievement strategies are used to succeed in communication, but viewed from an interactive perspective they seem to have different effects. While almost all of the \textit{code switches}, the \textit{co-operative strategies} and the \textit{retrieval strategies} trigger direct responses from the interlocutor, and sometimes serve as initiators of negotiation, the \textit{generalisations}, the \textit{paraphrases} and the \textit{restructuring} do not have this effect. If one believes in interaction as the basis for development of the interlanguage, and if the strategy use is successful, one conclusion could be that it is more efficient to use the first three strategy types than the latter ones because they solve the communication problem directly. However, seen from another vantage point, the first three strategy types, \textit{code switching}, \textit{co-operative strategies} and \textit{retrieval strategies}, could be interpreted as signals for help to the interlocutor, which do trigger helpful behaviour – the immediate surface linguistic problem is solved – but they do not necessarily serve as instigators of continued conversation. Seen from this perspective, the latter three strategies, \textit{generalisation}, \textit{paraphrase} and \textit{restructuring}, if successful, are not interruptions in the flow of conversation, but instead help the speaker to
keep the flow, thus concentrating the conversation on meaning rather than form, which in turn is the basis for native conversation.

Provided that Sofia's proficiency increases with time, and that consequently her interlanguage draws closer and closer to the target language, this reasoning should be reflected in changes in the use of communication strategies. In other words, if certain strategy types increase over time, this would indicate that they are closer to native language use and therefore, supposedly, more efficient in conversation.

If a division is made between the autumn term (Swedish Interviews 1–4) and the spring term (Swedish Interviews 5–9), the code switches decrease, from thirty-three to twelve, the cooperation strategies decrease somewhat, from twenty to eighteen, while the retrievals increase, from four to eight. At the same time the generalisations increase, from one to eleven, as do the paraphrases, from one to five, and the restructurings, from two to twenty. Although the numbers are low, and a tentative conclusion could be that generalisations, paraphrases and restructurings are more efficient, i.e. closer to L2 use, in conversation than, at least, code switching and restructuring.

If for a minute we go back to the definitional issues at the beginning of this chapter, Tarone (1983) wanted to define communication strategies as mutual attempts to agree on a meaning. Judging from the present data, Tarone's definition is applicable to code switching, co-operative and retrieval strategies, but not to generalisation, paraphrase and restructuring strategies, which are not mutual but undertaken by the speaker. Thus, it seems that some communication strategies are more suitable for negotiation of meaning, whereas others are more directed towards keeping the conversation going.

There is, furthermore, a connection between communication strategies and learning. It was suggested in 10.3 that Sofia uses repetition of the interlocutor's suggestion as a learning strategy. This does not imply, however, that communication strategies and learning strategies are the same. In section 1.4 I argued against Oxford's (1990) inclusion of communication strategies in her test of learning strategies. It might be possible that a learner takes advantage of, for example, an appeal for assistance, e.g. how do we say strange to learn a new word, just as Sofia repeats the Swedish words, i.e. the form might seem similar to a learning strategy. However, if this appeal for assistance is seen in its context, as in these interviews, it is abundantly clear that it is used for communication purposes. In other words, the intention is primarily to convey a message,
but the effect can be twofold: the message is conveyed to the interlocutor, and the response can be used for learning.

In this section I would like to leave the final word with Sofia:

Interviewer: What about... let's say that you're speaking Swedish, and you want to say a word, and it's, you can't find it, what do you do?

Eh, I try to use something else that is similar to that word. Or, I just say the rest of the sentence and try, and if the person I'm talking to understands what I wanna say, that's fine. If he doesn't I try to say it another way. An easier way.

Interviewer: Does it ever happen that you just quit if you can't find a word?

Yeah, yeah. When I wanna say something that's really difficult and I can't find any word, I just say: 'Just drop it, when I speak Swedish very well I'll tell you!' (LAUGHS) (Interview 3:5–6).
11. Development of Syntax

The purpose of the present study was presented at the beginning of Part I. One of the research questions concerned the possibility of relating individual differences to linguistic progress. In the preceding chapters in Part II (Chapters 4–10), it was suggested that several different factors have had an influence on Sofia’s progress (cf. also Chapter 12). The most obvious is her period in liminality, an emotional experience which seems to have had a hampering effect on her learning for a time. Another factor is the break over Christmas, which seems to have facilitated her subsequent learning. It was also indicated, for example, that she has had an advantage because of her earlier experiences of language learning, for instance in the use of learning and communication strategies, and that her motivation and a certain tenacity appear to have been supportive for her learning.

Sofia considers herself to be an average learner (see for example 8.6 and 8.7). From a grammatical point of view she says that she knows Swedish grammar, but she still had difficulties in applying some grammar rules towards the end of the course, for example word order (7.7). In order to broaden the description of Sofia’s case, this chapter will examine Sofia’s longitudinal development of grammatical competence, more specifically, the development of her syntax. Furthermore, the relation of IDs to linguistic progress will be discussed.

There are comparatively few longitudinal studies of Swedish learner language. In addition to the early studies by Hyltenstam (1977, 1978), the most elaborate ones concern the development of syntax and are based on the results of the SUM project in Stockholm (Språkutveckling och undervisningsmodeller [Language development and teaching models]), which studied 60 adult learners of Swedish (see below). These longitudinal studies have investigated the development of subordinate clauses (Viberg 1990), placement of negation (Bolander 1987, 1988a, 1988b; Hyltenstam 1977, 1978), inversion (Bolander 1988b, 1990; Hyltenstam 1978), and have established important facts about, for instance, syntactical developmental sequences in Swedish interlanguage. These three aspects of Swedish syntax are renowned for creating difficulties for learners and will also be investigated here.
In the following analysis of the development of Sofia’s syntax, I shall use the results of these earlier studies as background data to illuminate and sometimes explain the findings. In other words, it is expected that Sofia’s syntactical development will be similar to the syntactical development of these other learners and that deviations will pertain to developmental levels, rate of learning, or simply very few instances of an investigated structure in Sofia’s language. The use of the results of these other studies will, on the one hand, help to further illuminate Sofia’s individual case, and, on the other, allow Sofia’s case to serve as a small contribution to our knowledge of the development of syntax in learners of Swedish. Below, Sofia’s development in the use of subordinate clauses, placement of negation, and inversion will be presented, following the earlier studies mentioned above. In some cases average values are given, and I am well aware of the limitations of comparisons between individuals and average values of groups of individuals. They contribute, however, to make the picture of Sofia more complete, as does the presentation of the results of the language tests made during the language course (11.6).

The data for the SUM project were gathered in the middle of the 1980s from learners doing an intensive course for adults at a Labour Training Centre. The learners were taught 33 lessons per week, with a total of 600 lessons during a period of a little more than 4.5 months. Three thematic interviews in Swedish of about 10–15 minutes were recorded at the beginning, the middle and the end of the course. Few of the learners were beginners and they were divided into two groups, low level and high level learners, in accordance with the results of the Training Centre’s diagnostic test (Viberg 1985). The learners were 20 Finnish, 20 Spanish and 20 Polish native speakers, each group consisting of 10 high level and 10 low level learners.

In this chapter, all the tables referred to can be found in Appendix C.

11.1 Elicitation
The syntactic analysis of Sofia’s interlanguage is based on both oral and written data. The oral data consists of nine interviews, Swedish Interviews 1–9, conducted with Sofia in Swedish, 3–4 weeks apart (cf. 3.2). The written data consists of 19 compositions, Compositions 1–19, written by Sofia within the framework of her language course. The relative
distribution in time of the interviews and the compositions is illustrated in Table 1 (Appendix C).

The Swedish interviews were of varying length, between 20 to 30 minutes. They were carefully transcribed as normalised spoken language for the subsequent syntactical analysis in accordance with Bolander (1985:61ff.). The majority of the 19 compositions were written at home as homework, except for Compositions 10, 15 and 19 which were written in class, with the help of a Swedish-Swedish dictionary only.69 Content-wise most of the compositions were based on some form of stimulus, for example a discussion in class, stimulus words from the teacher, or a Swedish text on a certain subject. The first nine compositions had general subjects, but from the spring term on they resembled both in content and form the Rikstest which was to be taken in June (Composition 19), which contains a text to for the student to comment upon and refer to. Theoretically, the use of stimulus texts could invite the student simply to copy from that text, which might interfere with the linguistic analysis. The students were, however, instructed not to copy, but instead to write in their own words, and a subsequent check of Sofia’s compositions which I carried out together with the teacher, indicated that her compositions were written in her own words. In other words, they could be seen as representing her writing ability.

The following subjects were treated in Sofia’s compositions (the stimulus is given within brackets):

- My day
- A Person Description
- My room
- At the Town Library (description of a visit)
- The City (based on words suggested by the group together)
- A Party (based on a picture)
- A Trip (free composition)
- My Ideal School (stimulation words about education)
- Christmas (free composition)
- Learning a New Language in a Short Time (stimulus questions)
- Home Language Education (after a discussion in the group)

69 These three compositions were written in class in order to check the authenticity of the compositions written at home. No deviation was found.
The analysis below is primarily based on spoken language, but a comparison will be made between spoken and written language. Since the SUM project only investigated oral learner language, Sofia’s written language is compared to investigations of Swedish written language in Westman (1974) and Hultman & Westman (1977) wherever possible. These two studies investigated comprehensively the syntax of Swedish written language, based on informative language in brochures, newspapers and school books (Westman), and compositions written by upper secondary school pupils (Hultman & Westman).

In order to make a comparison with the reference studies from the SUM project, the data was accordingly divided into macrosyntagms (T-units) and only the correctly constructed sentence macrosyntagms were kept (Loman & Jörgensen 1971:55). In other words, sentences containing a subject and a finite verb were elicited and used for the comparison (for a more thorough description of the methods of elicitation, see Bolander 1985). The analysis below is based on the language of one learner, Sofia, which sometimes results in very few instances of each phenomenon. Therefore, the results of the analysis should be seen as showing tendencies only.

11.2 Frequencies

Frequency calculations of words and sentences were made. In total, the nine Swedish interviews produced 8,261 words in the elicited correct sentences and the nineteen compositions 6,501 words. A simplified indication of progress could be that the number of words and sentences increases with time. Table 2 (Appendix C) shows that the number of words

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70 I am well aware of the difficulty of using the terms ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ in connection with language, but this division is conditioned by the comparison studies.
increases in the oral interviews from about 300 in Swedish Interview 1 to about 1,600 in the last few interviews, with a radical increase from Swedish Interview 6 in March and after.\footnote{Table 2, like the other tables which compare spoken and written language, is organised along a time axis. To save space, Swedish Interviews 3 and 4 have been somewhat displaced, and Swedish Interview 8 was in reality conducted between Compositions 18 and 19 (see Table 1 for the correct picture).} The number of sentences also increases, from 50 to about 200. A similar increase, however not as radical, is found in the compositions. In a study by Hultman \& Westman (1977:53) Swedish-speaking students wrote compositions of an average length of 587.8 words. Interestingly enough, after Composition 14 Sofia seems to write compositions of a similar length to these Swedish upper secondary pupils. Finally, the total number of subordinate clauses is fairly low during the first term; they start increasing after the Christmas break.

These measurements, however, are rather crude since they depended upon, for instance, the length of each interview. A more accurate way of illustrating progress would be to measure the length of the sentences in words per sentence (Jörgensen 1976:39ff.)\footnote{Jörgensen (1976, 1978) analysed spoken Swedish in interviews, radio news reports, conversations and debates.} and the complexity of the sentences in the number of subordinate clauses per 100 sentences (Jörgensen 1978:27ff.).

As can be seen in Table 2 (Appendix C), the length of Sofia's sentences in the Swedish interviews increases to 7.3 words per sentence before the Christmas break, then it levels off for a few months to increase towards the end to almost 8 words per sentence. The number of subordinate clauses per 100 sentences increases rapidly just before Christmas, and then remains about the same, around 35 subordinate clauses per 100 sentences, for the rest of the period. Thus Sofia increases the length of her sentences, but not necessarily with the help of subordinate clauses. In spoken Swedish sentence length varies between 9.9 words per sentence in interviews, 12.0 in discussions, and 16.0 in news reports on the radio, according to Jörgensen (1976:40). The number of subordinate clauses per 100 sentences averages of 63.6 in spoken Swedish (Jörgensen 1978:27ff.). Judging from these figures, Sofia has some way to go before she reaches Swedish spoken language as measured in length of sentences. In the written language, however, Sofia seems to produce sentences of the normal length towards the end. According to Westman (1974), Swedish written language contains
an average of 13.3 words per sentence (1974:127) and 53.3 subordinate clauses per 100 sentences (1974:133).

11.3 Subordinate Clauses
A prototypical Swedish subordinate clause is initialised by a subordinate conjunction which signals the semantic and syntactic connection between the subordinate clause and the main clause. Furthermore, prototypically again, the sentence adverbials and the negation particle (see 11.4) are placed before the finite verb in the subordinate clause, but after the finite verb in main clauses. Both these characteristics, the external relation of the subordinate clause and its internal structure, create problems for learners of Swedish. Following Viberg (1990) I have chosen to investigate the external relations with regard to types of subordinate clauses, and the learner's growing system of subordinate conjunctions. In 11.4 the internal word order structure is discussed.

The subordinate clauses were excerpted from the data. There are 335 subordinate clauses in the oral data, and 346 in the written.

Types of Subordinate Clauses
The subordinate clauses were divided into the same groups as in Viberg (1990). Viberg identifies four groups; adverbial clauses, that-clauses, interrogative clauses, and relative clauses. According to Viberg (1990) it is possible that there is a developmental sequence for the different types of subordinate clauses. In his investigation, he found that there is a tendency for adverbial clauses to appear early, followed by that-clauses, whereas relative clauses appear rather late in learner language.

Table 3 (Appendix C) displays the distribution of the four types of clauses in the oral and written data. As can be seen, the adverbial clauses dominate in the early interviews, whereas the relative clauses are comparatively few. Even if the total number of instances is modest, there is a tendency for Viberg’s hypothesis to be verified in Sofia’s oral development as well. In the written data, however, the relative clauses dominate in the first six compositions while the adverbial clauses appear after that.

One explanation for these early instances of relative clauses might be found in the tasks themselves. While the oral interviews discuss common issues, such as interests, travel, sport and politics, the first writing tasks are
given as descriptions of places and persons, for instance. The adverbial subordinate clauses prototypically function as adverbials expressing, for example, temporal, causal, conditional and consecutive conditions, whereas the relative clauses prototypically function as post-posed attributes in an NP with the function of further specifying its correlate. Consequently, relative clauses are probably more common in descriptive texts. The four relative clauses in Composition 4 serve as an illustration.

Kristina, som var vår guide
Kristina, who was our guide
någon böcker som finns där
some books which are there

när [där] finns böcker som är mycket intressanta
there are books which are very interesting

när [där] finns böcker som jag kan låna
there are book which I can borrow

Another possible explanation for these early instances of relative clauses in writing reflects the difference between spoken and written language. While there is a tendency in spoken language to co-ordinate main clauses paratactically, using conjunctions, written language is characterised by more nominalisations and by hypotaxis. Even if this early appearance of relative clauses in the written language can be explained in several ways, the presence of relative clauses in the early compositions shows that Sofia knows how to form correct relative clauses in writing, even if she does not use them when she speaks.

During the second term, all types of subordinate clauses seem to increase in number, but, as was stated earlier, then the length of both the interviews and the compositions increases, which makes room for more subordinate clauses. In order to get a picture of how Sofia’s system of subordinate clauses develops, all the instances during the second term have been given in as a percentage of the total number of subordinates clauses in each separate interview and composition. This can serve as an illustration of the relation between the different types of clauses, and, furthermore, it offers the possibility of relating the data to those of other studies. This calculation has been made for the second term only, because of very few instances in the first term (Table 3).

In the interviews, the percentage of adverbial clauses are relatively high from Swedish Interview 6 in March and subsequently decreases towards the end of the term to about 40% of the clause types. The relative clauses vary
from interview to interview and reach 25% in Swedish Interview 9. The that-clauses clearly decrease, whereas the interrogative clauses increase somewhat. In spoken Swedish, the different types of clauses divide up as follows: Adverbial clauses 25%, that-clauses 37%, interrogative clauses 9%, and relative clauses 28% (Viberg 1990, in a recalculation of Jörgensen 1978). Sofia uses a high number of adverbial clauses and a very low number of that-clauses. There are also more interrogative clauses in Sofia’s speech, whereas the number of relative clauses is about the same as in normal spoken Swedish.

Viberg (1990) studied the change in types of subordinate clauses of 15 of the low learners and 15 of the high learners in the SUM project between their first and third interviews; an interval of about 4.5 months. In Sofia’s Swedish Interview 6 the relative distribution of her subordinate clauses is about the same as for the high learners in Viberg’s group in the first interview (Sofia’s 51%, 27%, 10%, 12% and the high learners’ 43%, 27%, 10%, 19%). After five months, which compares to Viberg’s interview 3 for the high learners and Sofia’s Swedish Interview 9, the figures also compare fairly well (Sofia’s 40%, 15%, 20%, 25%, as compared to the high learners’ 38%, 32%, 10%, 20%), except that Sofia has fewer that-clauses and more interrogative clauses. Thus, seen from the perspective of subordinate clause distribution, Sofia seems to display roughly about the same development as other learners of Swedish.

In the compositions, the types of subordinate clauses vary from composition to composition (Table 3). There seems, however, to be a tendency towards the end of the period for the adverbial clauses to decrease to about 20%, while the relative clauses increase to about 50%. That-clauses seem to average around 25%, while interrogative clauses decrease from about 20% to 5%. There are no directly comparable statistical calculations of written Swedish, but in an investigation of non-fiction prose Westman (1974:134) found that the largest group of subordinate clauses were relative clauses (45%) followed by that-clauses and adverbial clauses. In comparison, Sofia’s use of subordinate clauses in the written data towards the end of the period displays about the same relative distribution as Swedish non-fiction prose, which implies that she has attained a fairly high level of written Swedish in this respect.

73 Viberg’s students had probably been in Sweden for a while before they were admitted to the course. They were also considered to have attained a comparatively high level of Swedish when they started.
A tentative comparison of Sofia’s spoken and written Swedish suggests that her system of subordinate clauses is proportionately the same in March in spoken and written Swedish (Swedish Interview 6 and Composition 15). After that the written system develops towards the target language, whereas the spoken system approaches the target language more slowly.

In the following sections a further analysis is made of the different subordinate clause types, adverbial clauses, that-clauses, interrogative clauses, and relative clauses.

**Adverbial Clauses**

In the study by Viberg (1990) mentioned above, three subordinate conjunctions dominate in the adverbial clauses, när, om and därför att [when, if and because] with a tendency for om [if] to appear later than the others (Viberg 1990:346). Table 4 (Appendix C) illustrates the distribution of subordinate clause conjunctions in Sofia’s adverbial clauses in the interviews.

Table 4 shows that Sofia seems to follow the same pattern as the learners in Viberg’s study. In the first interviews därför att [because] and när [when] tend to dominate, whereas om [if] appears later and increases radically from Swedish Interview 6 and onwards. These three are also the most common subordinators used by Viberg’s learners. In total numbers, om [if] is the most commonly used subordinate conjunction here. The causal därför att [because] seems to be totally replaced by the causal eftersom [since] around Christmas. One reason for this could be that in subordinate clauses därför att can only be post-posed to the main clause, whereas eftersom can be used both in post-posed position and sentence initially.

On the whole, Sofia uses very few types of subordinate conjunctions in the oral data (8), which is in accordance with Viberg’s learners, where the low level learners use 6-10 types and the high level learners 10-13. Taken together, it seems as if it suffices for the learners, including Sofia, at early stages of their learning to be able to express temporality (när), causality (därför att/eftersom), and conditionality (om).

The tendency is the same in the written data (Table 5, Appendix C). The first subordinate conjunctions to appear are när [when], därför att [because] and om [if]. Furthermore, the change from därför att [because] to eftersom [since] is also obvious in the compositions.
That-Clauses

There are mainly three types of that-clauses in the data. The first and most frequent type functions as object in the main clause, as complement to a verb in the main clause:

ja tror att jag ska åka till Naxos
[I think that I will go to Naxos]

The second type are logical subjects replaced by a formal subject in the main clause:

det var inte så bra att vi hade bara en bok
[it was not so good that we had just one book]

The third type are predicatives:

problemet är att vi lära oss många ord
[the problem is that we learn many words]

Of the total number of that-clauses in the data (67 tokens in the interviews and 86 tokens in the compositions) the two latter types of that-clauses constitute only about 6% and 20%, respectively.

Therefore these will not be included in the tables below. They appear rather late, in writing, at the beginning of the second term.

Viberg (1990) states that for the learners in his study, the above mentioned subordinate clauses as objects are governed by very few types of verbs in the main clause, tro, säga, tycka and veta [think/believe, say, think and know], where tro [think/believe] dominates at the early stages of learning. These four verbs are also the most common in spoken Swedish, where tro [think/believe] accounts for about one third of the verbs, followed by tycka [think] and säga [say] according to Jörgensen (1978:31).

Table 6 (Appendix C) shows the governing main clause verbs in the object subordinate clauses in the interviews.

As can be seen from Table 6, these that-clauses are totally dominated by the verb tro [think/believe], from the first tokens in Swedish Interview 3, followed by säga [say] especially during the second term. Although the total number of instances is low, there is a tendency for these results to agree well with those for the learners in Viberg (1990).

74 In the latter are included a few tokens of other types of subordinate clauses that appear in the last few compositions, for example subordinate clauses as prepositional objects: oroa sig för att man ska inte klara sig [worry about that one will not pass].
The written data are found in Table 7 (Appendix C). The same tendencies are found as in the oral data. The most commonly used verbs are tro [think/believe] and säga [say].

Interrogative Clauses

Interrogative subordinate clauses are initiated by an interrogative pronoun or adverb, for example vad, hur, vem, vilken (what, how, who, which) or a subordinate conjunction like om (whether).

\[
\begin{align*}
jag vet inte hur det ska bli \\
&[I don't know how it will be] \\
jag vet vad som ska hända \\
&[I know what /that/ shall happen]
\end{align*}
\]

From a learning perspective, Swedish interrogative clauses are particularly interesting for several reasons. First, they have a parallel in question-formed main clauses like Hur ska det bli? [How will it be?], but the subordinate clause takes another word order. Second, some of these interrogative clauses must have a placeholder som ["that"] whenever the subordinate clause complementizer is the subject in the subordinate clause, as in the second example above (Hammarberg & Viberg 1975). Third, in the early stages of learning the verb veta [know] in the main clause and the clause complementizer vad [what] dominate in learner language (Viberg 1990).

The interrogative clauses have been excerpted particularly carefully in order to also find the clauses without placeholders and those with a divergent word order. In spoken language it can sometimes be difficult to decipher whether the clause is intended to be in indirect or direct speech, as in the following example, where Sofia is talking about a trip to the Greek islands.

\[
på sommaren ja vill gå till sjöss så ja frågade eh hur mycket kostar det å hyra ett rum för en natt och det var två tre hundra kronor \\
&[in the summer I wanted to go to sea so I asked eh how much is it to rent a room for a night and it was two three hundred crowns]
\]

In this case, the word order signals that it is a case of direct speech, at the same time as the context signals that it was probably intended to be said in indirect speech. This example has not been included in the data because of its ambiguity, but ambiguities of this type are, however, few. One consequence, then, is that none of the interrogative subordinates clauses in the oral data have a divergent word order. In the written data, however,
direct speech needs punctuation marks. Therefore deviant word order can be found in these clauses in the written data.

Interrogative subordinate clauses are not very frequent during the first term, either in speech or writing (see Table 3 in Appendix C). In Swedish Interview 3, just before the Christmas break, the first five instances appear. They all have the same formulaic character; jag vet inte hur... [I don’t know how...] which implies that they might be holophrases. In Swedish Interview 4 there are two instances, one of the type jag vet inte hur... [I don’t know how] and the other jag vet inte om... [I don’t know if...]. In writing there is only one example from the first term:

sen visade Kristina hur man söker böcker på datorn

[then Kristina showed how you search books on the computer]

These instances, although few, seem to confirm Viberg’s hypothesis that the verb veta [know] in the main clause is the most frequent in the early stages of learning with the difference that it is followed by hur [how] instead of vad [what] in Sofia’s examples. During the second term, however, vad [what] becomes the most common interrogative subordinate conjunction both in speech and writing. In the spoken language it seems as if Sofia uses the holophrase jag vet inte [I don’t know] as a frame followed by an open slot in which, for example, a subordinate conjunction can be inserted: jag vet inte vad... [I don’t know what...] (Axelsson 1988). This is further confirmed during the second term where seven of the fifteen instances using the verb veta [know] in the main clause are negated. Furthermore, Viberg sees a tendency for the verb veta to decrease in relative frequency over time. The same tendency is found in the present data.

In Swedish Interview 5 the verb förstå [understand] appears, but not until Swedish Interview 7 (April) does the verb system seem to be more differentiated, with verbs like bero på, komma ihåg, spela roll, se and välja [depend, remember, matter, see and choose].

In Swedish Interviews 6 (February) and 7 (March) the first two examples of interrogative clauses where the clause complementizer functions as a subject in the subordinate clause appear, however without the placeholder som [that].

så de spelar ingen roll va [som] ä rätt

[so it does not matter what [that] is right]

nästa morgon han kommer inte ihåg vad[som] hände
In Sofia's spoken Swedish there is only one example where she correctly uses a placeholder, in Swedish Interview 8. In her written language, the first example of interrogative clauses demanding a placeholder appears in Composition 12 (February). There are four instances, two correct, one incorrect, and one which overuses the placeholder.

få veta vad som händer i världen [correct]
[get to know what [that] happens in the world]
informera oss om vad som händer runt i världen [correct]
[inform us about what [that] happens in the world]
bestämmer sig för vad [som] är bra för dom att titta på [incorrect]
[decide what [that] is good for them to watch]
välja vad som vi vill titta på [overuse]
[choose what [that] we want to look at]

One interpretation of these examples from Composition 12 could be that Sofia is on the way of grasping this structure; that the placeholder som [that] must be used in the subordinate clause when the clause complementizer is the subject. However, there are no more examples of correct clauses of this type in the following compositions. On the contrary, there are seven incorrect instances where som [that] is not used.

In conclusion, it seems as if interrogative clauses appear rather late in Sofia's Swedish. The reason for this is probably that there are several components to control in the use of these clauses; the word order and the question words, as well as placeholders marking the subject and no placeholders when the subordinate conjunction marks the object. Furthermore, Sofia's use of interrogative clauses is in agreement with that of the learners in Viberg (1990).

Relative Clauses

As was mentioned earlier, a prototypical relative clause serves as a postposed attribute in an NP. The most common complementizer in Swedish relative clauses is som [who/which/that], but the complementizer can also be the relative pronoun vilken, mainly in written language, and adverbs like när, då, dit and där [when, where]. With the adverbs, the relative clause
generally functions as an adverbial. The relative clause can also be an appositional phrase when the complementizer *vilket* [*which*] refers to a whole clause. Furthermore, Swedish has a special genitive form of the relative complementizer, *vars* [*whose*] which is used for both animate and inanimate correlates, mainly in writing. Within the subordinate clause, the relative complementizer takes, for example, the role of subject, object, adverbial, or prepositional object.

In both the oral and written data the complementizer *som* dominates the relative clauses (about 95%). There are additionally a few examples of adverbs, mainly of place and time, and one example of the relative pronoun *vilken*, in Composition 18:

några exemplar vid [med] vilka försökte jag visa att...
[a few examples with which I tried to show that]

There are no instances of apposition or the genitive form *vars*. Clause internally, as mentioned above, the complementizer takes different roles. This is illustrated in Table 8 (Appendix C).

Table 8 shows that the relative complementizer as subject appears first and is most often used in both the oral and written data. This is followed by the function as an object, and together these dominate in the data. Rather late the adverbials appear, and towards the end of the study year, there are a few examples of preposition objects. These results follow exactly the results in Viberg (1990) thus indicating that there might be an acquisitional order involved. The examples are, however, too few to draw any conclusions.

### 11.4 Negation

The placement of the negation particle *inte* is considered difficult for learners of Swedish. In Swedish the negation is placed after the finite verb in main clauses and before the finite verb in subordinate clauses. The negation can thus have the following positions:

**Main clause**

subject > finite verb > negation > object

*hon spelar inte fotboll* [*she plays not football*]

subject > finite auxiliary > negation > non-finite verb > object

*hon kan inte spela fotboll* [*she can not play football*]
The learning of Swedish negation has been investigated in several studies (for example Bolander 1987, 1988a, 1988b; Hyltenstam 1977). All the studies agree with the developmental sequence found by Hyltenstam (1977) who suggested that the placement of Swedish negation is learned in the following continuum:

finite auxiliary + negation + main verb in main clause
finite verb + negation in main clause
A stage of consolidation of negation in main clause
negation + finite verb in subordinate clause
negation + finite auxiliary + main verb in subordinate clause

In order to investigate Sofia’s acquisition of negation, all the negated main and subordinate clauses were excerpted. The phrase *jag vet inte* [I don't know] was excluded since it is so frequent that it probably should be seen as a holophrase (cf. Bolander 1987). In spoken Swedish subordinate *that-clauses* can have both main clause and subordinate clause word order (SAG Vol. 4, p. 537ff.). The subordinated clauses were therefore divided into two groups, ‘regular’ subordinate clauses and that-clauses. Then, all the negated subordinate clauses were classified as either ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’, i.e. following the rules presented above. This could seem inappropriate for that-clauses since they can also have a ‘correct’ main-clause word order, but this was done in accordance with Bolander (1987) in order to compare Sofia to the learners in the SUM project who had mostly main clause word order in their subordinate that-clauses.

In total, there are 122 negated main clauses and 26 negated subordinate clauses (including 10 that-clauses) in the Swedish interviews, and 37 negated main clauses and 34 negated subordinate clauses (including 18 that-clauses) in the compositions. Looking at the data as a whole, the placement of negation in all the main clauses, both in the spoken and written language, is correct, whereas the subordinated clauses are more often incorrect than correct. This implies that Sofia can be placed just
above the stage of consolidation in the developmental sequence mentioned above. In other words, she has some way to go before she masters the placement of negation in Swedish. Most of the learners in Bolander's study showed a similar pattern, but the high learners increased their number of correct main clauses from low values to about 1/3 correct placements of the negation.

Table 9 shows the longitudinal distribution of all the 'regular' subordinate clauses which are either correct or incorrect, as well as all the that-clauses which are either correct or incorrect. The table shows that Sofia’s spoken Swedish contains no ‘regular’ negated subordinate clauses at all during the first term, and that during the first half of the spring term they are incorrect. Not until after Swedish Interview 7 (April) does she seem to begin to master the word order of ‘regular’ subordinate clauses in her spoken Swedish. All the instances of that-clauses are incorrect, i.e. constructed with a main clause word order. This is in line with the study by Bolander (1987), where most of the that-clauses had main clause word order.

In writing, the correct ‘regular’ negated subordinate clauses surprisingly seem to decrease in number towards the end of the year and incorrect dominate. In comparison, all the correct that-clauses are found between Swedish Compositions 11 and 15.

It is not possible to say where Sofia can be found in the developmental sequence mentioned above. The instances are fairly few, which makes it difficult to judge her level of development. It might be possible to say that there is a positive tendency in the spoken data, but it is still surprising that Sofia does not have one single correct subordinate clause in the last four written compositions. One possible explanation could be that the demands of the task of writing more and more advanced compositions increase the cognitive difficulty content-wise, which leaves less room for concentrating on form. Another explanation could be that Sofia is what Hyltenstam (1977:401) calls a backslider or a non-changing learner who has stopped at the stage of consolidation. Sofia herself appears to be well aware that she still has problems with Swedish word order. In (English) Interview 9 (May) she says:

Yeah, ordsföljd [word order]. I mean not about that the verb has to be in the second place of the sentence or that, the simple stuff I know them now, I can do them right. But like the adverb, maybe, for example when I talk and when I write I always write, for example if I say “Han också kom igår” [he
also came yesterday], when it’s like “han kom också igår” [he came also yesterday], it goes after the verb but I use it before the verb, and that comes from English: “He also came yesterday”. So, that’s the small things that I try to learn and to use right (Interview 9:20).

11.5 Inversion

Swedish has a verb-second constraint in declarative main clauses, which means that whenever a non-subject is placed initially in a declarative main clause, the verb remains in the second position and the subject moves to a position after the verb:

- han kommer idag  
  [he comes today]
- idag kommer han  
  [today comes he]

This rule of inversion is considered to be difficult for learners and also a late syntax rule to be learned (Hyltenstam 1978, Bolander 1988b, 1990). In order to investigate Sofia’s learning of inversion, all the declarative clauses with a non-subject initially were excerpted and divided into correct and incorrect clauses. To be able to compare Sofia’s use of inversion to other learners of Swedish, two studies based on the earlier mentioned SUM project were used, by Bolander (1988b, 1990). Bolander’s studies are based on the SUM project’s free interviews at Times 1 and 3, like in Viberg’s study (1990) discussed above, but she also includes a picture description task and an acceptability test. Bolander’s results show that there is very little difference in the use of inversion between occasions 1 and 3 both for the interviews and the picture description tasks, as well as between the language groups participating. Her results are thus presented as if they were based on only one occasion, which precludes a longitudinal comparison with Sofia’s development. Bolander (1990) concludes, however, that some contexts for inversion are favourable for early learning, and some are unfavourable, which motivates a comparison to the data on Sofia.

Looking at the data as a whole, one salient characteristic of Sofia’s use of inversions is that virtually all the inversions in her written language are correct (93%), from Composition 1 and onwards, as compared to only 21% in her spoken language, where the first correct inversions appear in Swedish Interview 6 in March. It could be hypothesised that there are proportionally more non-subjects initially in the written data. However, the
written and spoken data are similar in this respect: about 12% of all the sentences in the compositions have non-subjects initially as compared to about 15% of the sentences in the interviews. One explanation for these correct inversions in writing could be that there is so much more time to reflect in writing as compared to speaking, where the focus is on getting the message across, at a much greater speed. The high demands for processing speed might induce the learner, once the non-subject expression is processed, to resort to ‘normal’ Swedish SV word order (Bolander 1990:292–293). A further explanation could be, in Sofia’s case, that she is influenced by English word order. Whatever the explanation, Sofia’s correctly written inversions indicate that the rule of inversion itself is not difficult to learn; the difficulty lies in the oral processing of this rule in speech.

Based on the inversion data in the SUM project, Bolander (1990:296f.) proposes the following generalisations about inversion in Swedish:

Favourable contexts/early acquired
1. existentials/presentatives without the slot-filler det [it/there]
2. clauses with first-person pronouns as subjects
3. clauses with pre-posed objects with the slot-filler

Unfavourable contexts/late acquired
4. clauses with pre-posed adverbs, especially sen [then/after that]
5. subordinate clauses

These generalisations about early and late acquired contexts for inversion will be used to make a comparison with Sofia’s application of the inversion rule orally, in the Swedish interviews. The results of this comparison must be tentative because of the discrepancy between the total number of instances of the inversion rule, 3288 in Bolander’s study versus 169 in the Swedish interviews, but they help us to compare Sofia with other learners of Swedish.

Bolander’s first generalisation, that existentials/presentatives without det, for example sen kommer ambulans [then comes ambulance] instead of sen kommer det en ambulans [then comes it an ambulance], are acquired early cannot be applied on the present data, since there is only one (incorrect) example in the Swedish interviews. In her second generalisation, Bolander claims that inversion of clauses with first-person pronouns as subjects is acquired earlier than in clauses with second- and third-person pronouns as subjects. Table 10 shows the different types of subjects found in an
inversion context for each interview in absolute numbers with the correct inversions within brackets. The table also shows the relative frequency of correct inversions for each pre-posed subject in all the interviews taken together. For comparison, the relative frequency in Bolander’s study is given at the bottom of the table.

As can be seen in Table 10 the relative frequency of correct inversions with the first-person pronouns as subjects is the same as with the second- and third-person pronoun as subject. Thus, Bolander’s second generalisation cannot be confirmed in this study. Although the instances are very few in each interview, however, there seems to be a slight advantage for the first-person pronoun in Interviews 7 and 8.

Table 10 also shows that there are no correct inversions in Sofia’s spoken language until Swedish Interview 6. After that, there is an increase in correct inversions, which implies a development closer to the target-language rule, but Sofia does not seem to master this construction in spoken language after this first study year. Thus, the inversion in declarative main clauses in spoken Swedish appears to be a late syntax rule to be learned for Sofia, too.

Bolander’s third generalisation, that clauses with pre-posed objects are acquired early cannot be confirmed either, since there are only two instances in the present data, although both correct inversions (Table 11). Table 11 shows the different types of pre-posed elements found in an inversion context for each interview in absolute numbers with the correct inversions within brackets. Like Table 10, Table 11 also shows the relative frequency of correct inversions for each pre-posed element in all the interviews taken together as compared to Bolander’s results.75

Table 11 shows that adverbs, followed by subordinate clauses, are the most common pre-posed elements in Sofia’s spoken language in the interviews. Bolander’s fourth generalisation, that pre-posed adverbs are acquired late, especially sen [then/after that], is not supported here in an obvious way. Especially in Interviews 7 and 8 there are quite a few instances of correct word order among the clauses with pre-posed adverbs. As regards sen, all five correct clauses in Swedish Interview 7, five out of ten in 8, and three out of five in 9 are sen-clauses, which is quite a significant number. In the same interviews, however, there are also many examples of incorrect sen-clauses; in Swedish Interview 7 eight, in 8 three, and in 9 one. One

75 Bolander’s pre-posed element, predicative, has bee excluded since no instances were found in the present data.
tentative conclusion to be drawn is that the correct *sen*-clauses appear about the same time as the others and that there is a tendency for an early stabilisation. The instances are, however, very few.

Bolander's fifth and final generalisation, that pre-posed subordinate clauses are acquired late seems to be confirmed here. Sofia uses a fair number of pre-posed subordinate clauses in the interviews, but few have the correct word order. An interesting fact with regard to the subordinate clauses is that Sofia uses only two types of clauses in the pre-posed contexts, conditional *om*-clauses [*if*] and temporal *när*-clauses [*when*]. This is in accordance with the clear dominance of these two subordinate conjunctions in the adverbial clauses (11.3).

All in all, the comparison with the studies by Bolander (1988^b^, 1990) show little agreement. This is probably due to the discrepancy between the number of informants and the amount of data. Bolander's results are, furthermore, based on a picture description and an acceptability test. It is possible that Sofia in her use of inversion orally is below the average learners in Bolander's study. Thus, what is illustrated in Tables 10 and 11 might be the initial stages of acquisition of the inversion rule with a very slow increase in correct inversions. The results show that Sofia knows the rule of inversion as is indicated in the written data, but it apparently takes quite a long time for her to apply it to the spoken language.

### 11.6 Course Tests

In order to get yet another angle on Sofia's linguistic progress during the study year, the test results from tests given by the teacher in class were also collected.

Apart from continuous tests in class of, for example, listening and reading comprehension and the regular written compositions, eight more comprehensive tests were given to the study group. These mostly tested grammar and vocabulary, except for the last one which was the *Rikstest*, where reading and listening comprehension as well as oral and written competence, were also tested. The *Rikstest* will be discussed separately below. The students were given one to two hours to do the tests. In the presentation of the test results in Table 12, the maximum scores, the average scores and Sofia's scores are given for each test. Test 1 was given in September, Test 2 in October, Test 3 in November, Test 4 in December, Test 5 in February, Test 6 in March, Test 7 also in March, and Test 8, the
Rikstest, in June. In Figure 7 all the results of the first seven tests are displayed.

Figure 7. Sofia's test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Description</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Sofia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Diagnostic test, grammar and vocabulary</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a. Diagnostic test, grammar</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b. Diagnostic test, vocabulary</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a. Diagnostic test, grammar</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>121.5</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b. Diagnostic test, vocabulary</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a. Final test autumn term, grammar</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>112.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b. Final test, vocabulary</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c. Final test, grammar and vocabulary</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Test: Phrasal verbs</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Test: Social sciences</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Vocabulary from an earlier Rikstest</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7 shows that compared to her language learning group Sofia's test results are about average, or just above average, on all the seven test, which indicates that Sofia, in this particular context, could be seen as an average learner. This is also in line with Sofia's own self-evaluation in, for example, 8.6 and 8.7. The results of the Rikstest point to the same conclusion: listening comprehension 11 out of 20, reading comprehension 20 out of 20, vocabulary 40 out of 50, composition 'average', and oral 'average'.

11.7 Conclusion

As expected, Sofia mirrors development of other learners of Swedish as a second language, at least as regards use of subordinate clauses and negation. The make-up of her types of subordinate clauses resembles that in other learners, although she does not attain a native-like competence in these areas during the period investigated. Her first subordinate adverbial clauses, that-clauses, interrogative clauses and relative clauses are in accordance with developmental sequences for Swedish. Her use of negation generally follows the established developmental sequence, and her late use of inversion in declarative main clauses resembles what has been found among other learners. Furthermore, judging from the syntactic constructions investigated here, she apparently achieves a much higher level of competence in writing than in speaking.
Taken together, this characterises Sofia as a normal learner of Swedish grammar. This is also in accordance with her own assumptions (Chapter 8) and the results of the tests in 11.6. The impression given here is that she, like many others, can reach a high functional level in the second language in the second language environment within a fairly short period of time.

In this chapter it has been shown that Sofia follows the same developmental sequences as other learners of Swedish for several of the syntactic structures studied here (cf. Pienemann & Håkansson 1999). In other words, she follows the same route as all second language learners.

As regards the speed of learning, however, it is difficult to say if she could be considered to be a fast, average or slow learner. The results presented here show rather unequivocally that Sofia's syntactical development is slow during the first five months, until the beginning of the second term. Some time after the Christmas break there is a radical increase in her progress in many of the investigated areas. There seem to be several possible explanations for this apparently slow development during the first few months. One explanation could be that this learning rate is normal for learners in similar contexts, which is indicated by Sofia's continuously average results on the tests. In other words, it takes about five months before any real acceleration in progress is seen. Another, more probable, explanation for this slow progress can be found in Sofia's person. In other words, her apprehension during the first two months, her period in liminality after October, her varying motivation, and her low interest in her studies jointly hamper her rate of her learning. Once she begins to handle these issues, after Christmas, her learning rate increases rapidly.

This rapid increase could also have several different explanations. One is the break over Christmas, which gives Sofia a break in the cognitively demanding task of learning a language, which in turn allows her language to stabilise. Another possible explanation is that she has exited the emotionally demanding stage of liminality, which allows her to begin building a new positive identity. This, in turn, helps her to get to know more Swedish-speaking people, which probably promotes her second language learning.

The month of March seems to be a turning-point as regards variation and correctness in several areas investigated here. For example, Swedish Interview 6 coincides with the first correct inversions (Table 10), the initial rise in the number of words per sentence (Table 2), an increase in the use of om [if] as a subordinating conjunction, and the first appearance of an
interrogative clause complementizer as subject (11.3 Interrogative clauses).

In the written data, Compositions 14–15 coincides with a high degree of words per sentence and of subordinate clauses per 100 sentences (Table 2), and with the use of four new types of subordinating conjunctions (Table 4). As was shown earlier, February seems to have been the month when Sofia experienced a qualitative change in her use and learning of Swedish. These syntactic changes could thus very well be a delayed effect of the exhilaration she felt in her learning situation in February (8.5) and the optimism (4.4) and boost in motivation (6.3) she expressed. In other words, changes in her life situation are visible in the language with a slightly delayed effect.

All in all, this analysis shows that Sofia’s syntactical competence increases, step by step, as it should. This competence constitutes part of a general communicative competence. Last, in this chapter, Sofia’s increasing competence will be illustrated by four shorter excerpts from the Swedish interviews. These excerpts are taken from Swedish Interview 4 in December, Swedish Interview 5 in February, Swedish Interview 6 in March and Swedish Interview 9 in June. They exemplify, among other things, the change after the break and her increasing fluency. The excerpts are only given in Swedish.

**Swedish Interview 4**
ja ja tror att dom ska dom ska eh// dom ska stanna på deras åsikter och kan kanske de å bättre om dom acceptera namnet (MM) men ingenting mer (NÄ) bara namnet(JA KANSKE DE) mm kanske/ men jo men jag om om ja tittar på nyheterna och dom pratar om eh om Serbien å Makedonien och ja ser flag (flaggan) flaggan och namnet Makedonien ja ja mycket irriterad (MM) ja inte en politiker /och så ja säger ingenting/ ja å bara irriterad mycke irriterad

**Swedish Interview 5**
när ja kom när ja kom här de va de va så kallt och ja väntade ah for taxi å komma å / hämta mig / och ja bara / ja frös ja var sån här ja vill gå tillbaka till Grekland / men de va / ja stannade i Grekland fyra veckor så / första två veckor de var ah ganska å se hur hur de / ja har sett mina vänner efter fem sex månader de va / de va inte samma sak /NÄHÄ) de de fanns några gånger att ja ville / kom / tillbaka i sverige men sen när ja / efter två veckor de var bra eftersom / ja var samma person att jag var / sex månader ah före (JA JUST DET) så ja började å eh / get used to (MM BLI VAN) mm / situationen i grekland så / när ja kom tillbaka de (SUCK) de va mycket svårt i början ah första två tre dagar det var bara mamma (SKRATT) ja ja ringde till min mamma varje dag / men nu de är okey de går bra (JÄHA) ja går ut igen och eh ja ja ser mina vänner här (JA) spelar ingen roll (NÄ)
Swedish Interview 6

det kan bli bra och det kan bli ah / dåligt? (MM) det kan bli bra och dåligt samma
tid det är bra för ah de är en sa- en sammanträde (MM) och det betyder att eh
länderna ska hjälpa varandra och eh de de de är som / ett land (MM) men på andra
sidan de är inte så bra eftersom / va- varje land har sin egen tradition (MM) och
språk och (MM) eh historia (MM) så om de om alla länder är som ett (MM) ah de
ä / de finns / de sku- de ska bli nära länder som ska försvinna som / eh /5/ nära
länders historia och tradition och språk ska försvinna (MM) / speciellt när det är en
små / land som grekland (MM) de ä en eh / eh danger (EN FARA) jaa en fara

Swedish Interview 9

S: nä min pappa tycker inte om å ha hundar eller katter inne i huset han bara
tycker om fåglar så vi har ganska nä inte många var tre eller fyra fåglar / de är
tvärtom tvärtom nej tvärt tvärt dom // dog (JAHA HUR DÅ DOG) ja vi hade
tvälv dom här ja jag vet inte vad dom heter men men dom är gul
(KANARIEFÅGEL) ja just det och vi hade en annan också som / ja den sjunger
sjunger jättehögt röst jag vet inte vad den heter den här den sista min pappa tog
den han hittade den i inne i skogen en gång / så han / han hämtade den hemma så
vi hade den ungefär ett år kanske / så då vi var alla tre tillsammans då det var inte
så den var inte ensam men när dom två andra dog jag vet inte vad hände dom dog
kanse ja nån sorts sjukdom jag vet inte å den den sista var ensam trodde det var så
kul å stanna i en / (BUR) ja ensam så vi bara öppnade dörren och den gick ut
(DEN GJORDE DE Å FŁÖG IVÅG) ja / så vi har inga fåglar nu
PART III
An Holistic View

In Part II of this study, Sofia's first year of learning Swedish was reported on and discussed from several different perspectives both on the basis of a qualitative analysis of her self-report (Chapters 4–9) and on the basis of a linguistic analysis of Sofia's oral and written Swedish (Chapters 10–11). In Chapters 4–6, social, cultural and psychological circumstances are examined, for example the complexities of her life-situation (Chapter 4), her personal changes and durable traits (Chapter 5) and her motivation for learning (Chapter 6). In Chapters 7–11, aspects of a more learning-oriented character are disclosed, for example use of learning strategies (Chapter 7), organisation of studies and ideas about progress (Chapter 8), and self-report on use of Swedish (Chapter 9), followed by an analysis of her communication strategies in the oral recordings (Chapter 10) and an analysis of the syntactic development of her oral and written Swedish (Chapter 11).

In each of these chapters the results are discussed and conclusions are drawn. Part II could thus be compared to a collection of detailed snapshots of Sofia taken from different angles, focussing different facets of Sofia and her life from a second language learning perspective during this period. They can be seen as fairly separate entities, each covering one or a few individual differences (IDs). However, taken together they form a whole; a whole person, a whole second language learner. Accordingly, in Part III the approach is more holistic.

Part III aims to reunite the different aspects of Sofia as a second language learner in order to increase our understanding of this one case as a whole and to draw more general conclusions. Furthermore, the longitudinal and holistic design of this study allows a thorough discussion from a new perspective. It will be shown that many IDs change over time and are interdependent on each other. This study is, moreover, largely based on qualitative analysis in a hermeneutic interpretative tradition (cf. Part I). This method will be evaluated from a methodological perspective and suggestions will be given for possible further research.

At the beginning of Part II, the organisation of the section was described as having a funnel-shape, i.e. starting with a general description of Sofia's
life situation and narrowing down to her linguistic development. In a similar way, Part III is also funnel-shaped, although this time inverted, beginning with an interpretation of Sofia’s case (Chapter 12), and moving on to a concluding discussion of the phenomenon of individual differences in second language learning (Chapter 13). Finally, a general discussion of methods used and their implications for further research will be presented (Chapter 14).
12. Sofia’s Successful Language Learning

Chapter 12 is divided into two parts. In the first part, 12.1, the different perspectives of Sofia presented in Part II are reunited and interwoven to form a more holistic picture of her individual experiences of learning Swedish. I have chosen to present this picture in the form of a narrative, without specific references to Part II, in order to capture the intended whole-person description. Thus, this picture could also serve as a brief summary, although far from as extensive and complete as the separate chapters in Part II. In the second part, 12.2, salient positive and negative influences on Sofia’s progress will be discussed, giving a researcher’s interpretation of the reasons for her successful learning of Swedish during this study year. This interpretation is based on the research background in Part I, the description and discussion of Sofia in Part II and my own experiences as a learner, teacher and researcher (cf. also 3.1).

12.1 A Whole-Person Approach

Sofia is 19 years old when she is admitted to medical school in Sweden as a guest student, provided that she learns Swedish in about ten months. She has studied all her life in Greece, and has already learned two foreign languages, English and French, and she is not afraid to grapple with yet another language. However, when she arrives in Sweden towards the end of August her feelings are ambivalent since she is set on studying medicine, not another language. Her hopes lie in getting positive test results from Greece which will give her access to medical school there.

Her study background has provided her with several language learning strategies and she starts off studying Swedish using familiar routines. She believes that language learning is a combination of good study techniques, motivation to learn and emotional balance. For her, language learning is a matter of studying up to two hours per day after school, listening to native speakers, practising and trying to use the L2 whenever possible. She calls herself a ‘responsibly irresponsible’ learner, meaning that she does not always act in accordance with her own and her teacher’s expectations at first, but eventually she fulfils what is expected, sometimes forcing herself
to continue. Her basic motivation lies in her dream of becoming a medical doctor, but she also has a strong will to succeed in whatever she undertakes.

She shows a metacognitive awareness in the sense that she increasingly evaluates her studies, reflects upon the second language and monitors her own performance. At the same time she sees herself from a distance, she laughs at her mistakes and she is not anxious in the learning situation.

Socially, she becomes acquainted with her study group, those who live in her student corridor, her handball team and her compatriots, but she misses having a close friend, someone she can call in the middle of night and talk to about everything.

During the first couple of months she feels that she is making progress albeit swinging from satisfaction to frustration, but towards the end of October she experiences the feeling of having reached a plateau in her learning; she even perceives a slight deterioration towards the end of the term.

This plateau phase coincides with a deep crisis in her life. Suddenly, after receiving negative results from her test in Greece, she stays home from school, she isolates herself from her friends and she considers leaving Sweden and returning home. She feels despair, pessimism and indifference, showing signs resembling those of a traumatic shock. This has been interpreted as a state of liminality, a betwixt and between phase in the transition from one stage of life to another. She is feeling detached, in the middle of two places, without being able to go forwards or backwards. Judging from her diary notes, this period influences her profoundly. It has an impact on her emotional and social life, but it also appears to inhibit her will to study effectively, even if she does what is expected of her, routinely and dutifully. Although she begins to emerge from this state of liminality after a few weeks, it seems to last a few months more or less, until the spring term, when she starts to achieve emotional balance again.

In December-January there is a month-long planned break in her studies, something which Sofia has been looking forward to for a long time. At last she will be able to go back to Greece, to meet her family and friends in a comfortable haven, a safe and familiar environment.

This sojourn turns out to be not what she expected, especially as regards her friends. It dawns on her that she has few real friends. She realises that both she and her friends have undergone irrevocable changes during these few months.
At the same time, the break at Christmas seems to have had a fundamentally positive influence. She appears to have taken a giant leap both psychologically and linguistically. At the beginning of the spring term she is enthusiastic about her ability to speak Swedish with confidence and self-assurance. All the things she studied during the autumn term have fallen into place and her learning is faster and easier. She describes her learning as steadily increasing for the rest of the term. She also feels more relaxed in the language learning-situation and she gets positive feedback about her language from peers and native speakers. Her increasing ability is also shown in her changing use of communication strategies as well as in her grammatical development.

Furthermore, her ambivalence is waning, she feels more and more comfortable in her life situation and appears to achieve a more composite and balanced view of herself, and she has also learned to control her crises better. Moreover, she has established several new social contacts and she has deepened her friendly relationship with a Swedish student.

During this study year she goes through several other changes. She feels that she has become more mature, has learned to take more responsibility and has developed a dual identity, both linguistically and culturally. Although her basic motivation still lies in the goal of studying medicine, she is also motivated by the opportunity of learning to know another people and another culture. She starts to appreciate other sides of life, like closeness, friendship and love. Her use of language-learning strategies becomes more automatic and she increases her metacognitive awareness about language learning and herself as a language learner.

12.2 Explanation of Reasons for Success
Sofia learned enough Swedish in the postulated ten months to pass the language test, the so-called Rikstest, a national two-day Swedish proficiency test (cf. 3.1). In passing this test, she had succeeded in learning Swedish as defined by the goals of the language course and she gained automatic access to her further studies. The same year, in August, she began her medical studies and in the years that followed she was able to achieve her goal of becoming a medical doctor. Today she works as a physician in a Swedish hospital.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Sofia said: “It feels great to read this!”
As was shown in 1.6, considerable effort has been spent in second language learning research to map out the individual characteristics of good or successful second language learners. From this perspective, it is also interesting to discuss this single case, Sofia, who succeeds in learning Swedish in a short time. What might be the reasons for her successful learning of Swedish during these first ten months in Sweden? What positive and negative factors influence her development?

As I interpret it, there are several factors that come together positively in her individual profile, factors which taken together explain her achievement. The following seven factors seem to be the most salient, although with no relative order of precedence: Sofia’s earlier learning experiences, her motivation, her awareness, the break over Christmas, her social contacts, her access to English as a mediating language, and the structure and content of the Swedish course. These seven positive factors will be discussed more thoroughly here as well as some examples of potentially negative factors with reference to relevant research. In this discussion, references to earlier chapters as well as to other research will be made wherever applicable.

Sofia is an experienced learner. Swedish is her third L2, after English and French which have supplied her with knowledge about language and language learning. As mentioned, she knows how to study, she is familiar with the art of studying languages and she also uses several language-learning strategies right from the start (7.1). Furthermore, she knows that language learning takes time and she shows no inhibiting classroom anxiety in the language-learning situation (7.1). She is also well acquainted with grammar terminology and language analysis, which helps her in the language-learning classroom.

The asset of having earlier language-learning experience in further second language learning is reflected in some of the research on differences between multilinguals and monolinguals. For example, it has been suggested that multilinguals have an advantage over monolinguals in their awareness of language as a system, their higher metalinguistic skills, their cognitive flexibility and their less conservative learning procedures, provided that their proficiency is good in their earlier languages (for overviews, see Klein 1995 and Appel & Muysken 1987:108ff). This is confirmed for example in Klein (1995) in a syntactic acquisition task, and in Nation & McLaughlin (1986) who demonstrate that ‘experts’, i.e. multilinguals, perform better, when learning a miniature linguistic system,
than ‘novices’, i.e. bi- and monolinguals, indicating that the experts have access to pre-developed, more efficient strategies for learning. Similarly, Nayak et al. (1990) found that multilinguals were better than monolinguals at adjusting their learning strategies to the task at hand. In other words, Sofia has an advantage in her earlier learning experiences, which is most clearly displayed in her use of learning strategies (Chapter 7; cf. also the discussion on aptitude below).

Sofia’s strong wish to become a physician serves as a basic instrumental motivation (Chapter 6). She knows that if she fulfils the goals of her Swedish language course, Swedish will become an instrument that will allow her to study in medical school, which has been her ambition for several years. Although it is not her own choice to study another second language at this time, she eventually accepts the necessity in order to achieve this superordinate goal. The fact that her parents are working hard and sending her money so that she can achieve her goal, supports her to in putting pressure on herself to study. Her motivation weakens during her liminal period, but, interestingly enough, it changes character parallel with her language development. During the spring term, she describes how her superordinate goal to study medicine has to some extent given way to her increasing interest in the challenge of learning Swedish, developing knowledge of the language, even enjoying it (Chapter 6). This latter description indicates that she now has a more accentuated intrinsic motivation (Brown 1994, Noels et al. 1999, 2000). In other words, the substance of her motivation changes but it never really fails.

Motivation has been, and still is, considered to be one of the most important factors for successful second language learning (see for example Ehrman & Oxford 1995, Gardner 1985, 1990, Gardner et al. 1997, Nyikos & Oxford 1993), but there is a developing concurrent debate concerning the definition of motivation (for example Brown 1994, Crookes & Schmidt 1991, Dörnyei 1994, Gardner & Tremblay 1994a, 1984b, Noels et al. 2000, Oxford & Shearin 1994, Spolsky 2000). The dominating second language theories on motivation since the 1970s, represented by Gardner and his associates, emphasise a social-psychological definition of motivation. This definition entails favourable attitudes towards the L2 and the L2-community, an integrative or instrumental goal (orientation), a desire to achieve this goal and an effort (motivational intensity) to attain the goal (cf. 1.7 and 6.3). At the beginning of the 1990s, researchers started to see that this theory showed only part of the
complicated construct of motivation, i.e. the social aspects, such as attitudes and orientations in relation to the L2 group, with less emphasis on for example individual-internal aspects such as choice, interest and expectancy. It was also deemed as less applicable to school learning (Crookes & Schmidt 1991). Thus a new interest in the motivation construct has resulted in several complementary alternatives. One such alternative is the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation construct (self-determination theory) which is discussed in Chapter 6 (Brown 1994, Noels et al. 2000). Other examples concern the expectancy of success, the value of reaching the goal, and the setting of goals, all from the individual’s perspective (see Dörnyei 1998 for an overview).

Sofia is a very reflective person. She has an awareness not only about herself and how she functions socially and emotionally in the language-learning situation, but also about her progress and language use. She displays a metalinguistic and a metacognitive awareness (e.g. Chapter 7). Her awareness allows her to reflect upon her language learning, lets her see herself in contrast to others and helps her to handle difficult situations. She does not always act in accordance with her awareness, but it seems probable that her awareness not only allows her to take control of her learning through metacognitive learning strategies, but it could also support other parts of her learning and her life as a learner. Her awareness also seems to increase over time, which could be an effect of the learning process, or, in part, a result of the fact that she participates in this study, where she is specifically asked to reflect on her learning.

Here ‘aware’ is used in the general sense of ‘conscious’, ‘informed’ or ‘knowledgeable’. The definition of awareness, however, is an object for discussion within second language research. Schmidt (1994), in an attempt to define consciousness, discusses four basic senses relevant for language learning: consciousness as intention, attention, awareness and control. In short, consciousness as intention involves an intent to learn, for example by practising, consciousness as attention includes focusing and noticing, consciousness as awareness constitutes having knowledge of language structures for example, and consciousness as control differentiates between more consciously controlled language use, as in the early stages of learning, and more automatic language use. All four of these senses apply to Sofia, as has been shown for example in that she expresses an intention to learn, she attends to input, she is aware of language structures and she shows a conscious control of her language use at the early stages of learning, for
example in her code-switching. In other words, according to Schmidt’s definition, Sofia possesses consciousness. Schmidt’s differentiation of these different kinds of consciousness will probably play an important role in further research into the linguistic side of second language learning. For example, Leow (2000) in a recent article, points to several recently published class-room studies including his own in support of the facilitative effect of awareness as attention on learning. However, seen from an ID perspective, this model does not clearly account for several other observations of awareness/consciousness in Sofia, for example, cultural and social awareness, psychological awareness and self-awareness, all of which seem to be influential.

Such a general awareness is the target for the so-called ‘British Language Awareness Movement’, a group of researchers and practitioners who would like to see an increased language awareness at all levels of the education system to further the quality of language education (see for example Holmegaard 1999 for a Swedish perspective, or the articles in James & Garrett 1992a). They identify five different domains for language awareness; an affective, a social, a cognitive, a performance and a power domain (James & Garrett 1992b, van Lier 1996:83). These domains seem to cover what has been observed here and could thus serve as an explanation, but there is so far very little research evidence that awareness in this sense affects performance, according to James & Garrett (1992b:17ff).

These three factors, experience, motivation and awareness, could be regarded as being mostly ‘internal’ in Sofia’s case. They are brought to the language-learning situation by Sofia and although the new situation exerts an external influence on them they remain an internal part of her.

The break over Christmas, on the other hand, although externally motivated has a great internal impact. The importance of a break in second language learning emerges as a central and interesting result of this study. The break seems to have had a cognitive and social as well as an emotional effect on Sofia. Socially, she discovers that many of her old friends in Greece were in fact only acquaintances (4.3). She concludes that it is difficult but important to have close friends, and eventually realises that she can also find friendship in Sweden. Emotionally, she had been longing to go home before Christmas, but when she finally achieves this goal, she discovers that it was not what she expected (4.3). She begins to understand that she has started a process of living on her own, taking responsibility for her own life and also that she could actually be enjoying her new life.
Cognitively, the break allows her to rest from the demanding task of learning a new language, in speaking her L1 and doing something completely different. Sofia herself ascribes the reasons for the positive effect of the break to a need for some time off (8.6), but also to the realisation that she had idealised Greece in her longing before the break and was disappointed, and thus to a realisation that she would not be satisfied living in Greece either (5.1).

During the break her brain seems to have been active with the task of sorting out the linguistic impressions from the last few months, because when she returns to Sweden she experiences a fundamental change in her language proficiency (8.5) which is also reflected in her language development (11.8). This observation could be explained by a comparison to McLaughlin’s theory of language learning as an information processing activity (McLaughlin et al. 1983; McLaughlin 1984, 1987, 1995, 1996). According to McLaughlin, there are limitations on the amount of information (input) a learner can attend to in the learning process. Therefore the learner needs to routinise and automatise his/her language skills to unburden his/her cognitive capacity. This automatisation gives fast and easy access to old information at the same time as it allows the learner to attend to new information. However, the automatised information needs to be constantly restructured as the learning process continues. New information in input must be reconciled with the old, for example as the grammatical rules become more complex.

McLaughlin discusses the restructuring of the rules of grammar, but, judging from Sofia’s example, McLaughlin’s theory could also be extended to include longer breaks in the learning process. Restructuring is a time-consuming process, and when there is relatively little time, as in intensive language courses, perhaps longer planned breaks in the learning process, given over to completely different activities, will allow for a more thorough restructuring to take place. A parallel can be found in adult learning of a new motor skill, like dancing, skiing or aerobics, where a break in the learning process often results in a leap forward in the acquisition of the skill. McLaughlin uses his theory to explain discontinuities in second language learning, for example the well-known phenomenon of U-shaped learning, i.e. when a learner seemingly ‘forgets’ a learnt structure which later reappears (McLaughlin & Robbins 1999). I believe that another well-known second language learning phenomenon, plateaux phases, might have a connection to restructuring since this is also an example of a
discontinuity. Thus McLaughlin’s theory of restructuring could be further extended.

On the other hand, it is open to speculation whether a break in the learning process always has the positive effect found in Sofia’s case. In my experience, especially in foreign language learning contexts, there are students who come back after such a break seemingly having lost everything they learned before. One explanation for this could be that the learner has to reach a certain threshold in proficiency in order to enjoy the beneficiary effect of a break in the learning process. Proficiency thresholds have been proposed, for instance, in connection to bilingualism. In a discussion on second language attrition in elderly Australian bilinguals, De Bot & Clyne (1989) suggest that immigrants need to reach a critical threshold in proficiency in their second language in order not to revert to their first language in their old age instead of also retaining the second language. Cummins (e.g. 1979), in his threshold hypothesis, suggests two thresholds which apply to both first and second language of bilingual children. A proficiency level below the lower threshold would have a detrimental effect on cognitive growth for the child, whereas a proficiency level above the higher threshold would have a beneficiary cognitive effect. Furthermore, in second language reading research it has been shown that a proficiency threshold level in L2 has to be reached before learners can transfer to their L2 reading abilities already established in their L1, i.e. knowledge of strategies, goals and text characteristics (Schoonen et al. 1998). However, whether a proficiency threshold similar to the ones mentioned here exists in the present context is unclear, but, given that the timing is right, a longer break in the learning process could very well be beneficial to learning.

Sofia’s increasing social contacts with Swedish-speaking people eventually provide her with a social network in Sweden which is emotionally important to her (5.1), but also important for her language development, perhaps especially as regards fluency, in providing opportunities for target language use (Lightbown 2000, Spolsky 1989:166ff). She does not experience any real culture shock which might inhibit her, although she reacts to a few cultural differences (5.1). One explanation for this absence of culture shock could be that in Sweden she meets the same global youth culture that has values similar to her own and, furthermore, that her peers have a similar cultural background in their academic schooling.

She takes advantage of the fact that most Swedes speak English, which allows her to establish contacts and keep up conversations by using code
switching more than other communication strategies, at least at the beginning of her studies (10.2). English has the role of a default supplier language, i.e. English is the starting point for her construction attempts in Swedish (10.2). Moreover, English and Swedish are typologically closer than Greek and Swedish and Sofia says that she almost never consults Greek in her learning of Swedish (9.2). She finds it more natural to make comparisons with English. Furthermore, an interesting observation is that she learns from the subtitling on Swedish television by listening to the flow of English while reading the text strip in Swedish (7.7).

At the same time, this easy access to English could have an inhibitory effect since it is not important to learn Swedish to live in Sweden or to communicate with the population. It might also be the other way around, that Swedes, as learners of English, reply in English and want to keep speaking English for reasons of their own practice and convenience. Sofia has to urge her peers in her student corridor to speak Swedish to her because she is well aware that she needs to hear spoken Swedish, but Sofia herself mostly uses English. Not until February, after six months in Sweden, does she speak Swedish for about half the day, in her own estimate. This easy access to English could thus explain why she experiences such great difficulties in speaking Swedish (Chapter 8).

The Swedish course seems to satisfy Sofia’s needs in its intensity and strictness, its variation and communicative approach. It seems to fit her learning style (e.g. 5.2). As mentioned earlier, the teacher uses a variety of teaching methods with a basic academic approach expecting the students to study hard while encouraging them to practise their Swedish in the society around them (3.3 and 9.1). In the classroom the students are encouraged to cooperate with each other rather than compete.

The highlighting of these seven factors does not mean that other factors must therefore be regarded as insignificant. As was indicated in 1.5, for example, aptitude and age have been considered to be of importance in the learning of a second language. These factors have not been thoroughly investigated here, but it seems probable that Sofia is equipped with a certain level of aptitude judging from her earlier and current success in learning second languages (Skehan 1989:38). Aptitude is commonly defined as a) phonemic coding ability, i.e. an ability to connect sound with symbol, 2) grammatical sensitivity, i.e. identifying the grammatical functions of words in sentences, 3) inductive language learning ability, i.e. to be able to identify language material patterns from limited evidence, 4)
rote memorisation, making associations between stimulus and response (Skehan 1989:26ff). It seems clear that Sofia does possess a high degree of these four abilities, however it is difficult to judge from the current study whether these abilities were already present when she first started studying foreign languages or whether they are a result of these studies. Furthermore, research shows that her age probably puts her out of reach of becoming native-like in her SL proficiency (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson in press, Long 1990).

There are also potentially inhibitory factors, mostly emotional, in Sofia’s learning of Swedish, for example her ambivalence during the first few months when she was feeling more like a tourist than a learner, or her disappointment in friends who did not write, her boyfriend who was unfaithful or her feeling of boredom when studying words. The most important factor, liminality, which is another central result of the study, puts her in an alienated situation, paralysing her emotionally for a period of time. It is obvious that this period of liminality must have inhibited her learning process, although it is difficult to specify the details of this influence based on the present data (cf. her own learning curve in Chapter 8.3). However, from my experience, many second language learners go through similar periods, and therefore it is interesting to discuss how Sofia manages to escape from liminality. I believe that there are several cooperating circumstances, both individual specific and external, which might explain her successful passage through this period.

Despite her feelings of despair, pessimism and indifference she still goes to class and completes most of her homework. There could be several reasons for this. Her earlier experiences of language learning, for example, offer her the opportunity to rely on familiar study routines which are further supported by the strict curriculum and a teacher both demanding and encouraging. It could also be that she does not want to ‘lose face’ in front of the teacher and her peers, which helps her to do her duty, and keep up appearances. Nor does she want to fail in front of her parents. Moreover, apart from doing her homework, she is able to express her feelings in her diary whilst trying to overcome them through the reading of poetry. This reflects a certain emotional awareness which is open to the support offered by the teacher and to the opportunity for reflection during

77 In reading this, Sofia says that it was important to her not to lose face. She also believes that this could have been the case for other students in her class, too, because you feel rather isolated at the beginning of your studies.
our talks between researcher and learner. Furthermore, she has access to a basic social environment in her peers, her compatriots and in the people sharing her student corridor. The break at Christmas, and the opportunity to meet her family and friends, probably also reinforced the Greek side of her identity while encouraging her to continue her life in Sweden. Afterwards she expresses gratitude for having had the opportunity to get through such a tough period successfully which she feels has helped her in her development.

In this chapter, seven salient factors have been indicated as crucial for Sofia’s learning of Swedish; earlier language learning experiences, motivation, awareness, the learning break, the increasing social contacts, access to English, and the Swedish course, whereas emotions and the liminal period has been shown as a potentially negative factor. Taken together these factors point to the importance of strategies for learning, metacognitive awareness, motivation to learn, opportunities for target language use, a varied language-learning classroom, the advantages of a mediating language, but also the possibility of taking a longer break in the learning process and the avoidance of emotional stress. Thus, in general terms, they point to the importance for success of cognitive, social, educational, emotional and linguistic factors. In other words, judging from the interpretation of this single case, investigation into how second languages are learned entails using a cross-disciplinary approach.
13. The Dynamics of Individual Differences

At the beginning of Part II, Figure 3 was presented as an illustration of the categories and subcategories which were found in the Grounded Theory analysis of the interviews, the diaries and the questionnaires. In other words, it depicted Sofia’s self-report and served as the basis for the structure of Chapters 4–9. I shall use the term ‘categories’ in accordance with Grounded Theory here, but these categories cover most of what was earlier defined as individual differences in second language learning (cf. the beginning of Part II). Figure 3 can therefore serve as a starting-point for a more general discussion about individual differences in second language learning.

Figure 3 is three-dimensional in its reiteration of the files in the drawer and the change of months, in an attempt to capture the longitudinal dynamic aspects of individual differences (IDs) in second language learning. This reiteration emphasises the possibility of changes in each separate category over time, such as an increase in motivation or a change in strategy use. However, it could still be regarded as static since it does not illustrate the proportional importance of categories at different points in time, although this could be imagined within the separate files of the drawer.

In fact, different categories seem to be in focus for Sofia at different points in time in a dynamic way. I will demonstrate this for the most salient categories in this study, namely learning strategies, learning background, studies and progress (including language use), motivation, life situation, social situation, learning situation, identity and culture. To illustrate this, I have rather roughly defined three different points in time: the first two months, the next three months and the last five months, well aware that it is a matter of a continuous process with no clear-cut boundaries.

During the first two months, Sofia relies on her language learning background and schooling. She uses language-learning strategies that she already knows, she is curious and motivated, and she experiences a steep curve upwards in her progress, mostly in understanding and the rules of grammar. Her learning situation is mostly concentrated to classroom learning even if she listens carefully to spoken Swedish outside the classroom. These categories seem at first to dominate her activities. Categories such as her life situation, her identity and her social situation
seem to be less salient, more out of focus for her at this early stage, although she is somewhat troubled by the difficulty of fitting into Swedish culture.

The next period, however, shows a completely different picture. This period is clearly dominated by the turmoil in her life situation. She feels cast out into the middle of desert, in liminality, she loses confidence in herself, she abstains from social contacts, and she feels as if she is sitting in a cinema watching the world. In other words, the categories of life situation, identity, social situation and culture occupy her attention. She is also a little worried about not making progress, even feeling that there is a deterioration in her language especially as regards speaking, and, although she does not express it in so many words, her motivation seems to be waning. Whenever she finds time to study, however, she evidently continues to use language-learning strategies and they seem to become more reflective and metacognitive with time. She also passes the course tests.

During the next period, most of these categories seem to be in a calibration stage. They appear to change character, in an attempt to achieve a certain balance again. She still sometimes experiences crises in her life, but she has learned to control them better. She is developing a new, double identity using experiences from both cultures, her motivation is more complex and she is establishing more genuine social contacts. She has furthermore gradually automatised much of her learning, including many of her learning strategies and she also learns the language outside the classroom. She feels that she is making steady progress, in speaking, understanding, writing and reading, although she is not very keen on reading. This progress is also evident in her syntactic development as well as in her increasing fluency. At this stage, all the categories seem to cooperate to support her studies and progress. She herself expresses this eloquently in the following way: “Like, the more I learn, the easier I learn the things that I don’t know” (Interview 9:9).

The longitudinal design of this study allows us to see how the different categories vary in importance for Sofia at different points of time. In the early stages she relies on already established knowledge and experience, later she mainly wrestles with existential issues and towards the end a social/emotional equilibrium supports a faster increasing language development. Furthermore, the longitudinal design also reveals that many of these categories are not fixed in substance either. Throughout the study year there are great changes in Sofia’s life situation, her social situation and
her feeling of identity, as well as in her motivation, her use of strategies and her learning situation as has been shown above.

These two factors, the degree of importance at different times and the changes in substance, illustrate the flexibility and variability of a dynamic system of IDs in the individual. It thus emphasises the importance of considering the time factor when studying IDs in second language learning. In other words, depending on the point in time in the learning process these IDs are studied, their composition varies individually. As well as a language development, there is also an ID development.

These longitudinal aspects on IDs are generally not taken into consideration in the models presented in Chapter 1 (Ellis 1994, Skehan 1989, Spolsky 1989). They show the existence of these factors but only occasionally discuss longitudinal aspects, although Spolsky (1989:83) does point out the cyclicity of his model indicating a time perspective. This lack of longitudinal aspects is somewhat surprising, because language learning is a longitudinal process and it seems obvious that IDs continue to be a part of the learning process. One explanation for this lack could be that the purpose is to discuss individual differences between individual learners, as the construct itself suggests, not differences within the individual learner per se. The goal is instead to find general measurements for factors that predict language success. The same applies for the two multi-factor studies mentioned in Chapter 1 (Ehrman & Oxford 1995, Gardner et al. 1997).

The three-stage process discussed above incidentally reflects parts of a cognitive second language learning model presented by Segalowitz (1997; cf. the theories presented by McLaughlin in Chapter 12). Defining language learning as an advanced skill acquisition in a cognitive framework, he identifies three phases for IDs. In the first phase of second language learning, individual differences reflect a difference in general ability such as aptitude; in the second phase, with practice, individual differences reflect perceptual speed differences in, for instance, selecting production systems quickly; in the third phase, individual differences reflect a difference in degree of automatisation. Sofia relies on her earlier study and language-learning experiences in the beginning. Later, after the break at Christmas, there is an increase in her performance and towards the end of her studies, she describes her learning and language use as more or less automatic. Segalowitz concludes that the learner is situated in a complex, dynamic and communicative environment which imposes different kinds of cognitive demands. Therefore it is impossible to find one single most important
individual factor. Instead, language learning success depends on how an individual's perceptual and cognitive resources co-operate to respond to the social/linguistic environment.

Apart from the variability over time of the categories found here, these categories are also interconnected in a complex way. An obvious example is the fact that Sofia's language-learning background has equipped her with an array of language-learning strategies and also prepared her for the classroom learning situation. Another example could be that her life situation for a period had an important influence on her identity. There also seems to be a bi-directionality between the categories, i.e. a certain influence or impact can be imagined going both ways. For example, an individual's motivation is likely to influence progress in the L2, but progress in itself could also serve to enhance motivation. Furthermore, a motivated learner is likely to find suitable learning strategies for learning the language, whereas a learner who has access to a variety of cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies might be inspired to make a stronger effort to use them to learn. Additionally, a strong motivation could help the individual to overcome a complicated and difficult life situation, social situation and learning situation, but a troublesome situational factor could very well reduce the desire to learn. In fact, most of the categories appear to be able to have a more or less pronounced impact on most of the other categories. In other words, there seem to be interrelations going in all directions, more or less pronounced, more or less interwoven. This may be one of the reasons why the definition of the ID constructs are vague and overlapping (Ellis 1994:471).

An attempt to draw a picture of these interrelations, ended up in a very complex image, closely resembling a spider's web. This image of a spider's web captures very well the complexity of IDs in second language learning. Each learner is like an active spider weaving its web to catch its prey, the second language. If each thread in the spider's web represents one ID, then each thread in this web connects directly or indirectly with other threads in cooperation and interdependence to make the web strong enough to hold its prey. Every time the spider weaves a web, in order to succeed it has to adjust the size to the situation and the surrounding environment. Some threads carry more weight than others, but different spiders weave nets of different appearances to achieve their purpose. In Sofia's web, the strongest threads in the long run are the seven factors mentioned above, but initially her web was mainly based on her earlier experiences, and its strongest
threads consisted of language learning strategies and classroom strategies, as well as a certain motivation and curiosity.

In other words, the results of this study indicate that all the IDs are present in the learner to a certain extent, but their relative importance seems to vary over time. This variation, in turn, suggests that different learners could have different ways of achieving success in their learning. For some, like Sofia, experience and situational factors are important at a certain time, for others motivation and opportunities for language use could be important simultaneously.

Apart from the hypothesis that individual learners follow different patterns in ID application, it is also open to speculation whether the different IDs play different roles for different parts of the learning of a second language. For instance, it has been shown that the ID of age, or maturational constraints, obstructs the possibility of becoming fully fluent in the pronunciation of L2 (Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson in press, Long 1990). It has also been proposed that aptitude is more important at the early stages of learning (Segalowitz 1997), in formal foreign language learning classrooms (Spolsky 1989:206), and also that it can be nullified by high-quality teaching (Carroll 1965, as quoted in Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991).

The present study indicates that some IDs play an important role at the early stages of learning. Sofia's learning background has provided her with four general advantages which seem to have a facilitating effect for her learning, namely, her academic schooling, her access to learning strategies, her preparedness for the task, and her knowledge of English.

First, Sofia has a fairly high academic level of schooling which facilitates an adjustment to the language-learning classroom as well as facilitating social contacts with her peers who have similar backgrounds (3.1). Second, her earlier language learning has equipped her with learning strategies which she readily apply directly to the new language (7.1). These strategies remain important for the rest of the year, but they automatise and change character (7.8). Third, her earlier experiences from second language learning clearly reduce whatever hampering effects anxiety could have in the new language-learning situation (7.1). She knows that second language learning can be an arduous and laborious undertaking and she chooses to learn from and laugh at her mistakes (e.g. 5.2). Laughter is also an important ingredient in the interviews. Fourth, her best second language is English which helps her in several ways. During the first month, English is
the mediating language in the classroom teaching of Swedish (9.1). Consequently she can also use English to establish friendship with her peers who also speak English. English is furthermore a lingua franca in Sweden. You can always resort to English to make yourself understood at most levels of society. This fact probably reduces the risk of language and cultural shock, and Sofia also self-obviously frequently uses code-switching as a communication strategy initially when she tries to speak Swedish (10.2). After five months her code-switching diminishes as she becomes more fluent in Swedish.

In other words, in this context, academic experiences, access to strategies, preparedness for the task, and access to a language of communication seem to be facilitative at the early stages of the learning of a second language.

To conclude, the results of this study strongly emphasise the importance of an holistic perspective in order to begin to understand the complexity of the individuality of second language learning. Furthermore, the results advocate a longitudinal perspective in order to capture the variability of IDs. Although single-factor studies might help to chart and maybe define one or a few individual differences, it will be impossible to predict their importance for second language learning without also considering their relation to other factors as well as the possibility of their changing over time.
14. Principal Findings and Implications

The findings in this case study have helped to increase our understanding of the complexity of individual differences in second language learning. It is the most extensive and detailed study to date of an individual's learning of a second language. It has focussed on an area of research barely studied before and has furthermore tried out methods for doing so. Several working hypotheses have been indicated which could serve as starting points for further research.

On a general level, the study has underlined the importance of adopting an holistic perspective on individual differences, i.e. including as many IDs as possible, a perspective which has rarely been applied in second language research to date. From such an holistic viewpoint it is possible to reach a further understanding of the intricate interrelations and cooperations between individual differences suggested in Chapter 13, a hypothesis which need additional research. Adopting an holistic approach to the individual naturally involves a cross-disciplinary perspective, just as theories from various disciplines have helped to explain the findings in the present study. References have been made, for example, to psychology (Chapter 4), social anthropology (Chapter 4), social psychology (Chapter 6), cognitive psychology (Chapter 7 and 12) and linguistics (Chapter 11). This interdisciplinary search for reasonable explanations could be one of the reasons why there is no comprehensive theory of IDs as was stated in the quote from Ellis (1994) in Chapter 1.

Concurrently, this study has also strongly advocated the advantages of a longitudinal design. A longitudinal design emphasises the process aspects of second language learning thus pointing to the evolutionary changes that occur not only linguistically but also on a social and psychological level. Here I have indicated the change in importance and the change in substance in some of the individual differences (Chapter 13). These changes also need further investigation.

These two perspectives, an holistic approach and a longitudinal design, might serve as an incentive and starting point for further similar studies which could also contribute to the development of a more comprehensive theory of individual differences in second language learning.
On a more specific level, this longitudinal and holistic perspective has helped to reveal new angles which have earlier been investigated to a lesser extent and which also need further investigation. I will give two examples. First, there is no denial that the break over Christmas was important for Sofia’s language learning, but what are the underlying mechanisms? Should they be attributed to cognitive process aspects of learning as suggested here, or are they merely a matter of getting an emotional rest, in Sofia’s case from the effects of liminality? Could these mechanisms be generalised to aid other learners participating in similar types of language learning? Is there a connection between longer breaks, plateaux phases and thresholds?

Second, the construct of liminality has been introduced and thoroughly examined here, and has been found to serve as a general explanation for Sofia’s individual shock-like experiences. As such, it has never before been used in second language learning research. The model was developed by Turner (1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1995) as a socio-cultural transition process explanation (cf. 2.4 and 4.6). This process consists of three phases; a separation phase, a liminal phase, and an incorporation phase, where the liminal phase has the transformational power. From the individual’s perspective, the separation phase creates feelings of loneliness and loss, the liminal phase is characterised by feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty, whereas the incorporation phase brings relief and satisfaction. I have furthermore claimed that this three-stage passage model might apply to second language learning as a whole, which can be seen as a process-oriented transition from one state to another (4.6). This model has a strong explanatory power but it needs further verification. For example, the possibility of shortening or alleviating the effects of this period of liminality still remains to be investigated, although some possibilities have been discussed here. Furthermore, the expressions of liminality in other learners should be examined. Moreover, the application of the construct of liminality to the second language learning process should also be more thoroughly looked into.

In Part I, the aim of this dissertation was given in the form of the following research questions: What is the character of the intricate make-up of individual differences in the individual? How does this individual change over time? What are the reasons for the individual’s actions in the learning situation? To what extent can a connection with linguistic progress be found?
I believe that this purpose has been achieved. The phenomenon has been studied from a longitudinal as well as an holistic perspective and reasonable conclusions have been drawn (Chapters 12 and 13, cf. the conclusion sections in Part II). However, as regards the connection with linguistic progress the evidence is mainly circumstantial and indirect, although the initial intention was to be able to trace these influences directly in Sofia’s actual language development (cf. 11.8). One explanation could be that it is very difficult to distinguish clear-cut cause and effect relations because of the complexity of the research problem. Even within such a comparatively well-investigated area as second language learning strategies has research so far only partly succeeded in validating the effect of strategies on language learning (Ellis 1994:558, O’Malley & Chamot 1990:224). Another explanation could be that the only longitudinal studies of Swedish interlanguage found to compare with Sofia’s development were syntactical, investigating learning orders. Maybe more obvious connections between IDs and language development could have been seen at other levels of language, for instance semantics or discourse.

One of the main issues in qualitative interview studies is whether the methods and materials used have achieved their purpose of reconstructing the life-world of the interviewee in a credible and dependable way. I have chosen to combine a variant of a more structural qualitative method, Grounded Theory, with a general hermeneutic approach (cf. Chapter 2). This ‘marriage’ of methods has equipped me with both a tool for close analysis and a more recursive method which invites reflectivity. The explorative character of these methods has helped me to discover for instance the processual and longitudinal aspects of the categories described in Part II, but also the higher-order conclusions in Chapter 12 and 13.

The materials used for the qualitative analysis consisted of interviews, a personal diary, three questionnaires and observations in class (cf. 3.3). The most surprising observation here was the discrepancy and contradiction between the diary notations and what was said in the interviews during the liminal period, in October/November (4.2, 8.2 and 8.11). Methodologically, this emphasises, on the one hand, the importance of personal diaries in research (cf. the diary studies in 1.8), but also, on the other, how crucial it is to have access to several sources for interpretation (triangulation). In this case, had I had access to only one or the other, the interpretation would have been misleading.
In spite of all the precautions described in 3.3 concerning the preparation for and the line of questioning during the interviews, it is clear that some aspects of individual differences were rarely or never touched upon. For example, there are aspects of the organisation and preliminary analyses of the early interviews in particular which could have been more elaborate and effective in catching nuances and hints to further investigate. For instance, I am less satisfied with the basis for the categories *individual traits* and *learning style*. On the other hand, qualitative interviewing is both a matter of developing your craftsmanship and a delicate ethical balance concerning too much intrusion into the life of the interviewee. Fortunately, the research process is also a learning process for the researcher and the methods and materials supporting this study as a whole have been found to be more than satisfactory.

It is my hope that the results and hypotheses presented in this study will serve as a stimulation to other researchers for further research from the same or from other angles. I, for my part, would like to use my experiences from this study to continue investigating other case studies like the present to find confirmation in similarities and differences. Furthermore, the perceived lack in longitudinal studies of Swedish interlanguage could partly be remedied by a continued analysis of the materials collected for this study.

An issue which could be discussed in the evaluation of qualitative research is the matter of researcher effects on the results. One such effect is bias. One way of countering bias is to be specific and clear about aspects of the researcher's background, incentives and preconceptions which might influence the interpretation (cf. 3.1). Another effect, especially in longitudinal studies, is that the researcher merely by asking questions, actualising problems or discussing certain issues, encourages the interviewee to start reflecting upon the matter. One example in the present study could be the increasing awareness noticed in Sofia. Effects of this kind are unavoidable and even desirable, since increased reflection could provide the researcher with more information.

Using qualitative interviews in research can also be seen as a matter of trust. The researcher has to trust the interviewee to be able to convey his or her life world to the researcher, and the interviewee has to trust the researcher not to misuse this trust. I am grateful for this trust, Sofia.
Swedish Summary


Med andra ord avser denna studie att så fullständigt som möjligt kartlägga en individs livsvärld i ett inlärningsperspektiv för att därigenom utöka vår förståelse av individer och av individuella faktorer i andraspråksinlärningen.

Avhandlingen har tre delar: Del I består av tre kapitel som ger en forskningsöversikt, en metoddiskussion, samt en presentation av underlaget till studien. Del II består av åtta kapitel som, med stöd av citat från bland annat intervjuer och analyser av språkliga data, sammantaget ger en helhetsbild av den undersökte individen. Del III består av tre kapitel som diskuterar slutsatser om individen samt individuella aspekter på andraspråksinlärningen.

I kapitel 1 redovisas tidigare forskning om individuella faktorer i andraspråksinlärningen. Översikten visar att det finns en mängd olika studier med denna inriktning, men också att det inom vissa områden råder
stor oenighet om definitioner och faktorernas roll i inlärningen. Här återfinns också en beskrivning av 'den goda språkinläraren' som aktivt involverar sig i inlärningen, hittar vägar förbi inlärningshinder och använder sig av olika inlärningsstrategier. Vidare redovisas två kvantitativa multifaktorstudier, samt tre exempel på tidigare genomförda fallstudier. Sammantaget understryker denna översikt Vikten av att ytterligare fallstudier vad gäller individuella faktorer genomförs.


Mina forskningsfrågor ledde till insamling av två typer av material. Det material som används för studium av språkutveckling består av nio under perioden inspelade samtal på svenska samt de uppsatser som skrevs inom utbildningens ram. Materialet som analyserats med avseende på individuella faktorer består av tio intervjuer (på engelska), observationer i klassen, frågeformulär samt en dagbok i vilken Sofia ombads att på grekiska skriva ned sina känslor i samband med svenskstudierna. Nedan sammanfattas i kortform huvudresultaten i kapitel 4–11 i del II.


I kapitel 7 utreds detaljerat Sofias inlärningsstrategier. Eftersom hon studerat både engelska och franska i skolan i Grekland, har hon med sig en
uppsättning inlärningsstrategier som hon använder sig av redan från början i Sverige; hon antecknar, skriver ord- och grammatiklistor, använder sig av minnesteknik, organiserar sina studier och skapar tillfällen till språkanvändning. Hon tycks vidare applicera strategierna automatiskt i inlärningssituationen vilket har bedömts som en av orsakerna till att hon trots allt klarar sina studier. En intressant aspekt är att hennes användande av inlärningsstrategier förändras över tid. Allt eftersom hennes inläring automatiseras, tycks hon anpassa sina strategier till den förändrade inlärningssituationen. Denna automatisering har länkats till en kognitiv förklaringsmodell.


Kapitel 10 behandlar kommunikationsstrategier och bygger på en analys av de svenskspråkiga intervjuerna. Analysen baseras på en teori om kommunikationsstrategier som lösningar på upplevda problem i talproduktionen. Sofia använder sig i hög utsträckning av genomförandestrategier, vilket har tolkats som att hon är inriktad på att fullfölja kommunikationen. Den absolut vanligaste strategin inledningsvis är kodväxling, vilket faller sig naturlig eftersom både jag, som intervjuare, och Sofia har gemensam tillgång till engelska. Kodväxlingarna minskar

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dock stadigt, och efter cirka fem månader, i februari, karakteriseras hennes strategier mer av omstruktureringar och parafraser, det vill säga strategier som baserar sig på användandet av svenska. Detta har tolkats som ett tecken på att hennes svenska utvecklas, men kan också hänföras till hennes önskan om lära sig svenska och att därför undvika användandet av engelska.


igång samtal på svenska med hjälp av kodväxling. Samtidigt upplever hon
den ibland som en nackdel eftersom den är så lätt att utnyttja. För det
sjuende, verkar språkkursens uppläggning och lärarens sätt att undervisa ha
haft en positiv inverkan på Sofia. Kursen är huvudsakligen kommunikativt
inriktad och ställer höga krav på studenterna. Sammanfattningsvis tycks
flera olika faktorer samverka positivt i Sofias inlärning. Såväl kognitiva som
sociala, utbildningsmässiga, känslomässiga och lingvistiska faktorer har här
utpekats.

I kapitel 13 beskrivs dynamiken hos individuella faktorer utifrån denna
fallstudie. Olika faktorer verkar stå i fokus för Sofia vid olika tidpunkter.
Den första tiden förlitar hon sig på redan etablerad kunskap och erfarenhet
i sina studier. Därefter fokuseras hennes livssituation i samband med
liminaliteten, då fokus ligger mer på identitet, sociala kontakter och
kulturella frågor. Mot slutet av utbildningen tycks faktorerna samverka för
att understödja hennes inlärning. Den longitudinella upplägningen av
studien visar vidare på att de olika faktorerna även förändras till sitt
innehåll över tid. Som tidigare angetts förändras exemplvis hennes
motivation, hennes användande av strategier liksom hennes sociala
situation under loppet av studieåret. En central slutsats här är att denna
dynamik i såväl innehåll som longitudinal förändring bör tas i beaktande
vid undersökningar av individuella faktorer.

Vidare påvisas i detta kapitel att faktorerna också är inbördes
sammankopplade i ett komplext mönster. Exempelvis har Sofias tidigare
erfarenheter den effekten att hon använder inlärningsstrategier i
inlärningen, vilket i sin tur kan influera hennes inlärningssituation. Det är
också möjligt att föreställa sig att exempelvis motivation påverkar
språkutvecklingen, men att också en positiv språkutveckling kan påverka
motivationen. I detta kapitel liknas denna komplexitet vad gäller
individuella faktorer vid ett spindelnät där varje inlärare kan ses som en
spindel som väver ett nät för att fånga sitt byte, i detta fall språket. Om
varje tråd ses som en individuell faktor, är den direkten eller indirekt
sammankopplat med andra trådar i samverkan och omöjligt att göra
att göra nätet starkt. Varje gång spindeln väver sitt nät måste den anpassa
sitt nät mot omgivningen. Vissa trådar är viktigare än andra,
men olika sorter spindlar väver nät som ser olika ut för att uppnå samma
syfte. I Sofias nät utgör de starkaste trådarna på lång sikt de sju faktorer
som nämnades ovan, men i början av hennes studier bars nätet upp
huvudsakligen av inlärningsstrategier och klassrumsstrategier.
Med andra ord pekar resultaten av denna studie på att olika inlärare har olika sätt att lyckas med sin språkinlärning. För vissa, som Sofia, är situationella och erfarenhetsmässiga faktorer viktiga vid en viss tidpunkt; för andra kan motivation och möjlighet till aktiv språkanvändning vara viktiga samtidigt. I detta kapitel antyds också att olika individuella faktorer kan spela olika roll för olika delar av inlärningen. Framför allt betonas i kapitel 13 vikten av att anlägga ett såväl holistiskt som longitudinellt perspektiv för att kunna börja förstå komplexiteten hos individuella faktorer i inlärningen.

Avslutningsvis ges i kapitel 14 några förslag till fortsatt forskning om individuella faktorer i andraspråksinlärningen. För det första efterlyses forskning av tvärvetenskaplig karaktär som ur ett holistiskt perspektiv ytterligare kan klarlägga faktorernas komplexitet hos individen, exempelvis faktorernas ömsesidiga relationer samt hur de samverkar hos individen. För det andra forskning som undersöker de individuella faktorernas förändring över tid, både vad gäller deras vikt och innehåll. För det tredje forskning som undersöker huruvida pauser, platåer och trösklar i inlärningen är kopplade till kognitiva processer. För det fjärde forskning undersöker liminala perioder i inlärningen samt utreder möjligheten att förkorta dessa.
Appendix

A
Diagram of Oxford’s system of language learning strategies. (Oxford 1990, pp. 18–21.)

B
Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). (Oxford 1990, pp. 293–296.)

C
Tables 1-11.
Appendix A

DIRECT STRATEGIES
(Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation Strategies)

I. Memory strategies

A. Creating mental linkages
   1. Grouping
   2. Associating/elaborating
   3. Placing new words into a context

B. Applying images and sounds
   1. Using imagery
   2. Semantic mapping
   3. Using keywords
   4. Representing sounds in memory

C. Reviewing well
   1. Structured reviewing

D. Employing action
   1. Using physical response or sensation
   2. Using mechanical techniques
INDIRECT STRATEGIES
(Metacognitive, Affective, and Social Strategies)

I. Metacognitive strategies

A. Centering your learning
   1. Overviewing and linking with already known material
   2. Paying attention
   3. Delaying speech production to focus on listening

B. Arranging and planning your learning
   1. Finding out about language learning
   2. Organizing
   3. Setting goals and objectives
   4. Identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful listening/reading/speaking/writing)
   5. Planning for a language task
   6. Seeking practice opportunities

C. Evaluating your learning
   1. Self-monitoring
   2. Self-evaluating
II. Affective strategies

A. Lowering your anxiety
   1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
   2. Using music
   3. Using laughter

B. Encouraging yourself
   1. Making positive statements
   2. Taking risks wisely
   3. Rewarding yourself

C. Taking your emotional temperature
   1. Listening to your body
   2. Using a checklist
   3. Writing a language learning diary
   4. Discussing your feelings with someone else

III. Social strategies

A. Asking questions
   1. Asking for clarification or verification
   2. Asking for correction

B. Cooperating with others
   1. Cooperating with peers
   2. Cooperating with proficient users of the new language

C. Empathizing with others
   1. Developing cultural understanding
   2. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings
Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)
Version for Speakers of Other Languages Learning English

This form of the STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) is for students of English as a second or foreign language. You will find statements about learning English. Please read each statement. On the separate Worksheet, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER TRUE OF ME means that the statement is very rarely true of you.

USUALLY NOT TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true less than half the time.

SOMEWHER TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you about half the time.

USUALLY TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true more than half the time.

ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE OF ME means that the statement is true of you almost always.

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Put your answers on the separate Worksheet. Please make no marks on the items. Work as quickly as you can without being careless. This usually takes about 20-30 minutes to complete. If you have any questions, let the teacher know immediately.

EXAMPLE

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Read the item, and choose a response (1 through 5 as above), and write it in the space after the item.

I actively seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers of English. 

You have just completed the example item. Answer the rest of the items on the Worksheet.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

(c) R. Oxford, 1989

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

Part A

1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7. I physically act out new English words.
8. I review English lessons often.
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.
Part B

10. I say or write new English words several times.
11. I try to talk like native English speakers.
12. I practice the sounds of English.
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.
16. I read for pleasure in English.
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.

19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20. I try to find patterns in English.
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22. I try not to translate word-for-word.
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

Part C

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25. When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.
27. I read English without looking up every new word.
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

Part D

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.
35. I look for people I can talk to in English.
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.
38. I think about my progress in learning English.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on Worksheet)

Part E

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

Part F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice English with other students.
48. I ask for help from English speakers.
49. I ask questions in English.
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.
Table 1. Longitudinal distribution of data.

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<td>7</td>
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Explanations: W = consecutive order of weeks studied; C = composition number; composition in italics = written in classroom; S = oral Swedish interview number; E = English interview number.
Table 2. Frequencies, oral and written data.

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Table 2. Continued.

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Table 3. Subordinate clause types, oral and written data, and relative percentages for the second term.

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Table 5. Subordinating conjunctions in adverbial clauses, written data.

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Table 6. Main clause verbs governing object that-clauses, oral data.

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*These other verbs are in Swedish Interview 3 förstå [understand] and in Swedish Interview 4 hoppas [hope]
Table 7. Main clause verbs governing object that-clauses, written data.

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*These other verbs are, in Composition 14 bekräfta och anse; in Composition 15 förstå (2); in Composition 17 anse; in Composition 18 hävda in Composition 19 bevisa, mena, anse.
Table 8. Roles of the relative complementizer in the subordinate clause, oral and written data.

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Table 9. Number of correct and incorrect subordinate clauses, 'regular' and that-clauses.

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Table 9 Continued.

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Table 10. Inversion context: type of subject (correct inversions within brackets).

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<tr>
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Table 11. Inversion contexts: type of pre-posed element (correct inversions within brackets).

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References


Hyltenstam & I. Lindberg (Eds.), Första symposiet om svenska som andraspråk (pp. 203–214). Stockholm: Centrum för tvåspråkighetsforskning, Univ.


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