UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

CONTRASTING STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING OF A FOREIGN LANGUAGE GRAMMAR AND THEIR EFFECTS

VOLUME ONE

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Signature: _ _ _ _ _*MMCWells*_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

October 1996.

DECLARATION

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
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I certify that all material used in this

THESIS

which is not my own work has been identified and that no material

is included which has been submitted for any other award or

qualification.

Signed: _____

Date: __7th. October 1996____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

The researcher dedicates this work to *the Modern Languages classroom enterprise everywhere*:

(i)   *to those within it who learn,* in the hope that the methodological developments of the 'Interactive/Communicative Era' will be consistently considerate of their needs, interests and learning procedures, so that satisfying processes may be experienced and satisfactory outcomes realised in an improved Modern Languages subject-arena;

(ii)   *to those within it who teach,* in the hope that the policies of the National Curriculum will supply a worthy target in which to invest their efforts and a classroom methodology worth defending, as they strive to raise the status and performance of their subject in the schools' curriculum;

(iii)   *to those within it who research,* in the hope that through their activity they may establish an enterprise in which teachers increasingly play a proactive role in the continuous process of appraising Modern Languages teaching, strengthening their positions, through constructive reflection, as masters of the subject business for which they are responsible and accountable, its content and the processes of its delivery. The outcome may well then be the systematic raising of the profile of Modern Languages practice in this country and the eventual quieting of the long reign of subject discontent, as the collective process of Modern Languages teaching and learning is made confidently competitive - and is acknowledged as such! - with that of other, particularly European, states.

ABSTRACT

At the centre of this thesis is the question whether the grammar of a foreign language is more effectively delivered to the learner by implicit or by explicit means. The researcher has explored the question, which is essentially one concerning teaching method, in an action research project which conceptualises the essential contrast as that concerning the presence or absence of explicit summaries of grammar met by pupils first in action. The project has spanned the three years of a GCSE course of study in French, leading to the relevant examination in the High School where she works as Head of the Modern Languages Department. This action research has been placed as an empirical enquiry of the method-related hypothesis (conveniently embodied in the recent National Curriculum subject advice) in perspective with a study of the history of Modern Languages teaching from its early times to the present day.

The researcher's interest in pursuing the research at both of these levels arose from the following needs:

1. her personal need to take stock, through reflection (ie. research), of her own position and involvement in Modern Languages teaching, after a lengthy career which has witnessed frequent changes in subject design resulting from the pertinacious dissatisfaction towards the teaching methods used and the courses offered to learners, articulated yet again, currently, in the terms of the National Curriculum's subject plan;

2. her acknowledgement of the increasing desirability for classroom teachers of Modern Languages to investigate the teaching methods which each time of change imposes upon them for use in their practice, as is again the case now, as the latest National Curriculum policies assert their influence.

The researcher was a lone participant in her research for the majority of its design and run. The historical research was a journey which she made alone and applied alone in the form of the 'Review Of The Literature' as the background to her action research. The action research itself evolved as a two-instalment project, in its first phase incorporating a broad departmental representation of pupil and teacher participants, and in the second phase featuring only the researcher and the two GCSE examination classes for which she was personally responsible between the years 1991 and 1994. This practical exercise intended to set local insights in a wider perspective and to identify aspects which might have more general significance.

The action research took the format of a longitudinal study, which focused upon the question of the advantages or disadvantages attaching to either explicit or implicit grammar teaching at various stages of the participant pupils' GCSE course. The aim was to observe effects of the broadly distinct teaching strategies, made contrastive by the presence or absence of explicit grammar-summaries delivered in English (as a concession agreed in the National Curriculum Non-Statutory Guidance to the policy outlined above).

Data were gathered on both classroom processes and learning outcomes at various points, including final GCSE scores. Lessons and discussions were recorded and analysed, as were also regularly administered questionnaires. The pupils' MFL learning was closely and consistently monitored; their and their teachers' reactions were also considered and taken into account. All of the information which was accessed via such channels as these was collected by the researcher and entered systematically into her research diaries, of which she had 18 at the close of her three year action research project, namely 6 per academic year, therefore. These and some 55 filled audio cassettes became the principal material legacy of the practical investigation from which the thesis emerged.

The research brought results. On the one hand, the historical study and the broader related reading provided the desired rationale on Modern Languages practice and the tenacious problem associated with teaching methods and the place of a grammatical agenda in particular. The historical MFL teaching tradition was illuminated as the matrix of the contemporary developments. On the other hand, the action research concluded its contrastive study of (implicit and explicit grammar) teaching methods by disclosing a perspective on the relative importance and value of the grammar-summary principle which had been investigated as a case study in her local departmental setting and in the GCSE context. The hypothesis that grammar summary conveyed in the native language might have made a significant difference to enhance the learners' performance was not substantiated. Finally, the evolving practical research disclosed a number of associated themes suitable for further research to benefit the work done in Modern Languages classrooms, especially in relation to the issues of methodology.

"grammatical competence must be an integral part of communicative competence, but learning grammar does not seem to help students to achieve either"

Garret (1986).

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VOLUME TWO

1.0 CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1 A Personal Need To Do Research : The Reasons And The Timing

"Man has long been concerned to come to grips with his environment and to understand the nature of the phenomena it presents to his senses. The means by which he sets out to achieve these ends may be classified into three broad categories : experience, reasoning and research." (Cohen and Manion 1989).

For the author of this thesis it has become a necessity to reflect scientifically on certain aspects of Modern Languages pedagogy. Having been involved with this, as a classroom practitioner, for some 3 to 4 decades, and having encountered a considerable number of educational changes as they have occurred within that time, she wishes to avoid the risk of going into imminent retirement without first consolidating the experience of her involvement in this context. The above quotation states precisely the situation implied here. The 'environment' is the Modern Languages classroom and the work which attends the efforts of the teacher and the learner there. The 'experience' is the combined process of the teaching and the learning, and the styles or methods by which these are carried out towards effecting a successful outcome, namely the production of knowledge and ability for the learner. The 'reasoning' may be perceived as reflection on the experience and the 'research' becomes the activity which records, analyses and reports on the collective process.

In 1960, the year in which the researcher entered teaching, it was still possible to begin practising without first having trained. Indeed, for important personal reasons, the researcher made just such an untrained start to her career. The 'tabula rasa' beginning implied, therefore, that she had no point of reference, other than her own schooling from 1949 to 1956, on which she could draw for guidance or against which she could compare her gathering experience in the teaching arena. As she proceeded, the style of her performance changed all the time. Growing familiarity with the work, the factor of trial and error, the experience gained from external observation, the dictates of policies and examinations and the changes and emphases imposed by the fluctuations of educational reform - (almost from the start!) - conspired to influence her teaching approach. Often she referred back for guidance to her own education in Modern Languages, subjectively confident in the methods that had been applied at that time - a recourse which research (eg. Calderhead and Robson 1991; Kyriacou 1991) has shown to be quite common. However, she would

have found it difficult, in the early stages, to analyse and appraise in an objective way the quality and the effectiveness of those teaching styles to which she herself had been exposed. In addition, of the styles that she acquired over time, she knew only whether they worked, but not whether they were good. In any case, she became aware that they were being subjected to the criticism that comes from gathering disapprobation (Radford 1985; Phillips 1988). This period of initiation now lies deep in the past and the fact of imminent retirement prompts the understandable need to take stock and to try to make sense of the experience of a career spent in the Modern Languages classroom. The researcher has felt several needs in this context:

(a)   to look critically at her own performance;

(b)   to consider this performance, and specifically her teaching styles, against the background of contrasting traditions in Modern Languages pedagogy;

(c)   to investigate a teaching style for use in future practice in compliance with the new National Curriculum expectations.

In short, therefore, the researcher's interest is focused on methodology. This will be the factor to underpin the "reasoning" and "research" stages of the reflective exercise described by Cohen and Manion (1989) in their rationale which explains an individual's need to do research and to come to a critical understanding of his/her task and environment.

1.2   **An Evolving Personal And Professional Agenda**

The time from 1960 until 1996 encompasses the researcher's own career to date. The development of the teacher of Modern Languages within this time has happened against a structure of educational and curricular change and, specifically, of subject re-styling. In the context of Modern Languages the latter has had huge impact upon teaching methodology. At the outset the researcher taught as she had been taught, using the already familiar grammar-orientated text - and practice - exclusive course books such as: COLLINS' FRENCH COURSE, by Hebert Collins (1947), for French, and DEUTSCHES LEBEN, by A S MacPherson (1st ed. 1931),   for German. The presence of a reel-to-reel tape recorder and tapes in the new teacher's classroom informed her that the teaching method was taking on a new emphasis and that a new skill, Listening Comprehension, was about to be accorded an important place in the order of things, even if the technological delivery of this skill would for some time alternate with teacher-delivery of the materials, both in classroom practice and

in examinations. However, the dominance of the tape recorder and 'listening' aids in today's classrooms confirms that the early recorders implied a permanent purpose (Dutton 1966; Cammish 1983). Today's communicative teaching is anchored in that initiative and in the swell of development in the 'listening' materials which are manufactured to serve it. This has led to the upgrading of listening materials at the expense of, for example, notional-functional syllabus-design. It was as though the valve admitting change had opened to a rush of new pressures to agitate the Modern Languages teaching context, once the listening skill had infiltrated. For example, the subject steered quickly towards a four skill structure, with each skill allocated equal value in principle.

The base and frame of reference for the subject became the relevant cultural background to which the foreign language belonged. All the materials to be applied in the teaching were required to reflect such backgrounds, validly and authentically. Over time, the subject courses transformed from their GCE format and left behind the grammar manuals with their contrived stories of the artificial life of uncharacteristic families and their pets. The outcome of these developments endows us with study courses, which provide the foreign language necessary to access many aspects of real life. The themes of the recent GCSE examination course and of the new National Curriculum have captured, dictated and consolidated this policy, and the courses of the interim phase, namely CSE and Joint 16+, helped to deliver the subject from the formula which until the 1960s had given Modern Languages similar colorations to the classics.

The important recent developments within the evolution of the modern courses are the systems of a) self-accessing materials and b) pupil testing and profiling resources, already contained by the most ambitious courses and required of the rest, allowing a diagnostic assessment of learners' progress and forecasting the likely outcome for them in terms of examination success. These elements bond learners with their agenda in a way never before experienced.

Furthermore, inbuilt into the modern study courses are the dynamics to mobilize and explore all the four equally weighted language disciplines of SPEAKING, READING, LISTENING AND WRITING, to extend the classroom-based · methodology beyond the former teacher-generated didacticism into modern strategies of independent learning, peer tutoring, pair and group work etc., to employ all available technological supports like audio and video recorders, radio,

television, satellite-/telephone-and facsimile-communication and computer-based Information Technology, therefore even perhaps also electronic mail. The once dominating and rigid 'talk and chalk' methodology has given way to a flexible, multi-resourced and multi-activity based approach to the business of the classroom, in which the teacher and the learner are seen as more equal partners.

Even if the new objectives of 'communicative competence' have displaced those of exclusively grammatical competence, however, there is nothing to suggest that the dogged debate about the presence and importance of grammar to Modern Languages teaching has found a solution. Far from it, indeed! The fortunes of 'grammar', provisionally used here to indicate the use made by teachers of all or any metalinguistic analysis and particularly syntactic analysis in teaching, have been varied in the history of foreign language pedagogy. Within the experience of the researcher, the role of grammar, in the form in which it has just been described, has known two extremes. On the one hand, formerly, it was synonymous with language, in that language teaching was structured on grammar teaching and the learner's success in the subject was measured by the capacity to generate precise grammar, particularly in written exercises and often devoid of a wider context. On the other hand, latterly, there has been much less explicit teaching of grammar which, for the GCSE, could be implicitly gathered up with the learning of utilitarian phrases and expressions and 'reconstituted' in the learner's work. In this context, the learner's success has been measured by the ability to transact the business of encoding and decoding information, as much into and from spoken terms as into and from writing. However, the methodology curve has latterly taken a new direction, as grammar has assumed a raised profile in the context of the National Curriculum, though it has not been raised to its original peak status where it usurped language itself.

Decades of experimentation, as well as a change of emphasis from deductive to inductive learning (eg. Corder 1959, Wringe 1993), have resulted in a new insight about and a new respect for grammatical knowledge and understanding. This is no longer seen only as the matter that properly structures creative language, but it is acknowledged also as the matter that facilitates the decoding of language and determines correct comprehension (Johnstone in King and Boaks 1994). Some school students instinctively understand this. When questioned on the purpose of 'grammar', they attempt to articulate it as the common ground which enables "meaning intended" to correspond with "meaning comprehended" in any exercise which negotiates communication,

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regardless of the language skill in which that meaning is embedded. Communication can be carried out at a very fundamental level or it can reach ambitious heights according to the skills and designs of its participants. Language used in communication is, in its transmission, generated out of its author's mastery of lexis and syntax and shared in its full potential only if the receiver is able to operate at the same level with the capacity to use language productively as well as appropriately. The application of grammatical knowledge permits the unlimited potential for creative language-use, the formation of original language of all types and sustained accounts in speech or writing (Holmes in King and Boaks 1994). This rationale for grammar is clearly reflected in the philosophy of the National Curriculum which aspires towards encouraging the production of a higher status of foreign language acquisition on the part of its clientèle. Even so, the formula now officially advocated for the teaching of grammar is not the straightforward, logical prescription of the earlier grammar-translation times, when the conventional syllabus for Modern Languages was taught via the use of English! The National Curriculum policy, expressed in the D.E.S. proposal of October 1990, is clear on its priorities for the delivery of the agenda:

(i)   there should be a grammatical content which is provided implicitly, as an integral part of the teaching content, and taught by naturalistic methods (10.8), echoing primary practice:

"Learners of all abilities are much more likely to be able to grasp and work with grammatical structures if these are presented not through formal exposition but through demonstrations which make strong visual or aural impression" ... (9.17)

...

(ii)   the agenda, which is the target language, should also be delivered in the target language:

"It is evident that such demonstrations can quite naturally be carried out in the target language" (9.18) ...

"The natural use of the target language for virtually all communication is a sure sign of a good modern language course. Learners are enabled to see that the language is not only the object of study but also an effective medium for conducting the normal business of the classroom" (10.7).

(iii)   if necessary, and as a kind of concession, some brief summary of grammatical content may be made in English, in order to clarify and consolidate the matter taught:

"Teachers may nevertheless judge that a brief explanation in English ... would help understanding" (9.18)..... though the value of grammar notes, dictated by the teacher and written down by the learner, is held in some doubt (9.19) ...

The researcher became aware that the opportunity was right for the assumptions of the National Curriculum proposal for Modern Languages to be tried and tested, without prejudice, in the classrooms of her department over the three years preceding the foreseen inception in 1994 - (later postponed to 1995) - of the National Curriculum policy for Modern Languages in High School education. No research evidence had been offered by the Steering Committee to support the document's statements and tenets, such as those contained in the caveats already quoted in this chapter and summarised in the following equally unsupported claim:

"The twin approaches of exploring and being shown rather than being told and of involving learners actively in the process are most likely to lead to success."

(D.E.S/Welsh Office, October 1990 9.22 p.57)

Thus the experiment in National Curriculum teaching and learning methodology, in which the researcher involved her department, was designed in anticipation of an attempt to impose a national structure upon the Modern Languages curriculum in the High Schools. The absence of practical proof about the value and validity of this imposed structure and, on the other hand, the widespread reaction of doubt and anxiety which the news about methodological change aroused in many teachers, provided the challenge for research, which the author of this thesis found irresistible, into an area of fundamental importance to foreign languages teaching.

1.3   **Focus For The Present Research**

The need to reflect on practice was thus channelled into testing the methodology advocated in the National Curriculum policy, and thence into long standing but still relatively unresolved issues of pedagogy. In this way the researcher would become refreshed and remotivated for the final stage of her

career and equip herself, at the same time, to meet the new teaching era which was imminent. The exercise implied benefits for all who participated in it, because of the research challenge, its focus and its continuing relevance for practice.

It was anticipated at the outset that the relevant learners would respond to this work but also that the teaching staff would be brought together in a closer working relationship than before, to the general good of the department. In fact, the benefits for the teachers, and especially for the researcher, have been varied and there has been the opportunity to transcend the normality of the teaching brief in order to attempt an original exercise, in which one was script writer, director and editor and, ultimately, profit-maker. In addition, there was the thought that the reflective and researching teacher would perhaps succeed in leaving a footprint in the sand of subject knowledge and experience, even if only temporarily, and at least she would then know that she had made herself a part of its overall system. She would have availed herself of the occasion to defeat the everyday constraints which typify the hectic life of a teacher and usually prohibit reflection (Peck and Westgate 1994). Kyriacou (ibid) places this exercise of reflection in a realistic framework which coincides with the intention of this research project:

"Reflective teaching .... refers to an orientation towards one's own practice which is based on inquiry and problem solving." (p.3).

So, having fully alluded to the National Curriculum proposal of 1990 as the genesis of the action research to be undertaken, it remains necessary to re-emphasise the project as a longitudinal and contrastive study of classroom methodology, focusing on the delivery of the foreign language grammar. This has been placed as a piece of modern educational practice against a critical overview of the history of Modern Languages pedagogy and an appraisal of the phenomonon of language. The exercise was mobilised and sustained in the researcher's department over a period of three years, in which the Year Nine intake of 1991 was observed at work in the current GCSE context, taught, however, by the methods advocated in the National Curriculum proposal of 1990. This longitudinal methodological trial was seen as a well timed precursor to the mobilising of the official National Curriculum policy, which the department was originally required to have in place, in the form of the upgraded GCSE course, by September 1994.

The practical experiment in methodology was conducted with the School's 1991 intake sequentially, in year-group stages, over three years, ie. Years 9, 10 and 11. All ability ranges were involved, as will shortly be explained. Since the year groups were halved for time-tabling purposes, comparable groups of pupils were determined and two contrastive methodologies were applied. It was anticipated that all the department's teaching staff would contribute to the research. In this way, the researcher's potential subjectivity and the question of her agnosticism would be addressed.

The work done with pupils was co-ordinated in order to effect efficiency and consistency in assessment and analysis. Both French and German featured in the early stages of the research, because of the different natures of these two languages and their grammatical systems and because of the implications of these differences for the learner, for the teacher and for the question of grammatical teaching strategies.

Throughout the above-stated period of practice and observation, the progress of the pupils was monitored and their reactions and opinions were documented. The devices by which material and evidence were collected and registered included teachers' and pupils' questionnaires, audio and video recordings, teachers' and pupils' diaries, charts to provide for profiles, records, statements, appraisals, pursuits, plannings and overviews. Ultimately, the researcher held 18 research logs, compiled at half termly intervals. The pupils were tested formally and systematically and the test results were analysed in the light of the experiment in contrastive methodology. The analysis of the results has culminated in appraisal of the relevant eleventh year GCSE product.

The action research was structured upon practical classroom-based investigation of two feasible teaching approaches. The contrastive analysis which was reported throughout the three years of longitudinal study was enabled by the differentiating factor which may be seen to characterize the second of the two methods outlined below. Together the methods incorporated the attitudes expressed in the National Curriculum's intention for Modern Languages teaching, declared earlier as clauses 9.17; 9.18; 9.19; 10.7 and 10.8.

- The first teaching approach featured full use of the target language and relied upon the active presentation of the lesson agenda, with grammatical structures made implicit and acquired entirely inferentially.

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This is known in the action research and in this thesis as the GRAMMAR-IMPLICIT (or G-I) approach, otherwise as 'M', meaning 'Method' or M1.

- The second approach took the first approach as its base and then incorporated, that is added, grammatical teaching in the form of periodic and explicit structural summaries of grammar which had featured in the teacher's lesson agenda. These summaries were delivered in English and included formal written notes. In the research and in this thesis this approach is termed the GRAMMAR-EXPLICIT (or G-E) approach. The grammar summary which it contained is the FACTOR X which extends 'Method' as 'M' into 'M'+X or M2.

The question was being raised: In the two defined methodologies, which strategy of grammar teaching enabled the more positive results for the teacher and especially the pupil?

Undoubtedly, the research was intended to benefit the department in which it was centred as well as to explore a general issue and to derive generalisable insights. It first facilitated a perspective on Modern Languages teaching in High School education. Secondly, it afforded a more immediate understanding of the value to methodology of grammar-teaching by exposing which of two mooted and now tested strategies of grammar-delivery might be best suited to the needs and abilities of pupils learning a foreign language to age sixteen in current times. This important point echoes again the lack of evidence and background offered on teaching method in the National Curriculum plan for Modern Languages, alluded to earlier in this chapter.

1.4 Preliminary Background Issues

It is important in this introductory chapter to consider certain practical and ethical issues surrounding the research project. Howard and Sharp (1983) advise on the factors which are relevant to such an evaluation. These fall into categories as outlined below:

(A) **The Practicalities of the work were:**

(i) **The feasibility of the research plan.**
There is, after all, "little purpose in attempting a full evaluation of a topic unless the research to which it leads is feasible" (ibid p.33). The criteria which prove

feasibility, as defined by Howard and Sharp, are in place in this project and evidenced by the points (ii), (iii) and (iv) which follow.

(ii)   Availability and access to data and information

These have been assured, since the active research has been set in the researcher's own work arena; the historical study has been resourced by a number of library services.

(iii)   The opportunity to undertake the research

The opportunity to pursue this particular research design was positive and arguably obligatory, since it was perceived as a trialling exercise which anticipated the National Curriculum.   It was naturally embedded in the researcher's and colleagues' own work brief and mobilised by the school's timetabling system and curriculum policy.

(iv)   The time needed to complete longitudinal research was available as the time in which the researcher and her departmental colleagues took their GCSE groups through their three year examination course 1991-1994.

(B)   **The technical skills** which were required were

(i)   classroom teaching skills, particularly the ability to focus these in the cause of the defined methodological exercise;

(ii)   research skills, which have been derived in part from previous study and in part from dedicated reading, appropriate to this task.

(C)   **The risks involved**. Part of the story of this research project may be conceived as the risk-related development which the study underwent at intervals during its course. There were more risks than were at first anticipated, and they are all explained in later chapters, as the full development of the experiment is disclosed. At this point it suffices to report that the project survived all the difficulties that beset it. It ended as it had begun, loyal to the intention of its inventor and applied in practice with integrity. The composite exercise generated abundant data relevant with its definition, so that analysis could be undertaken and deductions could be made.

(D)   **Justifying the Research Project**

At a time when critics and writers, such as Hawkins (1981), Lodge (1990), Wilkins (1994), Roberts (1994), Buck (T.E.S. advertisement 15.03.91) and agencies like H.M.I., National Curriculum Council, NFER and CILT .... were commenting on the situation of formal language in Modern Languages practice in

High Schools, the researcher's own department was concerned about an apparent decline in the state of its pupils' self-confidence relating to the subject and about their observed inability to redirect the foreign language beyond the prescribed formulae of their courses or the use of set phrases. The frustrations of the majority and the poor performance of many were held by the researcher's department to be the product of modern teaching methodologies in which grammar, again understood in the general sense of syntactic structures, was given at best covert treatment with little recognised importance in the overall agenda. Not even through native language study does the contemporary learner necessarily develop the explicit grammatical knowledge which arguably might support his efforts with a foreign language. Pupils were calling for a response to their dilemma, which the teacher felt obligated to make.

(E)   **Ethical Questions**
Accepting that it was part of her brief to design and conduct her research experiment with responsibility and integrity and without compromising or putting at risk the best interests and prospects for the success of her pupils, the researcher was pleased to encounter no ethical objections to the experiment in contrastive teaching styles, on which she embarked. Indeed, both of those teaching styles intended for use and for analysis in the action plan were closely related and to be found currently in many schools as the methods accompanying the GCSE. Neither pupil-group would thus be disadvantaged *prima facie* by the use of one approach as opposed to the other. The research plan was accepted by all with an open mind. There was no question raised as to the possible superiority of one teaching style over the other, of the two which were used in the classroom research. Therefore no doubts were expressed about the possible privation or inconvenience imposed on either of the two factions of pupils involved.

Also, by legitimising the methodological trial with the school's Senior Management and with the parents of the pupils concerned in the work, and by clarifying the three year proposal to the pupils themselves, the researcher provided her research with the authority that it needed at the outset.

1.5   **Summary**
Finally, the two phases of the research, that is to say the historical review and the longitudinal classroom-based inquiry, are intended to unite contextual understanding with benefits of enlightenment through reflection. The former

was seen as underpinning an experience which was to be productive and satisfying in its own right. However, the broader value of this research project was to reside in exploring a methodological issue of wider significance, in order to make a real and valid claim to knowledge on an area of foreign languages pedagogy which has hitherto received very little systematic attention.

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2.0 CHAPTER TWO : THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Foreword

The action research in the teaching of a foreign language which is reported in this thesis may be seen to respond to two challenges for methodological reform occurring more than a hundred years apart. These two challenges are, in essence, one and the same, however, and the researcher's need to address them suggests that the problem which prompted the call for reform at the end of the last century persists even now and that, in reality, little has changed in the search for an effective teaching methodology which would satisfy Modern Languages critics. The earlier of the two exhortations alluded to is that delivered by Wilhelm Viëtor in "Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren" (1882); ("Language Teaching must turn about"), which represented a call for change and improvement in the methods of teaching a foreign language. If Viëtor (in Hawkins 1981) rallied against grammar-translation and the ingrained perception that the teaching-learning business was preoccupied with "letters" instead of "sounds", as he expressed it, then it is much to be regretted that, in current times more than a century removed from then, the in-vogue 'communicative' methodology provokes reactions of dissatisfaction and disapproval through incurring disappointment in its turn. Some considerable upgrading of this methodology is deemed necessary if it is to realise the full promise which it was earlier perceived to have. Just as Viëtor earlier attacked the grammar-translation method with the threat "Death to rules and sentences!" ("Tod den Regeln und Sätzen!"), so now, for instance, Tony Roberts (1994), a forceful voice among a number of contemporary critics, (whose ideas will be commented upon in this and subsequent chapters), sums up the continuing disaffection over methodology, and arrives at a criticism of the currently employed communicative method as follows:

> "The translation of near-gibberish into French (grammar-translation) or the drilling of patterns divorced from meaning" (audio-lingualism, a subsequent development) "are no worse, in this sense, than the memorisation of half understood dialogues under the currently fashionable heading of 'communication'".

He goes on, and it is important for this argument that his words are followed through:

"The cognitive behaviourism of earlier days has been resurrected in a new - if more covert - form of social behaviourism which programmes pupils to operate in set contexts - but not outside: ie. which encourages them to *learn* the language presented rather than to *learn from it* in a way that allows the expression of personal meaning". (Roberts 1994; Occasional Paper No.1, p.7).

At this time of writing, the researcher is both witness to and participant in the newest methodological development in the evolution to date of Modern Languages education. History is at present being made as the currently familiar GCSE in Modern Languages fails in its mission to provide fully for the needs of the learner, that is if Roberts and others are right in their assessment of it as having by contrast "dictated" those needs instead of simply serving them (ibid, p.9).

Yet the failure of the communicative vogue is not perceived as entire. The best of the GCSE system has been incorporated in the essence of the unfolding National Curriculum, in which are placed the renewed hopes and aspirations for future successful Modern Languages pedagogy. As has been explained in the *previous chapter, the researcher has seen this moment of methodological* transition or adjustment and realignment as a time for joining in the debate and making a practical inquiry into teaching methods through experimentation, as a means of contributing to the knowledge that otherwise already informs her work. The actual exercise of action research entailed in this perception receives full attention in its own section of the thesis later.

In building up to the literature review as the main purpose of this present chapter, the researcher looks forward to examining the tradition of Modern Languages teaching in terms of background reading. This will not only shed light on the movement being accessed for the action research but it will also place that inquiry against its proper background and in appropriate context, therefore. The reading has of necessity taken a number of directions, producing four principal zones of inquiry and information, namely:

1.   the developments in METHODOLOGY, and the question of GRAMMAR TEACHING

2.	the contribution to an understanding of languages pedagogy of various areas of LINGUISTICS, including the study of language as the natural endowment of the human being

3.	the processes of first language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) learning; the twin principles of acquisition and learning in relation to the L2

4.	ideas on ACTION RESEARCH:	its methods and importance; a rationale in anticipation of the researcher's action research project.

However, in order to satisfy the intention of this thesis, which is to establish the relationship of grammar to language learning, it must be made clear that the question of grammar will be pursued through all the aspects of the literature review.	The methods by which learners learn, acquire, internalise, apply grammar to their utterances and create expression and meaning, are all commented upon by the writers and researchers in common and are crucial to the action research which forms the apex to this thesis.	Moreover, since the action research becomes a relevant part of the historical research, the latter may itself be seen as an experiential journey which has prepared the researcher for the action exercise.	Indeed, in the collaborative post-conference report published by CILT in 1994, entitled **GRAMMAR!**, Lid King writes in his introduction of such an experiential journey and sets out the collaborators' rationale on grammar in Modern Languages practice in coincidence with the intention of this thesis:	"We don't want to go back to the past but we need to move on from here" (p.7).	The researcher agrees. Modern Languages teaching is at a crossroads.	The National Curriculum with its challenging ideas on method, involving target language use and the delivery of 'implicit' as opposed to 'explicit' grammar, has taken up its position directly ahead of the modern languages classroom and the present time.	Given the climate of national educational reform, which targets improved standards and a uniform education for learners, the National Curriculum and its philosophies must be considered inescapable.	At this curriculum crossroads, there is no choice but to go straight on, for there are no convenient policy alternatives in either side-road.	It is precisely the pedagogic implications for the Modern Languages learner of this enforced move ahead that the researcher has examined in action and reports in this thesis.

For the sake of clarity and convenience, the literature review will dismantle the interface of the complex relationships ... of grammar ... to method ... to linguistics ... to language ownership ... to Modern Languages teaching tradition

in history ... and discuss the background reading in discrete sections, in the order alluded to earlier and enlarged upon here:

1(a) The historical development of Modern Languages teaching from its known origins to the present day, as the background to the researcher's action research project.

(b) The issue and importance of grammar in relation to language-learning and its place, therefore, in the teaching of a language.

2(a) The field of linguistics as a discipline contributing to our understanding of language learning processes: grammar as a constituent part of this field.

(b) The concept of context as an organiser; the relevance of language learning capacity;

3(a) The processes of the teaching and the learning of L1 and L2.

(b) The implicit and explicit means of L2 (FL) teaching and learning; possibilities of imitating L1 methods in L2 practice.

4(a) Action Research: a description of action research; a rationale for performing 'AR' and for extending its uptake - a case for the researching classroom teacher.

(b) The reality of action research: the issues surrounding it and the benefits available for the participants.

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│        ZONE II          │
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│           ZONE III              │
│     TEACHING/LEARNING           │
│     L1, L2 APPROACHES           │
│     G-E; G-I STRATEGIES         │
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│           ZONE IV               │
│       A RATIONALE for           │
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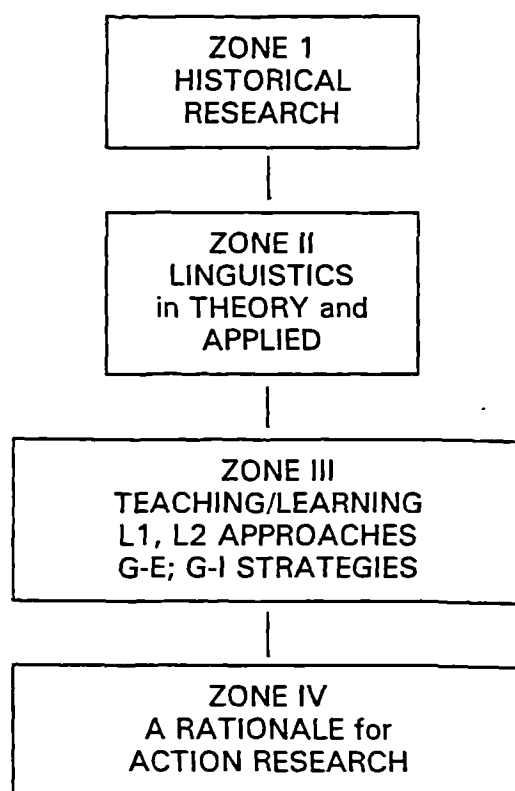
2.2   The Review Of The Literature : ZONE I
Context : The Historical Background To The Teaching Of Modern Languages

2.2.1 Introduction

Of the many writers who have recounted the history of Modern Languages teaching methods with its movements of change and development, perhaps few have been as clear or as explicit as Eric Hawkins (1981). Hawkins gives a full survey of Modern Languages pedagogy and asks all the important questions relating to the place of Modern Languages on the school's curriculum in our country and to the methods for the application of this classroom subject. He deals with the 'Why?', 'What?' and 'How?' factors, which have interested others also, notably Stevick (1986). Out of his extensive knowledge of the contemporary school system and of what goes on in it where the subject of Modern Languages is concerned, Hawkins explores and counsels on important issues : the principles of 'A Modern Language for All?' and 'A Modern Language for Life?' But which language? By which teaching style? For what purposes, now and later? In what relationship with the mother tongue? To what extent the use of the target language?

Hawkins shows deep concern over the immediately current situation of Modern Languages in schools and, on behalf of the extended and apparently unstoppable quest for effective and acceptable practice, he makes recommendations for the road ahead. His survey of 'panaceas from the past', converging with his analysis of current methodological explorations, clearly defines the historical background to Modern Languages and leads him to offer insights into the ways in which foreign languages are internalized by the learner. This, if it is at all understood by teachers, affects their teaching styles to the good.

In his 1981 book Hawkins puts a perspective on Modern Languages in schools in terms of the three dimensions of time - present, future and past - in which the methodological development has been and will be witnessed. He deals with the factor of grammar and its relationship with methodology in the context of the changing teaching trends and fashions over time (ibid and in King and Boaks, 1994). He advises also for the judicious employment of the target language as the natural medium for the delivery of lessons and of general classroom business. The challenges of the National Curriculum become the current extension of this account. With this Hawkins seems to be directly addressing

the needs of the researcher, whose action research is centred in the arguments which he himself explores.

It is Hawkins, therefore, who is first referenced here for the purposes of an appraisal of the Modern Languages teaching tradition in this country. Yet he takes the situation of the seventeenth century as his point of departure, not earlier. For this reason it would be appropriate and necessary to turn to several other writers now, in order to gain understanding about Modern Languages teaching from the point of its inception during the times of early Latin and Greek primacy, before returning once again to Hawkins and others who prepare an itinerary through Modern Languages practice from the seventeenth century onwards. Writers who access the more distant past include W.F. Mackey (1965) and R.H. Robins (1967), with some complementary insights from Radford, in Goodson (ed 1985).

2.2.2 Early Greek and Roman origins

Modern Languages pedagogy and the European tradition of linguistics owe much to Greek and Roman philosophy on language, and a researching student's understanding of this owes much in turn to the writings of linguistic historians such as those mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

From the historians it is learnt that the very term 'grammar', central to language and central to this research, sprang from the Greek word 'grammatikos', meaning 'one who understands letters' (Robins 1967, p.13). The early Greek grammatical descriptions became the bases for modern world standard grammars. In the beginning, according to Robins (1967), Dionysius Thrax (c.100BC) produced a grammar : Techne grammatike, in which he distinguished eight word classes (verb; particle; article; pronoun; preposition; adjective; adverb; conjunction). Later, the Romans, having taken over the Hellenistic world, established Latin superiority in the western half of the Empire in opposition to Greek dominance in the eastern half. Where Latin was used, it was the language of administrative business, law and social advancement. Where Greek was used, it was the language of literature and philosophy. Greek was studied by the Romans as second language or foreign language. The Romans engaged Greek tutors for this purpose and kept Greek-speaking slaves and servants in their households, through whom they could access the language (Mackey p.141). With the expansion of the Roman Empire, however, Latin

became the international language of the Western World, the language of Church and State and eventually the sole language of learning.

The first serious Latin writer on linguistics was Varro. Some of his original 25 volumes of grammar are still in existence today and are relevant to the modern way of looking at linguistic science, since he divides his study of language into three sections : etymology, morphology and syntax. According to Robins (1967), therefore, Varro was the early Saussure, expounding on 'langue' and 'parole', on inflexional and derivational formation (p.50).

From these origins, descriptive Latin grammar established the basis of language study in later Antiquity and the Middle Ages, before becoming the framework for the traditional language education in the modern world (Robins 1967, Radford 1985). The work of the Greek grammarian Priscian, specialising in phonetics, morphology and syntax and culminating in the grammatical model based on word and paradigm, echoed the work of Dionysius Thrax and in particular likewise disclosed eight parts of speech. In the matter of verbs and tenses, Priscian had been influenced by Varro and the Stoics but he failed to equal them in the matter of grammar. Even so, Priscian's grammar manuscripts formed the basis of the Latin grammar and of the linguistic philosophy which was applied in medieval times. The analysis of Latin resulting from these developments served as a grammatical theory for eight centuries (Radford 1985) and as the foundation of Latin teaching up to the 1960s and 1970s (Robins 1967). At this point it played an influential role in the development of the modern European languages and affected the movement of reform, which aimed to update and make relevant the content and the methodological approach associated with language courses delivered in schools.

It is not unusual for teachers of certain generations, for example the researcher's own, to refer to and draw from their past study of ancient or classical Latin. Some classically educated people, though fewer than with Latin, can resource their thinking from their past study of ancient or classical Greek. Greek was less available in the grammar schools of modern times, since its relative demise in the Middle Ages and in spite of its re-flourish in the Renaissance. In medieval times, the monasteries, abbeys, churches and universities used Latin as the language of learning and reinforced the concept of linguistics through the study of Latin grammar (Robins 1967; Radford 1985). Significantly, medieval modistic linguistics concentrated on matters of grammar theory, largely to the neglect of

pronunciation, although a number of classical grammarians included the treatment of phonetics in their work (Robins 1967 p.78). In what was arguably becoming a tradition, eight items of grammar were identified in the work of the classical grammarians. These were: *noun; verb; participle; pronoun; adverb; conjunction; preposition; interjection.* It was also deemed to be a matter of importance whether or not an item was declinable or conjugable.

The evolution of linguistic awareness through the ancient or classical languages encouraged the breakthrough of new lines of linguistic thought (Robins p.96). The fifteenth century saw the appearance of the first Spanish grammar manual, followed a century later by the appearance of French and Italian counterparts. Such linguistic developments were part and parcel of a nationalistic movement based in increased territorial awareness and pride. By the sixteenth century, French was systematically studied in England. The climate for this had been prepared by the legacy to upper class society of French for communication purposes, made by the episode of the Norman Conquest and by the spate of popularity and importance given to the French language in Elizabethan society (Radford 1985). Notably J. Palsgrave's *L'esclarissement de la langue francoyse* (1530) dealt with French orthography, pronunciation and a very detailed study of grammar. Punctuation and spelling were also taken seriously. Indeed linguistics became a matter of quite strong controversy, as the whole field was explored.

Linguistic awareness was extended through the growth of travel, tourism, commerce and trade. As all of these activities opened up the world, civilizations were encountered and their languages were uncovered. Marco Polo's travels through Asia and China, the Jesuit missions through Asia and Japan are only two episodes out of history which help to account for the broadening disclosure of languages in variety (Robins 1967, p.104). China itself exercised a profound interest in linguistics. This, in its turn, helped to promote and develop the perceived importance of the grammatical 'science' of language, especially in terms of lexicography and phonology. The existence of dictionaries in China from the second century A.D. denotes the extent of the importance accorded to the study of language in this culture. Dictionaries were more widely distributed and used and accordingly they became more and more sophisticated and linguistically explicit.

Ultimately, developments in printing enabled the potential for growth in writing and the availability of texts of all kinds. They opened the way ahead for ever

better dictionaries and grammars, and later, as Mackey (1965) explains, for Greek and Latin classical literature texts, which also inevitably became the focus of the attention of the grammar analyst. Because of the interest invested in the classical texts, both Greek and Latin became known as the classical languages. Then, because the study of their grammars became an end in itself, these languages systematically turned into the so-called 'dead' languages (Mackey 1965).

This implied that all the former developments were gradually undone or that they fell into disuse: the importance of spelling, which had been standardized, the evolved system of *phonetic spelling, which illustrated pronunciation;* the use of the language in its spoken and written forms for the purposes of communicating *more widely than with only the clerics with whom such communication started;* the use of the language as the medium of academic learning (Mackey p.141(. Through the example of the developments which had taken place with Latin, however, and perhaps because of the decline of its influence, room was made for the European languages to be explored and experimented with. This meant that their compositions and functions would be analysed and declared.

The increase in grammatical and linguistic awareness had unavoidable implications for tuition later, as the domain of teaching developed and spread, and in particular the teaching of the European languages. Just as the teaching of Latin had reduced to become the teaching of Latin grammar per se, so also was this the treatment given to the teaching of the living European languages. Indeed, the route to the further development of the European languages appears very much the same as that taken with Latin. Significantly, as in the Romans' pursuit of the Greek language, the starting point in all cases was the employment of private tutors in the home and the reinforcing of their mechanical tuition through the day-to-day contributions of native-speaker domestic staff. All of the languages tried out during these times were doomed to become the victims of a rigid, barren methodology. The main justification for their importance was the statement that has been used over and over again and is still going strong : they were perceived to provide an ideal training in mental discipline and the power of reason (Mackey 1965).

From the sixteenth century to the present day, despite the agitation for reform made by Robert Ascham and Montaigne in the sixteenth century and by John Locke in the seventeenth century (Richards and Rogers 1986), numerous

grammars of the English language were written and all were based on the Latin system of description. Of this description, certain aspects were regarded as being of particular importance :

orthography, the pronunciation values of the letters of the alphabet

etymology, morphology, parts of speech, forms and inflections

syntax and prosody, structures; rules of versification

punctuation, a further very subtle definer of meaning.

2.2.3 The search for the good method

Hawkins (1981, 1994) describes languages teaching in the seventeenth century as one of three turning points in the history of its development and "remarkable" on account of the widespread interest that society took in languages at that time. The initiatives of this era included various versions of shorthand and codes. Some of the personalities of the day were Samuel Pepys and, for Hawkins, the incomparable Comenius. Throughout the Tudor times French and Latin had been studied as the main languages. With the special, official roles that each of these two languages played - French was the official language of the judiciary and Latin was the language of religion and the 'lingua franca' of Europe - England was seen to be a trilingual state. There were more than 150 different manuals for French at that time, and private tutors delivered the teaching of French to the aristocracy. The new middle classes could acquire French in a number of private academies, and the grammar schools of the day taught Latin.

One of the most important features of languages teaching in mid-century was the influence of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) on methodology. He had pressed for a reappraisal of the prescriptive, deductive teaching approach and advocated an inductive method instead. (Moreover, his name was associated with the expanding world of phonetics and phonology). The principle of the inductive teaching/learning style will be examined in closer detail later in this thesis, but Hawkins meanwhile explains the process as being firstly the observation of the teaching matter in its natural state, then the induction of the rules which seem to hold the matter together, or make it the way it is. Comenius had contended that all languages are easier to learn by practice rather than by rules, but that the rules assist, strengthen, and consolidate the knowledge derived from practice. 'Impression learning' had been a feature of the Latin and French classrooms of Tudor times. Comenius in the mid century and John Locke later (circa 1690) expressed a belief in the exposure of learners to the foreign

language being learnt. In this he declared himself a follower of the process of immersion (Richards and Rogers 1986).

The fleeting mention made above of John Amos Comenius (1592-1671) does not do justice to that great scholar and his work. His influence has survived the three and a half centuries which separate him from modern times, yet his name, his teachings, his method design, his philosophy take their place again in the contemporary world of Modern Languages practice, which is now endowed with a number of Comenius centres, established to encourage and effect good teaching method in this currently new era of reform. Hawkins describes Comenius' contribution to immersion learning, his advocating of target language use and his textbooks which pioneered the "methodus novissima", visual method books, which encouraged the use of target language in response to pictorial stimuli.

Mackey (1965) and Richards and Rogers (1986) record the sense of urgency with which, in the mid seventeenth century, such teaching styles were sought, in the hope, not least that the matter of grammar would be successfully addressed. Mackey, in particular, observes that the new courses and course books of the period attempted the picture - narrative method, which in itself implied and induced the use of the target language as the medium for the teaching and the learning. As any long-term practitioner knows, the technique of 'language through pictures' held its place in modern languages pedagogy for many years thereafter and spasmodically reappeared. It is used on occasion even nowadays to stimulate action and boost performance in any of the four language arts, but particularly in Speaking and Writing. However, the good intention to apply target language flexibly and creatively deteriorated and was replaced by the technique of question and answer in the foreign language. At this point, Mackey (1965) explains, the seeds of the Modern Languages methodology debate had been sown; the search for good methods, which would enable effective and successful practice to take place, was actively underway. Looking systematically ahead at the developments which took place, Mackey isolates stages which appeared significant and, like Hawkins, he attaches much importance to John Locke and his legacy of ideology about immersion-related techniques.

In the meantime, thanks to the study of old Sanskrit, and as a result of the work of Indian linguists and their influence upon the European language and linguistic

philosophy, the semantic relations between component words and their sentences were analysed as part of language study. This activity was topical in the language debate of the time, bridging the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Robins p.133). It became clear that sentences were more than the sum of their juxtaposed words, that words as isolates were of only relative importance and not in themselves a sufficient base for the determination and discussion of meaning. For the Indian linguists, a sentence was an indivisible entity, functioning to convey meaning in a flash, in the manner of a picture.

It is interesting that this theory was to have a role to play in the outlook on method in the Reform Movement later, and appear as part of the present rationale on methodology, in the context of the GCSE and of the now current National Curriculum. The researcher would argue here, that whole-phrase or whole-sentence familiarity builds up to add a considerable language dimension, and gives the impression of some tone and reality to a person's performance in language, whether this be in his use of a native or a foreign language. Youngsters learning their foreign languages for GCSE purposes are encouraged to internalize whole items of expression in order to serve the needs of their communicative brief. The National Curriculum requires a creative input in addition and has recalled some prudent grammar teaching, and by implication an elevated interest in semantics, as the means to this end. In the context of Sanskrit, from which the preceding comment on the modern approach sprang, it is important to point out that the linguistic aspects of phonetics, phonology and grammar were deemed to be all interbound, in the spirit of the name of this old language : 'Sanskrit' meaning 'held together' (Collins Outsize Dictionary 1980). The interest in Sanskrit expanded to generate an interest in linguistics and grammar, in association with the Indo-European languages. This was later taken up in Germany in the nineteenth century by the Brothers Schlegel and the Brothers Grimm and was influenced also by the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835).

In the quest for a languages pedagogy, the development by the later stages of the eighteenth century produced a method which once again was structured on the skills of translation and in particular of prose translation (Mackey 1965). This implied the requirement for the accurate application of grammar. The journey full circle to a focus on grammar, that producer of perceived ills from which escape is inevitably sought, happens in the history of languages teaching time and again. The persistent claim that grammar makes to the spotlight of

Modern Languages practice entails the study of linguistic science, which occupies a later stage of this section and is argued more fully in Zone II. Just as the teaching of Latin grammar had become an end in itself, replacing the teaching of the Latin language and discontinuing the use of Latin as the medium, so also the teaching of Modern Languages suffered the same treatment. In this period and in all grammar-dominated periods of Modern Languages teaching, the subject has been doomed to become the victim of a moribund methodology. The main justification for this methodology in foreign languages continued to be that which was noted earlier, namely that it was a valuable aid to intellectual stimulation.

In Mackey (1965 p.143), we are informed that the beginning of the 19th century saw a reaction activated by James Hamilton (1764-1829) and Toussaint-Langenscheidt (circa 1800), who encouraged a return to inductive grammar teaching through the study of foreign language texts. Unfortunately the texts which they selected for use with their method were too difficult. The project was frustrated, therefore, until Seidenstücker (1811) compiled a manual of simple texts based on grammar structures. Others then followed suit, notably Ahn and Ollendorf (circa 1840). Any Modern Languages practitioner, who has employed this approach, will agree that there is a problem with text selection. Quite simply, the judgments on text quality, level of difficulty and suitability made by the experienced adult often conflict and contrast with those made by the inexperienced learner. However, Seidenstücker's principle was effectively revised, refined and adjusted by Karl Plötz between the years 1879 and 1881 and skewed once again in favour of the primacy of grammar. It became the method which dominated language teaching in Europe for some time, even though reactionary courses were awaiting the right moment to make their challenge.

Plötz's formula described a two-fold process, in which rules and paradigms were learnt by rote and then exercised in sentences for translation into and out of the foreign language. This was the essence of the grammar-translation method, which Claude Marcel (circa 1867) and Lambert Sauveur (circa 1874) found suspect and fought hard to replace. Their substitute method was one which was structured on the comprehension of texts, abundant listening, reading, speaking and writing (Mackey 1965 p.144). Clearly, these reformers were asking for a methodological approach which anticipated the more modern twentieth century courses and agendas, even though there is nothing in Mackey

(1965) that implies that Marcel and Sauveur had the prescriptive style of training used in the current GCSE in mind. The earlier 'Joint 16+' might have corresponded more closely with what they had envisaged. However, the presence of grammar had been so long entrenched in the historical developments and fortunes of language teaching that there was difficulty in reducing its status. To conceal it, or to remove it, or to try to ignore it, required the practitioner to practise without a structure which served the needs of teachers and learners alike. It comes as no real surprise that in 1874 Sauveur, though he agreed with Marcel's principle of language teaching as a four-arts-approach, nevertheless effected a compromise on it by returning to it the components of grammar and translation as consolidators. This was in spite of the work that was being done in some private schools in the natural method advocated by Marcel, and in contradiction of the grammar-translation principle of Plötz, Ahn and Ollendorf (Mackey 1965 p.144).

2.2.4 The Great Reform in Modern Languages methodology

Eric Hawkins (1981 and 1994) describes the Reform Movement (1880 to 1914) as the second of "three great turning points" in the historical perspective of grammar teaching, the first one having occurred in the seventeenth century, featuring the mood of the Renaissance and the work of John Amos Comenius and John Locke (in King and Boaks 1994, p.119). This episode has already been visited in this chapter, whereas the third turning point, occurring in the 1960s and 1970s, will be absorbed as an episode emerging from the Reform. In the Reform, the battle that Comenius had fought, for the teaching of language rather than the teaching of grammar, had to be fought, albeit by others, all over again, since grammar, having been re-introduced as a reinforcing agent, had inevitably taken over once again (Radford 1985).

The movement was heralded in England by the Clarendon Report (1864) and the Taunton Report (1868) which publicised assessments on the work in schools. Within the Modern Language Reform Movement, teachers of German exerted the greatest influence at first and were instrumental in eventually establishing the Modern Languages Association in 1892. The strong anti-German prejudice of the day activated against the success of the Association and its work, however, and by the time of the outbreak of the First World War, which took the young practitioners of the new method out of their classrooms, the methodological setback was serious. Hawkins, meanwhile, (1994 p.115) highlights particularly important features of the Reform as being : a) Sweet's

(1899) argument for 'the living philology' or the teaching of the spoken language and b) using the medium of the target language in a teaching mode called the Direct Method. The Direct Method would be structured on objects and activities which stimulated meaningful dialogue. Edison's phonograph, invented and made public in 1878, the new science in phonetics and Sweet, as the leading phonetician of the age : man, machine and cognitive system conspired to realise in practice the logical theory of learning through the ear, as arguably infants learn their mother tongue (Hawkins 1994). The skill or art of listening received increased attention and was supported by the application of the new International Phonetics Alphabet.

Perhaps there was hope after all, that the nineteenth century would bequeath to the twentieth century a much more robust, more acceptable and more practically effective approach to Modern Languages teaching than that with which the century had opened. At that time (Radford 1985) French had won its challenge to be regarded as a school subject on equal terms with the classics, thanks to the commitment and influence of Doctor Thomas Arnold (1795-1842). Status had been lost, however, for a number of reasons : lack of qualified teachers, low pay, notorious classroom indiscipline, insufficient time, poor conditions, lack of interest and motivation among the learners. ... Modern Languages was seen more and more as a pursuit for inferior intellects. Neglect of the subject in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge completed the inevitable condemnation of Modern Languages at this time (Radford p.208) and perhaps added to the difficulty that was experienced by the linguistic reformers in their attempt to establish a respectable status for their subject at the close of the nineteenth century.

The Frenchman Gouin, publishing in 1880 L'art d' enseigner et d'étudier les langues, had great influence in England, Germany and the U.S.A. His ideas were the germ of the Direct Method. In the way that Mackey (1965) depicts Gouin's philosophy, one is aware of that linguist's modernity. It seems that the language learning approach to which Modern Languages education aspires nowadays, existed in Gouin's objectives more than a century ago. Like Humboldt, he was interested in the psychology of language learning and the principles of the language learning process : the association of ideas; visualisation; learning through the senses; the principles of play and activity in familiar and everyday contexts. For Gouin (Richardson 1983), the sentence was the important language unit or entity and sentences should necessarily be

acquired in order to explain activity. In the learning process language should be introduced to the senses in the order of ear, eye, mouth. To this end, a vocabulary of 8,000 words was deemed a reasonable resource. The work of Gouin anticipated the work of Viëtor (1882) in every way. The earlier justifications of logic and analysis gave way to the justifications of the need for active language use per se, which would be learnt out of textbooks and through exclusive target language application as a means of "immersion". The ultimate goal was the primacy of the spoken word (Radford 1985).

Otto Jespersen (1904) has shed further light on the Reform Movement. In his work he draws from Petersen (1870) to describe the persistent method of Petersen's time as artificial and in need of being replaced by a more natural one. He agrees with Herbert Spencer's (circa 1860) cited opinion on grammar teaching, as being an intensely stupid custom, since words on their own are meaningless and atrophy, and grammar on its own is only drudgery. To place grammar and words together for translation purposes is an unfruitful torment (Jespersen 1904 p.124). Like Marcel, Gouin, Sweet and Viëtor before the turn of the century, Jespersen advocates the teaching of phonetics by which to enhance pronunciation and lend credibility, sound being crucial to authenticity. He also regrets the paucity of time allocated to languages teaching, making impossible any prospect of quasi natural language acquisition or even "the acquisition of a proper linguistic feeling". The place of grammar in the sequence of an effective method should be as the final stage consolidator after the language has been made familiar. Even then, the rules should be put forward inductively. Children should be encouraged to work out their own patterns in order to understand the mechanics of language. The use of analogy would help them to apply structure. "Never tell children anything they can find out for themselves" (p.127). Clearly, Jespersen was confident that learners have the learning capacity with which to access language naturally.

The Reform Movement emerged in response to Viëtor's rallying call (Hawkins 1982) cited earlier, and to the movement "Quoqusque Tandem" (Cannot we put an end to this?). The Reform was the outcome of the agitations of many potent educators. It therefore embraced the best pedagogical ideas of the times, which had been amalgamated for the purpose of upturning the old regime with its close connections with the earlier teaching of the classical languages. The new vision of method was that it should advocate the skill of communicating with natives, the reading of foreign authors, the discovering and exploring of other cultures.

Flexibility in the application of the actual language was the intended goal, an activity far removed from the logic-or puzzle-training of the mind. Yet the mind would, after all, receive a conditioning, for the learner would learn to observe, classify, deduce, conclude, reflect and apply (Jespersen 1904). The vision was that languages should be learnt for life, not for examinations.

The spirit of the Reform period was thus very similar to the spirit of the movements of the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in terms of the importance that was attached to communication and to creativity. Jespersen advocated poetry, which is strongly in fashion today, also "stretching", differentiation, the use of the target language as the lesson medium and inductive grammar tuition, all of which are aspects of the National Curriculum action plan of the 1990s. Echoes of Comenius and his reform work in the seventeenth century are sensed in Jespersen's recommendation of language production based on picture-stories, on re-narration as the composite technique and on question/answer practice. In not underestimating the difficulty of the learner's task in studying a foreign language by these methods, Jespersen emphasised the importance of motivation for all concerned in the practice. And the more one studies the history of modern languages teaching, the more one might become persuaded that the single most important contributor, one which is more important than method itself, is *motivation*. It may be added that not all methods are equally well appointed and some combine with the teacher's personality more effectively to produce a better result for a better motivated learner. It seems to the researcher that the scholars who instigated and inspired the Reform Movement of the forty or so years bridging the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, were prophetic in their understanding of the subject's needs and required composition. For even if they did not establish a long lasting arena for the practice of modern languages in their own time, they nevertheless appear to have provided a base and philosophy for the National Curriculum (NC). Current NC policy houses some of the most purposeful of the earlier Reform principles.

In some respects, therefore, Modern Languages practice stands on the same spot as it did a century ago and, in 1904, Jespersen was witnessed making the very same complaint. The National Curriculum policy for Modern Languages which is now in place for the foreseeable future has yet to prove its usefulness. At this time of writing it is making its initial run and the first tests at Key Stage 4 will be held in 1998. However, it will, of necessity, take time to approve or

disapprove of a method of teaching and learning which is based on the skills of language learning through application, with all that that implies for the target language use, the banishment of first language intervention (Richards and Rogers 1986) and an inductive grammar approach. The success of this precept, to use Hawkins' expression (1994), would imply the emphatic denial of the tenacious Grammar- and Grammar-Translation Methods, the demise of which has long been sought. The fact that 'A' Level agendas are being currently restructured on the same principles and joined by increasing choices of vocational languages courses, suggests that policy makers are determined to capture, and put in place for the long term, solutions which have so long eluded them. Perhaps the response to Viëtor's rallying call to start afresh has now, at last, been articulated.

An essential difference between the Reform of the late nineteenth century and the Reform of the late twentieth century lies in the advantage 'enjoyed' by the latter in its being a product of governmental order. By the law of the land, as it were, Britain now has an action-plan for Modern Languages which goes far beyond the unendorsed method promotion of the earlier activists. It could still fail, if teachers, learners and schools do not commit themselves adequately to it. Only time will tell, but the difficulties, which Jespersen perceived in the first reform attempt, remain to be surmounted in the second attempt: the lack of time given to the subject; the need for well qualified teachers who have relevant subject competences; the psychological implications for learners (Richards and Rogers 1986) and the requirements implied for them, that they play their role actively in the classroom, and in partnership with their teachers and each other; the problem of adjusting to and sustaining a decidedly challenging practice which models itself on first language acquisition, without having any of the natural benefits and accoutrements with which the first language is invested.

This thesis opened with the expressions of frustration over Modern Languages teaching methodology shared by Viëtor (1982) and Roberts (1994), implying the need for an answer to the question: How far have we come in the last hundred years' interlude? The answer at this stage may be: Not at all far but we have perhaps now at last set out on the journey still ahead of us. As Hawkins (in Baer 1976) articulates: "The Great Reform started with Viëtor and we are still part of its ongoing" (p.18).

2.2.5 **The failure of the reform and the continuing search for good practice**

The tragedy of the demise of the Great Reform and its methodological intention for Modern Languages is regretted by Hawkins (1981), Radford (1985), and Richards and Rogers (1986), among others. The dogged Grammar-Translation Method found its way back into fashion again. Teachers fell into bondage with traditions which refused to become obsolete, despite the work that had been done during the Reform on the Direct Method to ensure that "Grammar was made for Man, not Man for Grammar, that inductive methods were worthy and would enable an education which could and would function" (in Radford 1985, p215, citing MacGowan 1890). The debate was centred on : Modern Languages as grammar rather than Modern Languages as talk. The winner of this debate - grammar - has prevailed as the first force of language until the 1960s and the 1970s when the third turning point described by Hawkins (1981, 1994) occurred. Not even the two World Wars succeeded in stifling the vision of living languages as "the international highway leading to peace, truth, justice and humanitarianism and as the power to cement the League of Nations" (Radford 1985 pp.220-221). Indeed, to some extent the wars had stimulated such a vision, by bringing actual peoples into contact with each other, by pronouncing their cultures and their languages real and by causing or necessitating infiltration, integration and amalgamation of peoples and human intellects on certain levels of the international polemic. In fact, the so-called Army Method of languages instructions in the war years delivered the subject as a spoken language, reinforced with a small grammar component. This may be seen as a type of Compromise Method, a term which aptly describes the situation of method-merger, when either of the two usual extreme methods have been perceived to have incurred the consumer's and the critic's disaffection from it.

In the post-war years, Modern Languages has restored itself as a subject on (initially) the Grammar School curriculum, acquiring more than parity with the Classical Languages. The latter, indeed, were in any case to a large extent doomed by the imminent reorganisation of the education system and the birth of the Comprehensive School. This product of a political development of the early 1970s, catering for equal opportunities, has taken over as the most pervasive type of Secondary School in England. An increasing proportion of the schools' population has gained access to Modern Languages and this has meant that a large section of the new subject - clientele increasingly represents ability ranges which have never before been exposed to this subject. This has had

implications for the work done in classrooms, therefore also for course -, material -, and assessment-design.

The point with which the researcher introduced her task in this thesis has been returned to at this juncture. Allusion was made in the Introduction to the gradual infiltration of technology into the classrooms such as those which the researcher managed in the 1960s. The fact of the technological support given to methodology in Modern Languages may be re-emphasised here. This support started, as has been said, with reel-to-reel tape recorders and relevant materials, before developing into full-scale language laboratories and a broad range of other technological gadgets and associated materials as they have evolved since that time. Language teaching historians bear witness to such progressions, for they are integral to the whole language movement of their day. Mackey (1965); Webb (1974); Wilkins (1974); Hawkins (1981); Hornsey (1983); Radford (1985); Richards and Rogers (1986) and Wringe (1989), all chronicle this episode in the development of Modern Languages.

The outlook of (and for) learners and teachers was affected by the new technology. There was a kind of liberalism in the atmosphere, which was eventually added to by the relaxation of the Universities' foreign language entry requirement. The technology-aided input, enabling at second hand the native speaker to be heard in the classroom, and the second-language culture to be appreciated, was extended and led to the introduction to the Modern Languages arena of the Foreign Language Assistant and to programmes of European travel, including home-to-home/school-to-school exchanges and straightforward visits, tours and excursions abroad. This was the era of the Audio Lingual Method with its spin-off partner the Audio-Visual Method. There was no reason, of course, why the two approaches should not be used in tandem, and they were, with Audio Visualism always remaining the more popular twin. As defined and quasi-definitive methods they did not last, but they remain as method components, contributing effectively still in the teaching-learning exercise.

The methodological principles that were bandied about at that time included these: language was a set of habits; language was speech not writing; one should teach language, not about language; a language should be made accessible and should be familiarised through the practice of the four language skills of Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. Important initiatives of the day, (Hawkins in Baer 1976), included the Audio-Visual Language Association

(AVLA); the British Association for Language Teaching (BALT) (Radford 1985). These were followed soon afterwards by the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, (CILT 1965) and later others. In principle, if not always in practice, the notion of deductive grammar teaching was deposed.

Since Modern Languages was made available to all ability-ranges and to younger age-ranges in schools, there was a necessary shift away from preoccupation with the cognitive skills and writing. Their place was taken by an inductive approach, structured on the AL/AV initiative, targeting oral fluency. Foreign language acquisition rather than foreign language learning was aimed for, and the target language was essentially the medium by which this should be done. There could be no miraculous results overnight, since the Grammar Method was well and truly embedded in classroom practice and, it might be argued, decidedly easier to implement than the new approach. Neither could an actual cure for the ills of the old practice be expected to occur despite the hopes of optimistic supporters, represented by Lado (1964), for the new method proved to have its own inherent deficiencies (Cammish 1983). Belyayev (1963) articulates the perceived impediment as follows:

> "If the formation of habits is considered the main thing, the basic method of teaching becomes repetition, speech activity is standardized, the students turn into parrots which can reproduce many things but never create anything productive or new." (p.80)

In contrast to this, Lado (1964) approved the process of language through imitation, believing that it enabled familiarity for the learner who would proceed to a creative stage eventually on the strength of this. Examples of textbook-courses which are adduced by the historians who analyse these times and some of which the researcher has used personally in the course of her teaching, include: Longman's A.V. course; Le Francais de Aujourd'hui (Downes and Griffiths); A First French Book (Whitmarsh); Voix et Images; French through Action; TAVOR Aids. The visual and audio developments in ML teaching are explained in Corder (1966) and Dakin (1973) respectively. Of her own experience of implementing the AL/AV methods with the help of courses like those just mentioned, the researcher would venture judgments about them which concur with assessments made by Rivers (1964): that a) such methods condition the mechanical learning of patterns and the mechanical process of habit formation but appeal only to the lower levels of manipulative skill; b) both

pattern drill and language laboratory practice should be considered auxiliary and subordinate to practice in natural face-to-face situations; c) practice with a machine is artificial, practice with human beings is the core of real communication, the very reason for the existence and purpose of language. In fact, Rivers has touched upon the reason for the failure of the AL/AV methods, implying that they had made phoney the natural exercise of communication through language.

Languages teaching had become what Cammish (1983) termed "a son et lumière fiasco", in which, at best, foreign languages method implied a repetitive process for learners and the use of the techniques of habit and memory training through interchange drills. Cammish insists that this approach had its roots in behavioural psychology, and, at its most ambitious, it supplanted analysis with analogy, so that a really creative goal was rarely reached. Having been shown to be insufficient for its purpose, the AL/AV Method made its exit and with it the four basic assumptions which structured it: to learn the language as habit; to learn speaking before writing; to substitute analogy for analysis; to learn the language in context with its culture. Webb (1976) informs on this situation.

The position of the Language Laboratory now became tenuous, although language teaching critics like Dutton (1966) saw the laboratory as having enormous potential, as being in theory and in essence entirely desirable in the aim "to achieve fluency and quasi-native accuracy in the learner" (pp.19-20). By and large, the principle of the language laboratory failed, even despite the appearance of the Nuffield languages courses: En Avant, Vorwärts, Adelante. These courses were, if not cohesive, thorough, carefully produced, full of promise and invested with the hope of a nation which yearned for a system of effective Modern Languages pedagogy. The Nuffield courses held no magic solution, however, and were not sufficient of themselves to facilitate practical grammatical confidence. Many teachers were still committed to the ingrained grammar-translation method, and the AL/AV approaches had not managed to persuade them that they were wrong. Once again the panacea was sought in the form of a new method, or indeed "The New Method" (Spolsky 1979).

However, if, in the meantime, one required an explanation concerning the importunity of explicit grammar in teaching method, as opposed to the tried, tested and failed drill and reinforcement techniques of the AL/AV methods, then one should perhaps heed Cammish (1983) on Chomsky and his LAD (Language

Acquisition Device), and Rivers (1964) on Skinner and Mowrer and their theories about language as the reflection of social behaviour. These and other linguistic and behaviourist scientists will be drawn upon later, in the second phase of this chapter, when the science of linguistics will be discussed for the light that this will shed on the nature of grammar and its relationship with language and language teaching and learning. At this point, it suffices perhaps to say that the AL/AV method, relating to Skinner's theory of <u>operant conditioning</u> (Webb 1974), goes out, and explicit grammar-associated techniques, relating with Chomsky's view of grammar as an inherent part of the human being's ability to make and use language, become important again and come back in.

2.2.6 En route via Communicative Methodology to a new status for grammar

In the context of a new era of modern languages teaching, for which a new and more potent ideology is sought, Hawkins explains a trend to return to Gouin's vision (1880) of foreign or second languages taught in imitation of the child's way of acquiring its native tongue. There was renewed speculation about such a method, despite there also being several reasons why it perhaps was not a realistic possibility. The factors which worked against it were:

(1)   The acquisition of L1 takes place in whole-space, whole-time and whole-language circumstances. This is to say, wherever s/he is, whenever s/he is, and whoever s/he is, the child is surrounded by the native language in most of its registers. This is not the case for the learner of L2.

(2)   The acquisition of L1 takes place in an authentic, natural, cultural setting. Not so the learning of L2.

(3)   The developing native speaker has an innate Language Acquisition Device, (Chomsky's LAD) which exists in conjunction with the Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) and in contrast with the Adolescents' Language Processor (LAP) used in later stage L2 learning (eg as discussed in Halliday, Billows, Krashen and others). L1 is acquired by natural processes, whereas L2 is deliberately learnt.

The above factors make the processes of dealing with first language (L1) and second language (L2) different and unequal. There is only one way in which they could become equated and that is by transplantation of the individual into the relevant culture of L2 in whole-space, whole-time and whole-language circumstances.

Teachers and the systems, courses and materials which they employ for their teaching, do their best to compensate their foreign language learners in schools for the disadvantages inherent in the contextual conditions of their foreign language pursuit. On the matter of point (3) above, there has been considerable controversy leading up to the GCSE and the National Curriculum in Modern Languages on the issues of natural acquisition and deliberate learning, implicit and explicit methodological strategies, deductive and inductive routes to grammar awareness. These issues have all arisen as contrastive realities and are all oversimplifications of a theme. There are no separates here; in fact, as Hawkins points out (1994, p.118) citing Stevick (1986), " ... the modes of getting a new language which are available to the learner are not exactly two in number. What we have been calling acquisition and learning now become only the ends of a continuum which rests on a single process."

Hawkins and Stevick suggest further that explicit and implicit knowledge of grammar rules intermix with each other and are often tested out by the intervention of the mother tongue. This coalescence of explicit and implicit knowledge finds a further ally in what Jespersen (1904) had introduced as "inventional grammar", later discussed by Jones (1984) as "discovery" or "imaginative" grammar.

In fact, the debate on grammar, so long protracted, has produced a number of types of grammar, among them the following:

> traditional, functional, pedagogic
> inductive, deductive, inventional.

In the 1960s and the 1970s, the pendulum swung once again to the notion that ear-training was crucial to good language learning. Hence the introduction of the increasingly emphatic use of Listening Comprehension to the Modern Languages agenda, as mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis. In fact, the advances in technology had brought to the teaching arena a full technological service with which to energize the teaching and gradually allow the management of language learning to reflect the world in which children generally live. Particularly since the 1970s, however, with the development of the communicative methods, youngsters have been learning ready-made, ready-for-use formulae and have not necessarily been placed in a strong position to generate new phrases and sentences and cope with unfamiliar contexts. The old grammar-translation ways

had been ousted for the purpose of training learners in the task of buying an ice-cream (Radford 1985), but that, and that sort of thing, was patently all that they could, in fact, do. Moreover, if their mother tongue was their only point of reference, it could be argued that they were not at all well versed in an understanding of its own mechanics and could therefore not draw help from it for expression and comprehension in new contexts (Hawkins 1994, citing Luc 1992). Since the 1970s, specifically since the Joint 16+, and more essentially since the inception of the GCSE in 1987, Foreign Language teaching and learning has been occupied with training for communicative competence, but this has relied on the internalising of "a stock of pre-assembled patterns, formulaic frameworks, ..." (Hawkins, citing Widdowson quoted in the <u>National Curriculum Modern Languages Working Group Report</u> 1990), the same criticism having been repeated by Roberts later (1994), as already cited in Chapter One.

Widdowson describes communicative competence - which receives more explicit definition in later stages of this thesis - in this context as "essentially a matter of adaptation, and rules are not generative but regulative and subservient" (pp.119-120). The National Curriculum wants more than this: it implies the wish to restore grammar to the heart of language learning without actually placing it as a threat to the broader language learning agenda, so that it may facilitate the generation of new and original and personal and individual language phrases. The aim of the National Curriculum is to raise the overall standards achieved by its clientele, in particular stretching the more able and more gifted among them, and not least in the area of creative language use. The advocated National Curriculum methodology explained in the Proposal and Non-Statutory Guidance documents of 1990-1992 takes over from the methods which have conveyed the communicative teaching of the GCSE and the rather less communicative teaching of the Joint 16+ before it. Target language use and the cautious application of grammar as only an implied component of the course-agenda have been advocated as strategies for administration in all current ML teaching contexts. It would come as no surprise, however, if the majority of teachers who might be asked, admitted to using an eclectic methodology, as part of which grammar is quite formally taught in explicit mother tongue terms admitting the use of metalanguage. In some cases, especially in low attaining classes, grammar may have remained relatively untouched or its existence denied. The Eclectic Method, blending the Direct Method with formal grammar instruction, is explained in Mackey (1965) or, as the Compromise Method, in McArthur (1983), among others.

To allude briefly again to Hawkins' (1994) highlighted third turning point in the history of Modern Languages teaching: the period of the 1960s and 1970s, this turning point is clarified by Radford (in Goodson 1985 p.226), as being the result of the poor practice which was perceived in the classrooms of the Comprehensive System of the time, reflecting in itself the fall in status which the subject had suffered, as it had also suffered a drop in demand. Severe criticisms had been levelled by HMI against languages teaching and made public in the survey: <u>Modern Languages in Comprehensive Schools</u> (1977). Most Modern Languages teaching in English schools was held to be in a grim state and nothing short of a disgrace. Accordingly, the universities of Sussex, Kent, Essex and York pioneered more enlightened practice for application in schools in terms of method, courses and materials. One of the most influential enterprises then, and with its impression still firmly marked on today's practice, was the Graded Objective Movement in Modern Languages (GOML). This has had huge and positive implications for Modern Languages classrooms. In addition, at higher education level, the polytechnics of the time offered to their students arguably more practical courses as alternatives to those offered in the universities. Such pioneering work has had a large impact on the situation of Modern Languages in schools, especially since in-service possibilities and increased capitation have been provided intermittently, so that teachers might avail themselves of some of the opportunities that were and still are on offer. From the loss of status and subject credibility alluded to earlier, the Modern Languages lobby has agitated for a "Modern Language for all" and has restated the best of the former arguments to describe the objectives of their Modern Languages brief (Radford 1985):

*   the development of linguistic and cognitive skills
*   the promotion of linguistic understanding
*   the promotion of competence in the four language skills or arts
*   the promotion of tolerance and insight concerning other cultures
*   the linking of Education with Industry and the Civil Service
*   the promotion of Travel and Tourism
*   the growth of social liberation.

As Radford (in Goodson 1985) points out, the most modern developments of the Joint 16+, the GCSE and the new National Curriculum, in concentrating on the importance and promotion of the skills of communication and particularly of the speaking skill and the broadened use of the target language, seem to be

systematically advocating the return of the Direct Method of languages teaching. It would be gratifying if this could be achieved without a return of the problems which hampered the prosperity of this method in the first place: classes which were too large; teachers who lacked the competence to administer their agenda by that method involving the predominant use of the target language; too little time for any kind of meaningful "exposure" to be possible for the learner ... Such problems have already been alluded to in this section. Radford is confident, however, that the Communicative Approach, if sensibly applied , will help to "banish tedium and promote effective learning" (Goodson 1985 p.226). Time, experimentation and experience will tell to what extent Radford's words hold wisdom. The researcher's action research, furthermore, for which this present chapter is setting the scene, though a localized exercise, may in itself shed some light on the possibilities inherent within the method practised here with the National Curriculum in mind, for less tedium and more effective learning.

2.2.7 **A summary of the foreign languages teaching methods outlined in this section**
Radford (1985) and Mackey (1965) have been the sources principally relied upon in this section. (Their respective analyses are presented in tabular form, below). However, other writers have encapsulated the matter effectively, not least Stork (1976) and McArthur (1983). Yet still others have specialised in certain specific methods as separate movements, eg. Roberts 1993 and Rivers 1989.

A. **RADFORD'S SUMMARY DEPICTS FOUR PRINCIPAL STAGES OF MODERN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

STAGE ONE		GRAMMAR I OR E?
The Norman Conquest to the Napoleonic Wars	*The age of the Private Tutor for the rich and ambitious or for girls wishing to become accomplished	GRAMMAR-IMPLICIT in (I) tutoring through talk

STAGE TWO		GRAMMAR I OR E?
Most of the nineteenth century	*Pioneering for recognition of French and German as the poor man's Latin (DIRECT METHOD) Then bid for academic respect in schools and colleges.	GRAMMAR-IMPLICIT then (I) GRAMMAR-EXPLICIT (E)

STAGE THREE		GRAMMAR I OR E?
The Sixties and Seventies	*Rising status and expansion. Criticism of Methods and courses. Dynamic innovations in 60s. Communicative Method in 70s.	GRAMMAR-EXPLICIT then (E) GRAMMAR-IMPLICIT (I)

STAGE FOUR		GRAMMAR I OR E?
The Seventies and Eighties Projected to the Nineties	New functional syllabus and behaviour objectives. Lively debate on old values versus new values. Broad and balanced agenda should exclude neither CROISSANTS nor CAMUS.	increasingly GRAMMAR-IMPLICIT - in theory and design (I) With grammmar's values acknowledged (E)

B. **MACKEY'S SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES TEACHING METHOD OCCUPIES EIGHT STAGES UP TO 1965, THE TIME OF WRITING HIS BOOK**

STAGE ONE	GRAMMAR I OR E?
Active oral use of Latin in ancient and medieval times up to the fourteenth century	I

STAGE TWO	GRAMMAR I OR E?
The learning by rule of the Renaissance Grammar in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries	E

STAGE THREE	GRAMMAR I OR E?
Back to oral activity with Comenius in the seventeenth century	I

STAGE FOUR	GRAMMAR I OR E?
Back to Grammar rules with Plötz in the eighteenth century	E

STAGE FIVE	GRAMMAR I OR E?
Back to the primacy of speech with the direct method in the eighteenth century. Demand switches from the classical languages to modern languages. The Industrial Revolution leads to expansion of trade and commerce and therefore the need for more extensive, active use of Modern Foreign Languages	I

STAGE SIX	GRAMMAR I OR E?
Modern Languages brought more widely into schools and taught like the dead languages as intellectual exercises in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries	E

STAGE SEVEN	GRAMMAR I OR E?
Modern Language teaching became the rule rather than the exception in schools of Grammar School status. Therefore there is a necessary reaction against the techniques and objectives in relating to Latin and Greek. This is the REFORM MOVEMENT of the nineteenth century	I

STAGE EIGHT	GRAMMAR I OR E?
The middle of the twentieth century witnessed the Grammar Translation method being used. Criticism mounts and in the later stages of the century other techniques are mixed in, eclectically	E

NOTE

The above schema describes the periodic development of Modern Languages upto the time of Mackey's publication (1965). The situation of the interval from then up to the present day may be attached here as stage nine.

STAGE NINE	GRAMMAR I OR E?
Use has been made in current times of a Communicative Methodology, forming in the days of the Joint 16 +, condensing for GCSE and continuing with updated and extended objectives in the National Curriculum. This implies large-scale use of	I
the target language and a preference for the implicit or inductive style of grammar delivery. However, allowing for Stevick's view of a learner's language curiosity, some explicit or deductive attention to grammar is permitted	E

A POSTSCRIPT TO THE ABOVE SUMMARIES

In **summary model A**, the sequence pattern of Modern Languages teaching methods featuring implicit (inductive) and explicit (deductive) grammar delivery approaches can be represented as follows:

I ; I → E ; E → I ; I (E)   (based on Radford 1985)

In **summary model B**, the sequence pattern of Modern Languages method featuring I or E grammar approaches can be seen as follows:

I ; E ; I ; E ; I ; E ; I ; E ; (I+E)   (based on Mackey 1965)

Grammar teaching in the context of Modern Languages pedagogy, therefore, can be argued to have undergone equally alternating styles, the two extremes of practice referred to by Hawkins (eg in Baer 1976), as the pendulum has swung over the course of time. Concurrent with the development of the European Community, when it is more important than ever before that young people of this country learn foreign (European) languages, the new educational philosophy of the National Curriculum accommodates a kind of compromise for grammar in terms of both implicit and explicit grammar teaching strategies but gives preference decidedly to the implicit or inductive strategy which is based in target language use. The researcher's action research exercise tests out the National Curriculum teaching approaches experimentally. The processes and the outcomes are described in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

2.2.8 **Conclusion to Zone I**

In their publication : Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (1986), Richards and Rogers attempt to say more than others have said, (eg. Mackey 1965), by interpreting and therefore going to the cause of the historical sequence of developments. In a way, one suspects that they are sympathetic to the explicit (deductive) delivery of grammar associated with the Grammar Translation Method, explaining that, until the Great Reform, this method reflected a time-honoured and scholarly view of language and language study (p.14), and had become the national Modern Languages teaching tradition, before giving way to the more naturalistic methods that followed it. Tradition

has been hard to break with, as the simple I versus E analyses of the foregoing section explain and as, in real terms, teachers' difficulties with the handling of practical methodologies confirm. The struggle for an effective and acceptable method for languages teaching goes on. It is to everyone's credit that it does so, however much adverse criticism is has suffered in the interim. Richards and Rogers (1986) explain that part of the difficulty lies in the complex nature of the Modern Languages teaching-learning process. The complexity is due to the importance to the process of a number of major influences, such as those that follow:

1. **The Philosophy**: the hopes, aspirations, assumptions and beliefs of the teaching and learning participants. The philosophy may be described as the ideal view of the ideal outcome for the (ideal) learner.
2. **The Psychology**: the understanding of the learner and the learning processes, which happen within the learner's mind. Insights are gained when the teacher is able to empathise, get into the learner's shoes and, if possible, into his head. Such insights should, arguably, influence the teaching process.
3. **The Theory** ie. the axiomatic approach to the brief, jointly with
4. **The Practice** ie. the procedural approach to the brief.

Within one approach there can be many methods. The search for the most appropriate method has been the researcher's task, accounted for at all of its levels in this thesis.

Usually, according to Richards and Rogers (1986), language historians do not explain to their readers the nature of method or the nature of the methods they explore. Many assumptions are made, not least concerning the roles of the teachers and the learners. These writers, however, are succinct in their own explanation, which is that : a method is theoretically related to an approach, is organisationally determined by a design and is practically realised in procedure (p.15). The authors provide a Method Model to explain the full process (p.29).

METHOD		
APPROACH	**DESIGN**	**PROCEDURE**
*a theory of the nature of language	*the general and specific objectives of the method	*classroom techniques, practices and behaviours observed when the method is used
*a theory of the nature of language learning	*a syllabus model	
	*types of activities for the teaching/learning process	
	*learner roles	
	*teacher roles	
	*the role of instructional materials	

On the <u>reality</u> of methods applied in the classroom, Richards and Rogers disclaim all probability that anything much is actually known, or that anything much can actually be stated definitively in evaluating a method or in comparing one method with another. Certainly they believe that some methods, and notably perhaps the more practical ones - they mention Total Physical Response and Community Language Learning - seem to involve stress, defensiveness and, possibly, embarrassment for learners, impeding their full commitment and participation. However, they insist that judgments may be based only on conjecture and on the observer's making the best of the evidence available:

"We have found that for most of the approaches and methods we have reviewed, there is a lack of detailed description. Most methods exist primarily as proposals and we have no way of knowing how they are typically implemented by teachers." (p.161).

Normally, it may be true to say that one can only attempt to make fragmentary or superficial assessment of what goes on in a classroom in terms of how methods are used there. However, the researcher hopes that in this very respect she will break some new ground in her efforts to explain and account for

the methods employed in the methodology-related experiment performed in her classrooms over a period time, and for the outcomes of this experiment. Again, the reader is asked to refer to later chapters of this thesis.

Grammar-teaching fashions come and go and come back again in a story that has as yet found no end. It is clear that the teaching and the learning of a second or foreign language from scratch, in non-native ie. non-authentic or non-relevant circumstances, and with poor time allocations mitigating against the learning process, is a practice beset by difficulties which will not and do not go away. The words of Rapaport and Westgate (1974) still hold true today and have surely been proven many times over:

> "There is the conviction that language learning and particularly foreign language learning in an English classroom is more complex than the revolutionaries care to admit." (p.131)

The National Curriculum appears to allow for the individual teacher's difficulty and the problems with method. Its policy permits the use of any approach - in the way advised by Friedman (1971) - as long as the target language is used as its vehicle; as long as grammar is taught with care; and as long as youngsters are motivated for the learning. Perhaps in this last item lies the key to success for the National Curriculum Movement. Certainly, many of the writers who have so far been referred to in this chapter have emphasised the importance of motivation in the process of learning, not least Hawkins (eg. in Baer 1976) and Hornsey (1983). It will be interesting to see whether the slump to grammar teaching by explicit (deductive) means, or to grammar teaching for its own sake, will repeat itself as a reaction to the new trend, by analogy with the patterns of the past.

As Mackey (1965) implies, good effective language teaching will always depend on how much value the learners place on the subject and how competent, how well qualified, able, fluent and versatile the teachers are. The need for such competence in the performance of Modern Languages teachers arguably implies demands made upon them, which are not made of other subject practitioners, in the meantime. But in any case, drawing again from Rapaport and Westgate (1974), and their discussion of the subject's status at Primary School level, with the Plowden Report in mind, it might be concurred that:

"It is only ... through teachers' preparedness to adapt and experiment that the subject can continue to evolve as a component of the *curriculum*." (Furthermore it) ... "lies in the teacher's continuous awareness of how it is being understood by the children in front of him." (p.135)

Hornsey (1983) takes this argument further, by alluding to the influence of Modern Languages on society, at a time when the subject is delivered to (almost) all school children. The far reaching advantages that she sees in the curricular role of Modern Languages include: the extension of career opportunities; cultural enrichment; linguistic understanding; and character development. Hornsey expresses a reservation about the potential for success in the subject with the learners from the lower ability streams, with which the researcher would take issue and refer the reader to the later chapters of this thesis, in which the results-charts depict the surprisingly high performance of the low ability sets which participated in the action experiment. One may, perhaps, be encouraged by Hodgson (1955), who believed that, considering that all children can and do learn a first language, it should be incorrect to assume that they are incapable of acquiring a second one. (p.3) One must discontinue the supposition that the English are without the aptitude for language learning and put their reluctance or resistance down to their negative attitude towards it, which is arguably derived from their perceived lack of a need for it.

The problem of attitude will not be cured, as long as every stage in the historical *experimentation with teaching method leaves the English society with the impression of massive failure*. For more than twenty years (McArthur 1983), society has worked towards and then worked with the Communicative Method of languages teaching, with its policy of language *as* communication and language *for* communication. The best qualities of this method are currently being used as an integral part of the National Curriculum Method, which combines the importance of *the message* with the re-discovered importance of *the form*. The emphasis is on language as a real, live concept (Hornsey 1983), and graded objectives and pupil profiling techniques will continue to support the motivation process. However, learners will quite naturally expect answers to their questions : What? ; When?; How? etc. Therefore, although it is apparently quite widely agreed that implicit grammar teaching, inside a target language setting, is the best kind of teaching (Hornsey 1983, Wringe 1989, Nunan 1989), there can be no harm in teaching some grammar, formally and in mother tongue

terms, if it is kept "in its place" (Hawkins in Baer 1976, p.46). The researcher tests out this collective claim by incorporating the device of grammar summary within the design of her action research exercise later.

As this section or 'zone' of the chapter explaining the historical background and the background reading to the action research makes way for the next one on linguistics, it is clear that one or two questions remain unanswered. For example:

*   Why do methods remain unsatisfactory?
*   Why is there - and what is? - the problem with grammar?

Harold Palmer (1968) is helpful on these matters. His work is prefaced by its editor, who seems to encourage the reader to detect in Palmer's writing an astonishingly modern outlook and rationale (Harper in Palmer 1968). Perhaps, however, Palmer has been ahead of his time, because nothing really has changed, no ideal method has yet been declared and made official, no solution has been found to the ills of methodology. Palmer himself wrote: The Principles of Language Study Methods (1964), The Scientific Study and Teaching of Languages (1968) and Modern Languages Methodology (1968), in his capacity as a reformer and as a long-standing technician of methodology (ed. Harper 1968). He perceived methods to be unsatisfactory because they lacked base. His perception, moreover, of language as a science, has implications for grammar. Linguistic scientists, like philologists, phoneticians, grammarians, pedagogues, psychologists and philosophers, tell us what language is and that grammar is interbound and inseparable from it:

"In language one is bound to lexicology and grammar and these themselves are interbound" (Palmer 1968 p.11).

Logically also, if grammar is interbound with and inseparable from language, then it is also a major criterion affecting the method by which language is taught and learnt.

For this reason, the imminent zone of discussion on linguistics is necessary to this chapter and to the subsequent chapters in which the action research is described from its classroom and its teacher-directed setting. It will provide a base from which to derive a methodological truth. In the mind of Palmer (1968),

the method-writer writes from his armchair, while the teacher edits method from the chalk face, responsible and accountable all the time for the pedagogic processes inherent in and dictated by the method in question. He puts the point as follows:

> "A complete and ideal language method has a fourfold object, and this is to enable the student, in the shortest possible time and with the least effort, so to assimilate the materials of which the foreign language is composed that he is thereby enabled to understand what he hears and reads and also to express himself correctly by the oral and the written mediums" (p.24).

In the action research body of this thesis, the researcher has attempted to disclose from the chalk face some real evidence about teaching methods, (specifically those required by the National Curriculum), as a response to the philosophies and assumptions of the writers whom she has read, as it were, from her armchair.

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2.3 The Review Of The Literature : ZONE II

Context : Language, Grammar And Linguistic Awareness

2.3.1 Introduction

The principal component of this thesis is an action research study of contrasting Modern Languages teaching methods. The first zone of the present chapter has given a historical outline of Modern Languages teaching, suggesting that methodological developments implied in the National Curriculum reform could yet resolve some of the most long-standing dilemmas. A perspective of this kind was needed as background to the specific methodological contrast being examined. Central to the study, however, is observation of a language learning process. For this reason it is appropriate next to consider the phenomenon underpinning that process, namely LANGUAGE itself. Moreover, since the language under scrutiny is a foreign language, the discussion must include features which distinguish first from second language use and learning, as well as the implications of such an analysis of language for the classroom setting. This zone is structured by a series of related and interdependent questions, all focusing on the matter of language. The issues considered will aim to clarify language itself, the properties of its composition and function and the effects of language awareness upon the language teaching process.

2.3.2 What is 'Language'?

A principal theme emerging in response to this question defines language as the human being's system of communication and is at the same time the resource for that communication. Language is perceived to be very special, indeed a unique system and resource, for it is unlimited, versatile, malleable, may be simple or sophisticated and generates meaning through the manipulation of words (Wilkinson 1972, Brown 1984).

As many times as one reads about language, as many times one encounters the notion of communication, as though the two were synonymous with each other. In a way, perhaps, they are so, for language has its purpose in communication. The two concepts are, at the least, very closely associated. This close association reflects the meanings contained within the one term in English, namely 'language', which implies both *activity* (cf. 'Language and thought are closely allied') and *system* (cf.'I'm learning another language - French'). Saussure's theoretical distinction between 'langue' and 'parole' (late 19th century) clarifies this concept which remains ambiguous in English, except for

the explanations offered through the Saussurean terms themselves and also through the analogous principles of 'competence' and 'performance' respectively, or 'language' and 'communication', as has been noted. Therefore, in an exposition structured on questions, another question is encountered, namely one querying the nature of (at least linguistic) 'communication'.

2.3.3 What is 'Communication'?

It might be argued that 'language' as 'communication' is influenced by 'situation' or 'context' and does not, indeed cannot exist actively without these settings (Wilkinson 1971 p.52). Just as the context and situation vary, in which communication is produced, so also the type, tone and register of the language itself vary accordingly. The protagonists in the communication event and the topic of their communication are the variables which make each communicative activity different from all others; they are the variables upon which the topic, tone and register of each communicative example (op.cit.) can depend. An authoritative model to refer to at this point might be that of the Kingman Report (1988), which summarises current views of the complex ways in which context affects the use of language transacted between speaker and listener or writer and reader: "Speakers and writers adapt their language to the context in which the language is being used" (op.cit.p.23). The main features of context as the dynamic for communication are outlined in the following adaptation of the model (p.23):

COMMUNICATION

CONTEXT
*   place/time
*   topic
*   type of discourse
*   what has already been said in the discourse

Speaker	Listener
* intention in speaking * attitude in speaking * perception of context	* intention in listening * attitude to speaker * attitude to topic (interest) * background information on topic * understanding of what has already been said * perception of context

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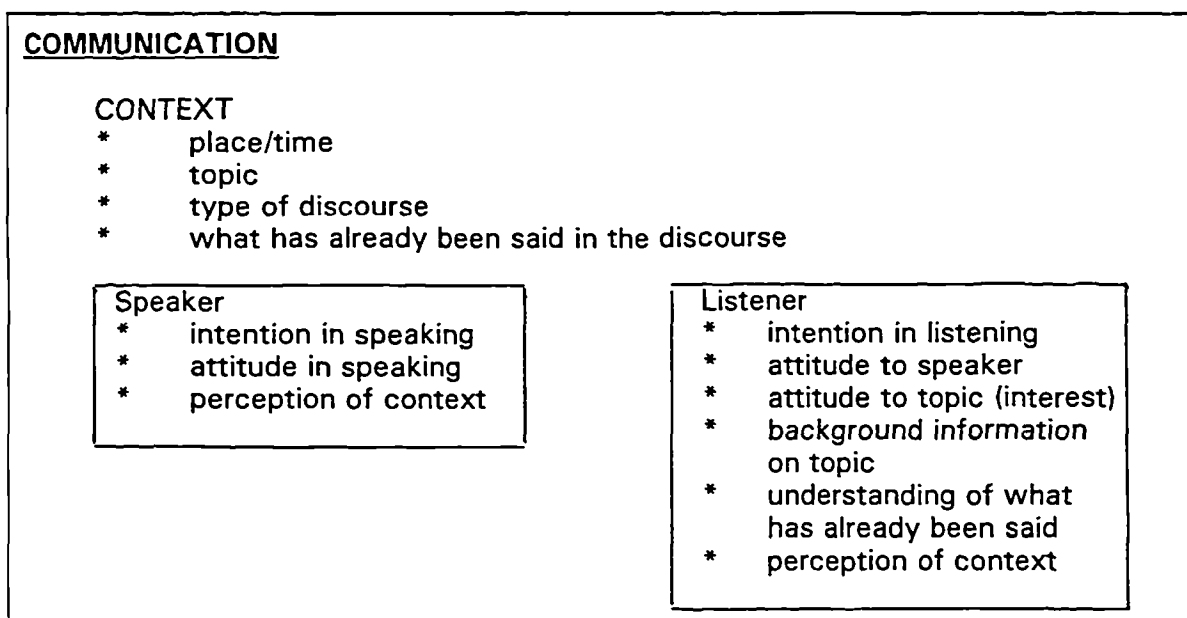
Edwards and Westgate (1994) enlarge upon the principle of context as dynamic by including among the factors of its composition not only those "already 'there' at the outset of the talk", but also others which are "brought into being, maintained, modified or challenged through the talk itself" (p.23). The model proposed by Edwards and Westgate (1994) illustrates the importance to contexts arising and evolving in classrooms of the interaction of a number of variables, some of which echo those featured in the preceding model from the Kingman Report and others, marked *, extend this range.

Speakers' perception
of the situation & of
relationship with
other participants

*
Feedback
(verbal and
non-verbal)
from others

Location
(& physical
features of
setting)

INDIVIDUAL
SPEAKER

Expectations
held by speakers
about the 'event'

*
Other ambient
conditions:
heat, time of
day, etc.

Speakers'
communicative
purposes

*
Speakers'
feelings & sense
of own knowledge,
self-esteem, etc.

Most of the writers, in their discussions, pay some attention to the two ways in which language is acquired and developed, based upon the observation that there are two types of learner as follows:

1. the individual taking ownership of a first language (L1), (native language NL; mother tongue MT),

2. the individual seeking to 'pick up' a second language (L2), or foreign language (FL).

In the first instance, it is generally understood that the activity of procuring language as L1 is termed 'acquisition', as distinct from the term used for the procuring of L2 or FL, which is 'learning'. This is broadly the distinction used influentially by Krashen (1983). His view that L2 can also be 'acquired' (ie. through use not formal instruction) has been the source of much of the currently fashionable method of communicative teaching, emphasising the value placed upon an authentic, relevant task for the learner and the learner's own active involvement with it. The twin-principle of 'acquisition and learning' reflecting also Krashen's views as just described, lies at the core of the action research project which features in later chapters. Language can be internalised by either of the two processes at any level of discourse, the spectrum running from the mere babbling of pivotal utterances to the production of fully interconnected, sophisticated discourse. It is important to note that a major factor in the processing of discourse involves the acquisition of grammatical knowledge, however inexplicitly or sub-consciously, as a resource for language use.

The characteristics of grammar in the various senses of the term will be examined with reference to relevant writers at a later stage of this zone of discussion. However, it is nevertheless important to identify here the role of the individual user's 'internal grammar' as an essential factor in the production of language as communication, for communication is the process of the transmission and reception of MEANING and it is widely agreed that it is grammar which allows the two parts of this process to match. In this sense 'grammar' equates with ie directs the development of 'competence' and 'performance', as attributed to Chomsky and as explained in Crystal (1994). Brown (1984 p.10) describes a hierarchy of language properties (or levels), which features the importance of grammatical knowledge to the production of meaning, which in turn, by inference, shapes and orders communication. The researcher interprets Brown's idea in the following equation:

```
┌─────────┐     ┌──────────────┐           ┌──────────────┐       ┌──────────────┐
│         │     │  PRINCIPLES  │           │  STRUCTURES  │       │              │
│ WORDS   │  +  │      =       │    of     │      =       │   =   │  MEANINGS    │
│         │     │  (RULES OF   │           │  (FORMS)     │       │              │
│         │     │ COMBINATION) │           │              │       │              │
└────┬────┘     └──────┬───────┘           └──────┬───────┘       └──────┬───────┘
     │                 │                          │                      │
     │          ┌──────┴───────┐          ┌───────┴──────┐               │
     │          │   SYNTAX     │   with   │  MORPHOLOGY  │               │
     │          └──────┬───────┘          └───────┬──────┘               │
     │                 │                          │                      │
     │                 └────────────┬─────────────┘                      │
     │                              │                                    │
     │                     ┌────────┴─────────┐                          │
     │                     │    GRAMMAR       │                          │
     │                     └────────┬─────────┘                          │
     │                              │                                    │
┌────┴──────────────────────────────┴────────────────────────────────────┴────┐
│   C   O   M   P   E   T   E   N   C   E                                       │
└──────────────────────────────┬───────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                │
┌───────────────────────────┬───┴────────────────────────────────────┐
│     PERFORMANCE           │  =  │         COMMUNICATION              │
└───────────────────────────┴──────────────────────────────────────────┘
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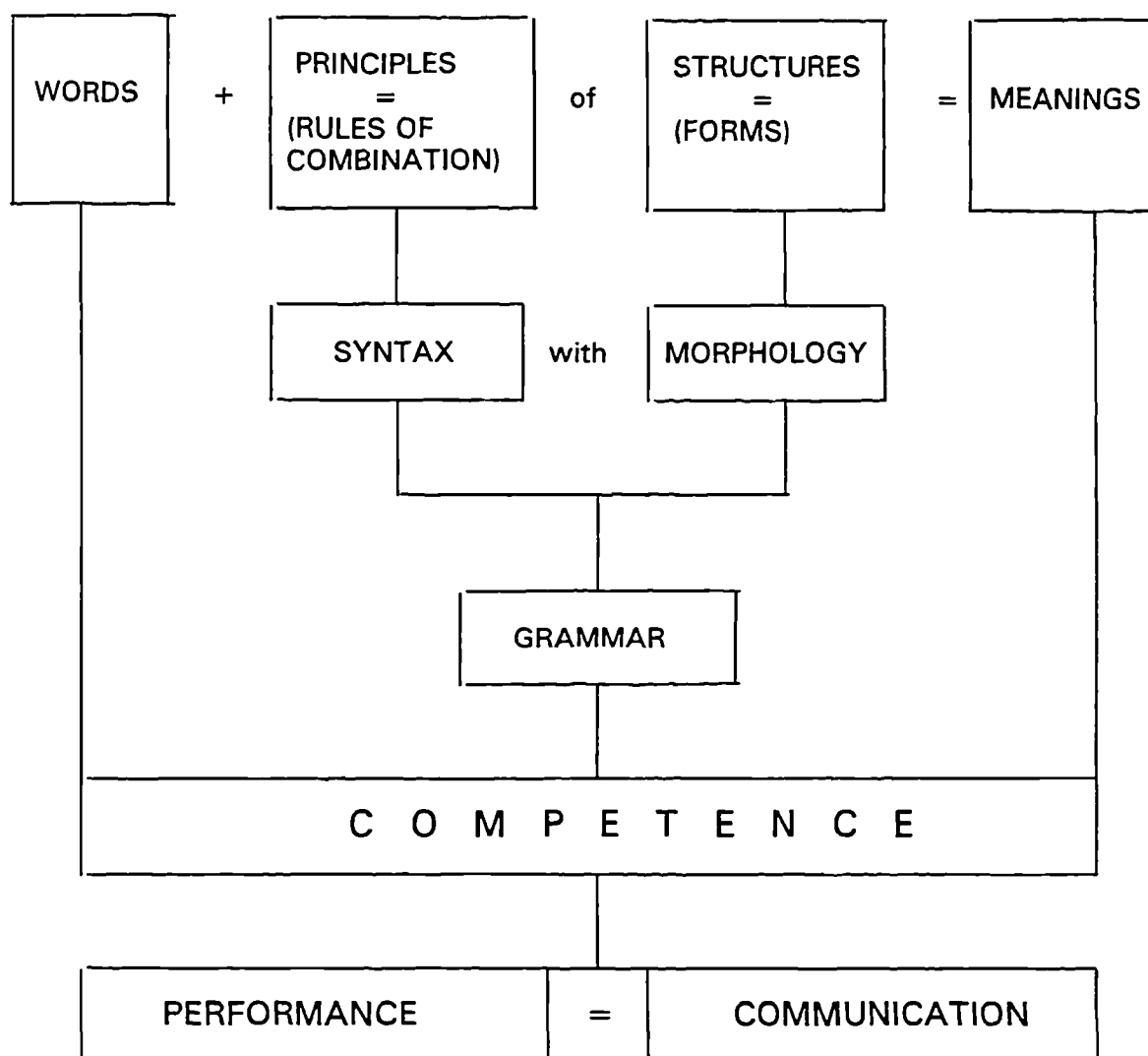
Effective communication in L1, L2 or FL terms depends, for Krashen (eg. 1982), on the processing of meaningful input and, for Chomsky (eg. 1965, 1971), on the language user's linguistic or 'formal' competence, which is the sum of his potential for variety, versatility and register, as illustrated earlier in this discussion. Wilkinson (1971) is one of a number of writers to connect communication with the area which surrounds it, which he names 'situation' or 'context' or 'context of situation'. However, Edwards and Westgate (1994) distinguish 'context' as a factor separate from the 'settings' in which language events take place. They explain context as being generated by communication, talked into existence, as it were, both in terms of the discourse and of what is foregrounded in the talk (p.23). Such an analysis highlights more than grammatical competence but certainly includes that as a basis.

Difficulties with grammatical principles and structures affect meaning and therefore communication, as Brown (1984) and Crystal (1968, 1992) explain. There are, however, strategies for safeguarding meaning apart from the logical ordering of the language system which the Linguistic Sciences punctiliously formulate. Billows (1961) explains the work of the psycholinguists, who devise "tricks" for "fixing" language and advise on techniques and habits that the user can and does apply to his personal language use, his idiolect - they are undoubtedly applied to his regional dialect also - in order to enable the user to handle the language more comfortably, with a sense of familiarity and confidence, avoiding intimidating complexities and facilitating easier transactions through communication (p.162).

Halliday, cited in Brumfit (1984), marvels at the unlimited possibilities for language use, as he conceives of language as the potential for making and sharing meaning:

"Language is a dynamic, not a static system" (Brumfit p.27).

This dynamic is the result of the unlimited possibilities for creating meaning out of the lexical items stored within a language which are energized through the application of grammar. The most basic meanings contained in words can be at once extended, enhanced, co-associated, manoeuvred and manipulated, elevated or reduced, complicated or simplified and become different levels of meaning, reflecting the language performances and competences of the participants in communication who seek to share meaning. Language, once it has become an established feature with or for its user, can function to support all an individual's communication needs. Indeed, language is put to three principal purposes (described for example by Wilkinson 1971) as follows:

L A N G U A G E	P U R P O S E S	(1)	CONATIVE USE	Using language as a means to an end
		(2)	AFFECTIVE USE	Using language to express feelings and to create
		(3)	COGNITIVE USE	Using language to respond to requirements or to make requirements and request information

The simplicity of the table placed above, and the preceding fundamental observation on language as a dynamic, belie the vastness of the concept, ie. the reality, of language. A student struggling to measure it in any way which allows her to account for it in an exercise such as this one and relate it to a "real" exercise or experiment based on language learning, must of necessity stand in awe of the phenomenon she is engaged with. As Palmer (1971) points out (and this echoes the reference made late in Zone I), there are no separates here. Language cannot be discussed as an object with a single dimension. There is, indeed, a structuring, binding and bonding, yet potentially mercurial interface, which allows the infinite management of language which has been alluded to earlier. Palmer (1971) describes the potential for language as being infinitely more than the sum of its parts. Its capacity to be all-resourcing ironically depends less upon its perhaps massive store of lexis than upon its arguably small and finite grammar. The combination of these two components enables a static element to become a dynamic phenomenon of immeasurable scope, described by Wilkinson (1971) as a "miraculous accomplishment". Even more amazing, therefore, is the mastering of it, not just in a native language context, but in other second or foreign languages also.

Palmer (1971) refers to man's status through his human-language ownership as "homo loquens." Then, the fact that he can infinitely produce or understand sentences that are new to his personal experience of language, is due to his being also "homo grammaticus." It may be argued, therefore, that grammar is the generator that converts language into meaning and enables communication. This equation has implications for the researcher's experimental exercise, which will be examined at a later stage. For the moment, however, it seems that the next item in this present discussion must feature the question: What is grammar? ... as well as to explore a general issue and to derive generalisable insights.

2.3.4 What is 'Grammar'?
Part a). Grammar : the physical system and its properties
As the discussion of the preceding pages made grammar the central dynamic of language, enabling meaning to be processed for use in communication, the present discussion will attempt to explore the reality of grammar as this important and remarkable property. The researcher found it a matter of interest to seek an authoratative reference to explain grammar, prior to exploring the

ideas and theories of researchers and writers further. She selected the explanation of grammar found in Palmer (1971 p.9):

> "There is a highly complex system in (the) construction (of sentences), and this complex system differs from language to language - that is why languages are different. Within this system there is a complex set of relations that link the sounds of the language (or its written symbols) with the 'meanings', the message they have to convey.
>
> In the widest sense of the term, grammar *is* that complex set of relations. According to a recent definition, grammar is 'a device that specifies the infinite set of well-formed sentences and assigns to each of them one or more structural descriptions'. That is to say it tells us just what are all the possible sentences of a language and provides a description of them. This is no small task, but one that is well worthy of human study."

Grammar, understood here as a) linguistic and b) broad (including all but lexis), is the set of rules by which a language operates, or it is seen as "a system describing the language it belongs to" (Wilkinson 1971, p.32). Chomsky's work on grammar, and arguably that of all grammarians since then, looks at grammatical systems and at human beings' approaches to and affinities with these systems. Grammar is important to the process of language learning because it is a part of essentially human language. When grammar is recognised and internalized, it can be applied unconsciously from within the language being used and also consciously from outside, as the language is being understood. It has already been implied that the conscious or, more likely, unconscious, application of grammar underlies formal competence, which influences the production of well formed utterances or sentences. There are infinite possibilities of such expression (Palmer 1971) but it is more "communicative competence" (Hymes 1972) which accounts for modification in real contexts, ie. adjusting tone, register etc. Grammar has been found to be crucial to the structuring of meaning, in the encoding and decoding phases equally, allowing the meaning or message that is intended to match that which is comprehended.   In this observation the researcher gains confidence from the support of Crystal (1968, 1992), Slobin (1971) and Halliday (1975), among other writers, whose contributions have

systematically substantiated this section. Halliday (1975) has described grammar as the means by which language is idealised and is also allowed to function flexibly. He is in agreement on this with Palmer, whose philosophy on grammar is summed up in the cover-word to the 1982 edition of GRAMMAR:

> "(Grammar is) a complex set of relations that link the sounds of language, or its written symbols, with the message they have to convey".

Palmer's simple formula to illustrate this account particularizes the constituents of grammar and depicts them as interactive:

| PHONOLOGY | ↔ | SYNTAX | ↔ | SEMANTICS |

(p.186)
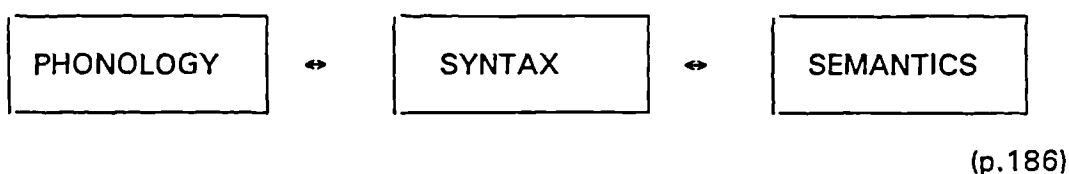
Quite coincidentally it seems, although she could be disclosing the influence of Palmer upon her work in collating linguistic items for her reference handbook, Aitchison (1992) describes the same formula for the generation of meaning out of a linguistic system activated by grammar. The constituents are described in Aitchison as follows:

| PHONOLOGY | = sound patterns

| SYNTAX | = word-structure and word arrangements within groups

| SEMANTICS | = meaning - patterns associated with words
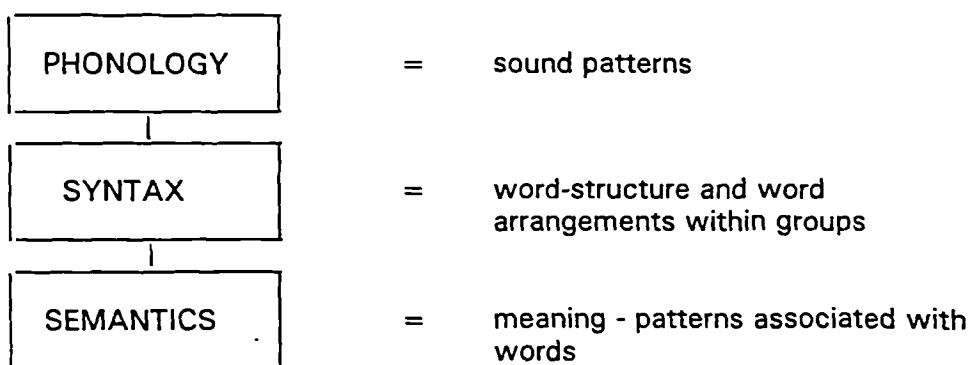
However, as one's investigation of grammar and one's insight extend, so also does the rubric expand accordingly. From Bloomfield (1933), and from Palmer (1971) on Bloomfield (p.110 ff), comes clarification of MORPHOLOGY, as the branch of grammar which applies to the structure of words, as opposed to SYNTAX, as the branch of grammar which organizes the resulting elements (or

morphemes) into structured sentences. This is maintained by Crystal (1969, 1992) and McArthur (1983), for whom the entity GRAMMAR divides into two associative systems of MORPHOLOGY and SYNTAX, legislating form and function respectively:

GRAMMAR	MORPHOLOGY	= Form	= the internal structure of words
	SYNTAX	= Function	= the external structure of sentences

The importance of SYNTAX to MORPHOLOGY is explained by Turner (1979) as existing in a series of benefits as follows:

* giving placement and relationship (p.69)
* combating ambiguity (p.70)
* enabling and producing style (p.71)
* allowing expansion through the use of connectives and stylistics (p.72)

In Turner's developing argument on syntax and morphology, the former concept appears to subsume the latter in its capacity as the prime force of language which, although it exists side by side with morphology as the "grammar of words", challenges and subjugates this domain, since all words and word-parts (morphemes) belong to one syntactic group or another. For Wallwork (1969) the morpheme is the minimal unit of grammar, often conceived by the layman as a syllable. It initiates the language-building sequence of:

MORPHEME → WORD → PHRASE → CLAUSE → SENTENCE → DISCOURSE

In this exploration of the properties of grammar, as defined above, two further concepts remain in need of mention : PHONETICS and PHONOLOGY. Any confusion between them is dispelled by Hodgkins and Rudorf (1972, p.232), who explain the former as the study of the speech sounds of a given language in terms of their physical properties. Crystal (1992) clarifies phonology on the other hand, as the sound system itself, (ie. the limited set of phonemes which

constitute the system as well as their possible combination into patterns of intonation) - or, indeed, the scientific study of these phenomena.

In summarizing the properties of GRAMMAR, therefore, one concludes with Aitchison (1992) that grammar is a linguistic system which has the following composition:

PHONOLOGY	PHONETICS	SYNTAX	MORPHOLOGY	SEMANTICS
G	**R** **A**	**M**	**M** **A**	**R**

In the Introduction to this thesis, the researcher referred to the properties of grammar, implying that they would play a part in the observations that she would be making in reporting on her practical study ultimately. This is, indeed, the case, but the appraisal of grammar as a highly complex tool for language description has more to do than rest its case after a review of its basic dimensions, as the following sections aim to show.

Part b) Grammar : the practical system and its adaptations

McArthur (1983) poses and answers the persistent question : What is grammar? Grammar, he claims, is a descriptive system which is twenty five centuries old and is a main composite housing a number of sub-concepts. There is no hierarchy attached to the co-existence of these sub-concepts, yet they would seem to submit to two main categories as follows (p.74):

GENERAL GRAMMAR	PRIMARY or NATURAL GRAMMAR	non-conscious, subliminal
	SECONDARY or ANALYTICAL GRAMMAR	conscious and cultural

Judging by the ease with which people handle and master their native language, effecting the transactions they intend and therefore, by analogy, effecting the meanings they intend, it may be assumed that much order is already implicit in the language one picks up through experience. Of the two categories just depicted, PRIMARY GRAMMAR exists to facilitate performance. It implies rule-

like behaviour that promotes communication. Primary grammar is absorbed in the acquisition of a second or foreign language also, for without it the shared encoding - decoding process, necessary for successful communication would be impeded and seriously held back. The SECONDARY GRAMMAR, needing to be systematically mastered, is slow to develop and for some may, indeed, never do so. The latter grammar, however, arguably plays a role in the process of L2 or FL learning, and may become a conscious influence upon the encoding - decoding mechanism in that context and, indeed, in all the four learning skills pertaining to it. Krashen's monitoring function might be attributable to it.

McArthur's enlargement of his explanatory formula to include two sub-categories of 'secondary grammar' as (1) *prescriptive grammar* and (2) *descriptive grammar* causes a reaction of interest in the researcher, since it seems to describe summarily the contrastive methodological approaches which she herself used in order to deliver her grammatical agenda in the action research exercise. McArthur's extension is as follows:

```
                 ┌──────────────┐
                 │ PRIMARY      │
                 │ (NATURAL)    │
                 │ GRAMMAR      │
                 └──────────────┘
┌──────────┐                      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ GENERAL  │                      │ PRESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR     │
│ GRAMMAR  │                      │ (USUALLY PEDAGOGICAL)    │
└──────────┘                      └──────────────────────────┘
                 ┌──────────────┐
                 │ SECONDARY    │                              Extension
                 │ (ANALYTICAL) │
                 │ GRAMMAR      │
                 └──────────────┘
                                  ┌──────────────────────────┐
                                  │ DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR      │
                                  │ (USUALLY LINGUISTIC)     │
                                  └──────────────────────────┘
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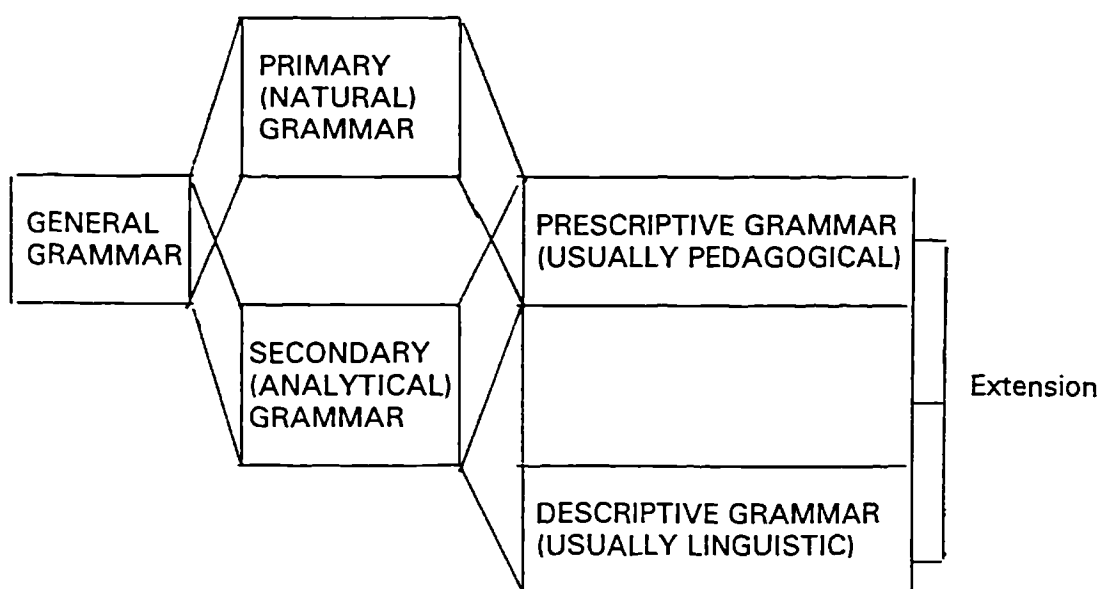
From the above, the researcher perceives that the grammatical experiment carried out in her classrooms over the three year span of the action research has drawn from the "secondary" or "analytical" grammar-type. The "Grammar-Explicit" (G-E) faction has been exposed to the prescriptive/pedagogical variety of grammar and the "Grammar-Implicit" (G-I) faction to the descriptive/linguistic variety. In addition, the researcher is encouraged by her reading of McArthur to believe that both factions will have benefited to one extent or another from their receptiveness of "primary" or "natural" grammar. McArthur's clarification (p.75)

of the terms "prescriptive" and "descriptive" confirms the researcher's belief that she has made the correct assumption. She designs the clarification as follows:

| SECONDARY (ANALYTICAL) GRAMMAR | PRESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR | consists of rules that are imposed from outside by an external authority on language-use |
| | DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR | consists of rules or rule-like phenomena which are discerned in language behaviour and which operate as a part of the user's underlying competence |

NOTE

If PRESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR is 'imposed' grammar then it is that which is alternatively called EXPLICIT or DEDUCTIVE grammar from the pedagogic point of view. Similarly, if DESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR is 'discerned' grammar, then it is that which is alternatively called IMPLICIT or INDUCTIVE grammar. It is important for the understanding of later sections of this work that these definitions are understood, since this collective terminology features at intervals throughout.

There are other categories and capacities of grammar, which may be listed here as adaptations of the main practical system. Only brief allusion is made, however, since there is doubt at this stage that they need to be involved significantly in the discussion. They are listed as follows and do not include those already explored above:

A.

| formal grammar theoretical grammar reference grammar cognitive grammar pedagogic grammar notional grammar traditional grammar | notions, interpretations and criteria of grammar, used when language relates with the external world or to the user; indicative of situation and specific responsibility |

B.

| Structuralism | as proposed by Bloomfield in the 1940s and 1950s, this grammar was based on the segmentation |

and classification of utterances.

C.

| LAD = Language Acquisition Device
performance grammar
competence grammar
Universal Grammar (UG)
transformational) grammar
generative) (TG)
DEEP STRUCTURE/
SURFACE STRUCTURE | — | The grammar
philosophy of
Noam Chomsky;
(see following
section). |
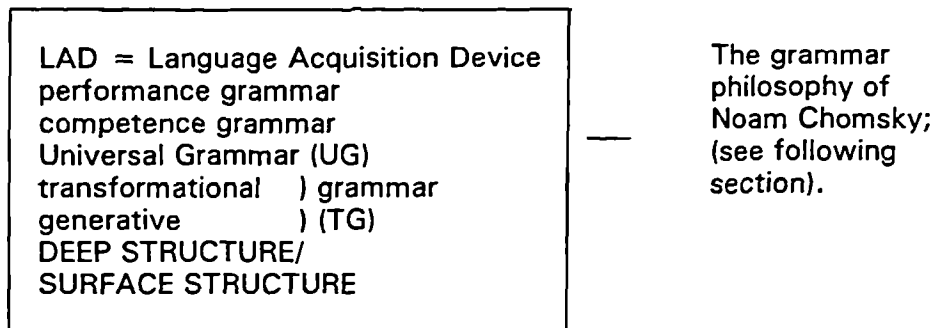
Part c) Grammar : the influence of Noam Chomsky

Aitchison (1992) describes Chomsky as arguably "the most important influence on linguistics in the latter half of the twentieth century" (p.27). Particularly significant is his claim that "a human's knowledge of language is largely genetically inbuilt and separate from other cognitive abilities" (p.27). His hypothesis of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD, 1965) replaced later by that of Universal Grammar (UG, 1981 and 1986) - statements that children are pre-programmed with a knowledge of universal grammar as an aid to the acquisition of their own and further languages - must be of interest to teachers of language, including teachers of L2 or FL, as well as to the present research. Having UG would involve "understanding some basic linguistic principles and being aware in advance of some crucial options available to human languages" (Aitchison 1992, p.27). Children might cross-refer these possibilities with the language going on around them and "set the parameters" of their internal grammars accordingly.

In trying to determine the relevance of UG to L2 acquisition or learning one may consult Cook (1986), who suggests that L2 learners may attain "reasonable success" in their pursuit of L2 and, if this is so, will end up with very complex knowledge "underdetermined by the input data" (p.56). The input data of language are the speech and speech-related data whch permeate the environment of the L1 learner. In the case of the L2 learner, there is markedly less provision of natural data and the learner is of necessity fed with custom-controlled or designed data. Cook's vision of "reasonable success for L2 learners" implies that:

* they will acquire the ability to communicate in terms of the pursued foreign language

*   they will attain some degree of accuracy in the use of the relevant
         foreign syntax and in their ability, therefore, to deal with ambiguity and
         ungrammaticality: ie that they will develop a sense or feeling about what
         is well formed in their L2.

In other words, and still as Cook implies it, Chomsky suggests that the same
inherent structure of Grammar (UG) which assists the L1 learner, may assist him
also in his pursuit of L2, on the strength that it has already been activated for
the L1 contingency and is already in habitual use when the need to deal with L2
arises. The learner is already trained in operating his language judgement and
adept in setting his parameters (drawing from Chomsky 1981b). Therefore, one
may conclude that UG may be involved in L2 learning, in that:

*   UG may be brought to bear on the L2 data and
*   the learner's attitudes to parameter setting will be applied to his tasks
         with the foreign languages (Cook 1986, p.57).

(In support, see Chomsky himself, 1981b; Hornstein and Lightfoot, 1981;
Lightfoot, 1982; White, 1982).

The argument for the credibility of UG as a principle used by L2 learners
depends upon one's understanding of it as an innate structure without which the
L1 developer could not conceive of, let alone produce or comprehend new
language. Since perceptive L2 learners reach a stage from which they can
conceive and create new material out of their experience of the foreign language
- and comprehend the new materials which are continually put before them
(Johnstone 1994) - it surely follows that, in the admittedly relative and artificial
environment of the classroom, creative progress can be made by learners of a
foreign language, thanks to their inbuilt language monitoring device. The present
research, in its processes and outcomes, could conceivably be interpreted as
able to substantiate this hypothesis. Within an experiment testing two
grammar-teaching modes contrastively with two classes of learners, it is
possible that one class, on being fed more formal, "imposed" grammar rules,
might perceive language as a finite principle, or as a principle containing
impediments to challenge and possibly defeat their capacity to control and
master it. The second class, on the other hand, having received no instruction in
the formal rules, might see language as arbitrary, even infinite and might set to
work upon it without any preconceived ideas or sense of explicit difference

separating its system from the L1. This issue may be equated with the suggestion (Aitchison, 1992) of "top-down" and "bottom-up" data processing systems. The first associates itself with imposed grammar (G-E) and the second with inferred grammar (G-I).

This argument concerning the influence of Noam Chomsky upon the reality of language and grammar, could logically extend as an inquiry into TRANSFORMATIONAL GRAMMAR and GENERATIVE GRAMMAR (TG), which, as Devitt and Sterelny (1987, p.130) explain, were offered by Chomsky as theories of linguistic competence and performance, jointly a natural property of people, in which grammar plays a central role. However, in the light of the tests to which these grammatical theories have been subjected over recent years, and of the changes and counter arguments which have been made, eg. Hymes (1971) and Brumfit (1984) - and in spite of the sympathetic reception and acceptance of these theories which some writers like Devitt and Sterelny (1987) seem to continue to make - the researcher prefers to remain with the principle of the human being's innate linguistic endowment in the form of Universal Grammar (UG) as Chomsky's contribution to her methodological investigation. The nature of the work done at GCSE level by her teaching groups, which does not necessarily entail the generation of creative language on a large scale (Roberts 1994), would seem to make this an appropriate decision.

Part d) Grammar : a concluding comment

Having placed the item GRAMMAR at the root of problems found in languages teaching - this informs the argument of the first section of this chapter and influences the action research chapters later! - the item must be understood as a very complex principle. The explanations which have been offered so far are minimal and do not do it justice. They simply point out the complexity of grammar as a phenomenon and presage the role to be played by some aspects of the matter in the present research. Thus far the subject has been seen essentially as follows:

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│    GRAMMAR AS PHYSICAL DYNAMIC        │
│  LANGUAGE STRUCTURER AND STABILISER   │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘

                    ↑
                  ┌───┐
┌──────────────┐  │ G │  ┌──────────────┐
│ GRAMMAR AS   │  │ R │  │ GRAMMAR AS   │
│ 'VITAL'      │  │ A │  │ APPROACH     │
│ BIOLOGICAL   │ ←│ M │→ │ METHOD OR    │
│ ORGAN or     │  │ M │  │ ATTITUDE IN  │
│ INBORN       │  │ A │  │ THE TEACHING/│
│ LANGUAGE     │  │ R │  │ LEARNING     │
│ MECHANISM    │  └───┘  │ PROCESS      │
└──────────────┘         └──────────────┘
                    ↓
        ┌──────────────────────┐
        │  GRAMMAR AS LANGUAGE  │
        │   REGISTER - DEFINER  │
        └──────────────────────┘
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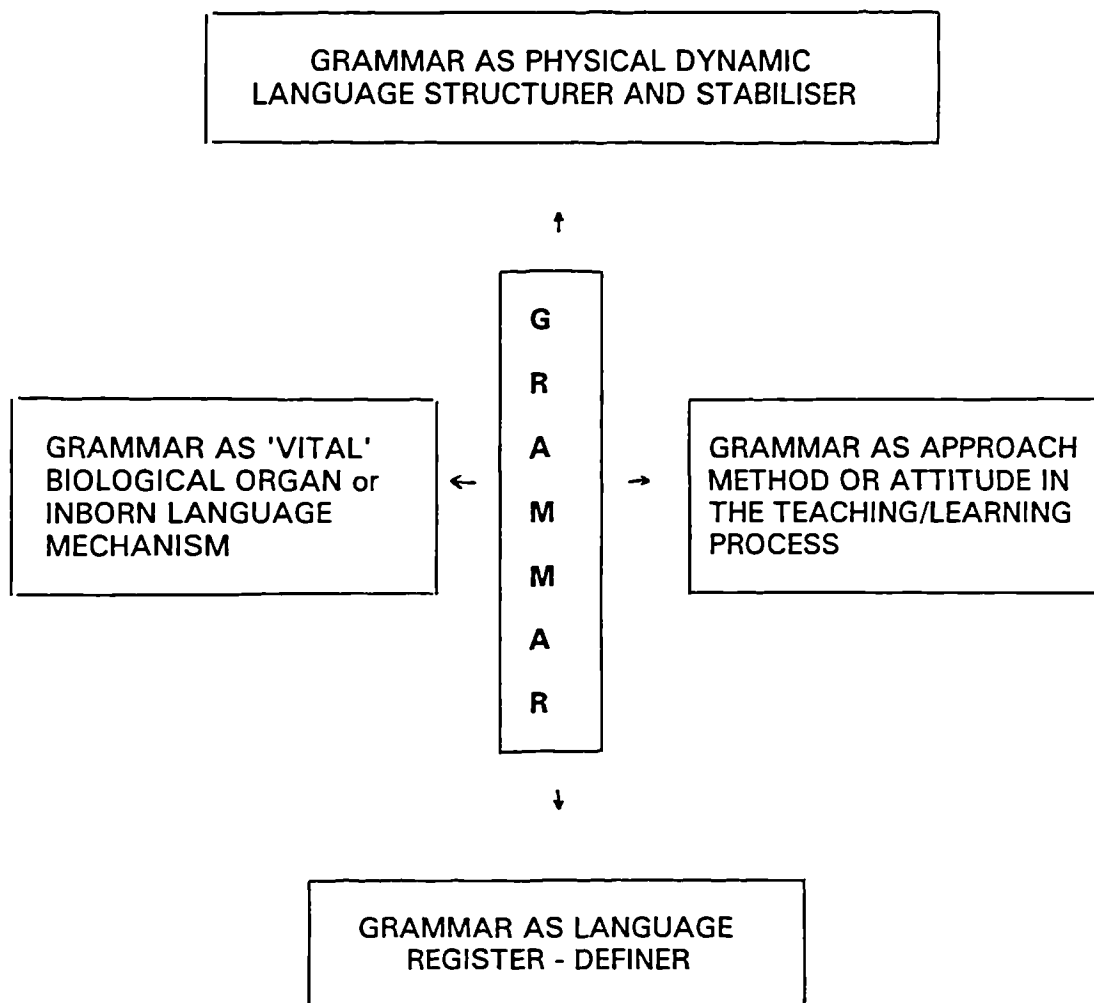
For Crystal (1992), grammar has implications for learners as the most direct measure of their developing linguistic ability. Learners who apply the properties of grammar with savoir-faire at once enhance their use and comprehension of language. For example:

* vocabulary and syntax are important to meaning,

* semantics and morphology are important to comprehension,

* punctuation is important to sense and to style, and so on ...

As Crystal (1992) recalls, the Bullock Report (1975) recommended that the best way to encourage familiarity with a language, including its grammar, was through the use of that language. That is very similar to the position which is once more taken up by the National Curriculum in respect of L2 learning and

The debate about the good and the bad where the place of grammar in Modern Languages teaching is concerned is a protracted one. It is not solved yet, except in so far as grammatical control is seen as an undeniable basis for language use. It can thus also be regarded as a necessary aim of a teaching method, even, some argue, in the case of the learner's first language. Devitt and Sterelny (1987), who wrote out of dissatisfaction over confusion on such matters - linguistics, psycholinguistics and grammar - attempt to adopt a positive stand on the issue of grammar. They advertise grammar as the device which explains language structure so that, when applied, it creates meaning out of strings of words, in any natural language, giving rise to infinite possibilities for creative use and comprehension (p.90, p.92).

That view at least commands a wide consensus. Argreement, however, divides sharply over the top-down' against 'bottom-up' teaching and learning strategies (Aitchison 1992) or, as framed by the present research, over explicit or implicit L2 pedagogy. The review thus far highlights both the importance of the dilemma and the absence of hard evidence, or consensus, over the role of grammar in L2 teaching. It is necessary to ask whether that remains the case when seen from the wider perspectives of linguistics, as parent-discipline for grammar.

Defining grammar as a field within linguistics implies that grammar, even in its full sense, may not be realised as one and the same as linguistics. Crystal's (1992) reference for linguistics treats the concept as one comprising scientific "branches and approaches" to language study, and not simply as a content-field.

So, the question arises; if grammar is not entirely synonymous with linguistics, can an enquiry into linguistics shed some useful light on aspects of the enigma of language which study of grammar alone leaves unresolved?

2.3.5 <u>What is 'Linguistics'?</u>

<u>Part a) Linguistics : a difficult concept to determine</u>

The field of linguistics may be conveniently sectioned into three dichotomies, as the Encyclopaedia Britannica - specifically the Macropaedia (No.23, p.49) - informs the inquirer. After disregarding synchronic and diachronic approaches to the topic, the researcher has been helped by conceptualising *theoretical-and-applied-linguistics* as structured according to the three perceived domains of the *linguistic sciences* (see Morris, below). The goal of *theoretical linguistics* is the

applied-linguistics as structured according to the three perceived domains of the *linguistic sciences* (see Morris, below). The goal of *theoretical linguistics* is the construction of a general framework for the description of languages. The aim of *applied linguistics* is the application of the findings and teachings of the scientific study of language to a practical context or framework.

Linguistics is concerned with "the nature and functions of language, the differences between spoken and written forms, phonetics, structure, some aspects of meaning, the role of language in education, the teaching of languages and language change" (Wallwork 1969). The science of linguistics is concerned with the theory of language expressed in terms of linguistic universals, ie. features of language that are common to all natural languages. This schema, as described in Morris (1938), must embrace at least three domains:

1. pragmatics, which is the study of the language in use;
2. semantics, which is the study of meaning;
3. syntax, which provides for the formal interrelations existing between language elements and words.

This analysis heightens the impression of broad synonymity between the concerns of grammar and linguistics more generally. Other writers appear to confirm this impression. For example, Gregory (1970) ascribes the recent dramatic advances made in the field of the linguistic sciences, "largely to the work of the American linguistic philosopher Noam Chomsky" (p.165). Gregory's itemisation of Chomsky's bequests to linguistics - biologically innate grammar (UG); the concepts of Surface Structure/Deep Structure Grammar (TG) - are the very principles which have already been acknowledged in the discussion on grammar. Certainly many of the authors who have been used by the researcher to provide an inroad to this section on language and who have informed her inquiry, believe that the work of Chomsky has been of enormous influence in the history of linguistics, which here embraces grammar. Linguistics has a short practical history of little more than a century's span, it seems, as opposed to its much longer existence as a philosophy, (Hodges and Rudorf 1972). However, it seems also that the era of Chomsky is closing, if Wallwork, Palmer, Brumfit and others writing within the space of the last two decades are correct in forecasting new developments.

Dominant since the 1970s have been studies in the sub-disciplines of *psycho* - and (especially) *socio-linguistics* (cf the work of Slobin, Labov, Hymes and others); also, work in *pragmatics* (eg Grice, Levinson, etc.) which again focuses on contexts and real use. These developments have been marked by a consequent change of concern, as far as users or learners are concerned, from formal concepts of competence to communicative and pragmatic equivalents. Such studies (as reviewed eg. by Edwards and Westgate 1994) have application principally to the acquisition of the mother tongue competence (eg Romaine 1984; Wells 1987). The same is largely the case with studies set in classrooms. Where language learning and teaching have been directly investigated (eg Ellis 1992), moreover, the contexts have been mostly those of second rather than further foreign language classes. This is a matter which could be returned to in a specific way, through consideration of the role of applied linguistics, but two points must be made at once: a) second language contexts characteristically provide more exposure and support to and for the target language; and b) that difference alters the balance between the roles of what has been referred to as primary and secondary grammar. Little work has been done on the specific place of secondary (explicit) grammar teaching in the foreign language classroom. Thus linguistics has, in this sense, not answered the questions left unanswered by the review of grammar above. Nevertheless, a purpose will be served by recalling the changing perspective in which these enduring dilemmas, and grammar in particular, have been considered.

Part b) The History of Linguistics : a development in brief

'Linguistics' is essentially a twentieth century term and the scientific or scholarly study of linguistics is little older than this term, even though the awareness of it and interest in it go back as far as Plato. Linguistics therefore, belongs essentially to the modern period of the history of language. Its changing concerns can be represented thus (Hodges and Rudorf 1972):

LATE 19TH CENTURY EARLY 20TH CENTURY	In this period Ferdinand de Saussure changed the course of linguistic study by drawing the distinction between diachronic and synchronic linguistics and by differentiating between 'langue' (language) and 'parole' (speech). For Saussure 'langue' was the underlying structure of language and 'parole' was the outward manifestation of that structure.
20TH CENTURY (the first half-century)	Thanks to the work of Saussure, a new era of linguistic study opened up and was called 'Structuralism'. Linguistics now had the redefined goal of describing the nature of 'la langue'. The structuralists of the times included: Franz Boas 1920s on - Edward Sapir 1920s Leonard Bloomfield 1930s Benjamin Lee Whorf 1950s Language study was required to be based on empirical evidence and language was to be examined for what it actually is and not for what men thought it ought to be. This was the age of 'Behaviourism' and Bloomfield (Language, 1933).
20th CENTURY (the second half-century)	Because 'Structuralism' was seen to be a mental process, some challenges were taken up against it in its Saussurean definition. Noam Chomsky maintained that universal patterns are present in all languages. He stressed the mentalistic theory of language, insisting that linguists should observe the native speakers' unconscious knowledge of their own language, which he termed their 'competence', rather than observe their actual production of language, which he termed their 'performance'. Chomsky saw in the native-speakers' competence an unlimited potential for performance. He aimed to write a grammar that would identify those unconscious rules. Accordingly, he developed his Transformational and Generative Grammars after writing 'Syntactic Structures' (1957).

The above summary has been supported by the Encyclopaedia Britannica and Hodges and Rudorf (1972).

In the light of the dichotomy in teaching styles examined in the present research: Grammar-Explicit/Grammar-Implicit hypothesis (G-E versus G-I), it is interesting

to view the development of linguistics as demonstrating what may be construed as general support for approach E up to the late 1920s. Since that date the earnest search for better methods has generally been conducted with approach I perceived as the desirable component and target.

PHASE ONE			
TRADITIONAL GRAMMAR MODELLED ON LATIN (a <u>prescriptive</u> method emphasised importance of meaning. BUT too narrow, stilted and imperfect)	The base of all Western scholarship and of the Church, giving rise to the vernaculars Language described according to Latin structural systems	MIDDLE AGES THROUGH TO FIRST YEARS OF 20th CENTURY	E

PHASE TWO			
STRUCTURAL PERIOD DESCRIPTIVE MOVEMENT PHONOLOGY/ MORPHOLOGY/SYNTAX (a <u>descriptive</u> outlook emphasising the importance of the whole sentence as concept. SEMANTICS becomes important. SPEECH wins primacy as language skill.	F. de Saussure, Gouin, Marcel, Bloomfield (<u>Language</u> 1933), Sapir The development of) TRANSFORMATIONAL -) GENERATIVE GRAMMAR) from SOURCE to) CHOMSKY) New developments via technology coming into the ascendant.	LATE 1920s 1900-1950s 1930-1970s 1980-2000s	I
NB. DEFINITIONS OF 'LINGUISTICS'	(a) Theoretical = study of language for its own sake. (b) Applied = study of language to solve educational problems.		

2.3.6 <u>The effects of 'Applied Linguistics' on the teaching of languages in the classroom</u>

As has already been suggested in the preceding pages, it is important to differentiate between theoretical or pure linguistics and applied linguistics before one can discuss a role for the classroom, for it is the latter type which occupies the role. Fraser and O'Donnell (eds. 1969) argue once again that the discipline of applied linguistics "exists as a department in its own right and not merely as a sub-division of linguistics" (Preface p.xi, p.xii). Applied linguistics is a highly suitable source of pedagogical application for it is essentially a problem-centred discipline, placed to decide how practical difficulties might be solved.

Applied linguistics may serve a valuable purpose in classrooms where L1 is taught. However, it is generally agreed that benefits in that area are considerably less significant than those effected in the L2 classroom (Fraser and O'Donnell 1969; McIntosh 1969; Wallwork 1969). McIntosh (1969) explains the reason for this difference:

> "For in certain ways an English-speaking child's knowledge of English is always in advance of what we can teach him."
> (p.v-vi),

implying that this is in no way the case with L2. Involvement with applied linguistics has produced insights which have been highly fruitful for the methodological developments of modern and recent times. Wallwork (1969) agrees with McIntosh (1969) on this, describing the new twentieth century approaches to L2 teaching as arguably better than those used in previous centuries, for two principal reasons:

1. the insights of earlier times have been extended and deepened (p.vii)
2. the modern research has brought new and interesting thinking but also an awareness that the research has a long road of development yet ahead, before a fuller understanding of "the many complexities of linguistic study" can be achieved (p.viii).

Thus learners of L1 have less need of linguistic revelation because they have a naturally acquired or innate language experience and insight. L2 learners, on the other hand, may benefit from the application of linguistics to their study of language and from the added bonus that, as learners of L1, they have that innate or acquired language experience and insight. McIntosh (1969) argues this equation in the case of L2 learners and discerns much advantage for them in the two resources that have just been described:

> "Much is written about the way a knowledge of one language interferes with the acquisition of an idiomatic control of another. (However) less is said about the appalling difficulties likely to arise if learners had *no* previously acquired native language at all and so lacked ... the linguistic experience which this has given them."
> (p.vii).

Roulet (1976) and Saporta (1968) express agreement with views such as those of McIntosh referenced above. These authors single out specific factors and principles like "grammatical theories", "structural and transformational-generative grammars", which, having become too dominant as methodological elements, were integrated into pedagogical grammars, "which take into account the acquisition and use of the language as an instrument of communication", (Roulet, 1976 p.197). Saporta (1968, p.81) agrees on the matter of the conversion of "scientific grammar into a pedagogical grammar for the purposes of modern needs and use in modern classrooms".

Applied linguistics is, after all, a potential resource for ways in which language is put to use in the classroom; therefore it is the language that the teacher teaches and the language that the learner learns and uses. It could be argued that applied linguistics provides the syllabus and, because the syllabus is delivered over a period of time and must be designed in instalments accordingly, applied linguistics is closely associated with - or indeed is - syllabus design itself. Corder's work, Introducing Applied Linguistics (1973) explains why this is so in an editorial cover-comment:

> "Of all the areas of 'applied linguistics', none has shown the effect of linguistic findings, principles and techniques more than foreign language teaching - so much so that the term 'applied linguistics' is often taken as being synonymous with that task".

There is no problem in accepting that a grammar-explicit syllabus has its grammar content mapped out specifically and overtly. Usually, to date, grammar has been taught and learnt incrementally. It has constituted the building blocks of the language being learnt sequentially and accumulatively (Rivers 1983). However, communicative teaching for the GCSE has not been wholly suited to sequenced, structured grammar teaching (Rutherford 1987; Little 1989) and, to an even greater extent, the National Curriculum implies that the sequential, accumulative emphasis is no longer a necessary or a desirable factor of good subject-practice (eg. p.37; 6:24). The wisdom of a more random approach to addressing grammar has yet to be confirmed through observations of non-sequenced practice reported on by researchers.

In the case of a G-I syllabus, the grammatical content is not directly articulated, but it exists as part of the language being transacted - usually within a broadly

notional functional design (Wilkins 1976; etc.) or a so-called 'communicative' one (Littlewood, 1981). Therefore, it must be addressed by the teacher with the intention that the learners pick it up as they go along. However covert, the implicit approach is still, like the explicit approach, linguistically informed. The linguistic agenda is 'captured' and emphasised in the classroom business through a variety of means relating with syllabus design. These include the following points, suggested in part in Littlewood (1989):

*   *designed teaching materials*, linguistically graded and sequenced,
*   *the teacher's agenda*, in which grammar receives the teacher's emphasis but is kept covert and subliminal for the learners,
*   *the spiral curriculum plan*, in which thematic and grammatical/linguistic items are visited and revisited, and in which more lexis and more grammar are added each time,
*   *the content, the strategy and the focus*, which the teacher builds in to lessons and syllabus-plans, and so on ...

The researcher, who has here undertaken to argue that the implicit approach to the teaching and learning of a language is linguistically informed in spite of the absence of an overt grammatical agenda (delivered in the native language), cites Roberts (1993) who insists that the question of grammar in a language syllabus can not be avoided, for the simple reason that linguistic creativity is impossible without it. However, the final word on the matter is extracted here from the Hutchinson Encyclopedia (9th ed; p.488), in which implicit grammar is described as being larger than explicit grammar. Both having derived from natural grammar, implicit grammar is more akin to it than explicit grammar. Unspecified amounts of implicit grammar may be contained in discourse and some can be developed as a free-standing agenda to be treated explicitly and consciously. Thus the declared grammar (explicit) is only a part of the undeclared grammar (implicit or natural). The two sides of the researcher's experiment are separated by nothing but the factor X (mentioned in the Introduction and explained more fully in Chapter Three) which is only a measured part of an extensive, unmeasured (and possibly unmeasurable) linguistic agenda.

It must, perhaps, be added to the discussion at this point that L2 learners approach their task not only with requirements in which they are arguably objective, but also with expectations and preconceived ideas in which they are not objective. Certainly they do not set out with the blank mind, the tabula

rasa, in the same way as the L1 initiate. They expect to learn the language as a system of communication describable in terms of a large set of linguistic universals. They expect, consciously and unconsciously, to find words and sentences, grammatical structures and locutionary modes awaiting them in that language. And, on the semantic level, they expect to find words that fit into the familiar word classes of their L1 experience. They confidently (if erroneously) believe that the words that they are intended to master will prove to be directly interchangeable with their own. As has already been seen, the science of linguistics is concerned with the theory of language in terms of linguistic universals. Therefore, by definition, this science and the influences of all who pursue it, of necessity penetrate into the agendas of the classrooms in which the natural or modern languages are taught. Crystal (1992) characterizes this process, on behalf of L2 learners, as an attempt to elucidate language problems through reference to other areas of experience.

The researcher finds all such reflections important for her methodological study, in which on the one hand a kind of linguistic diet was selected and fed to a class of learners (G-E), whereas, contrastively, the second class of learners (G-I) was required to forage for linguistic correctness by accessing their natural language experience and intuition. From some writers on the subject, eg. Crystal (1992), one may infer as from Corder earlier, that knowledge, understanding and awareness of linguistics and the pedagogy of Modern Languages are virtually indivisible. It makes sense, therefore, that McArthur (1983) should encourage teachers to seek an understanding of what linguistics is and of what linguistics can do for their teaching, and for their clients' learning, when applied in their classrooms.

Perhaps first and foremost teachers should acquaint themselves with the philosophies of Saussure (circa 1913) and Sapir (circa 1921), who differentiated between '*langue*' and '*parole*' as the abstract system of language and the manifestation of language respectively (Brown 1984; Wilkinson 1971). Wilkinson (1971) sees the Sapir/Saussure idea as being of importance to the individual's use of language, therefore to the teaching-learning process. He outlines the levels of language that should be assimilated into one's awareness in the following simple pattern:

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                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │   LANGUAGE   │
                          └──────────────┘
          ┌──────────────────────┼──────────────────────┐
┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│  LEXIS (WORDS)   │  │  GRAMMAR RULES   │  │ PHONEMES (SOUNDS) │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
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LEXIS (WORDS)	GRAMMAR RULES	PHONEMES (SOUNDS)
(i) CONTENT WORDS (noun, verbs etc.) (ii) STRUCTURE WORDS (articles, negatives, connectives etc.)	(i) WORD ORDER (SYNTAX) (ii) ACCIDENCE (WORD CHANGES)	(i) INTONATION (ii) STRESS (Both of these imply that dialect has its own inbuilt grammar)
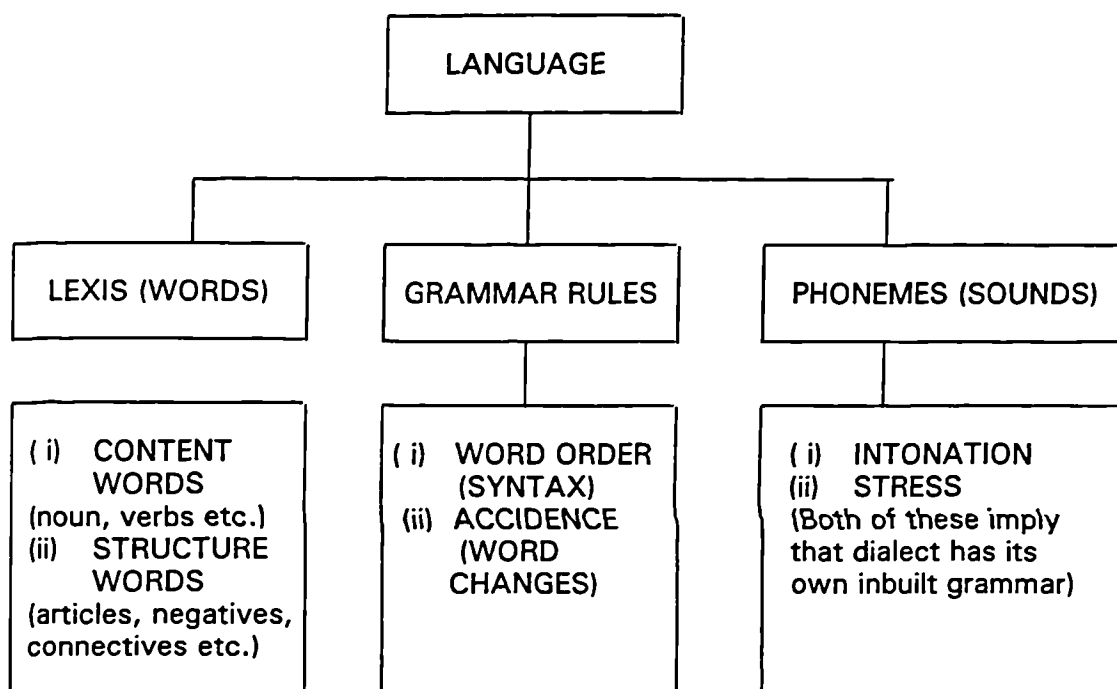
Wilkinson recommends further that there should be an understanding sought of Chomsky's theories of language also, with particular reference to <u>SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES</u> (1957) and <u>ASPECTS OF THEORY OF SYNTAX</u> (1965).

In this discussion, Chomsky's influence can be linked up with the aforegoing discussion concerning the importance of linguistic knowledge to L2 learning and the headstart afforded by innate and acquired experience in the context of L1, acting coincidentally as a boost in the assumption of L2. Understanding all of this may be deemed important if for no other reason than that Chomsky says it is so. Of course, he has his reasons. Cited in Cammish (1983), Chomsky accounts for the failure of methodological approaches through the by-passing of LAD, a major feature of L1 learning, and of the child's innate hypothesis-forming mechanism which helps him (the child or learner) to internalize inbuilt grammar rules. Too often, it is implied, the teacher goes counter to the "natural syllabus" by over-supplying formal, prescriptive grammar. This hampers the learners' natural perception of the patterns embedded in the language they receive. Chomsky would wish to see more confidence placed in LAD, (and in LASS! - the Language Acquisition Support System), with its three major components:

* knowledge of linguistic universals, the "building blocks" of language,
* a hypothesis making device and
* an evaluation measure for ensuring which grammar, out of several possibilities, is best suited to a set purpose.

(Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar, with its inbuilt flexibility-giving device for parameter setting, is his later updated version of LAD/LASS).

The researcher cannot resist alluding to her action research exercise in the light of Chomsky's espousal of the "natural syllabus" and the teacher's tendency to over-supply formal grammar. This argument reflects precisely the differential used by the researcher in her methodological hypothesis!

Totally germane to the concern for supporting a natural agenda in the languages classroom as opposed to a contrived or artificial one, is the matter of catering for the principles of '*competence*' and '*performance*' (concepts deriving from Saussure's earlier distinction between 'langue' and 'parole' but applying to the individual language user). Despite his initial denial of their having any relevance to language teaching, these came to be regarded by Chomsky as the first and central concern of linguistic philosophy and of its influence upon teaching and learning in Modern Languages classrooms. The 'competence-performance' debate is taken up by Devitt and Sterelny (1987), among others, reinforcing the sentiments already expressed by Chomsky himself on the persistent overshadowing of the natural agenda by the desire for artificial perfection in the languages subject. Teachers it is argued, "get hooked" on competence-based attitudes conditioned by programmes of idealised grammar. In other words, too much time is devoted to the process, too much importance is attached to a stylized or fashioned product and the end result conjures disappointment (Devitt and Sterelny 1987, p.91).

As has already been noted in this section, Chomsky is accorded high regard yet encounters challenge. Brumfit (1984), in discussing the contemporary teaching objective of 'communicative competence' in the Modern Languages classroom, remains with Chomsky's description of Grammar in the context of 'competence and performance'. He suggests that an individual's performance is not always the most positive outcome of his/her competence but that it can inadequately reflect competence and therefore may suggest failure. Brumfit implies, perhaps, that caution should be exercised towards the application of linguistics in the classroom and towards an undue emphasis on 'competence' in its relationship with 'performance'. He writes:

"The notion of competence is extended to embrace all rule systems which describe <u>our knowledge of language and how to operate with</u>

<u>it</u>". ... "Language behaviour is complex but it remains a contentious issue to what extent such complexity should affect language teaching" (1984, p.25).

The competence and performance issue becomes an even more interesting one in the context of UK foreign language teaching and learning, because of the artificial circumstances and the constraints which prevail in that connection. Brumfit (1984) acknowledges these matters as a part of his critique of the UK Modern Languages teaching context. On the subject of grammar and its *position in the classroom agenda, he proposes that too much emphasis is placed* on too many items - many of these being small items - as an attempt is sustained to retain an important status for grammar, but at the expense of real and meaningful L2 acquisition (p.37). Once again, the researcher's action research outcome may be said to address just this issue. Brumfit's argument about classroom pedagogy in Modern Languages becomes one centred on accuracy and fluency. Chomsky's argument was on competence and *performance. Though they do not reason in total congruity, they each produce* an argument which bears significantly on the researcher's experiment. For Brumfit, the distinctions between accuracy and fluency form "the basic polarity" in language learning (p.52). His argument makes language essentially a facilitative process which requires something worth facilitating to be focused upon without "prior specifications" being placed in the path of this process (p.90).

Earlier than Brumfit, Wilkinson (1971) wrote on the matter of children's natural "ownership" of competence and their potential for performance (p.134). Wilkinson ascribes the early acquisition of competence to the innate possession of native grammar which children are able to combine with their vocabulary to produce flexible speech. For Wilkinson, these properties are re-invented as 'possession' and 'use' (p.133). It is interesting that in their personal discussions *about L1 acquisition and L2 learning, writers like Wilkinson and Brumfit - and* others drawn from in this section - see L1 acquisition as children's natural acquisition of their native tongue via their experience of life rather than via their experience of the subject taught as English in their classrooms at school. In marked contrast, the L2, be it French, German, Spanish or even one of the two classics, can be presented ONLY in the classroom setting in the combined circumstances and conditions - including those of a linguistic or grammatical nature - which have already been alluded to. In the English classroom, the

English language features as both the process and the product of the teaching-learning programme which is carried out there. Hence has arisen a different but parallel debate over National Curriculum English, as to the role of direct grammatical instruction or of 'knowledge about language' (often KAL), as referred to in the Kingman Report (1988).

In the recent BAAL collective report: Applied Linguistics in Society (1988), Carter's paper studies the position of English as a classroom subject from two different points of view, those of a) the subject "Reactionaries" and b) the subject "Romantics" respectively. The formers' requirement for "a prescriptive view of language which manifests itself in a concern with grammatical correctness, accurate spelling and punctuation, and so on" (p.52), speaks clearly for the application of linguistics to the work in English, ie. for the furnishing of a stabilizing code of rules to the matter being conveyed and assimilated. This reactionary view is a minority attitude, however, and is not, for example, found in the researcher's school. Indeed, in current times, in the English classrooms in the majority of schools, and certainly in those in which the researcher's experiment pupils learned their English, the opposite philosophy is at large, described by Carter as being knowledge which is handled differently to that which is taught explicitly in other subjects where subject matter is mostly underpinned with formulae, facts and texts (p.55). He makes a number of observations about this modern romantic style of English teaching and some of them, cited here, seem to reflect the legacy made by English departments to current ML classrooms:

*   no knowledge content is explicitly imparted;

*   children move toward knowledge on their own initiative;

*   children are helped by their own experience of life (which varies from child to child);

*   it is seen as an Art not a Science, decidedly non-mechanistic, therefore, and essentially a creative, intuitive subject area in which the teacher plays a non-interventionist role;

*   it is essentially against formalisation, free of any threat from the jargon of linguistics and metalanguage, therefore free of grammar rules and grammar terminologies;

*   it is individualistic and the individual is placed with a kind of autonomy in a child-centred classroom (pp.54-55).

This is perhaps what Slobin (1974) describes or implies within his discourse on prescriptive and descriptive grammar, characteristic of the individual's knowledge of language or acquisition of language (p.2).

The issues of prescriptive and descriptive grammars will be discussed in Zone III of this chapter, for they immediately affect the present study. Yet the researcher does not wish to pass on from the tenets of the romantic attitude to English teaching before alluding to Wilkinson's thesis (1971) that language has no purpose outside of communication. A reiteration of the point serves at this stage as a reminder that language should be naturally learnable through interaction between an 'addressor' and an 'addressee.' However, in the context of the home and the child's experience of L1, the roles of addressor and addressee are relatively equally and flexibly shared, whereas in the classroom these roles are more firmly placed in the control of the teacher (Edwards and Westgate (1994, passim). The home environment is, moreover, populated with a variety of people, many of them adults. Therefore there are many varieties and registers of talk - content, talk - context and talk - situation. The possibilities of exposure, immersion and time should offer the child a much richer arena for the acquisition of L1, continued in his English classroom, than the non-native, decidedly contrived and very restricted Modern Languages classroom is able to provide for the purpose of promoting L2 (based on Wilkinson 1971 p.109). Wilkinson's advice on the teaching of L2 is that children should be "brought up" in language under an enabling discipline and L1 interference should be ruled out.

So much for the boost or bonus that was envisaged through the influence of the learner's L1 experience earlier in this argument! It will have been observed by the reader that the stream of argumentation, though it steers its course on a planned and connected itinerary of philosophies and writers, meanders nevertheless with the convergences and divisions of their opinions and reasonings. And invariably the research study can be seen to address something on behalf of every one of them, whether they agree with each other or not. Which only proves that in this territory of linguistics and attitudes to grammar there are surely no absolutes!

Thus Crystal (1983 p.15) argues "the importance and complexity of language as a form of human behaviour" and advises the study of Chomsky and Halliday, who put grammar into a perspective which corrects the notion of its being a random collection of features or of its being possible to teach it that way, either

in L1 or L2 terms. Grammar indeed is the very substance of language and integral with it. The very first sub-section of this whole discussion of language came to this conclusion. Palmer (1982) is as clear on these things as others, and maintains that grammar is indispensable to language and to man's command of it. He describes the dropping of grammar from the school syllabus in recent times as "a deplorable state of affairs" (p.7), for it robs learners of an outlet to their need to get to know the "mechanics", the "calculus" of their own and other languages, whichever ones they are studying as L2 or FL. Learners have a right, according to Palmer, to explicit knowledge of the language and that is only possible through a knowledge of grammar (p.13). Having allowed Palmer the concluding word in this discussion on the plea for linguistic teaching in the classroom, it must be observed that, in coming down on the side of explicit knowledge, he has brought the discussion full circle and back to the researcher's hypothesis.

2.3.7 Summary and conclusion to Zone II

This thesis is concerned with the issue of implicit or explicit grammar teaching as a tool in the learner's accumulation of language, specifically a second or a further foreign language. In this second zone of the background study it has been suggested that some of the reasoning about the role of grammar in the acquisition of L1 may also be valid to the reasoning about its significance to L2. Grammar has been associated with linguistics and with language itself, of which it is called a property along with phonetics and phonology. Grammar on its own, however, that is to say that item which is composed particularly of morphology and syntax, is the principle that steals the researcher's interest in relation to the action research project which she describes in subsequent chapters in this thesis.

Grammar has been examined from four points of view:

1. its constituent parts :   morphology and syntax
2. its relative types   :   structural and transformational-generative
3. its role in relation   to language as LANGUE
                                       to language as PAROLE
                                       within the context of LAD
                                       within the context of UG

4. its assumption by the learner by means called

          prescriptive or descriptive

          deductive or inductive

          explicit or implicit

The researcher's classroom-based experiment compares two teaching styles and monitors the process of their delivery and the effect this produces upon the pupils involved. The measurement of the product, represented by the accumulative set of results gained by the pupils and their final GCSE performance, also enables the researcher to discuss to some extent the effectiveness of these contrastive teaching styles used for the delivery of a second language. The expressions used most often in discussion of grammar in this thesis are 'explicit' and 'implicit'. Within the setting and the conditions of this localised experiment, *it was hypothesised that one method might emerge more effective, therefore "superior" to the other* - at least in the researcher's own setting and, possibly, beyond it.

In preparing this review of linguistic and grammatical analysis, the researcher found some of the writers' attitudes immediately exciting, their being particularly beneficial to a closer understanding of her action research (described in Chapters Three and Four). The few discrete examples which follow are placed as being representative of such clarification:

(i)   Citing Slobin (1974) -

> "Grammatical knowledge is something that people must have in order to speak and understand language" (p.2).

for a grammar is ...:

> ... "the characterization of knowledge necessary for the use of a language or the conceptualisation of a language" (ibid p.6).

There is the feeling with Slobin that if the grammar - that is to say the prescriptive grammar, "the sort that makes people shudder" (p.2) - is not delivered to the learner, then the learner will go to meet the grammar which is in any case embedded within the language of text, and this then becomes descriptive grammar discernment. In this second instance, grammar unfolds the knowledge that the learner must have for his continued production and his continued comprehension of language. The researcher's practical project tests out this thesis.

(ii) Referencing Chomsky -

Chomsky's principles of LAD, then UG, have been aired and with them the idea of the learner of L2 as the established acquirer of L1, who has already employed his LAD or UG mechanisms in his acquisition of his native language. The L1 learner, it has been argued, is able to use his experience and trained instinct to fix his parameters into the new grammar of L2, without submitting himself to explicit, prescriptive, imposed, therefore formally delivered grammar.

(iii) Citing Grace (1987) -

Grace subscribes to the argument on the inescapability of language for man and acknowledges the crucial factor of grammar to man's ability to employ this essential human resource. Grace maintains that the competent use of language, essential to the competent living of life, depends upon the individual's competence in applying a variety of skills which in turn are evolved out of experience of language use, but ultimately from the training of the language user's memory. Only by turning to our memory stores can we access language p.137):

"Linguistic competence involves memory. Memory comprises cognitive representations of different kinds."

The question of memory will play a part in the practical exercise managed by the researcher later.

The first of the series of three questions posed at the start of this zone of inquiry was: What is language? To this question a writer like Grace (1987, cited above) would reply that language is the one essential tool in the social construction of reality, the means by which the reality of a culture, once constructed, "is preserved and transmitted from person to person and from generation to generation" (editor's cover word).

To the recalled question : What is Linguistics? Lyons (1987) offers a clarification based on "the scientific study of language and the scientific coding or description of language to stabilize it so that it can be used reliably" (p.7) to generate meaning which is required to correspond appropriately to the meaning that is then comprehended. Linguistics can fix form and substance; linguistics can identify language, dialect and idiolect (p.14) and can affect the individual's competence and performance at all its analytical levels: phonology; phonetics;

orthology; lexicology; morphology; grammar; syntax.

To the question : "Why is language as it is?", Halliday (in Lyons 1987) explains that "the nature of language is closely related to the demands that we make on it, the functions it has to serve" (p.141).

This section closes by making reference to Wilkinson (1971), writing on the value of GRAMMAR to LANGUAGE and to the LANGUAGE USER, his comments having been based on research rather than on speculation and possessing, in the researcher's view, enduring importance:

- using Boas (1917): "The training in formal grammar does not improve pupils' composition."
- using Catherwood (1932): "A knowledge of grammar is of no general help in correcting faulty usage."
- using Macaulay (1947): "Grammar is often taught to children who have not the maturity or the intelligence to understand it."
- using Pressey and Robinson (1944), *on the application of grammar in* relation to foreign language learning: "A knowledge of grammar is helpful - if the language is approached through grammatical categories. However, there is no evidence to suggest that grammar is helpful to Direct Method learning". (It will be recalled that the researcher has already likened the case of current methodology to the Direct Method of the past, or implied it as a continuing phase of it).
- using Macaulay (1947) and Heath (1962): "Learners of L1 (English) who had been given formal grammar tuition wrote more faulted language than those who had not had formal grammar tuition" (op.cit. pp.33-34).

Finally, it has seemed appropriate, within a thesis which will ultimately attempt to explore two comparative routes to the teaching of (a) language, that the nature of language has first been examined. The fact that two routes have been explored, and not one only, implies differences separating the two approaches. These differences are real. They centre around the reality of grammar or, loosely, around linguistics. They have been explained in Chapter I and they will be reported on and discussed in the later chapters of this thesis. The outcome of the action research will surely depend upon the researcher's application of the chosen and described grammar-teaching methods against an awareness of a) methodology itself, as outlined in Zone 1 of this chapter and described in greater detail in later chapters and b) the science of language which has been the issue

of this second zone. The brief history of linguistics in its modern form through the twentieth century has been seen to run in parallel with the history of Modern Languages methodology. The task of the present zone of discussion was to find linguistics and grammar essentially constitutional with language and indispensable to it, therefore, when used. The weighty argument which develops from this situation, for the writers researched for this thesis and for the researcher herself, is, therefore: *Is grammar (qua linguistic description) by analogy necessary to a programme of L2 teaching, as a force to be overtly taught?*

The following zone of argument, Zone III, will discuss a) the principles of L1 and L2 teaching and learning and the influence of the former process upon the latter, and b) the concepts of 'Explicit' and 'Implicit' methodologies in language teaching, focusing on the presence and role of grammar within these.

2.4   The Review Of The Literature : ZONE III

Context : Language Acquisition And Language Learning

Discussion of the processes and an argument for researching them

2.4.1 Foreword

This third zone of inquiry into the processes of language teaching and learning facilitates a discussion which is structured into two sub-sections, examining writers' and researchers' views on the matters of:

*   L1 acquisition and L2 learning
*   L2 delivered by contrastive teaching modes equating with acquisition and learning

2.4.2 L1 Acquisition and L2 Learning

(i)   Introduction to this item

In the preceding discussion about language, grammar and linguistics, it became clear that the processes of learning the mother tongue and of learning a foreign language are essentially different. The reasons for this will be explored in the present argument but they have been seen to centre initially in the conditions, circumstances and environments which surround the language learning activity. Because the process of learning the mother tongue occurs systematically and naturally in what the researcher describes as a total situation set in a whole-time whole-space, whole-community framework, it suits the term 'acquisition' by which it is known. The young learner exists inside the native culture which is imbued with the native language. Being immersed, s(he) absorbs. The process is akin to "osmosis", as used in Krashen and Rivers and as explained in Howard (1994). The process happens, furthermore, in the majority of cases of immersion, whether the cultural/linguistic setting is native or not (Wilkins 1974). The cultural/linguistic environment overtakes and swamps the individual, who is smaller than it is and unable to resist or reject it, indeed is in need of it. As has already been noted in the previous section, and as the writers whose ideas inform this present section agree, the native language (or quasi native language) serves one's needs. It enables creativity and production and the expression of emotions (Dodson 1967; Wilkinson 1971; Richards and Rogers 1986).

On the other hand, the foreign language which is pursued outside of its own cultural setting, is a false reality. It is usually brought to the child in the form of a discrete learning package - a school curriculum course - the composition of

which depends upon artificial targets bartered for within a classroom setting. In most cases the learner has no compelling relationship with this course of learning, could easily live without it and has difficulty, if the truth were acknowledged, in living meaningfully with it (Dodson 1967; Wilkinson 1971; Wilkins 1974). Again, this situation is recognised by many of the writers who may be consulted on the matter of language learning. In fact it could be argued that the classroom pursuit of L2 does little more for learners' lives other than to open their eyes to the existence on their planet of another culture which uses a different voice to their own. This recognition is worthy in itself, but it is a far cry from the actual practical application of the language learning course that is placed before learners by those who claim to know what is good for them to learn. For, indeed, the relationship between learners and a non-native language is realised through the process of *learning*, which is usually construed as being different to the process of *acquisition*.

In most cases, the learning situation lacks real, realistic, authentic, genuine or relevant circumstances, however much 'authenticity' of texts and tasks is urged upon the teachers. In their discussions, writers use their favoured terms to describe the artificiality of the FL learning scene. The foreign language being targeted has a native setting but this does not feature when the language is taken out of its natural context and transplanted in the form of a school subject into a classroom in a different country. The whole-space, whole-time, whole-community criteria are absent and are inadequately substituted by the classroom which is a comparatively infertile arena, having in most cases only one FL 'specialist' in it in the teacher who, however proficient, is very rarely a native speaker. In addition to this (Wilkins 1974; Hawkins 1981), there is a time-provision of between one and three weeks per year - carved up and scattered - in which to do the learning of the language with a "gale of English" blowing all the while outside the classroom door (Hawkins 1981).

The differences which separate the challenges of learning one's first language as opposed to a foreign language are surely clear. They must account for the appropriateness of differentiating between the processes by applying to them the terms 'acquisition' and 'learning' respectively. The simplest symbols summarize what has so far been discussed:

```
      MT + NC                        MT + NC
 MT            NC              NC                MT
  +     ┌───┐   +       V      +   ┌──┐  ┌───┐    +
        │ L │                      │ L│  │TLP│
 NC     └───┘   MT            MT   └──┘  └───┘    NC
      MT + NC                        MT + NC
```
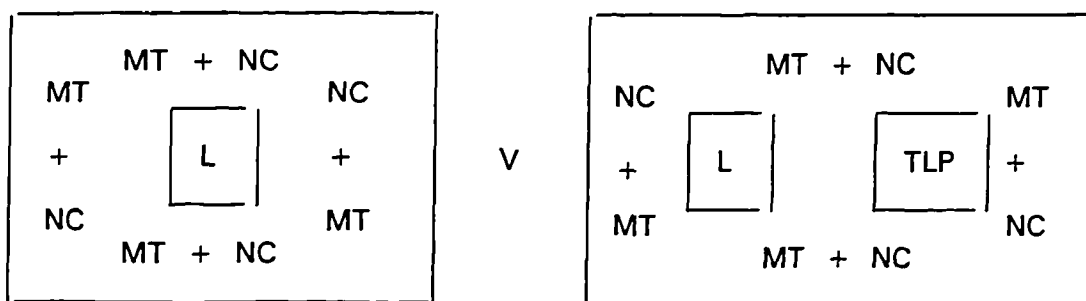
(L   =   Learner   )   (L   =   Learner   )
(   )   (   )
(MT   =   mother tongue   )   (MT   =   mother tongue   )
(   )   (   )
(NC   =   native culture   )   (NC   =   native culture)
                                   (   )
                                   (TLP   =   target language   )
                                   (package   )

In order to review a selection of writers who have treated this dichotomy, it would seem to be appropriate at this stage to divide the argument and explore each of the language development processes independently.

(ii)   **Native Language (L1) Acquisition**

The relevant contributions of a selection of writers on the matter of L1 acquisition may be outlined in summary and placed in anticipation of a more detailed discussion of the processes which may be associated with the L2 achievement, these being arguably more closely germane to the researcher's brief.

Dodson (1967) describes the genesis of native or first language acquisition as the human body's 'tabula rasa' which in the course of time is filled up with language utterances, and eventually expressions, phrases and sentences of an expanding register. Children collect their language and organise it as they develop their auditory function and their mental processing ability through babyhood, infancy and all the stages of their maturation. As children develop, they acquire more skills to process and verbalise their desires and intentions. They take control of their lives and label their concepts. In relation with their peers, they may be at an advantage or at a disadvantage in the development of their language skills, depending upon the level and type of environment in which their maturation occurs (Dodson p.46). The process of maturation is perceived by Dodson to be an efficient process, not burdensome or irksome, since it is

abundantly supported by relevant, cultural evidence to impact the senses and the memory. Dulay and Burt (1978) agree with Dodson on this and succinctly detail the natural and imperceptible mechanism of L1 acquisition as a process resulting from "innate mechanisms which operate more or less independently of input factors" (p.21).

Irvin (in Lenneberg 1966) contributes to the discussion by indicating that children's native language development exists on a parallel with their maturation process and in relationship with the environments in which they are brought up. Children's grammar, therefore their language, "converges on the norm for the community in which they live" (p.163). They learn grammatical (ie. language) structures which were never taught to them explicitly. Patterns, eccentricities, idiosyncrasies, habits and errors become locked into their language. Imitation of what they hear around them and the effects of 'operant conditioning' have a lot to do with this, but neither of these attitudes nor the processes of natural acquisition bring advancement in L1 development when grammatical and semantic concepts range at or above a certain level of complexity, at which point children's learning cannot proceed further without external support. This implies that directed or structured L1 teaching is required if learners are to raise their sights and enhance their performance. Otherwise their development and their performance will come to a standstill.

Imitation has already been mentioned as one of the devices named by Irvin (in Lenneberg 1966) which play a role in the development of language. Imitation helps substantially in the acquisition of vocabulary or of phonetic mastery. It is, indeed, important to the whole ritual of classroom-based learning, for in this context the language of the teacher, if imitated, provides the optimal prototype or model for the enrichment of the pupils' talk, just as in the case also of childrens' adults in the home environment. However, imitation does not allow for progression where grammar is concerned, but more will be noted on this later. The point about 'imitation' in language development is taken up by Wilkins (1974). Wilkins describes 'imitation' as the process of example-following in a setting which in L1 terms offers exposure to talk and stimulation in an image-filled world or environment. It follows that, in L1 acquisition, the learning and the use of the language are interbound and interdependent (p.33). However, acquisition through imitation has already been seen to be scarcely adequate for childrens' needs, these needs being concerned with exercising control over their lives and with establishing status and relationships with others

in their society (Richards and Rodgers 1986). This implies a decisive creative input on the part of the developer in L1. Such an input itself depends upon the individual's having more personal, original, purposeful, innovative, therefore creative language than that obtained through imitation. The progression of complexity in a child's linguistic development has been recognised since the mid 1960s as involving variously structured 'input grammars', owing very little to mere imitation (cf Brown and Bellugi, 1964, on 'telegraphic' speech patterns or 'two-word' grammars giving rise to, eg, "All gone milk"). In other words, even the simplest and earliest utterances reveal some degree of *processing* and *creativity* beyond imitation.

To describe the process which the user employs to effect such creativity, Richards and Rodgers (1986) cite Krashen's theories on language acquisition and Krashen's "Monitor", which is grammar knowledge called upon and used for referencing purposes and for editing (citing Krashen 1981, p.18). Rivers (1983) draws again from Krashen (1977, 1981) in explaining her views on L1 acquisition, sharing his belief in the value of immersion and articulating their joint perception of immersion as "through the pores learning" (p.8), which she regards as authentic learning of the most desirable type. Widdowson (1990), on the other hand, though he shares in the protracted discussion on Krashen's teachings on acquisition, on the role and function of the "Monitor" and on the "Reinforcement" theory, proceeds cautiously with his treatment of Krashen's views. He accuses Krashen even of considerable "armchair speculation" (p.34), seeing him as attempting to impose a method and a philosophy about method upon L1 development. Widdowson cites Morrison and Low to support his argument and Richards and Rodgers (1986) could be mentioned in this context also. (The principle of 'Immersion' will feature again later in the discussion on L2 teaching and learning).

Mention must also be made of Herriott (1971), moreover, whose writings on the application in the learning process of the technique of *analogy-making* are representative of those who find this an important aspect of children's language development. The use of analogy as a deductive technique implies, however, that both correct and incorrect conclusions can be made. In their discussions on analogy, Herriott and his like-minded colleagues draw also from early Krashen, for whom analogy has its roots in listening to adults. The importance of the mechanism of analogy lies in its function as perceived by the language user. The user employs analogy in order to facilitate his production of language. The

writers are clearly persuaded that the productive quality of language is the most vital aspect of the learner's linguistic development (eg. Herriott 1971, p,30).

According to McArthur (1983), L1 and L2 language teaching and learning "are not as different as is commonly suspected" (p.93). The two processes have things in common, which include stage by stage learning, gradation, graduation of the acquisition of L1, or of the learning of L2. The four language skills in both L1 and L2 develop by the same patterns of advancement (p.91). Further to this, Halliwell (1993) believes that the processes of acquisition and learning are both necessary to a person's development in any language, whether L1 or FL, since they complement each other (p.21). Halliwell cites the National Curriculum policy documents - already so important to this thesis - which advocate the use of the target language, once this has been sufficiently acquired and internalized, as a self-complementing dual process. In relationship with this point, there is the proposition, expressed by the writers used in this discussion, and represented here by Herriott (1971), that foreign language learners create and manage a relationship between their L1 and their L2 or FL in such a way that they use their knowledge and experience of the L1 as a base for their learning of L2 (Herriott 1971, p.56). This assumption conveniently opens the discussion on L2 (FL) learning at this point.

(iii) **Foreign language learning**

The more and the longer the researcher teaches foreign languages in school, the less confident she becomes about stating how the foreign language learning process is actuated, maintained and sustained. The teaching process which influences the learning is a very complex process in itself and, because of that, it is a highly difficult one to effect with evident success. There are imponderables, variables, difficulties of many different types which, it seems, combine together to either warrant or frustrate the intention of the teaching exercise, to boost or weaken the teacher's effort, and these circumstances consequently prevail over the performance of the learners.

This section of the discussion about teaching method and the learning process becomes a difficult one to report on for the reason that the writers, who have been consulted on the subject, seem to grapple with a similar uncertainty and a similar diffidence as the researcher has already admitted to on her own part. However, the researcher takes encouragement from the assurance given by Rutherford (1987) that the curiosity concerning the languages learning process

has only relatively recently stimulated serious research, in spite of the number of centuries, if not millennia, that have witnessed the teaching of foreign languages to date. Interest and speculation about the language learning system have been increased as a result, primarily, of the developments in PSYCHOLINGUISTICS, which challenges on the matters of HOW? and WHY? in association with languages learning. The researcher agrees with what Rutherford implies, and has made the same statement at an earlier stage of this chapter, namely that to *understand how language learning is done, the teacher must attempt to get into the learner's mind. The teacher's teaching methods could and would gain much as a result of the close insights which are won* from such experience. For, like Rutherford, the researcher has become aware, after long years of practice, that the teaching and the learning are, in fact, almost a twin-process, almost indivisible, interreliant, a synonymity - almost! For without the one, the other does not happen. Rutherford expresses this actuality as follows:

> "The teachability of a language is bound up inextricably with its learnability. This is a symbiosis".
>
> (1982, p.2)

At the very least, as Rivers (1983) points out, the learner's position in the pedagogic plan is central to both the teaching and the learning, and the former of these two is seen as facilitative of the latter. The researcher summarizes the classroom brief as one which requires the teacher to provide instruction to act as a) an agenda for the pupil to learn and b) a method enabling the learning to be done effectively. There must also be an end product of knowledge and understanding related to the teacher's output and the learner's engagement with it. The teaching-learning exercise is, in fact, one of communication, in which the decoded message (the learning) is intended to correspond with the message which had initially been encoded (the teaching agenda or syllabus). In a preceding zone of this chapter it became clear that the structure of teaching methods has presented problems over time and in this present zone of argument it has been observed that the method of learning a language is a tenuous prospect because, as Mackey (1965) explains, the concept of method itself is vague. Having just left the theme of L1 mastery as a question of acquisition by natural processes, and on proceeding to an appraisal of the learner's assumption of L2, it will be observed that this is seen as a matter of more conscious learning, a more contrived process than natural acquisition. Later, in the

following section of this discussion-zone, the two processes will be appraised as possibilities for the assimilation of a foreign language.

Levin (1972) agrees with what has already been aired on the matter of L2 learning, specifically that this is not just a linguistic issue but a psychological one also (p.2). Wilkinson (1971) explains this attitude as one which emerges from learners' inequalities. He explains these (p.139) as their:

* different levels of awareness or consciousness
* different values for the subject and their differently perceived needs
* different states of motivation and enthusiasm
* different vision, self confidence, imagination, expectations and requirements
* other deep-seated psychological factors.

The aforegoing section on L1 acquisition exposed some elements of the dialectic on psychology in language learning, and these recur in the context of L2 learning also. For example, it may be recalled that the child "knows what language is because he knows what language does" (Wilkinson 1971, p.143), namely the effective use of L1 satisfies children's needs and their natural requirement to bring order to their lives. However, this rationale flies in the face of learners' occupation with a foreign language, for they have no undeniable needs which demand the application of the foreign language as the means to satisfy them. Even abroad, in the culture associated with the foreign language in question, their native language, being English, and being the principal world language, will resolve any difficulties for them, even more effectively, perhaps, than if they used the foreign language for communication purposes (Hawkins 1981 and in Baer 1979). In this respect they are different from their European counterparts, who do have English around them in the form of music, satellite TV and film at the least, and who recognise that use of English will take them across the world and, not least, to America (Herriot 1971). Because English youngsters normally have no needs which incur the intervention of the foreign language, they are not universally motivated to engage with it. If they do not engage with it, they do not develop knowledge of it. If they have no or little foreign language · knowledge, they cannot be creative in foreign language terms within a school curriculum which stipulates a foreign language component for (almost) all. This means that they cannot order, require, assert themselves, inquire, give and receive information, exercise choice, communicate, create and emote ...

Wilkinson (1971) describes the situation in which reluctant foreign language learners find themselves in their cold relationship with the subject : they are like deprived children in a deprived children's world; they are deprived of language performance and of the sense of satisfaction that successful use of the foreign language could bring them. Unmotivated learners cannot gain enough foreign language experience quickly enough to make dealing with a foreign language a more exciting prospect than it is! And even if they could, they perceive that they have no context and setting in which to make sense of it. All of these things together can conspire to block the learners' energy, interest and value for their subject and to impede their progress.

Noticeably, every phase of argument here brings the researcher back to the reality that little is known in real terms about the processes of teaching and learning a foreign language. Without a mechanism or strategy for the mobilisation of the learning activity, supported by an effective teaching programme, there is only frustration in store for learners who await their foreign language development to take place in a foreign language classroom situated in the geographical setting of their native country. Frustration was surely what Wilkinson (1971) had in mind, when he discussed the contrast between children's expectations concerning their native language as opposed to those concerning their foreign language being learnt. On the one hand, as he explains, "the majority of children have basic competence if not performance", in the mother tongue, acquired early, and "a native grammar which they can operate and convey on a surprisingly large vocabulary" (p.134). On the other hand, in terms of L2 or FL, a child may have the will to express his ideas, but for a long time he has no vocabulary and no structuring device with which to convey them.

In the use and comprehension of languages, much depends on experience. In the native language, experience builds up all the time with compound interest, as it were. In L2 or FL, however, experience is a very relative concept and accumulates extremely slowly with only simple interest in this currency analogy. All children are perceived to have the basic linguistic equipment necessary for language learning, but they do not use it equally. Neither do their L1 equipment and experience necessarily generously affect their efforts with L2. The frustration which has been seen to characterize the relationship of the learner with the foreign language, is increased potentially in the philosophy of those who, like Herriot (1971), see language as the process by which behaviour is denoted. The process of thinking is a part of this behaviour, regulating non-

verbal and verbal activity (op.cit.). If language develops as learners mature, this is because their thinking develops also and the two activities become interrelated through the process of internalisation. There is satisfaction in this for learners as the acquirers of a native language, but frustration awaits them as learners of a foreign language. For this reason, a considered teaching method is applied with the intention of focusing on their foreign language learning needs and of facilitating the actual process of learning in that context.

The process of internalisation is so important to learning that the method used to aid and abet it must be effectively and imaginatively managed and must require 'hands on' involvement by the learner, as well as wise leadership by the teacher. Wilkins (in Baer, 1979) explains that on the whole "people learn what they do". He advocates adage-related principles of 'practice making perfect' and 'persevering until the task is mastered' (p.39), since L2 proficiency will only be possible as a result of intensive experience and use. With this established, the teacher must put learners to work on the foreign language in the same practical way as his colleague applies them to their woodwork tasks. Learners should not be taught *at*, Wilkins advises, since they do little of their learning in a receptive way (p.40). Whatever method the teacher uses, it should aim to train the learners to *actively use* the foreign language, by which is meant that they should become able to speak it, understand it when hearing it spoken, write it and read it (Wilkins in Baer 1979, p.38). Immediately, there are implications for method, based in classroom and group management and a variety of instruction techniques. Arrangements for enabling group work, pair work, quiet reflection, independent learning, peer teaching and concerted practice of the four language skills come immediately to mind. To these Wilkins (in Baer 1979) adds the requirement of presentation and practice sessions; the use of contextualised sentences and dialogues; practice in role play and language games; the exploration of play methods; the involvement of audio and visual aids; the attempting of individual and alternative activities (via, for example, computer programmes and poetry writing) (Wilkins in Baer p.50).

In this connection Hawkins (in Baer 1979) describes the process of bringing the foreign language into the classroom as one which implies the responsibility of providing an appropriate, convincing and stimulating setting in which the subject may "take place" in the natural way of the L1. In expressing his concerns for L2 learners, Hawkins draws from Nelson Brooks (1960) and together they produce the following list of requirements on their behalf:

* Learners need to hear between 3 and 5 times as much foreign language as native language and should at first train their ears away from the disastrous effects of extraneous noises. (To appreciate the irony of this situation, the reader is asked to consider that the FL learner is furnished with only a pathetic amount of classroom subject time, as explained in the closing stages of this discussion).

* A 'cultural island' must be built in the classroom or department. All resources and decor must reflect the culture to which the targeted language belongs, REALIA, therefore, and maps, pictures, records and tapes to show the actual existence of the culture and the country in the world. Postcards reflect the possibility of sampling through travel the reality of the language and its setting. Modern Languages classrooms are often a school's best examples of teaching areas which effectively characterize the subject which is taught there.

* Classroom seating is important; it emphasizes or disappoints the learners' relationship with their teacher and with the subject being taught.

Hill (in Baer 1979) takes up and continues the proposal articulated by Hawkins in the preceding paragraphs. Hill insists upon a major methodological role for technology, so that the most is made of radio and television programmes. As has been established in this thesis already, the concept of technology for classroom use is now a much more extensive one than it was in the 1970s, at Hill's and Hawkins' time of writing these critiques. Further aspects of FL teaching and learning method, such as the involvement of grammar and the questions to do with imitating L1 acquisition, will be referred to as this section proceeds. In the meantime there are several attempts on the part of writers to offer 'in-the-nutshell- explanations' of what L2 teaching and learning is all about. For example:

* On the teaching : "The minimal irreducible and indispensable function of the teacher is to tell the learner what is or is not an acceptable utterance" (Corder 1973, p.143).

* On the learning : "Language is a hierarchic assemblage of language constructs - phonological units at bottom, discourse units at top." The cumulative mastery of this tower of facts enables language learning (Rutherford and Sharwood Smith 1988, p.3).

When they learn their L2 or FL, learners may by-pass the process of natural development which characterizes their L1 acquisition and they find the means to compensate for, or replace, the time, conditions and circumstances that are not theirs to dispose of in this context. In taking short cuts to some degree of foreign language empowerment they may do either or both of the following:

(i)   consciously or unconsciously use the native language experience, intuition and monitor, therefore their Language Acquisition Processor, as a base for their foreign language learning.

(ii)   learn the foreign language by 'cramming' and by explicitly accessing and applying its grammar.

It is with these two possibilities of L2 learning that this section continues its discussion.

In particular Dodson (1967) stands out as exploring the influence of L1 experience upon L2 learning, arguing that there may be benefits in the situation for the learner. Indeed Dodson seems to deny that there could be anything untoward in the role played by L1 in the L2 process since L1 acquisition has made the young individuals proficient in language use before they turned their attention to L2. For Dodson, natural acquisition implies natural retention and consolidation processes, all of them emphatically uncontrived and not onerous. Even so, he is careful to clarify the **exact** position which he perceives for L1 experience within the context of L2 learning : the foreign language learner works with a different set of tools to the native language learner, and the native language is one of them (p.52)! Dodson articulates a number of similarities and differences which are perceived to exist between L1 and L2 learning.

(a)   <u>Some common factors in L1 and L2 learning (p.45)</u>:

*   the existence of a 'tabula rasa' *   the need to train the auditory function *   the need to condition the mental processing ability *   the need to collect vocabulary, expression, idiom *   the need to strengthen the language skills

NOTE : Whereas the above points have been grouped together as similarities, they imply a number of incongruities, which themselves become the differences which divide L1 and L2 learning (p.52), as follows:

(b) <u>Some differences in L1 and L2 learning</u>

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* the 'tabula rasa' is only a relative concept for the L2 learner as opposed to the L1 beginner because the latter is surrounded by sounds and by a language ethos from birth.

* degrees of immersion in language

* different contact frequency

* different perceptions of exposure to language, and in particular to the language of adults.

* the ability to rely upon peer-language in L1 and L2

* the environmental setting: natural or artificial

* the cultural or non-cultural context

* degrees of desirability and need, therefore of motivation

* application for realistic everyday purposes

* application for life

* the notion of the language: understood as a reality or a myth

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Richards and Rodgers (1986), on the other hand, support the argument for L2 learning by means of imitating acquisitional strategies. They see the drive for naturalistic methods gathering momentum in the Reform Years of the 1880s to the 1920s and consolidating in the Direct Method in the earlier stage of this century, to be repeated again currently in the context of the communicative era of Modern Languages teaching.   The former tradition, established in the nineteenth century, of teaching by textbooks which "codified the foreign language into frozen rules of morphology and syntax" (p.3), of learning from much explicit explanation and memory work, of paradigm learning and a minimum of oral exercise in imbalance with a maximum of mechanical translation, was extremely difficult to break with, and still haunts some of today's classrooms. Richards and Rodgers recall that the Reform Movement did much to effect change, because its strength lay in its being structured on a

whole philosophy which asked for the sciences of phonetics, technology and linguistics to be taken seriously, so that, with grammar also taught inductively and with large-scale target language use, the learning of L2 could and should imitate L1 acquisition. Currently, the National Curriculum plans for the same things. Such dynamic reform-philosophies state naturalistic principles and wish to see them conveyed by naturalistic methods and courses to create a naturalistic end-product.

On the subject of speeding up the learning of a foreign language by tackling it through its grammar, Stork (1976) sees in this possibilities which make it a useful stratagem. One may perhaps infer that two levels of confidence are seen to be won by *grammar-accessing learners, if their natural use of UG is taken into* account also. Since L2 learning, like L1 development also, involves the conditioning and use of the motor skill, the organisational or systemic skill and the contextual skill, it might be argued that these are promoted by the disciplined approach necessary to grammar-and-structure-study. Equally, the linguistic levels of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics, all constituting grammar, could perhaps be served more appropriately through conscious attention rather than unconscious acquirement. Moreover, according to Wilkins (in Baer 1979), it is to be understood that the cognitive code approach is a popular method among learners for the teaching and learning of a foreign language. Methods which exclude explanation leave their learners asking questions like Why? What? and How? (p.43). Wilkins simply affords the grammar method some benefit of the doubt in this, without in any way declaring himself a supporter of it. He is of the same mind as Hawkins (in Baer 1979), however, on the subject of the need of L2 learners in the critical years of puberty to move away from natural methods to more structured and explanatory methods of teaching and learning. Drawing from Lenneberg (1967), Hawkins argues that before puberty the brain is 'plastic' and the learner has the flexibility and the sensitivity needed in keeping with the natural approaches. After puberty, however, the hemispheres of the brain have settled down to perform their functions more mechanically and rigidly (p.16). Hence the structured approaches based on pedagogic grammar and cognitive coding processes would seem to be more suitable at this time in learners' developments. Teachers who practise Modern Languages teaching in Sixth Forms may immediately recognise some validity in Hawkins' and Wilkins' claims in this respect.

This phase of the discourse on the matter of grammar teaching, described by Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1988) as the **Pedagogical Grammar Hypothesis** (PGH) may conclude with one or two finalising comments by some of the authors writing on this feature. These same authors make pedagogical grammar (PG) the means by which L2 or FL may be facilitated. Also, they determine language as rule-governed behaviour, which allows the learner to be understood by the native speaker. If the rules constitute a repertoire of the target language facts to be communicated to the learner, then perhaps the rules provide a direct route to that end, ie. to L2 or FL competence. Sharwood Smith (1981) offers the principle of 'Consciousness Raising' (CR) as the means of improving language awareness and competent language use. He makes his decision about grammar-learning as a means to the TL end by claiming, in the spirit of what has just been noted on 'maturation', that learnt knowledge can be very wasteful, because the learner cannot, or will not or simply does not apply it before, say, age 18 (p.107). It is, therefore, preferable and less futile, by this argument, to remain with acquisition or natural methods. Finally, Wilkins (1974) perceives the need for shortcuts to competence because of the "astronomically long period of time" it would take to reach the same level in L2 as in L1. Such shortcuts would necessarily include grammatical explanation.

Widdowson (1990) takes further the points made so far in this argument, depicting teaching as a self-conscious enquiry into the possibilities of helping the learner attain knowledge. For Widdowson, classroom activities may be thought of as an exploration in practice of theoretical principles of one sort or another. These principles are then described as the teachers' bearings by which they plot their course. Any initiatives which may be used by teachers to increase the momentum of their agenda can be easily frustrated by the many variables which are naturally at large in the classroom or which occur unexpectedly. such variables would include the following list combining suggestions from Widdowson with some of the researcher's own ideas:

- the range of inequalities which characterizes a group of learners viz their opportunities; outlooks; abilities; motivation levels; domestic starting points, and so on ...
- the play or interplay of personalities; the 'mix' in a group;. the outcomes of problems with personal chemistry; the influence of an attention seeker; the mental and physical well-being of individuals at any given time;

unexpected intervention or interruption or disruption from a) inside b) outside; breakdown or cut-out of mechanical support systems ...

- the tactics of expedient interaction in situations like those envisaged above
- the needs perceived by the teacher versus the needs perceived by the learners
- the presence or absence of reciprocally directed positive regard.

The implied presence of the term 'versus' in discussions like the one described here on Widdowson's behalf, makes an interesting situation. Indeed, it is in itself an integral part of the reasoning on 'variables'. It may be *inferred here that* a class of learners is a force to be reckoned with in positive challenge terms as well as on account of the objection or resistance which it may be inclined to put up against the teacher's intention and the teacher's agenda. Today, the teacher is the facilitator and the classroom psychology focuses upon the needs of the learner. Learners, being central to the classroom transactions, must essentially *be made aware of their independent responsibilities and must be negotiated with.* With all of the described circumstances going on in the background, teachers must proceed carefully with the principle of their teaching agenda and the techniques by which they execute their brief. Widdowson (1990) explains those factors as follows (p.2):

PRINCIPLE	+	TECHNIQUE
↓		↓
abstractions that have to be actualized in a classroom	→ VIA →	methodological decision-making
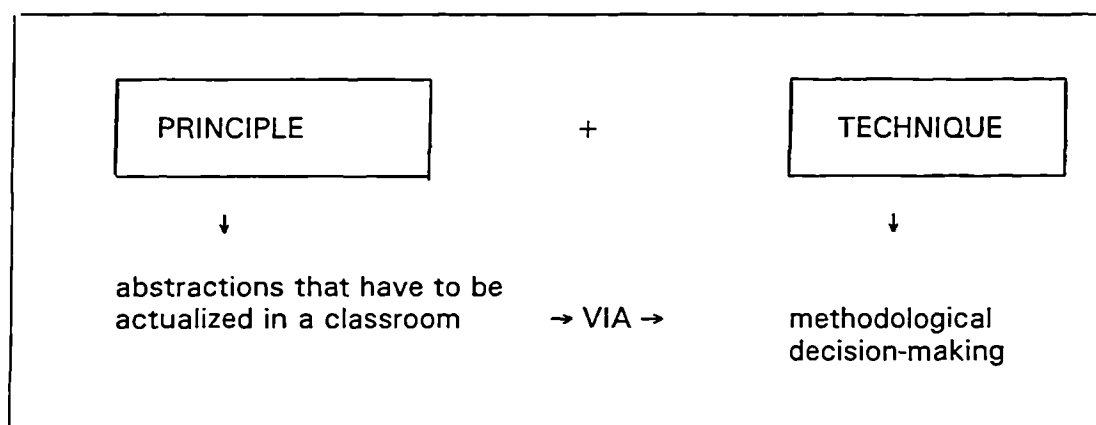
The activity of teaching serves and promotes the activity of learning and is most beneficial to it when experimentation and inquiry are built into the teacher's approach. Again, however, the assumption can be made that in today's ML classrooms much psychology is required as the natural accompaniment of the teacher's pedagogic skills. Rivers (1983), citing Gardner (1974), indicates the

broad concept that the foreign language has become in having been determined as GESTALT (p.22). This perception of a language has had implications for foreign languages teaching and implies considerable responsibility currently for the management of the Modern Languages agenda in schools. Formerly, grammar-translation was a narrow field of work, in which every item and process was clearly defined. The method of teaching and the process of learning were closely aligned, it might be argued. Also, in learning grammar in order to correctly translate grammar-charged sentences and paragraphs, the process was, as it were, synonymous with the product. With the developments from the 1970s up to the 1980s and the advent in the 1980s of the 'communicative methodology', things have changed considerably in the teaching and learning of Modern Languages! This movement has imposed a comparatively complex challenge for teachers and learners, in which the teachers' sense of inquiry, investigation and experimentation is in great demand and in which the syllabus itself has become broad and amorphous rather than narrow, incremental and systematic.

The desire to witness new approaches taking their place in the classroom, featuring specifically pair-and-group work, independent learning, peer tutoring, defined and graded objectives, and so on (Wilkins 1974), - and since then the application of Information Technology and other technology - removes no part of the teacher's burden. Indeed, the voice of the teacher, though now functioning more extensively in the target language and no longer necessarily didactically dominating the classroom talk, remains arguably the most important factor of any lesson, for it is in the majority of circumstances the only example of the live spoken foreign language from which learners can gain their experience. As has just been implied, its role is different, it operates less wastefully but it must be carefully heeded or its messages and its crucial example will be lost to the learners. To complicate matters even more, in modern teaching terms teachers are expected to meet the needs of all individuals in a group rather than provide the same regimen for all (Rivers 1983). The importance of the principle of diversification has escalated over recent years and now teachers are severely criticised if they take short cuts in their agenda-planning in this respect. Irvin (1973) is in agreement with this and emphasises the need for modern teachers of Modern Languages to be good at their subjects and good at their jobs as teachers.

It is worth-while tarrying for just a moment longer over the notion of the complexity of the current ML method, in order to observe the interest that Rivers (1983), still drawing from Gardner (1974) and from Bruner (1974), expresses on the subject of the psychological reactions which pervade modern classrooms, as a result of the changed nature of the overall task from something which was mechanical, objective and defined to something which is expansive, liberal and personalised. Rivers is particularly concerned with the problem of anxiety implied in the learners' reaction to their brief. Anxiety could become a hindrance to the progress of the individual or of the group and accordingly one calls to mind the teachings of (educational) psychologists and counsellors : Rogers, Brown, Curran and Maslow. Maslow's hierarchy of students' needs is of particular importance : SECURITY, BELONGINGNESS, SELF ESTEEM; ESTEEM FOR OTHERS; SELF REALISATION; SAFETY; STABILITY; PHYSIOLOGY. When students' needs are addressed in a meaningful way, MOTIVATION is strengthened. For Rivers there are two categories of motivation, as follows:

1. INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION = effective language learning.
2. INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION = strong drive for language mastery.

So much concern about the effects of method upon learners and about the difficulties incurred by modern courses and teaching styles for teachers, begs some investigation into the methods in question. As far back as 1870, Petersen was acting as a prosecution counsel on the subject of the then current Modern Languages practice in advance of the Reform activated by Gouin, Marcel, Viëtor and others. Petersen expressed a simple equation on the matter of ML methods, namely that there were two, an artificial one in real life and a natural one in an ideal world, and the one must be given up for the other (pp. 97,98). In alluding to the artificial method, Petersen depicts a scenario in which a boy was handed a grammar which he crammed or had crammed in to him piece by piece, for grammar is, in fact, by nature, made up of pieces, whereas language is a GESTALT, an integrated entity (Rivers 1983). Petersen's story continues ... The boy was filled with paradigms, which had no connection with each other, or with anything else in the world ... He was filled with words, only half of which occurred only occasionally, and some never at all, in what he read. This method is peremptorily summed up by its accuser as a 'perverted method' which causes 'sighs of pain' and dissatisfaction. On the other hand and from a time-distance of 125 years, Petersen's words re-echo and allow him to act as defence counsel for the method which he favoured then, which writers like Rivers perceived later

in their own times and which modern teachers are struggling to establish now: language delivered in the teaching practice as a whole organ and adopted by the learner through the process described by Rivers as "into the soul absorption", ie. the 'natural' method of teaching and learning in the manner of the native language. Within this philosophy only the **reasonable** and **realistic** and **possible** and **sensible** and **relevant** should be taught and learnt, which, in the translation methods, had not been taken seriously.

However, in the opinion of writers like Rivers (1983), it is not easy even now to exclude explicit grammar teaching from one's teaching plan, particularly since the linguistic sciences have made *teachers conscious of the fact that grammar is a crucial reality of language, its very core,* in fact. Some of the strains of this argument have been explored in the previous chapter-sections but they must be allowed to echo here again as a reminder of grammar's role as the pivotal force of language and as the matter which influences the teaching and the learning processes as well as the quality of the end-product for the learners:

> "Without an internalized set of rules or syntax ... no-one can understand or use a language : language is rule-governed behaviour" (Rivers 1983, p.30).

Rivers makes a number of statements on the role of grammar and its implications for foreign languages teaching. These and all such observations registered in this background section will be re-examined later for their value to the action research experiment in teaching method. Rivers appears to insist, on her own and on others' behalf that, whatever method is used in foreign languages teaching, the learning and the application of the foreign language depends upon the learner's or user's capacity to involve grammar. The following observations, drawn from Rivers (1983), substantiate this assumption:

*   In FL teaching there are two grammars:

(a)   a linguistic grammar, which is the actual grammar existing within language and
(b)   a pedagogic grammar, which is the grammar that is taught as an agenda (p.30).

*   She cites Chomsky in arguing against the supposed value of learning by habit-forming. In this, therefore, one envisages the teachings of Chomsky, around the 1950s, placed in opposition to those of Skinner.

Learners' language development and capacity to use language are encased in the principle of 'competence and performance', which instinctively has grammar as its core. Even acquisition-learning and any learning which imitates this, is seen to be a matter of using building blocks, ie. a process of structuring based on an appreciation of structure and an understanding of the elements of sub-structure (p.33).

* Innovative ability in the learner exists only to the degree that underlying competence exists also. Learners must have internalized language-structure formalities before they can create with language. Therefore learners must acquire the L2 grammar and let it function for them as a vehicle for meaning (p.34). Through a large knowledge of grammar and an ability to employ it effectively, language users are in a position to make infinite use of finite means (p.31).

* There are two levels of language behaviour:

(i)   the level of manipulation

(ii)   the level of expression of personal meaning (p.34).

* Teaching styles are supported by two necessary procedures: (i) intensive varied practice exercises and (ii) the involvement of syntactic structures (p.35).

* Language must be seen by teacher and by learner as a whole functioning system and not merely as a disjointed purveyor of individual language parts (drawing from Bruner on language as Gestalt p.34). Morphology, syntax, semantics, phonology relate and bond the parts.

* Sometimes 'cramming' already mentioned in association with Irvin (1973), can be managed in order to enable the learner to take short cuts to competence and performance. 'Cramming' implies explicit learning of grammar and vocabulary accompanied by rote-learning and mechanical practice through grammar exercises (p.38).

* Rivers warns, however, that paradigmatic learning and rote learning may prove valueless if they are not converted into conceptual understanding of the language aspects involved (p.59). Otherwise, as Wilkins (1974) wrote, paradigm learning simply makes the learner good at paradigm learning. Moreover, one remembers Petersen's (1870) warning on this matter, that one cannot begin with grammar in the teaching and the learning of a language. It has to be experienced as a natural part of the process. It seems appropriate that any reinforcement should be applied at a later stage, therefore, as also Irvin (1973) advises in shaping his influence on this discussion. Overt grammar teaching is perhaps the

procedure, however, which is most easily organised in a classroom , satisfying in its own right for the learner, useful and convenient 'en passant' as an interim support-measure, but banished as an obvious form from the teaching/learning scene by the reformists of the late nineteenth century and now rejected by modern reformists also.

*   In any mode of foreign language teaching and learning the native language influence is almost certain to poke through (Rivers p.38). This may be detrimental to learners' progress with the foreign language and, should, therefore, be discouraged. Early extremists making propaganda for the natural method of FL teaching via the use of the target language itself may have wanted the presence and the intrusion of the native language eradicated from the scene of the learning. However, more realistic researchers, understanding and sympathising with the learners' highly complex task, see more good than harm in allowing them to yield to their natural inclination to access their mother tongue as a source of reference and comparison at certain times and in appropriate measure. The researcher's own attendance at conferences and seminars held at home and on the continent on the subject of Modern Languages teaching and learning, has witnessed speakers expressing their opinions along just such lines.

Irvin (in Lenneberg 1966, 1973), writing before Rivers (1983), explored similar concerns in preparation for a way forward with the early stages of communicative methodology, as the reign of grammar-translation, which served the GCE purposes, was systematically left behind. Moreover, Irvin has already been involved with some of the issues treated by Rivers and reviewed in this exposé.   For example, on the matters of naturalistic learning and the involvement of grammar, he maintains that children have or make their own sets of rules for dealing with language. They are able to analyse material and evolve rules in order to create understanding out of their materials. In this way learners are enabled, in their turn, to create their own material from the examples which they have experienced (p.173). In addition, they use the device of analogy to form extensions or copies of expressions and to rationalise linguistic classes and rules (p.186). It would perhaps be absurd to suppose that learners do not have the need to construct rules in order to avail themselves of language and put it to use (p.173). The previous zone of discussion on the nature of language itself has already argued this as a necessity for both receptive and productive

language involvement. Accordingly, Irvin points out that learners can monitor what they receive as they also can monitor what they put out (p.187).

In fact, Irvin and Rivers can be found to concur on the subject of developmental language learning. On the point of applying grammatical reinforcement and structural assistance to the teaching/learning plan, Irvin implies that a ceiling is reached by FL learners in their capacity to infer or deduce correct and appropriate language. This maturation point occurs "when grammatical and semantic concepts are above a certain level of complexity" and children are unable to learn them by natural means. Maturation becomes the process affected by "supportive, explicit input". This premise has already featured twice in this section, both in connection with L1 acquisition and L2 learning. Irvin's reflections in this context bring the discussion full circle.

The points discussed here are quickly summarized as follows:

IMITATION and ANALOGY   ) comprehension upgraded
) and
MATURATION and MONITOR   ) GENERATION OF NEW MATTER

(iv) **Conclusion to this item.   Teaching and learning L2 in the manner of L1:   the views of selected writers**

The National Curriculum philosophy on appropriate methods for Modern Languages teaching - and the main body of this thesis is actively involved with examining this subject - advocates the imitation of children's acquisition of their mother tongue (D.E.S., October 1990). This present chapter section (Zone III) concludes its discussion by examining the reality of this caveat in the light of the opinions of a number of writers. This appraisal is in fact central to the methods employed in the researcher's experiment, in which she names the contrastive teaching styles used as Grammar-Implicit (G-I) and Grammar-Explicit (G-E).

In the first place, and writing from the heart of the current Modern Languages context, Widdowson (1990) takes up some of the points aired above and argues that authenticity of L2 proficiency, won arguably from an acquisitive approach to the teaching and the learning, is bound to an illusion, since the learner cannot deliver a native-speaker response. The fact that learners are alien to the target language means, for Widdowson, that they must internalize their learning and experience of L2 or FL through a focus on form. They do this by analysing the matter that they encounter before focusing on meaning. Widdowson is

persuaded that the foreign language learner, by definition, **learns** rather than acquires. For this reason there is no point in banning from the classroom the learning techniques related to 'focus on form'. Indeed, learners would be hampered by their absence. In describing 'learning' as distinct from 'acquisition', Widdowson is influenced by Ellis (1985). In common, they sum up these two processes and recommend a combination of them as the means most suited to producing the best equation for the learner and for the outcome of his task. More will be written on this, however, in the next stage of this chapter. Krashen (1983) , cited in Rivers (1983) on natural acquisition in L2 learning, believes that formal learning is unimportant to the development of communicative ability, in which the emphasis should be placed on interaction (Rivers 1993, p.13). L2 learning may confidently be allowed to imitate L1 acquisition, in Krashen's thinking, since all individuals are perceived by him to have the innate capacity to acquire a language by natural means.

Moyle (1982) echoes agreement on some of the points described above and in particular reflects that "the contemporary school must treat children as full partners in learning rather than as vessels to be filled" (pp5-6), in order to provide a more generous experience from which their language may develop. This means effectively focusing on children, watching what they do, how they react, testing what can be drawn out of them and listening to their articulation of their ideas and reactions. There are writers who express their interest in the matter of children's talk and encourage adults to monitor closely the ratio of children's to adults' contributions, in order to ensure that children receive ample opportunity to communicate actively as at least equal partners in talk. Such writers include Edwards and Westgate (1987); Halliday (1975); Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968); and Moyle (1982), in whom this discussion is presently centred.

Such a 'talk partnership' might profitably exist for foreign language learners also. Accordingly Moyle is clear on the advisability of encouraging FL learners to imitate L1 learners and especially on raising the levels of their reading skills through word recognition, processing language and therefore processing higher levels of meaning in text. By involving children in group work with their peers, they are "much more likely to reveal many of their real language needs", as is demonstrated in the well populated environment of L1 learners (p33). Moreover, a content-centred curriculum, such as the one with which Modern Languages learners are involved, should be delivered through a holistic,

integrated approach to the teaching and the learning, in the manner of L1. Furthermore, there should always be vital feedback, reinforcement, repair and encouragement. Earlier than Moyle, Herriot (1971) also emphasizes the importance of feedback and adds to it the principle of continuous adjustment and the need for progression to an optimum state where automisation is made possible (Herriot p20). By further adding to these considerations experience of the world - which L1 learners by their teenage years have got, and which helps them as learners of L2 - and a feeling for semantics and syntax, the production and comprehension of either the L1 or the L2 will be recognised as active processes, in which all participants involved in communication design and interpret meaning in the same way.

If modern thinking seems to imply that the teaching and the learning of foreign languages could or should be done by 'naturalistic methods' imitating the processes by which young children acquire their mother tongue (Chapter One of this thesis), then some comment based on research should be offered on this point.

The language development of the L1 learner of early years can not be discussed without reference to Rosen and Rosen (1973). These researchers investigated children's performance in their own homes with their families, as did Halliday (1975) also investigate the language development of his son, Nigel; and Bruner (1983) went "to 'the clutter of life' at home, the child's own setting for learning", where language is learned by using it (Brazelton on Bruner, cover-word 1983). The Rosens also looked at children's performance at school, where the L1 is used constantly, since children are involved in an impressive non-stop talk and communication performance. They do this without special teaching and the L1 is mastered without frustration and anxiety. In this setting, children need an adult but not all the time; in the interim they have each other. In L2, however, the adult is all they have and if they forego the adult they have only a very suspect, minor product to share amongst themselves. They therefore have no basis from which to generate talk of any creative or imaginative context (ie language as experience) to inspire them and to learn from. When left to work together without an adult, L2 learners are seen to perform well if they produce target language solutions to the prescribed stimuli of the GCSE role-play and conversation situations, or their equivalents. In order to improve children's L2 or FL competence, Rosen and Rosen emphasize the importance of much reading, writing and talk in a work-setting which is kept positive through strategies which

encourage and motivate the learners to approach their task with self confidence and willingness. The presence of vitality, energy and excitement in children's attitudes adds tone and quality to the language they produce (p85).

When L1 learners come to school they have already learnt a lot about their language:

- how to make patterns to express deference and politeness;
- how to speak to different kinds of adults;
- how to organise their own environment and their place and requirements within it (Rosen and Rosen P85).

Their competence is non-conscious and their performance is the practical and concrete expression of it. In contrast, L2 or FL learners start their courses with only the 'tabula rasa' in L2 or, it may be argued, their experience of L1. This observation again brings L1 and L2 together in the discussion, though contrastively, and makes it appropriate at this point to engage with the related ideas of Tough (1979) on the development of L1 in the early years and what this might imply for the case of L2.

The writers who observe and report on children's acquisitive development of language at primary age and pre-primary age record the same thing, namely that language was already there with the child before their investigation of its acquisition took place. So it is also with Tough, writing about the work done for the Language and Environment Project, which she described in her book (1970): "One fact stands out quite clearly about the three year olds ...! They had all learned a great deal about using language already" (p9). Tough marvels over the development of a child's learning, or rather the acquisition of its native language in little more than a year from the moment of its initial pivotal utterance, and suggests that enormous progression has taken place within, therefore, the first three years of life. The mother is at the centre of the Tough project and there is constant relating between mother and child. Not only this, but the child is usually surrounded by people including a variety of adults and siblings. This implies that a diversity of experience is generated out of family talk at a number of registers, through which the efforts and progress of L1 learners are enriched. The growth of their ability is systematic and is helped along by several tactics, like the use of mimicry on their part and, on the part of their caring, indulging adults, the tactic of applying some form of meaning to any

and every expression that they make.   Tough demonstrates that young children are able to use only the language that they have been taught or have experienced, yet she acknowledges Chomsky, his LAD, generative grammar and UG (1957 and 1965).   She reflects on the ability of L2 learners to make their progress in the same way as with L1, using 'building blocks', grammatical universals and transformational - generative grammar through exposure to the teacher's talk and the teacher's example, which substitute the talk and example of parents, relatives, peers and others in the L1 instance.   Through this exposure, the learner is taught how to differentiate between utterances and use structured utterances to shape meaning.   There is the problem with the foreign language that 'exposure' is only a very relative concept.   In addition to this *intimate relationship with other people*, conducted in talk, children learn language through play and through sharing a world of imagination with their peers and elders.   No matter how hard Modern Languages teachers try to produce an environment to equal the natural communicative settings and the play-environment of indigenous children, it could never be anything but a tiny, tenuous and highly contrived fragment, a pale reflection of a potent L1 reality.

When Hawkins (in Richardson 1983) discusses the principles of learners' attitudes and aptitudes in language learning, citing Buckby (1981) and the work of the University of York Language Teaching Centre, he includes in his discussion the importance of the development of certain abilities on the part of learners, eg:

* the awareness of syntax, implying perhaps the development of UG
* the ability to see and apply patterns
* the ability to develop linguistic awareness
* the ability to reason and analyse
* the ability to rely on short term memory (STM)
* the ability to rely on long term memory (LTM)
* the ability to use empathy
* the ability to avoid *insecurity*
* the ability to keep motivated

On these issues which affect L1 and L2 learners equally, Hawkins has drawn from Pimsleur (1966), Carroll (1973), Olson (1973), Green (1975) and Donaldson (1978).   In considering the language development of young L1 learners, he draws from Donaldson in particular, who agrees with the already

established factor of L1 acquisition, that children learn a flow of speech from their parents and other adults. She explains also that children, in order to understand the messages put out to them, must actually learn to dis-embed linguistic elements from the complex signals transmitted to them.

Of the writers, whose opinions and research have informed the argument of this chapter-section, many agree with Bruner (1975) that nearly all children have some analytical linguistic competence (p108). As Herriot (1971) put it: "Grammar is present as soon as a child puts two words together" (p32). The child first copies sound then imposes structure progressively as he perceives it (op cit). Eventually - and Bruner finishes off the image of the child's linguistic development - some learners can "turn language in on itself" to the extent that they are aware and ready to make a break-through to literacy. This awareness is aspired to by eleven-year-olds starting their foreign languages courses.

Chomsky and Miller (1963) explain two scenarios in which an adult foreign language learner and a child FL learner are at work on their brief. In one scenario, the adult uses a traditional grammar, a dictionary and a structured course, and is taught by an explicit method accompanied by a precise programme of reinforcement contingencies. In contrast with this the writers claim that a full degree of mastery of a language can be attained easily and quickly by an untutored child without explicit instruction. Through exposure and immersion (s)he will develop the competence of a native speaker in a relatively, even remarkably, short period of time (pp 275-276). The same principle should hold out in a learning situation placed in the school environment, in which case the expected outcome may be not native-speaker capacity but rather fully successful competence at GCSE level or similar.

Dulay and Burt (1977) take this argument further. They explain that, through the application of naturalistic methods, such as the Direct Method initially and the Communicative Method of current times, a high degree of success for foreign language learners has been made possible. (The researcher would emphasize here that this is true when a *naturalistic* product is required as the outcome of the Modern Languages practice.) However, the writers state clearly that a recognition of grammar was an important factor in all successful methods of this type. This feeling for grammar was won from rationalist-cognitivist and philosophical underpinnings of language, namely from transformational-generative grammar. Dulay and Burt suggest a model for language development

and speech production which reflects the progression relevant possibly with both L1 and L2 learning. They imply agreement perhaps with much else that has been argued in this section, that it is indeed feasible to teach and learn the L2 in the manner of L1, with a relatively optimistic result prognosis. Their model is repeated here by the researcher with some slight adjustment made, in order to enable the full language progression to be illustrated.

SPEECH MODEL (after Dulay and Burt 1977)
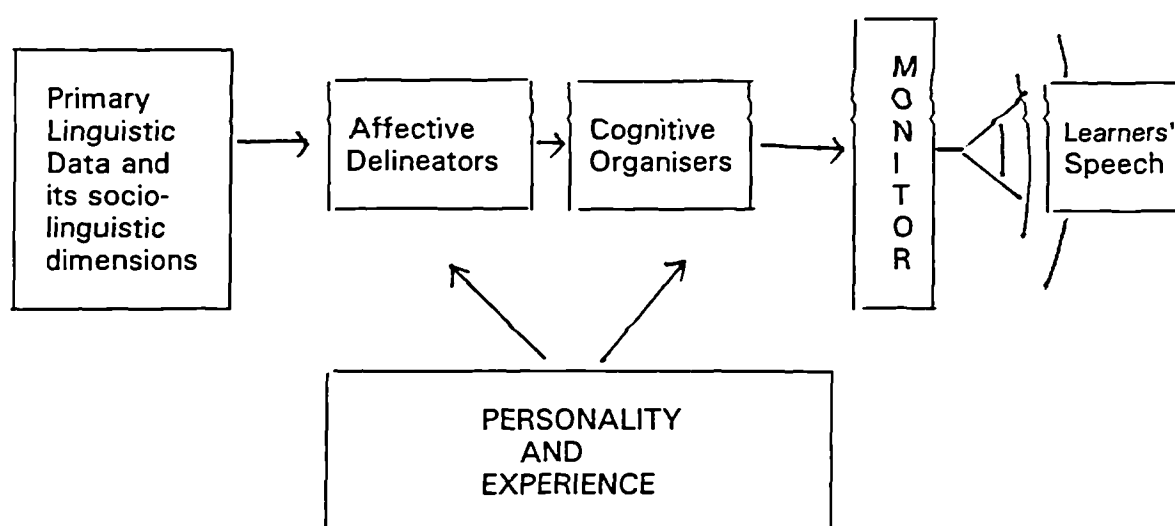
McArthur (1983), commenting upon the nature of language teaching and learning, perceives the L1 and L2 teaching processes as having more in common with each other than is commonly suspected (p93). He refers in particular to the factor of stage by stage internalisation on the part of the learner and the gradation and graduation processes implied in this. In maintaining that the child learning a native language proceeds through his paces and through the skills by the same pattern of advancement as the child learning a foreign language - and conversely the equation remains the same - McArthur concurs with the assertions of Dulay and Burt (1977), alluded to above.

Wilkins (1974) agrees with McArthur (1974) on the subject of the similarities which characterize L1 and L2 teaching, but warns that for the latter to be really effective, the objectives must be carefully tailored and clearly defined and he implies that the presence of the grammar must be discernible. L2 learning may be achieved in a naturalistic way if the learning activities and the learning objectives are the same. When attention is thus given to objectives and activities and the agenda is conveyed with optimum use of the target language,

the teaching of Modern Languages, in Wilkins' (1974) opinion, is brought very close to the process of acquisition associated with the manner in which the child learns his native language.

If all of these observations appear to reflect the teachings of Gouin (in Hawkins 1981), campaigning at the end of the 19th century for the teaching of L2 by the natural method, practising it and assimilating it and using techniques of analogy to produce language examples out of it, all in the manner in which the learner masters the native language, it must be remembered that Gouin (1880) advocated the importance to the learning process of attending to verbs as the key part of every sentence. These should be practised and learned by use (op cit). The modern teachers are well aware that verbs and tenses constitute the most difficult feature of their language agenda, the feature which often mocks the principle of inductive language teaching. Certainly this was a problem which featured in the researcher's action research exercise, as will be made clear in Chapters Three and Four, later.

In concluding this section, it seems appropriate to turn again to Rivers (1983), who, citing Carroll (1971), proposed two routes to acquiring language, as follows:

1.   language learning by the rule
2.   language learning by the habit

Rivers, like Chomsky, from whom she draws support for her argument, gives superiority to the habit and asks that L2 learning should mimic L1 acquisition, the process for which she borrows a term from Krashen (1977), namely: "through the pores learning". Rivers makes no mention of being limited by habit, even though habit is effectively repetition and has no power to generalize.

Learners who seek to master by acquisition a second or a foreign language face a considerable challenge, for it is implied that they will perform their task through immersion, interaction and authentic experience, whilst at the same time be naturally capable of self-monitoring, self editing and unobtrusive learning.

The challenge described above is taken on by the researcher as a vital part of the contrastive study in teaching method, which is her action research project.

It remains to be seen whether her G-I pupils become immersed in their foreign language studies sufficiently successfully to enable acquisition to occur and to effect desirable levels of competence and performance, comparable with their G-E counterparts, who are given an amount of explicit explanation of L2 grammar in native language terms. The challenge in practice appears more daunting even than the challenge signified in theory in the above discussion, for the researcher's pupils have a reality based upon:

(a) no environment other than a classroom setting decked out to resemble Hawkin's "cultural island";

(b) no native speaker pluralist society to promote and shape their language experience; the solo presence of a non-native speaking teacher scarcely compensates for this lack, and the services of a foreign language assistant have been sacrificed since the introduction of 'Local Management of Schools';

(c) no appreciable time allocation which might suggest positive prospects for the exercise of learning by acquisition through immersion, as the child acquires its native language; the following simple mathematical equation makes this clear in the context of the researcher's school -

* In the 2 week cycle, which characterizes the timetabling system of the researcher's school, there are 6 lessons of 50 minutes each. Therefore the optimum time allocation is 300 minutes per cycle for each class of pupils, or 5 hours.

* In each of the researcher's principal experiment classes there were, for most of the time, 30 pupils. Therefore, in an equal world, each pupil received a personal time allocation of $300 \div 30 = 10$ minutes per fortnightly cycle or 5 minutes per week.

Even though individual pupils and all the pupils collectively draw from the sum of the time allocation, it nevertheless provides food for thought that immersion and acquisition could be considered possible on the basis of either the whole available time or the individual's perceived fraction of that time. Hawkins (in Baer, 1979) was surely aware of this tension between the theoretical ideal and the practical reality when he wrote the following observations:

"The debate about mother tongue and foreign language learning continues but teachers cannot wait for the researchers to produce their final answer" (p15).

He continues:

> "The way forward is unlikely --- to be marked by spectacular advances" (p19).

Finally, in advocating *motivation* as the commonly considered key to success in learning a language, Hawkins (eg in Baer, 1979) *establishes not only a* convenient and appropriate point at which this discussion section may be terminated but also an opportunity to speculate upon the desirability of discussing the contrastive approaches to ML teaching and upon the desirability of doing an action research as a prelude to examining the nature and outcome of the real action research exercise which awaits the attention of the reader from Chapter Three of this thesis.

2.4.3 The explicit and implicit approaches to Modern Languages teaching and learning

(i) Introduction : The methodological debate and the central role of grammar

The researcher's practical experiment explores Modern Languages teaching delivered to two learner factions by an approach which, when augmented by factor X for delivery to one faction, has been rendered dual and contrastive. The formula ascribed to this may be reviewed briefly as follows:

* learner faction 1 (G-I) learning by 'M' (Method; M1)
* learner faction 2 (G-E) learning by 'M'+X (Method and factor X; M2)

'Method' implies full target language use in the teaching and the learning of the foreign language and grammar taught implicitly. The application of factor X, however, afforded the relevant learner faction the potential benefit of grammar summary in English as a revealer and consolidator of the grammatical matter taught and to be learnt. Even though there is only one teaching approach at the base of the experiment, the absence or presence of grammar summary in it encouraged the researcher to pursue an argument about contrastive methods of teaching : 'M' as M1 (G-I; grammar implicit) as opposed to 'M'+X as M2 (G-E; grammar explicit). This section of the present zonal discussion is thus given to an observation of the implicit/explicit dichotomy.

Broadly speaking, Modern Languages teaching falls into two styles which may be perceived to correspond with the concepts explored and tested by the researcher in her experiment. These are referred to as

IMPLICIT and EXPLICIT (researcher's own selected description, also eg. McArthur 1983) or as

INDUCTIVE and DEDUCTIVE (egs. Corder 1973; Krashen 1982; Ellis 1984) or

DIRECT and INDIRECT (egs. Dodson 1967; Sharwood Smith 1981; Rutherford 1987) and so on.

These teaching approaches match quite conveniently with the notions of ACQUISITION and LEARNING that have been the subjects of discussion where pupils' attitudes are concerned in the preceding section. For this reason it appears appropriate now to examine the statements which writers make on these matters as concepts and, in so doing, link with the discussion of the previous section and support the researcher's intention to shed light and place an informed perspective upon her action research which follows later.

In anticipation of an examination of the actual teaching methods in question, however, there are queries and assumptions surrounding them, which background research discloses. An impression of some of the issues surrounding the central debate may be drawn from Hood (1994) and illustrated as follows:

Should repetitive
PATTERN DRILLS
be used as a
standard device? $\longrightarrow$

What is the relationship of

| GRAMMAR |

to this?

Should overt
TERMINOLOGY
be used?

Are these (*,**)

| VIABLE
OBJECTIVES |

with equal outlooks
and promise for the
teacher and the
learner?

| THE DEBATE |

* | INDUCTIVE |

versus

** | DEDUCTIVE |

teaching
method

What kind of

| GRAMMAR |

is involved? -

| PEDAGOGIC,
REFERENCE,
LINGUISTIC,
UG? |

What are the

| IMPLICATIONS |

for

| TARGET
LANGUAGE USE? |

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                    ↕

┌─────────────────────────────┐
│  What are the               │
│   ┌──────────────────────┐  │
│   │  PROSPECTS           │  │
│   └──────────────────────┘  │
│  for meaningful             │
│  TL use by the              │
│   ┌──────────────────────┐  │
│   │ LEARNER? and for     │  │
│   └──────────────────────┘  │
│ ( i) ┌───────────────────┐  │
│      │ GRAMMAR           │  │
│      │ TEACHING?         │  │
│      └───────────────────┘  │
│ ( ii)┌───────────────────┐  │
│      │ GRAMMAR           │  │
│      │ LEARNING?         │  │
│      └───────────────────┘  │
│ (iii)┌───────────────────┐  │
│      │ GRAMMAR as the    │  │
│      │ DYNAMIC to        │  │
│      │ COMPETENCE?       │  │
│      └───────────────────┘  │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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"It is a basic problem in teaching to know how much one has to tell a learner about the language and to what extent mere practice will invoke the appropriate mechanisms to cope with the task in hand" (Hood 1994 p.55).

Marland (1979) detects less ambivalence in the original role attributed to grammar as the agent which has been employed to indicate what is *right* and what is *wrong* in a person's use of language. He acknowledges that native speakers intuitively acquire a native grammatical competence and indeed that, if a number of researchers and writers are correct in their speculations, they could have been born with this propensity. However, where the learning of a foreign language is concerned, learners need to have transmitted to them by their teachers notions about language and a set of linguistic concepts and terms from which to plot their foreign language course. This is the case, even though a) this in no way matches the teaching of grammar for grammar's sake, which featured in the classrooms of the 1920s and 1930s (p.56) and even though b) support no longer comes to Modern Languages departments from English departments as it traditionally used to do (p.62; also Corder 1973). Yet if grammar was previously seen as the indicator of correct and incorrect expression, Krashen (1979) and Bialystock (1979) are united in their opinion that

learners of up to pre-sixth-form age do not apply learned grammar rules to their work. This implies that structures which have been acquired, rather than structures which have been learnt, will be found in a learner's created text. (The researcher is alert to potential evidence which might support this suggestion when reporting her action research). It follows from this that Krashen (1983) rejects any role at all in the discussion for metalanguage, insisting that metalinguistic knowledge or expertise is not a requirement to implicit (inductive) or explicit (deductive) methods or to unconscious or conscious learning. (It is made clear that Krashen, cited on this matter in Roberts (1994), identifies the inductive with the implicit and the deductive with the explicit teaching modes).

The importance of grammar to Modern Languages methodology is explained by Roberts (1994) as the factor which helps the learner target correct usage. Citing Heafford (1993), Roberts rationalizes that, without having a basis of grammar knowledge, the learner is unable to generate new utterances. Since that is his ultimate aim, he must implicitly or explicitly know the target language grammar. He concedes that: "the notion of grammar has long been contentious in education circles" (p.2). The contention takes the form of the debate on the cognitive issue about how grammar should be mastered. This is the same debate as that centred in inductive or deductive methodology. The ever-present contentious issue of grammar commands one's attention quite forcibly in the current era dominated by communicative methodology, which emphasizes the use of the target language as the medium for all classroom communication and the implicit delivery of the grammatical agenda. Even so, there is persistent doubt about the strength of the resolve to teach grammar in this way, ie. covertly, for the memory of overt grammar teaching and its association with the translation skills persistently intrudes, as Roberts 1994 argues:

"In recent years the role of grammar in modern languages has been marginalized as communicative aims became the norm. Ironically enough, perhaps it is precisely those writers who were to the forefront in promoting such aims who are beginning to recant and, as in the case of Ellis (1993), to advocate a return to structure, under the guise of 'grammar awareness' programmes. In many ways such a move is welcome. The danger is, of course, that the overly inductive approach of communicative days will be replaced by a return to some of the most

deductive aspects of the grammar-translation approach or by an unbalanced eclectic compromise between the two" (p.2).

Such shifts and the usefulness of an eclectic method had been foreseen. The reluctance of ML practitioners, or of the collective ML system, to move away from one (perceived safe) teaching approach to another (perceived unsafe) teaching approach is made clear in Dodson (1967). At the least, he clarifies teachers' reluctance to shed explicit grammar as a reliable teaching component, therefore to let go and observe the growth of the foreign language as something which is allowed to occur for the learner in a more natural way. Even by the late 1960s, evidence of change, though this had long been called for, was still slight, in spite of a) the rebellion against traditional methods b) the growing awareness of the linguistic sciences and the advancements in the field of linguistics, and c) the extending role taken by electronic and mechanical classroom teaching aids.

Dodson wrote these observations at a time by which the researcher's career opportunities had taken her from the technical school where she began her career in 1960, into two other schools. Dodson comments on the slow pace of methodological change and the researcher would agree. In the initial seven years of her practice as a teacher she had to adjust to the advancements in technology, even though courses and examinations were still structured on grammar and grammar-translation objectives. In her two subsequent grammar schools there was no technical support, since the department and school managers did not perceive a need for this for the courses just described. Even when C.S.E. was introduced around 1967 - these contained no 'prose' translation and quickly dropped their 'unseen' component - the potential for a technological input lay dormant for a time and even 'Listening Comprehension', when it became a course-component, was delivered by the teacher. C.S.E. was taught side by side with the G.C.E. until one course for all was devised. Therefore grammar continued to be taught and courses were delivered to classes on a buffer of grammar.

This debate about G-E and G-I became important for the communicative era in Modern Languages teaching. Dodson (1967), foreseeing the developments of this movement and the tensions of the debate, even at a distance of some 20 years ahead of his time of writing, nevertheless kept on insisting on the importance and advisability to teaching of grammar explained in MT terms, so

that the learner might be allowed to progress more rapidly, more efficiently and more satisfactorily.

After all, systematic (grammatical) structure of language cannot be denied, therefore the desirability of actively and honestly dealing with it must be a reality rather than an illusion. Palmer (1969) outlines the two sides to the argument that is being developed in this introduction. In attesting to the grammatical composition of language, Palmer writes:

> "A language is essentially a code - an organised system of signs and signals (p.12).

In warning of the importance of perceiving language as a medium for active use, he continues:

> "Language is a means of communication, a thing to be studied, and ultimately a thing to be used" p.33).

Palmer classifies a teaching method as something which

(a) enables acquisition for L1 purposes, for which time is not limited
     and
(b) enables learning for L2 purposes, for which time is limited, and involves short-cut arrangements by which the codification processes are often built into the teaching plan.

Therefore Palmer (1969) makes no definitive statement on the best method for use in the delivery of Modern Languages. His ambivalence is an intentional attitude, informed by tested observations which have persuaded him of several important conditions which affect classroom practice and the interest of learners, namely:

1. The teaching and the learning of language as *speech* is seen as the most important classroom activity. Competence in speech is, therefore, the most important and most valued product to emerge from this for the learner (p.44).
2. The best method to use for the production of an appropriate outcome for learners is *any* method which keeps them (the learners) positive and motivated

and which emphasizes the priority of the 'speaking' skill in the ideology surrounding the concept of language as communication (p.49).

This outlook, perceived in Palmer, is in a way echoed again two decades later in Peck (1988). Peck observes Modern Languages teachers at work and comments on their position to the inductive/deductive possibilities of transacting the grammar. More than that, in a special project managed across the country and beginning in the early 1990s, Peck has designed consultancies for individual schools' departments to advise on how to advance their awareness on teaching grammar communicatively. His consultancy for the researcher's school was established on 1 November 1993. It is a free-standing, unpublished document, which is included by the researcher in the evidence collection attached in the appendices to this thesis. The importance of Peck's work at this time is that he demonstrates a vision of grammar as something which has validity and carries weight and significance (and even potential threat) only in measure with the individual's or the individual department's requirement and use of it. Therefore, Peck looks at grammar as a matter to be tailored, treated and served to suit individual needs and applied as a support in the quest for linguistic knowledge and understanding. For Peck, knowledge and awareness of grammar allow the development of language for use, ie. to help the learner impart and infer meaning in communication (p.3 of consultancy handbook). He deals with a range of factors not unlike those featured in Palmer and mentioned earlier, as being significant to the teaching and learning of a foreign language, as follows:

*   the significance of grammar to the National Curriculum philosophy on method
*   the existence of unconscious and conscious grammatical knowledge
*   implicit or covert grammar teaching in the speaking context
*   explicit or overt grammar teaching as grammar teaching
*   the 'Inductive Method'   )   arguments for and against each of
*   the 'Deductive Method'   )   these two
*   a 'Compromise Method', featuring flexibility, eclecticism and possibly bilingualism
*   the question of featuring grammatical terminology (referenced from L1) in the context of L2
*   the question of the use of the target language in the teaching and the learning of L2 or FL
*   the issue of teaching grammar communicatively

*	the desirability of careful structuring of lesson plans which account for the elected treatment (explicit, implicit, compromise) of the grammatical agenda and engineer its implementation accordingly

Just as Peck and others remain circumspect about the positive and negative aspects of the teaching styles involved in the current debate, Littlewood (1984) also subscribes an opinion which takes into account the complexity of the subject and goes some way, perhaps, towards explaining why there has been this obstinate difficulty over method relating to grammar. Littlewood seems to suggest that teachers are put under pressure to address the teaching fashion which has been in development from pre-Joint 16+ and GCSE times, at this time of writing, and currently brought to the fore by the National Curriculum. Teachers are, in fact, presently obliged to incorporate in their teaching approach a large range of fashionable attitudes and idiom if they wish to avoid unwelcome criticism in inspection terms. Even before OFSTED, H.M.I. prepared teacher-appraisals which took account of teaching strategies, of the implementation of L2 as the medium of classroom communication and the delivery of the agenda, of the role attached to grammar, of the hands-on involvement of the learner and the less didactic position of the teacher, of the application of or absence of formal explanatory jargon in the lesson transaction and so on ... All of these things are made clear by Littlewood (1984) in his assessment of the subject. He makes a cautious but strong case for an understanding of the complex and challenging nature of Modern Languages as an important area of the learner's curriculum. On the one hand he advocates naturalistic teaching strategies for language as he recalls:

1.	Skinner (1957) on the influence of 'Operant Conditioning', on language as behaviour, on repetition as a means to language development, on the ability of the language learner to become conditioned or shaped in the habits of language use and, like Halliday, he advocates youngsters' association with adults as a means to promoting their competence (p.5).
2.	Chomsky's teachings on 'innate capacity', a premise which endures even if LAD is no longer in vogue (p.6).

On the other hand he disclaims such conditions as those just described as being adequate to L2 purposes and he appears to argue for a structured teaching approach. He bases this position on the following premises:

* Language is more than verbal behaviour in that it is also a creative tool of inexhaustible possibilities. This makes learning a language arguably the most difficult of human tasks - and the most amazing of human accomplishments, therefore (p.5) - meriting some special attention to assist and encourage the learner.

* Children's innate language (grammar) learning capacity drops off by the age of twelve, after which time their grammatical utterances develop from the earlier telegraphic utterances to increasingly more sophisticated articulation. The application of some directed, structured teaching may be perceived to aid and abet this development.

However, in recalling and citing the influence of Richards (1971), Littlewood keeps the issue of grammar teaching in perspective, acknowledging the dangers of incurring difficulties for the learner by overstating the teaching of grammar itself. With this advice for caution, Littlewood offers a number of questions which teachers ought to consider in order to determine an informed strategy, in effect *the method*, by which they intend to impart their grammar information to their classes. Such questions are:

* How much grammar should be treated?
* How much importance should it command?
* How should it be taught in order to facilitate the best results?

  - should it be taught by explicit means?
  - should it be taught by implicit means?

These questions bring this discourse to its next stages, in which the explicit and implicit modes of grammar teaching are discussed. The queries concerning the appropriate extent of the grammar agenda and the importance which should be accorded to grammar are addressed as an inherent part of the modes-agenda.

(ii) **The grammar-explicit principle**

This section rehearses arguments specifically for the deductive approach to language teaching and learning, here called the explicit principle in order to keep the argument linked with the action research, which is the main focus of this thesis.

As has already been noted in the introduction to this section, human beings acquire their language through a combination of their innate potential to do so and through the effects of their association with others and particularly with adults in the place where they are brought up. The writers who have informed this discussion are in agreement with this, but they have been selected for what they have to say about the further needs of the L2 or FL learning process. Their outlooks to the deductive mode are keynoted in subsequent paragraphs by phrases set in bold italics. Their contributions to this extension of the discussion are centred in the universal agreement about the positive value of Chomsky's work and a shared belief in the worth of explicit grammar.

Second language learning may be seen as a process involving the *motor skills,* the *organisational or systemic skills* and the *contextual skills* of learners. Learners must then master the linguistic *levels* of phonetics phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics whilst *acquiring* ie. building up a vocabulary resource (Stork p.20). Stork, who coincidentally represents the collective views of the other writers referenced here, is clear on the need of L2 learners to avail themselves of *descriptive grammar* as a guide to correct language use. The command of *grammatical knowledge* and its *practical application* will enable *correct and appropriate use of language* in L2 of FL terms. In other words, in the opinion of writers like Stork, grammar should be taught and learnt - fundamentally altogether perceived - as a functional aid or short cut to language learning. However, it should not be allowed to intrude as a theoretical burden (p.20).

The other writers selected for their relevance to this section, and writing from different times in the run up to the current communicative era, emphasise in particular the point made by Stork on the value and importance of grammatical knowledge to language teaching. Their various points of view are set out below, characterized in each case by a selected quotation:

* Carroll (1955, cited in Billows 1961), on the teaching of grammar as linguistic analysis: "Linguistic analysis is not a method of instruction; linguistic analysis merely *has something to say* about what is being taught" (p.90), implying the need to encourage this as information *leading to a useful understanding of the mechanics* of language.

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*   Billows (1961) on children's natural need to make sense of language: "Children of fourteen or fifteen and over can be very *interested in analysing as a process of perceiving and recognising the language* they have *already learnt*, although they may not have been able to do it as they learned it" (p.168).

*   Incorporated Association of Head Masters (I.A.H.M., 1966) on the importance of grammar to good teaching method: " ... *careful study of the native speech* from which we start, *and comparison* of its sounds and structures with those of the taught language is an essential part of good teaching method" (p.34 point 163); ..... grammar should be *consolidated* through learning *after it has been treated through practice.*

*   Brown (1971) makes a case for the explicit teaching of grammatical theory: "*Grammatical theory* may be claimed to be *useful to second language pedagogy* ... The strongest claim is that it can provide a *theoretical basis for* the prescription of *methods and techniques* for foreign language teaching" (p.229). Brown makes the claim that to explain grammar takes the *strain off the learners' memory*, allowing them to *work some things out* with the assistance of relevant formulae and an understanding of the rules.

*   Valdman (1974), on the value of grammar used as a factor in method: "Since *errors* reflect the way in which learners acquire linguistic competence, they must serve as a *basis for the ordering of grammatical features*, and beyond that, for the *establishing of objectives and aims of instruction*" (p.23).

*   Wilkins (1979) on the importance of grammar to efficient language use generally and on its importance specifically to creative language use: "The acquisition of the grammatical system of a language remains *a most important element in language learning*. The grammar is the means through which *linguistic creativity* is ultimately achieved and an inadequate knowledge of the grammar would lead to *serious limitations on the capacity for communication* ..... a grammatical syllabus must seek to ensure that the grammatical system is properly assimilated by the learner" (p.66).

*   Hyams (1986) on the importance of grammar to a learner's linguistic maturing: "Finally, he (the child) must uncover the *system of rules -* morphological, phonological, syntactic and semantic - *which comprise the grammar* of the language he is to acquire ...

One hopes to acquire *insight* into the general *process of language* acquisition by focusing in on *syntax* .... It seems clear that the child will not control *complex sentences* until he learns *aspects of grammar* ... " (p1).

* Stevick (1982) on the importance of *grammar* to the goals of the ML classroom as a) the *quality maker* in *language learnt* by the pupil and b) the quality maker, therefore, in the *language taught* by the teacher. The principal objective in which teachers and learners place their responsibilities is communicative competence, that is to say linguistic competence. Having *competence implies* that one *understands "what and how"* in terms of knowing *techniques*, mastering vocabulary and commanding grammar (p16). Whereas learners acquire their native language, they *procure* their second or foreign language by more *conscious* means. Teachers must ensure that learners are given the opportunity and the means by which to do this well (p21). As the custodians of grammar, language teachers build power into their teaching agenda by adding the *grammatical content* and *empower learners* to *develop their linguistic knowledge and understanding* (p185). It is a matter of importance that pupils are encouraged to deal with grammar rather than avoid it and so fudge their responsibilities towards it (p83).

(iii) **The grammar-implicit principle**

The implicit approach may be seen as a *natural attitude* which has its source both in the individual's involuntary response to his or her *need to acquire* knowledge or information and in the teacher's responsibility to furnish that knowledge or information by selected, in this case implicit, strategies. The individual, in order to grow, mature, extend and find fulfilment *must move towards knowledge*. This premise can be placed in any framework, as in language learning, and there, too, it may be framed in the context of the teaching and the learning of grammar:

"Learner discovery is a vital feature of learning, and this helps to frame an approach to grammar teaching" (Hood 1994 p.28).

For the process of *learner-discovery* to be possible in the first place, the learner must have access to a knowledge resource or matrix. In this argument, it is the target foreign language which houses the linguistic and grammatical structures which the learner needs. His fluency and full understanding of his subject are relative to his *exposure* and *immersion* in this language (Wilkins in Baer 1972).

The process by which learners pursue their objective of language acquisition develops from a number of tendencies constituting a *holistic approach* to language learning. A representative selection of such tendencies is found in Naiman et al (in Brumfit 1984):

* AWARENESS and active ENGAGEMENT
* COMING TO GRIPS with language as a SYSTEM
* USE of the language in/and through real COMMUNICATION
* MONITORING the INTERLANGUAGE
* COMING TO TERMS with the AFFECTIVE DEMANDS of language learning.

In the reseacher's action research, such a holistic approach was sought for each of the experiment classes. However, as has been described, the G-E group had the addition of some grammar summary delivered regularly in L1 terms as a descriptor and consolidator of the principal grammar points contained in the teaching plan. It will be seen whether this proved to be an enhancer or a disrupter; whether it amplified the holistic ideal or fragmented it.

Writing earlier, Hatch (1978) argued the relationship of grammar to method, in describing as false the assumption that grammar was best learnt and practised ahead of the use of discourse. In fact Hatch insists that: "One learns to *interact* verbally, and out of this interaction *syntactic structures* are developed" (p.403-404). This is Hawkins' theory (King and Boaks 1994) of *'Percept before Precept'*, by which he defines the inductive approach of foreign language teaching and learning. The stages of this process in Hawkins' description (op.cit.p.111) are:

* *observe the facts*
* *induce the rules*
* *confirm with the evidence*
* *hold these* determined *rules* as valid for as long as they are not falsified with fresh evidence.

Drawing from Comenius (circa 1646), Hawkins cites arguments to support the inductive method: " ... children need to be given many examples and things they can see, and not abstract rules of grammar" (ditto) and: "All languages are easier to learn by practice than by rules" (Comenius 1657, ditto). Even so,

Hawkins, citing Comenius, admits that rules assist and reinforce the knowledge derived from practice. He finds it undeniable that an awareness of grammar is essential to language learning, since grammar is a part of the language and is, indeed the part that structures it and keeps it cohesive and mouldable (op.cit. p.121). However, the argument here is no longer about grammar awareness won through explanatory summary. Whatever the modus operandi, a genuine language course must take into account the needs of the learners in relation to their targets. The target that this research is concerned with is the GCSE (anticipating the National Curriculum), requiring of learners that they must *focus* on and be tested on their abilities in *communication*.

The GCSE examination, it might be argued (as in Roberts 1993), is somewhat behaviourist, in that many of the 'speaking' and 'writing' requirements concentrate on the delivery in the foreign language of *set phrases* and *rehearsed responses to stimuli* prescribed by the syllabus. There is less emphasis on the 'authentic' and 'creative' aspects of language use than might be supposed, although the inception of the National Curriculum may remove some of the artificiality and replace it with *independently generated meaning*. An *awareness of grammar* becomes a necessity, however, to this end. Roberts cites a number of writers on this issue, including the following:

* Chomsky and Halliday, arguing the need to internalize grammar, in order to be able to use language and create meaning,
* Rivers, for whom self expression depends upon the learners' knowing the language's rule system.

However, the process by which learners (who are involved with the inductive or implicit method of internalizing grammar) develop a creative use of language implies a sense of *personal involvement* on their part.

It was on the point of this personal involvement on the part of learners as a criterion for the implicit approach that this section opened. Roberts' comments (1993) have, therefore brought this discussion back to its starting point.

(iv) **'Explicit' and 'implicit' : a contrast of teaching styles**
A major influence in the movement to bring L2 learning closer to L1 acquisition has been exercised by Krashen, with whom it is convenient to open this area of the discussion. Writing particularly in the early 1980s, at the time in the U.K. of

the Joint 16+ and in the build up to the GCSE and the full communicative movement, he welcomed the developments which would make foreign language learning a more natural process than ever before. He favoured unconscious as opposed to conscious learning and the application by the teacher of the inductive method in preference to the deductive one.

" ... second language teaching should focus on encouraging acquisition, on providing input that stimulates the subconscious language acquisition potential all human beings have" (1982, p.83).

For Krashen, as has been noted in Zone II of this chapter, conscious learning calls into play the users' editor and monitor mechanisms which affect their language system and their actual performance. The language internalization process, as rationalised by Krashen, is too important, too versatile and too powerful to allow one to suggest that he turned his back on conscious learning. Indeed, he writes on this as follows:

"This does not mean to say however, that there is no room for conscious learning. Conscious learning does have a role, but is no longer the lead actor in the play" (ibid).

Roughly speaking, he equates conscious learning with grammar which he describes within the dual function of 'monitor' and 'editor' as the enhancing factor in language awareness, language appreciation and, by implication, language production. He emphasizes that overuse of the deductive approach may inhibit or disable the performance of learners by causing intimidation and anxiety about error-making. Conscious knowledge is not responsible for fluency, neither does it initiate utterances. Some conscious learning, though not all, may become acquisition, just as some acquisition, though not all, may become conscious learning.

Other writers who have contributed to the discussion about conscious and unconscious learning (learning as opposed to acquisition, therefore) and deductive and inductive teaching modes, in company with the influential Krashen referenced above (1982), include Dodson (1967); Corder (1973); Sharwood Smith (1981); Stevick (1982); Ellis (1984); Rutherford (1987); Peck (1988, 1993); Widdowson (1990); Halliwell (1993). The contrastive teaching modes generally named 'explicit' and 'implicit' respectively for the purposes of this thesis, have been similarly described by the writers, using a variety of

designations other than those already mentioned, eg: 'traditional'/'explorer'; 'indirect'/'direct'; 'mechanic'/'assimilative'; 'conservative'/'radical' and so on. The differentiating characteristics of these modes, including those which can be referenced in Krashen (1982) are listed below:

THE EXPLICIT (DEDUCTIVE) MODE (structured; formal; prescribed)	THE IMPLICIT (INDUCTIVE) MODE (unstructured; naturalistic; inferred)
· grammar points declared and treated explicitly via explanation and analysis	· practice and play exercises hold grammar embedded, therefore implicit
· grammar points 'exercised' in examples	· structures emerge to the learner through principle of exposure
· grammar points embedded in sentences and texts in order to contextualize them	· inherent patterns are perceived, internalized, imitated via analogy and reinvented
· grammar points applied to extending contexts, systematically	· 'new' language gradually emerges with the acquired structures embedded
· grammar points taught as a graded agenda	
· grammar competence tested and measured, systematically	· communicative competence tested (this relies upon learner's management of grammar)
· the teacher has control	· the teacher lets go; the learner takes hold
· TRANSFORMATIONAL IN PRINCIPLE	· UG - RELATED IN PRINCIPLE

It is significant that so much work has been done on the processes of L2 teaching and learning, as outlined in the summary above, and that so much analysis has emerged, whether through thinking, speculating or researching. The need for research into classroom methodology is advocated by the writers who have been used here, because of the opinion that they share, not merely with each other and with yet other writers - also with many classroom practitioners who make regular observation on their practice or who perhaps formally or informally monitor their practice - that it is the learning process that is at the fore. This conclusion is established out of reflection and out of the practical confirmation of the insight that if learners do not engage with their task, no amount of teaching will secure their objectives for them (cf. Ellis 1984). However, this argument in no way diminishes the responsibility which characterizes the teacher's role in the classroom, regardless of which approach to the teaching and the learning is employed there. The role of the teacher and

the teacher's dynamism have much influence on the motivation of learners, on their production of language and on their ultimate success, therefore. McArthur (1983) places teachers with the power to incite the most generative attitudes among learners, yet he perceives their influence as potentially beneficial or malignant, emphasizing that capable and incapable teachers can inspire or undermine the work of the classroom and the outcome of it for the learners there. He has teachers' accountability in mind when he writes:

"Teaching is an art. As an art, much of it is idiosyncratic, a personal achievement of the teacher" (p.82).

Because of the possibilities for the learning that are contained in teacher-pupil relationships, writers, such as those used above, encourage researchers and teachers to explore the psychology of the learner as a way forward to formulating an effective FL teaching method.

(v) **Writers' critical observations on methods and learners**
Writing from Germany on the psychology of learning, Ludwig (1987) articulates strong views about the formidable responsibilities that learners must shoulder in order to realise their objective, which, in the home context, is to achieve something like their GCSE. Whatever the subject-teacher's approach to the shared classroom task, whatever the formal strategy for the delivery of the agenda (ie. in ML terms, G-E or G-I!), the reality is that those who wish to learn must do the learning for themselves and begin by understanding and accepting that there are many ups and downs attached to the learning process. Learning will not be achieved in real terms, ie. measurably, by the faint-hearted or the irresolute who remain unable to toughen up their approach and assert themselves. Learning is not simply a matter of using the memory. The memory store is, in fact, able to play only a limited role in the learning process. It can absorb only 16 pieces of information at one time and, unaided, retains each piece for approximately 10 seconds. Learning is more than that. It is a matter of applying the personality and the emotions and of also developing these during the course of the learning exercise (op.cit. p.8, p.9; also implied in Wilkinson 1972).

At an early stage of this section, Maslow's (1962) attitudes to psychology were noted, with a view to motivating learners. Ludwig agrees on the need to offer support through positive regard, stemming from understanding and sympathising

with learners over the difficult task which they face. He outlines the phases which successful learners go through, once they have developed their individual learning strategies:

1.	*inspired*	6.	*self recriminating*
2.	*enthusiastic*	7.	*cutting off*
3.	*serious*	8.	*beginning anew*
4.	*unsettled*	9.	*enlightened*
5.	*confused*	10.	*concluding successfully*

The teacher's role in the teacher-pupil relationship is a complementing one and crucial to the successful outcome which is desired for the pupil. In spite of the fact that teachers cannot do the learning for their pupils, they can and must instruct them in work techniques, advising and assisting them in *how* to work and *how* to learn. It is important that young people are brought to an understanding of the reality of the classroom, which is that all who occupy a place in it are participants in the business transacted there. All have jobs to do which demand effort and some discomfort (Schräder Naef 1978). Learners must see sense in the work agenda and must be motivated to apply themselves to it for reasons which go beyond the clinical attainment of grades and results. The German educational psychologist Schräder-Naef (1978) offers timeless advice on a sensible and constructive approach for learners who have their minds set on a successful conclusion to their course and experience:

* they must be able to make sense of their agenda
* they must be motivated from within and from without
* they must appreciate the learning for its own sake and value as well as for the examination pass which it implies
* they must fortify their powers of concentration
* they must avoid distractions
* they must listen and focus
* they must accept their responsibility for the learning
* they must work in a way which allows proper completion of task
* they must keep a balanced and positive outlook.

When the learning experience is bound to a foreign language, the learners must be given a syllabus which has an inbuilt momentum, so that they are aware that their FL development is taking place (Dodson 1967). They will appreciate this

development, the more they are able to measure their comprehension and their production of meaning (Corder 1973). The learner's language learning process may be likened to a journey which requires some real time to be given to it, since there is a correlation between the learner's intelligence, wit, emotions and state of personality, and subject-related aptitude. McLaughlin (1978) advises caution and patience, lest learners should be overburdened with too much mental baggage for the analogous journey which they are required to make in language learning. Specifically, in an appraisal of learners' attitudes to a task of FL learning based in the G-E as opposed to the G-I approach, McLaughlin insists that there are capacity restrictions to the learners' monitor, which means that much of the time spent on explicit teaching is wasted and would be better spent on implicit teaching instead (p.319). This in turn requires of learners that they develop intuitive feelings about what is correct and acceptable, all of which can only be done through time and experience (Sharwood Smith 1981). Since they allow shortcuts to competence, however, Sharwood Smith sees some virtue in the appropriate use of explicit methods.

The immediate benefits for the learner in the efficient conveying of information, and the response to the learners' need for explanation, give learners a sense of satisfaction and an encouragement which propel them on to further stages of their learning process. Sharwood Smith offers 'Consciousness Raising' as a major, qua explicit device in aiding and abetting this massive process by deliberately, ie. explicitly, drawing the learners' attention specifically to certain formal properties of the target language in question. Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985) are clear on the value of this to the learner, even though writers like Widdowson (1979) and Brumfit and Johnson (1979) had earlier emphasised the limited influence of linguistics upon the understanding, the performance and the outlook of the learner.

Mohammed (1993) agrees that learners of L2 or FL need to avail themselves of grammatical knowledge in order to do their job adequately, if not well, and achieve a state of competence as users. They are helped towards this state through the explicit teaching of grammar. Mohammed supports his own view on this by citing Ellis (1987); Rivers (1981); Van Baalen (1983); Rutherford (1987); Sharwood Smith (1988) and others who have done empirical research. Learners combine three kinds of knowledge to form their competence, however:

*   their analysed or explicit knowledge

*   their unanalysed or implicit knowledge, the sort they discover for themselves

*   their metalinguistic knowledge

As Seliger (1984) puts it (p.249):

learners use their
```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  TACTICS or LEARNING STRATEGIES           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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                              ↓

to convert
```
┌──────────────┐
│  INPUT        │
│               │
└──────────────┘
```
                              ↓

into
```
┌──────────────┐
│  INTAKE       │
│               │
└──────────────┘
```
                              ↓

and allow
```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION              │
│                                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
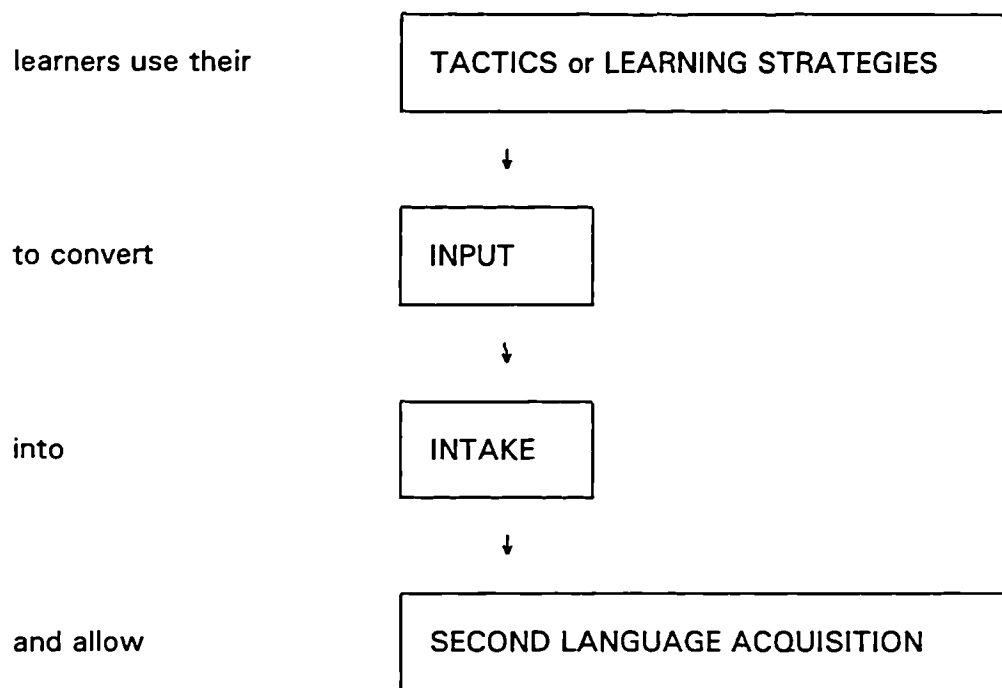
Finally, in anticipation of the researcher's own action research, it is interesting to observe Ellis's report (1989) on a contrastive study of two learning styles which was set up, featuring the performances of two classroom learners. Interesting features of this case included:

1.   the observation of the learning strategies or tactics of the two learner types as

      the field-dependent learner (active, studial)
      the field-independent learner (passive, experiential)

2.   the observation that being comfortable with the learning style makes acquisition easier (p.25).

Some of these ideas will come to feature again in the action research attached to this present study of contrastive teaching/learning approaches.

This sub-section closes with a point made by Ellis (1984) in which he acknowledges the difference which exists between two styles in order to make

them constrastive, but which ironically also binds them, by whichever strategy the learning is done. Equally, the teaching exercise, by whichever style it is undertaken, remains one and the same responsibility for teachers in their accountable relationship with the learners seeking knowledge. In writing the following, Ellis reminds the researcher of the inherent complexity of her own action research task of contrastively studying the strategies of G-E and G-I:

"A competency is more likely to develop from exposure than from instruction. And yet all instruction involves exposure" (p.211).

(vi) **Conclusion to this section**

Central to the issue described in this section regarding teaching/learning approaches (viz. implicit/explicit; inductive/deductive; acquisition/learning; direct/indirect; radical/conservative; explorer/traditional, and so on ...) is the concept of grammar and with it the question whether or not it is to be consciously or overtly taught as part of the subject agenda. It will be recalled that grammar is described by Jespersen (1904) as being made up of items in isolation which, when brought together and integrated, fuse and form language as a corporate mass. The teaching of language can reflect this paradox. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of the writers who have been used to support this chapter deem the holistic approach to be superior and more worthy than the deductive diffuse one, which simply treats separate aspects of language. As McArthur (1983) observes:

"A teacher's view of grammar is crucial to how he or she will teach" (p.103)

McArthur's explanation of 'explicit' and 'implicit' teaching of grammar summarizes the tabled patterns that have been given:

"If a teacher uses grammar, then it can either appear only in the books chosen and the work done, or it can be fitted in implicitly in the gradation of material that superficially appears to be grammar free" (p.104).

The qualifying term 'superficially' is important to McArthur's vision of how language is taught when the agenda seems to by-pass the grammar content. One can only give the grammar explicit or implicit treatment, or take up what

McArthur calls the 'conservative' or 'radical' positions to it, as has already been seen and as the following sketch shows:

GRAMMAR IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

either

deliberately used — taught explicitly by conservative means

or

deliberately underplayed — taught implicitly by radical means

(from: McArthur 1983, p.104)
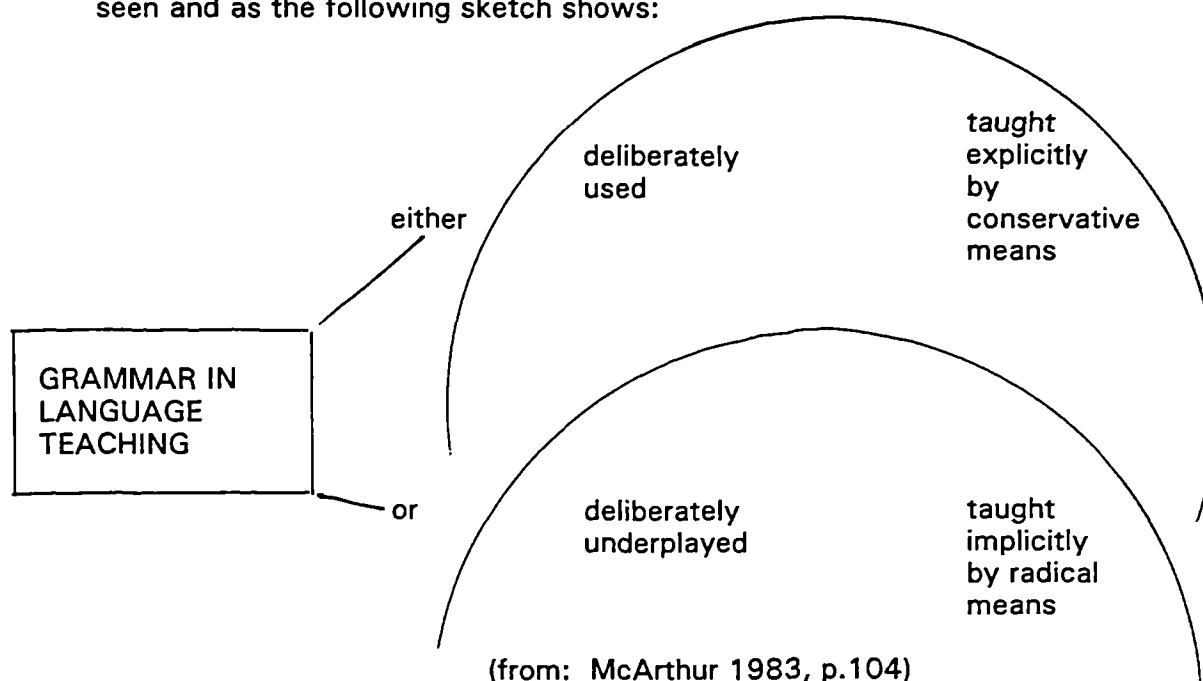
Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1985) advise teachers on three clear options for language teaching which are open to them, thus:

QUESTION : WHAT CAN ONE DO?

1. One can EXPLICITLY call attention to a grammatical feature and even articulate an informally expressed grammatical rule as an instructional aid.
2. One can IMPLICITLY call attention to a grammatical feature through calculated exposure of the learner to crucial pre-selected data.
3. One can choose to IGNORE a grammatical feature altogether, thus neither suppressing it nor giving it prominence.

NB. The timing of the procedures elected for use as grammar reinforcers is an important consideration. The teacher may signpost grammar anticipated in the agenda later or, like the researcher, summarize grammar already covered.

A comment might be focused on the frustrations of discussing an issue in terms of its being a divide (the explicit/implicit divide of L2 grammar teaching), when there is, in fact, no such divide. Having said that, the problem of L2 grammar teaching has not suddenly gone away as though it had never existed. The

problem is indeed there, as perceived, and, if anything, the potential frustrations surrounding it may have increased. It is simply that the black and the white of the situation are not definitive realities! The writers who have been referenced to inform this section, and not least Corder, Krashen, Ellis, Widdowson ... write their views also about the points of merger which occur in the learning/acquisition argument, the points that is, at which explicit knowledge becomes implicit knowledge - and vice versa - through practice, use and insight. Widdowson, Krashen and Roberts mark this convergence point as a point of major development for learners, eg. as the point at which they move from a reproductive to a productive use of language. Halliwell's recent publication (1993) emphasises the modern tendency to understand grammar as pattern. This necessarily implies that grammatical pattern must be readily discernible, whether it is treated by overt or covert means. The implications for an informal grammatical agenda are, however, intensified, as Halliwell herself points out:

"The more we expect the learners to take in pattern indirectly, the greater the need for exposure to that pattern in use. There is a very interesting and frustrating paradox here which is not always acknowledged" (p15).

Even with this understanding of the complexities just described, researchers into FL method, or teachers wishing to rationalise on method, particularly perhaps for the current times, owe it to themselves to keep a sense of perspective about the reality of the teaching and the learning of a language and the place of grammar within this activity. By going back to basics, by recalling that in the first place the LI has already been acquired by the L2 or FL learners and that it has been acquired by natural(istic) means - with the grammar-pattern content not necessarily obvious or discernible! - one may retain or restore one's confidence to pursue the path to the acquisition of L2 particularly, if not FL. As Halliwell reasons :

"We do not set out to learn our mother tongue. We pick it up as we go along, through exposure to it and through the need to use it" (p16).

If immersed in another language community later, individuals would, according to Halliwell's argument, avail themselves of the same instincts and abilities to command the language associated with it. Significantly, in this analogy, the

concepts of 'immersion' and 'language community' are not realities in relation to a classroom setting, with the result that one is left with all the more reason for finding short cuts to knowledge via, for example, exposure to language patterns.

This discussion about the direct and the indirect processes of language learning closes at a point which conveniently opens the section on speculation about reasons for conducting action research in Modern Languages teaching methods and indeed recalls the researcher's personal reasons for setting up her own investigative project. McArthur (1983) explains the situation which provides the spur to many who, in doing this, seek not to change what is unchangeable but rather to make better sense of a situation which has been imposed upon their system :

> "National educational decisions taken at government level affect methodology in a way which may be beyond the individual's power to alter things" (p84).

The National Curriculum in Modern Languages is the educational policy/philosophy which stands at the centre of Halliwell's dialectic on the position of grammar in language teaching. It stands also at the centre of the researcher's own examination of the 'explicit' and 'implicit' teaching modes in theory and in practice. The NC acknowledges both processes but makes it clear in clause 6 of the Non-Statutory Guidance, and in the Programmes of Study, that language acquisition should be possible without the overt teaching of grammar. Through exposure to the target language, through having regular opportunities to use knowledge about language, including linguistic patterns, structures, grammatical features and relationships, through being subjected to activities relevant to their needs, learners should be encouraged and assisted to learn and use the target language (Halliwell p21).

What has been discussed in this section describes the tension contained in the researcher's action research. There is one stage of inquiry yet to be covered before this practical exercise can be analysed, namely : a rationale on the matter of conducting action research in Modern Languages. Such a rationale is offered in Zone IV of this chapter, which now follows.

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2.5   The Review Of The Literature : ZONE IV
Context : Action Research, A Strategy Which Intends To Benefit The Prudent
Practitioner (With Positive Implications For The Classroom Process)

2.5.1   Introduction : the argument surrounding action research

Having investigated matters of language and methodology as a background to her action research, the researcher finds it necessary to examine the actual concept of action research as one which offers benefit to caring and engaged practitioners and their classroom activity.   This rationale is placed as the antecedent to the practical longitudinal study which occupies the prospective sections of this thesis.

2.5.2   The teacher and the action researcher : the existent contention surrounding the notion and the reality of action research

In the Introduction to this thesis (Chapter One), the researcher has explained her personal reasons for doing research, particularly action research, as a matter of importance prior to taking retirement from a long career and as the means of providing an appropriate conclusion to that career.   The sources selected to guide this zone of discussion provide arguments which support an individual's perceived need to conduct inquiries into his or her practice.   These studies have the potential to encourage committed teachers to perceive the importance and benefits of research activity and to take steps to engage with it.

Research may be seen to be carried out in the main by specialist researchers, who work in apparent detachment from the teachers whose classrooms they borrow for their practical research purposes, and who do not always supply feedback into those areas which they have accessed and in which their requirements have been supported (Wells in Peck and Westgate 1994).   Such research is impersonally, scientifically done as "systematic investigation in a field of knowledge, to discover or establish facts or principles" (Collins Large Print Dictionary 1980) and may remain "theoretical", a thing per se, not committed to the process of finding solutions to problems, that is to say : it may be 'pure' research rather than 'applied' (Hutchinson Encyclopedia 1990).

The lack of communication between researchers and teachers, the lack of awareness of research interest and activity on the part of teachers generally, associated with their lack of reading at this level and their lack of related inservice, are factors which all contribute to the frustrations experienced by

practitioners in certain problematic areas of their work. Closer communication between researchers and teachers (on the matters that compel the former to visit and work in classrooms, and on those matters of policy and curriculum which affect subject organisation and delivery on the part of the latter) can surely enhance the function and performance of both parties. Most importantly perhaps, such co-operation can make the subject domain more fertile for learners and therefore, by implication, their prospects for successful education in the subject can be made more positive.

Such a situation might be associated with regret that the lack of research education for teachers and the lack of communication between teachers and researchers imply a loss for the teachers, their subject and their classes, which for this thesis is perhaps more significant than the loss which may be similarly implied for the researchers themselves. To the foregoing ideas on the teaching-researching divide, Widdowson (1990) articulates an attitude which matches the researcher's own :

> "Research is commonly taken to be the specialist and reserved occupation of theorists, an activity which is carried out in detachment from immediacy of actual events and requiring knowledge and expertise of a kind, which only academic intellectuals can legitimately claim to have. The activity yields findings which have the weight of authority and the stamp of truth" (p55).

The failure to return authoritative and truthful findings to classrooms, however, is confirmed by Widdowson as being due to the separation of roles, and the implied inequality of these roles, as alluded to above. He perceives continuing lack of concurrence between researchers and teachers to have obstructed the pedagogic process in that it has impeded a closer working relationship than the existing one. Although the researcher might feature as "the producer of truth" and the language teacher as the "consumer of it", their roles should be understood as carrying equal respect and as implying more equal accountability for the progress of the consumer, whom they both should serve. This accountability is the driving force of the work of teachers. The prevailing situation is depicted by Widdowson as one in which the researcher "remains detached --- from the context of the research" and the teacher teaches on, foregoing the potential benefits of the other's observations and "feels inadequate and undervalued - believing his work lacks rigour" (p55). For

Widdowson the solution is clear : research and practice should be reciprocally dependent; the requirements of relevance and rigour should be reconciled.

The considerations that have so far been discussed are epitomized in Rutherford (1982) who, at the slightly earlier time of writing, perceives researchers as the authors of many assumptions and opinions which need to be "subjected to rigorous empirical investigation" so that ultimately the "practical cart (may be placed) back behind the theoretical horse, where it belongs". This analogy which equates the horse with the researcher and the research and the cart with the teacher and the classroom agenda, makes the researcher's responsibility to the teacher absolute! Finally, McCutcheon (1981) offers a conclusive statement on the role and importance of the researcher as follows:

> "The researcher is a perceptual lens through which observations are made and interpreted, so the researcher profoundly affects what can be understood" (p9).

This is all the more reason, one might argue, why teachers should not only work in tandem with researchers but also themselves become researchers of their own practice! The point made here is reinforced in Walker (1986), specifically in the author's declaration that research has now become an essential element in the teacher's role due to the increasing professionalization of that role (p3).

2.5.3 **Reasons for conducting action research**

Apart from the fact that the would-be researcher may wish to exercise a sense of duty or may have personal reasons for wanting to manage an action research plan, there are also external criteria which make this a sagacious undertaking (Nunan 1989).   Linking in with what has been discussed in the preceding paragraphs of this section, Nunan stresses the importance to teachers and their work of meaningful inservice and subject inquiry, which keeps their experience up-to-date and their expertise fresh and sharp.   For the purposes of integrating theory with practice, he advocates that teachers should (a) learn to self-resource through accessing workshops and (b) adopt an action research orientation to their work. The outlook which supports research on issues affecting the Modern Languages classroom, ie reflective practice, is shared by a growing number of prominent writers, cf Johnstone (1990) and Westgate (1995).

It is on the matter of avoiding professional and intellectual rustication that Widdowson (1990) joins in the encouragement for teachers to go beyond the superficial levels of their brief to examine the familiar phenomena, which are usually taken for granted, and attempt to discover "the abstract categories and connections which underly them" (p55). In accepting that things are not always simply as they appear to be, the teacher "can reformulate the familiar so that it assumes new significance" (ibid). If researchers, here specifically teacher-researchers, observe the laws of validity and agnosticism as far as possible, they should make measurable gain in order to benefit their teaching and their classroom learners (Mackey 1965). As Mackey insists with respect to Modern Languages : "There are three distinct but related fields of inquiry".

These are : 1. LANGUAGE
2. METHOD
3. TEACHING

For Mackey, it makes sense to investigate these areas per se, in order to penetrate to a deeper truth about them or to make contrastive examination of a process with other related processes, in order to discover a specifically defined truth embedded in an initial hypothesis (pvi). This quite general concept is interesting and important for the researcher of this thesis. Indeed, it seems to explain the exercise she has attempted to carry out, in terms of both the historical review of Modern Languages teaching, as well as the action research component itself. Even more definite identification of the researcher's purpose with Mackey's philosophy becomes clear, however, on the specific issue of methodology; for Mackey there is an implied need for research, as soon as teachers take ownership of a 'method' of teaching, for that method is only a relative concept in the teacher's hands. It is, indeed, the teachers' responsibility to become clear on the design and purpose of the method, to familiarise themselves on its characteristic in 'scientific' theory and, through application, inform themselves on its practicability, in order to employ it to the best advantage in the teaching/learning programme for which they are accountable.

As Mackey recalls, and as this thesis so far has shown, controversy and conflict have been associated with method for a long time. Hawkins (1981) has demonstrated the efforts of Comenius in the 17th century to reform the methodological framework of Modern Languages teaching. Moreover, every

Modern Languages historian has focused upon the Great Reform of the 19th century, when the issues and debates surrounding Modern Languages methodology were at a height.   The failure to resolve these contentions of the times is attributed by Mackey to the fact that there was each time a lack of proper definition of the problem, a lack of proper scientific approach to analysis and appraisal of situation, with the result that "the majority of the past experiments were invalid as experiments" and "the findings were invalid as findings" (pix).   This being the case, individual performers' personal efforts (cf Klinghardt 1901) were rendered futile and, accordingly, the cause of a whole reform movement was frustrated.   Armchair theorizing is what research becomes - an empty, impotent, mental exercise - when it is not appropriately, exactly and formally structured and framed.   This is so, whether the research is a collective activity, as in a movement, or a single individual's inquiry.   It is important, furthermore, that action research should never be mistaken for the 'armchair' type.

For Widdowson (1990), classroom teachers are essentially researchers by nature and in immediate response to the latent requirements of their task.   Whether consciously or unconsciously, teachers explore hypothetical principles of pedagogy in their search for a good or a better technique by which to convey the subject information to their pupils.   In this context, teaching is a research activity all the time, and it is the only setting in which the validity of the principles tested may be aligned with the utility of technique (p2).   The teacher, as the person responsible for inducing the learning and for mediating the instructional activities, is also the person who can most efficiently, effectively, consistently and thoroughly test out the techniques and methods that are used to that end (p3).   One could argue (and Cohen and Manion 1990, Howard and Sharp 1986 and Calvert in Peck and Westgate 1994 might support the argument) that few researchers are better placed than the teacher to practise research which implies the involvement of self-defined topics with results tested out in situ.   The teachers can make the time and the conditions available to enable continuity to be given to sustained longitudinal/developmental study and the scope needed for lateral, horizontal and contrastive study.   The features of whole-space, whole-time, whole-opportunity which characterize the teacher's natural situation should be able to support empirical research in a satisfactory way.   Teachers as researchers should, therefore, be taken more seriously and be accorded greater credit and credibility.   In addition, they should take themselves more seriously and they should acknowledge, more confidently, their

value and use as researchers on a more equal level with professional researchers.

Widdowson captures these thoughts when he writes : "Teaching may be defined as a pragmatic process of continuous evaluation" (p73). This dismisses any notion that the activity of teaching is a process which travels in a single straight line, as it were, from teacher to pupil and that it is clinically executed with no problems arising intermittently or ultimately to hinder the process of the learning. The complex persona of the teacher in itself (let alone the complexities generated by the pupils) disallows such a neat and tidy state of affairs. Widdowson joins with Brumfit (1987) on the matter that one person's being a good teacher and another person's being able to understand the teaching do not at all necessarily go hand in hand, for which reason engaged practitioners will seek increased conscious understanding of their craft by conducting some action-in-classroom research.

In brief, the discussion of this present section has attempted to express important reasons why teachers should involve themselves in action research :

*   they are "experts on their own classrooms" (Westgate and Batey 1989) and as such they are ideally placed to run and sustain the activity and to apply it in a real, owned and not borrowed, not unfamiliar setting, in which they can gain from the conditions of whole-time, whole-space, whole-context,
*   they will benefit from the process by earning a better understanding of their craft and adding to their knowledge,
*   they will be enabled to evaluate the true worth of the methods they use and to perfect their actual efficient use of these methods,
*   they will ultimately ensure benefits for their pupils in terms of enhancing their prospects for developing positive learning attitudes; a clearer understanding of the subject, of their task and of their ways of executing it; a good outcome in the final analysis,
*   they may discover something new which could add to others' existing knowledge and possibly influence the subject practice,
*   they will be able at least to find and raise an informed voice at times of imposed policy change.

On the last matter listed above, more may be drawn from Richards (1990), who, in warning that most language teaching methods are given only a short life span due to the frequency of the change in educational trends, seems to imply that appropriate method research would encourage the retention of approved and worthy methods and save them *from being improvidently discarded as the* analogous baby in the pedagogic bathwater. This point is expanded upon in the opening stages of the following section.

2.5.4 Closer clarification of the principle of action research

Among the explanations of 'research' offered by many sources, not least the dictionary and encyclopedia sources already used in this section, Howard and Sharp (1986) explain it as a device which aids in the purpose of reviewing existing knowledge, of describing some situation or problem, of constructing something novel or of furnishing an explanation of an item. Research of this nature is normally done by 'descriptive methods'. This term implies a review of literature and of existing research findings and opinions, in the manner of this present chapter, in which the writer of this thesis has sought to investigate the history of Modern Languages teaching as well as the background and nature of language as a phenomenon. Now, offering an explanation of 'action research', Cohen and Manion (1990) describe this as an "on-the-spot-procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation" (op cit p217), or as "a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination (over an appreciable period of time) of the effects of such intervention" (ibid). It is further explained that action research may be expected to be the following things:

. situational (specific, context-related and symmetrical);
. collaborative (featuring teams of participants working and negotiating together);
. participatory (implying that the researchers themselves take an active role in the agenda and implement and own the research).

Contrary to the popular assumption that research must be associated with extraordinary activities and conducted of necessity by brilliant or outstandingly gifted individuals with an unusual level of commitment, research may be undertaken in reality at any time by any agent who has the competence and the dedication to respond to reasoned thinking, with a view to using methodological processes, in order "to add to one's own body of knowledge and, hopefully, to

that of others, by the discovery of non-trivial facts and insights" (Howard and Sharp 1986). It is emphasized as part of this definition that research, to be valid, must necessarily add to existing knowledge rather than simply lead to a confirmation of it or to a clearer understanding of existing work. Viewed in the simplest way, research is educational as well as investigative (Walker 1985, p194). The writer of this thesis trusts in having addressed all the criteria included in this composite statement of meaning. An appraisal of her work will judge her success in satisfying this aim.

Specifically, this section has been dealt the function of distinguishing 'research' from 'action research' and of describing the nature and mechanics of action research as a matter to be engineered by the teaching practitioner as 'in situ' or 'insider' researcher. Cohen and Manion (1990) and other research specialists, eg Bartholomew (1971), Cope and Gray (1979), Parker (1981), agree that while they would wish to encourage more teachers to commit themselves to research, the practitioner-researcher is not a new concept. The advantages that are implied for the quality of research performed by incumbent practitioners have already been aired in this discussion. Also the collective goal (of improving the practice, of enhancing the understanding of the investigated matter and the gain of new knowledge) has been alluded to. It remains now to study the sequence of the stages by which action research is effected and to examine modes of actively researching which might echo relevantly the researcher's own activity and study.

In claiming to be representative of exacting action research, the researcher's study is LONGITUDINAL, CROSS SECTIONAL and COHORT ANALYTICAL. It follows, therefore, that it is also DEVELOPMENTAL and PROGRESSIVE. These qualities combine in the explanations offered in Cohen and Manion (1990) to identify and depict, within specific contexts, patterns of human growth and development and establish individual- or group-related growth curves. Cohort examination allows the investigator to recognise causal relationships and to perceive changes in certain traits, properties and attitudes of individuals or groupings. Action research structured on the aforementioned dimensions and, in any case, longitudinal in character is costly research every time, in terms of expense, effort and time itself, which is arguably also its principal asset.

The sequence of the procedure in the application of action research, once the researcher has defined the proposal to be treated, may be outlined very simply in the manner located in Cohen and Manion (1990), as follows:

. the hypotheses are formed
. the approach is applied
. the data are collected
. the hypotheses are re-examined
. the principles are modified
. the improvement for the existing practice is perceived and enabled (and the new knowledge assessed)
. the value of the action research is measured in terms of the greater understanding achieved.

However, others have drafted systems to represent the stages of the action research process, not least Kemmis et al (1982) and Elliott (1981), both cited in Walker (1985). In addition, writers like Ebbutt (1982), also in Walker, have outlined an evaluation of the teacher-researcher's relationship with the research task. The two brief descriptions and relating sketches which follow represent these two concepts thus:

A. the interpretations of Kemmis et al and Elliott of action research as a "spiral" or as a "spiralling staircase" respectively, conjoined by the researcher in a hybrid form,

B. the visions of Ebbutt of the research mode occupied by the insider teacher-researcher. Here the 'traditional' and the 'classic' modes have been combined by the researcher, since they seem thus to have more similarity with the style of her own adopted approach. The modes-outline is juxtaposed with a selection of the techniques advocated by research specialists (eg Walker 1985) as being of particular efficacy to the management of action research. In his item also the researcher sees reflected the essence of her personal approach to her own action research enterprise.

A. <u>The sequence of task</u> :

What is happening now
General idea
Reconnaissance
Field
of
Action

Discussing
Negotiating
Exploring opportunities
Assessing possibilities
Examining constraints

General plan

How can I monitor
the effects of my
action?

First action
step

Evaluation

discussing

re-thinking

reflecting

re-planning—

Monitoring

understanding—

learning —

Kemmis et al
(1982)

Elliott (1981)

'Reconnaissance'
(Explain any failure
to implement and
effects)

Revise general
idea

Amend plan
and implement
ACTION STEP 1
ACTION STEP 2
ACTION STEP 3

B(i)

The teacher-researcher and the (insider) activity mode

|

Works in isolation of
own classroom/department
as part of a coherent group
who meet regularly

&

Reflects systematically
about aspects of practice
and own practice. Selects
hypotheses

&

Uses the help of consultant
or supervisor or critical friend

&

Systematically collects data

&

Systematically analyses data
to verify, falsify or
generate hypotheses

&

Writes reports, open to
public critique

&

Systematically measures
improvement by testing
hypotheses at institutional
level. Hopes to contribute
to knowledge of laws

|

INSIDER ACTIVITY PROCESS TEACHER RESEARCHER (TRADITIONAL and (CLASSIC ACTION RESEARCH MODE

B(ii)

Techniques for use in conducting action research

|

AUDIO RECORDINGS

&

VIDEO RECORDINGS

&

QUESTIONNAIRES with open questions closed questions grids, tick boxes etc

&

INTERVIEWS

&

DISCUSSIONS as with individuals small groups large groups

&

SURVEYS

&

DIARIES

&

CHECKLISTS

&

CASE STUDIES

2.5.5 Methodology and its claim on research

Research is not always centred in methodology, it is true, yet that is the issue which directly concerns this thesis. The writers who have been addressed by the researcher for this section nevertheless discuss methodology as a priority issue. McArthur (1983), Richards and Rodgers (1986), among others (echoed throughout in Peck and Westgate 1994) articulate the motivation for and the rationale of methodological research which is arguably unsurpassed in its importance to Modern Languages teaching. The following quotations represent their views respectively and relate them with the need to explore and appraise method, as perceived and discussed in this section :

*   "National educational decisions taken at government level affect methodology in a way which may be beyond the individual's power to deter things" (McArthur p82).

*   "Teaching methods are introduced without their having been seriously studied in terms of curriculum development or as classroom processes. There is seldom an accompanying examination of outcomes of classroom processes" (Richards and Rodgers p166).

Richards and Rodgers advocate that "the quest for the ideal method should be given a more rigorous basis to replace the limitations existing typically" (1986, p166). In acknowledging the truth of this, the researcher sees it as part of the argument for teacher-produced and teacher-applied research, for, whether the individual has the power to determine things or not, to alter things or not — there is surely an argument for investigating the imposed situation to which the writers allude :

*   precisely because it is imposed
*   in order to test it out objectively and understand its strengths and weaknesses, with the needs and requirements of pupils in mind
*   to exploit it to best advantage or
*   to reject it on the evidence of (non)-viability.

Effective classroom practice is at the heart of the matter.   The committed teacher, acting as researcher, is aware of this (more certainly than the visiting specialist researcher from outside, whose objective is to observe and record).

With an unmistakable measure of optimism, Widdowson (1990) writes :

"The idea that teachers should adopt a research perspective in their teaching has been current in educational thinking ―― for a good number of years" (p60).

How much better it would be if that perspective should lead to an ever developing trend for teachers to assert themselves as action researchers in their classrooms and carry out more and more formal, structured classroom research, particularly on important issues, and curtail their susceptibility to suffering compromise by having policy matters imposed upon them. Just such a policy matter is the principle of methodology and the issues associated with it. As has already been discussed, the question of methodology constitutes a prime reason for setting up in-classroom-research, of the kind, indeed, that the researcher herself has undertaken.

Although action research is occasioned by many provocative theories or assumptions, a number of writers (cf Corder, Cook, Brumfit) single out *longitudinal methodological comparison* as being one of the most 'popular' studies for action research in the classroom, even though the findings of such studies are not always necessarily perceived as having a definable, general value, as opposed to a local one. Corder (1973) advises on the local validity of active classroom research as follows :

"The results of the observation of teaching styles, often the basis of a comparative exercise, are, strictly speaking, only valid for the learners, teachers and schools in which the experiment took place" (p108).

The presence of such a local limitation suggests the need for *more* research to be carried out by *more* teachers in *more* classrooms so that *more* findings may be provided as a basis for the assembling of more widely applicable conclusions. In this way, teachers' opinions would be seen to be supported by evidence and their voice would be listened to by policy makers with greater respect. They (teachers) would then systematically place themselves in a position of being able to exercise greater influence and impact than ever before on the processes of policy making and, specifically, they would earn the right to share in the decision on methods and teaching styles which structure their classroom business.

On this subject of methodological inquiry, Cook (1986), drawing from Hatch (1980), emphasizes the responsibility that is shouldered by teachers for the good

of the learners. This responsibility is the burden of teachers - not of external researchers - and it should imply :

* a greater role for teachers in policy making and research
* by definition of (a), a more compelling need for teachers to *consciously* measure and account for their practice.

Cook's rationale on the desirability of method research includes the following major points which are also the 'raison d'être' of the researcher's own research :

1. (a) to *investigate* L2 acquisition, involving matters of pedagogy, psychology and linguistics;

    (b) to *describe* the process of L2 acquisition;
2. to improve language teaching as its applied goal, on the understanding that -
    (a) language teaching is only successful if language learning takes place;
    (b) the more that is known about language learning, the more the quality of the teaching can be improved.

2.5.6 Methodological research : staging the inquiry

(a) Authenticating the experiment

Since teaching by a given method is an area which is unclearly defined, it follows that action research into teaching method may not properly be undertaken unless the conditions and prerequisites for structuring an inquiry are carefully analysed and laid down. Brumfit (1984) suggests the following considerations :

1. One must ensure strict adherence to reality and the depiction of everybody and everything in accordance with actuality.	TRUTH
2. Information, principles, metaphors and "insights" must derive from and must relate with a whole range of sources.	INFORM
3. Perceptions must relate with *THE* TEACHER, *THE* PUPILS, *THE* CLASSROOM.	RELEVANCE
4. One must construct a simple conceptual framework, enabling a spate of language teaching, supporting a specific course (cf GCSE/ National Curriculum) within the requirements of local conditions.	DIRECTION
5. One must accept knowledge and allow for the complexity of the teaching/learning process which houses the experiment.	VARIABLES
6. One must establish proof of legality, appropriateness, worthwhileness, power to convince.	VALIDITY

Once the conditions for an experiment are in place, the experiment itself can go ahead.   Corder (1973) explains what an experiment actually is :

(It is) "in its scientific sense, — the process of testing a hypothesis, usually about some relationship of cause and effect".

155

The variables and validities must be taken into account during the planning and execution of the experiment. In establishing these considerations, Corder presages the ideas already gleaned for this argument from Brumfit, writing later. Corder explains the categories of variables and validities :

A

VARIABLES	DEPENDENT	eg the groups for contrastive study; the teachers participating the materials used
	INDEPENDENT	eg the methodologies
	OTHER	eg motivation; age ranges; intelligence; aptitude; circumstances; status; mix; background; knowledge; experience; expertise; personalities; dynamics etc

B

VALIDITY and ETHICS	CONTENT	VALIDITY
	PREDICTIVE	VALIDITY
	CONCURRENT	VALIDITY
	CONSTRUCT	VALIDITY

Widdowson (1990) emphasizes a further important consideration,

namely OBJECTIVITY which is known by writers and researchers

as a particularly difficult preserve to address.   Edwards and Westgate (1994) relate the problem of objectivity with the complex background of an experiment, in which the matters of variables and validities play a major role.   They refute the possibility of there being any such thing, in real terms, as neutrality or objectivity on the part of the researcher :

> "Any claim to absolute neutrality or objectivity would imply a failure to grasp the inescapability of all these interrelated choices" (p57).

The issue of neutrality/objectivity and the question of the researcher's own personal agnosticism has produced much interest in the action research project, as later chapters evidence.

(b) **Structuring a comparative methodological study**
The many sets of ambiguous results, which are said to have crowned researchers' experiments particularly since the 1950s, confirm that the testing of the comparative effectiveness of methods is inevitably a difficult exercise to carry out with really satisfactory conclusions (Richards and Rodgers 1986 p165).   The following are perhaps the principal reasons why this should be the case :

1. the complex nature of the variables and imponderables which are associated with a contrastive/comparative exercise; - (the researcher's own experiment, as described in Chapter Three, illustrates this point) ...

2. the problems associated with neutrality/objectivity/agnosticism, already referred to above ...

3. the lack of available evidence to prove that teaching methods are indeed the critical variable in successful Modern Languages teaching, a difficulty which has been alluded to earlier in Zone III, in the discussion of 'implicit' and 'explicit' teaching strategies (Kennedy 1973 p68).

Cook (1986) acknowledging that "a typical piece of language research compares two groups of students who have been taught in different ways" (pp8,9),

explains certain essentials concerning the organisation of the research plan and its conversion into an activity. He selects the following essential ingredients :

TIME	→	for a realistically prolonged longitudinal study : weeks, months, years
MONITORING MECHANISMS	→	relating with the teaching and learning processes
DATA and SAMPLES COLLECTION	→	systematized at regular or appropriate intervals in connection with learners' developments
EVALUATION	→	of changes in the learners or; of effectiveness of the teaching styles used

The *practical* activity of research is then further categorised by Cook (1986) in the following stages :

| DESIGN OF THE
TEACHING AGENDA
AND
DELIVERY OF THE
TEACHING AGENDA | → | incorporating the methodological differential (the implanted variable(s)) so that a predetermined |
| | → | agenda is addressed and delivered in order to aid and abet the requirement of objectivity |

+

| OBSERVATION OF LEARNING
AND PERFORMANCE
AND
RECORDING OF LEARNING
AND PERFORMANCE | → | deciding what may be considered 'competence' and 'performance' |
| | → | recording on tape and on video diary studies, pupils' selected work/tests (assess-ment and profiling systems) |

+

| ASSESSMENT
ie OF THE LIVE
VARIABLES OBSERVED
IN THE COURSE OF
THE PRACTICAL EVENT | → | differences in and among the clientèle in aptitude/attitude/ motivation/ability/desire to learn/ attendance or absence from class/ value for subject/prejudice or open-mindedness/group dynamics/extro-version or introversion/reaction to method of individuals and group/ relevance to pupils' place in the world. |

The methodological project, which the researcher herself has undertaken, has been introduced in this thesis as a contrastive/comparative study of currently relevant teaching strategies, from which the analytical observation of outcomes for the learners has implied conclusions about the strategies themselves. This description is articulated more fully in the exposition of the experiment supplied in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. Since this experiment in teaching methods is one which is directly concerned with the issue of teaching grammar - the dialectic having been treated in the previous zone of discussion - it now seems appropriate to inquire into some of the observations made by writers on

precisely this connection of grammar with method and on any influence that this may have with related action research.

(c) **Focusing on grammar in a research study with some reference to examples of action research**

For Rutherford, the fact of focusing on language means focusing on grammar unavoidably.

> " --- language, whatever else it may be, is certainly also the embodiment of a formal system and -- any use to which the language may be put entails the activation of that system. The main issue, however, is how knowledge of the system is to be imparted to the learner. In other words, what does it mean to 'focus' on grammar?"
>
> (Rutherford and Sharwood Smith 1988, p232).

Much has been noted in this thesis so far on the importance of grammar to the production of meaning and, therefore, its significance in human communication. Grammar has been seen to serve the needs of language users. The development of users' competence and performance in understanding and delivering meaning, ie in communication and in creativity generally is related to their awareness and application of grammar. To teach and learn language means understanding and addressing this delicate yet complex matter. The G-I/G-E polemic, which has surrounded the teaching/learning systems throughout time, has been disclosed in Zone I of this chapter and is reiterated now. As part of their promotion of 'consciousness raising' (CR), Rutherford and Sharwood Smith (1988) cite examples of writers who state a case for giving covert or *overt attention to the grammatical* agenda of the language teaching/learning brief, eg :

COVERT	OVERT
Newmark and Reibel (1967)	Lamondelle and Selinker (1978)
	Wilkins (1979)

Corder (1973) perceives the need for an intelligent, balanced approach to grammar, a respectful acknowledgment of it, so to speak, as a vital fact of a

working language and as an item which must be acquired in some quantity by learners and added effectively to their stock of lexis and pronunciation. For Corder, therefore, and for any writer who makes a statement on the desirability of teaching grammar in a certain way - overtly or covertly - the debate which has obsessed this thesis continues. It is continually referred to because in history it has produced persistent conundrum, and insists on being investigated. Corder finds this quite natural :

"We are not born speaking language. We have to acquire it. It is tempting to want to explore how we do this" (p23).

How compelling, therefore, is the need to examine the means by which foreign languages are learnt through analysing the route by which they are taught! This implies immediately a review of the methodological framework (eg G-E/G-I) which works side by side with human psychology as the driving force of the teaching/learning activity. (However, on arriving at the point of concluding her thesis in Chapter Six, the researcher will be seen to have turned this compulsion in upon itself!).

Accordingly, Sharwood Smith (1981) describes the spotlighting of a particular method by those who are keen to advance the methodological argument, eg the 'implicit' method, as akin to "carving a headstone" for that method (p160). There are indeed those who carry the methodological standard and whose experiments enrich knowledge and understanding about methodology and incite *others to follow their example* and promote the inquiry in their turn. Richards (1990) notes the need for such research as the basis and monitor of a methodology, in use or for use in the classroom, where those who work there wish to be clear on :

- learning strategies;
- the bottom up, top down concept;
- the benefits to be gained from self-monitoring and reflecting on practice.

Teachers who do action research insure themselves against accusations of complacency which might come their way if they taught by imposed methods about which they were not adequately informed.

(d) **Action research : real examples of real experience**

At this juncture it is appropriate to look briefly at some information on a number of action research trials carried out in terms of contrastive methodology and informed by their researchers' desire to observe the realities of the inductive and deductive teaching styles. These are models which, as incentives, motivate other researchers, not least the writer of this thesis, to set out their stalls and mobilise their projects, even if, in so doing, they must overcome the potential for dismay which is experienced in an encounter with Brumfit's qualified disclaimer :

"No-one is going to prove, even provisionally, that a particular language procedure is better than another. Research on methodology in teaching is an attempt to understand and to intervene in the process of language teaching" (Brumfit 1984, p23).

Some examples of action research, which in their essence resemble the present researcher's project, in that they involve observation of pupils' performances on a basis of comparative methodology, are set out below:

Researcher	Testing
Mueller (1971)	the effectiveness of two learning models described as - A/L habit theory and cognitive - code learning theory
Levin (1972) (the GUME project, Stockholm)	the effectiveness of two learning models described as - the cognitive approach with native language explanations and implicit grammar delivery or explicit grammar delivery
Krashen (1979)	the effectiveness of two learning models described as - the learned competence approach based on 'focus on form' as against the acquired competence approach in which form is not consciously

|	addressed
Sharwood Smith (1981)	the effectiveness of two learning models described as - the competence/performance distinction in the theory of second language acquisition and the pedagogical grammar hypothesis

It is interesting that the outcome of each of the comparative studies alluded to above denotes superiority of effect for the cognitive code teaching/learning mode as opposed to the rival method which the respective researchers described.   It is also perhaps important that the researchers, in approaching their brief, seem to have declared a degree of personal bias towards one of the two modes of practice which they tested.   The question of the researcher's objectivity or agnosticism has not always been satisfactorily addressed.   The present researcher has borne this in mind whilst anticipating reporting on the development and outcome of her own action research project, described in subsequent chapters.

In addition to the above studies, reference can be made to three further action research projects which were performed in the 1980s with the aim to observe the acquisition of L2, with certain selected groups of learners placed in certain stated learning conditions.   Even though the time allocations, group sizes, age ranges, teaching and research monitoring techniques may have been different among the groups for the studies organised by Felix (1981), Ellis (1984) and Lightbown (1985), in all three cases the focus was on the qualitative study of L2 development in the classrooms concerned.   The researchers in these instances, on investigating certain specific grammar syllabi in particular classroom settings (viz how to form questions, make negatives, use past tense —) seemed to find that :

1. formal grammar was mastered earlier than it would or could have been if the grammar had been only casually approached as an agenda,

2. classroom discourse could avail itself of the same universal process of language and provide similar opportunities for 'Second Language Development' (SLD) as natural(istic) discourse,

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3. no decision could be made whether the rate of development was favourably or adversely affected by the classroom settings.

The points 1 and 2 above bear relevance for this commentary with its focus on the comparative effectiveness of teaching styles. The conclusion drawn from the research experiments referred to above in fact match essentially those drawn from the preceding batch. As has already been commented, all give greater credit to the overt or deductive teaching method. A further insight may be gained by referring to Ellis's experiment (1989), conducted with two adult learners of L2 German. In this instance the brief was to measure the effect upon performance of the two learning styles : studial and experiential, used by a field independent learner and a field dependent learner respectively. Again in this experiment, the field independent learner was seen to outperform the field dependent learner in both the formal and the communicative contexts of the work prescribed.

In all the examples cited here, and in others which are appearing to public attention at this time of writing, cf East's Munich grammar-measuring experiment (1995) which receives attention again later in this thesis (Chapter Five), the results of the comparative exercises have consistently determined the superiority of formal grammar teaching as the mode which most effectively supports and promotes L2 or FL acquisition. Other researchers who might be consulted on effective methodology and who, on the basis of evidence, have concluded that some styles are superior to others include : Rubin (1975); Naiman et al (1978); Reiss (1981); Reiss (1985), all cited in Ellis (1989). The fact that these researchers have been confident enough to state the superiority of a method under review, as a result of their experimentation, is a matter which sets the scene for the present researcher to claim a similar empowerment, justified by the scale of her action research, which exceeds the scale of any of those just described. It will be interesting to determine in later chapters whether the researcher's experiment, which is structured on a similar contrastive study of methods, has evolved a similar result.

The action research, of which the report is now imminent, has been conducted for a representational variety of the reasons suggested in this section. The researcher's reasons, it has been seen, bridge the calls of personal satisfaction and pedagogical enlightenment. In all its aspects, however, her enquiry is fixated with the issues surrounding grammar :

* she has conducted research in order to make an attempt to observe in a practical and empirical way the matter with which she has been occupied as a teacher over the last three to four decades, namely the teaching of languages by a teaching style in which grammar plays a significant role —

* she has conducted research in order to challenge the reform of the National Curriculum on certain issues of its policy, specifically the major unsubstantiated ideal of inductive grammar teaching in association with the principle of target language use in the teaching/learning agenda.

2.5.7 Conclusion to Zone IV : anticipating the action research project

In closing this section of the thesis in anticipation of the action research, the discussion comes full circle and returns to the matter which has been at its crux: the issue of grammar and how it should be taught. The final word here is assigned to this matter since, whatever her reasons for doing her research, the researcher has taken as her brief a particular examination of the use of grammar explanation in its relationship with ML teaching. The context in which her observations have been made is that implied in Rutherford's depiction (1988) of the twin achievement of teaching and learning which is aimed for in terms of the Modern Languages curriculum in modern times, namely:-

1. to try to achieve language as an instrument of communication and not merely as the embodiment of a formal system,

2. to ensure that learners are made aware of the formal system but not so as to become grammarians per se.

It has already been seen in the section on implicit and explicit language (ie grammar) teaching that writers and researchers are divided in their views on the merits and demerits of these methodologies, and often sceptical of the one that they personally do not support. For example, Billows (1961) and Newmark and Reibel (1967), in maintaining that language learning can take place with or without classroom attention to language form, are strong in their support of the explicit and implicit approaches respectively, *even at the early time of their* writing in relation to the currently more urgently expressed debate. By contrast, Wilkins (1979) and Halliwell (1993), writing at later stages and in ever closer anticipation of or involvement with the communicative era, are in common convinced about the importance of grammar in and for ML teaching as well as in and for ML learning. Whichever of the G-E/G-I approaches one uses for the teaching brief, the same queries must be addressed in the preparation of the

agenda, which, as language, essentially focuses on grammar, as witnessed through Corder earlier. Such queries are as follows :

| HOW? |
should one go about the task of providing language knowledge?

| WHAT? |
would be the most effective mode of grammatical contribution to the language learning experience?

| WHAT? |
therefore, should that grammatical contribution be composed of?

| HOW? |
should the decided curriculum be delivered (= by what teaching styles and with what learning strategies in view?)

| WHAT? |
view of grammar is acceptable/advisable? -
* grammar as discrete units?
or grammar as a whole force?
* 'SURFACE GRAMMAR' - to be mastered consciously?
or 'DEEP GRAMMAR' - to be assumed unconsciously?

| WHY? |
are teachers and researchers driven by their concerns? What debt do they owe to the learners?

| WHAT? |
conclusions can be met as a result of enquiry that can be applied for the good of the teaching/ learning process?

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(influenced by Wilkins 1979 and Halliwell 1993).

In addition to the commentaries and argument featured by writers and researchers in the foregoing report, and recalling 'grammar summary' as the principal differentiator of her L2 project, it is interesting for the present researcher's own action investigation that Billows, writing as early as 1961, advocates with specific confidence the use of grammar summary in L1 delivery, precisely for learners of 14, 15, 16 years of age, namely the current GCSE age bracket which is identified in the researcher's action brief. Billows justifies his advocacy of grammar summary on grounds as follows :

*   that it provides a systematic overhaul, to demonstrate that a body of knowledge has been acquired,
*   that it provides a mirror onto errors,
*   that it enables awareness of errors to be used as a means to correction and to learning from the correction process,
*   that it enables the agenda to be clarified.

In her experiment, the researcher has tested the very principle of grammar summary for the effectiveness of which Billows seems persuaded, at his time of writing, in the four claims reported above. However, three and a half decades later, the anomalies, conundrums, issues and problems which have beleaguered the Modern Languages stage throughout the historical inquiry reported in this thesis, continue to mock at writers, investigators and researchers, even when they write at their most emphatic and positive. Once again it becomes clear that the long desired progress in Modern Languages pedagogy is an ever elusive principle, still centred in the issues related with grammar teaching. Halliwell (1993) summarizes the prevailing ambivalence which still characterizes the condition of Modern Languages teaching in current times. In her introductory statements she writes :

"Recent developments in language teaching have left many of us unsure what to do about grammar. Old approaches have been questioned, some would say discredited, and yet so far nothing clear has emerged to replace them. New approaches have been tried out, but some people feel they are not working. Yet without any sense of pattern a foreign language is just a terrifying jumble" (p1).

The researcher's work is seen immediately to address the dilemma alluded to by Halliwell and to employ the new approaches which coincidentally incorporate also the grammar summary discrepancy referred to by Billows. Some explanation of this has been given in Chapter One (Introduction), and a fuller insight is contained in the following sections (Chapters Three and Four) which are committed to the action research itself. The researcher has tried to approach her task in a suitably objective way, although she appreciates the reservations expressed on the reality of objectivity by a number of writers alluded to earlier in this section, not least Brumfit (1984) and Edwards and Westgate (1994). Furthermore, the researcher will attempt to draw meaningful conclusions through her study, although she recalls and acknowledges the reservations expressed directly on the issue of validity relating to localised action research by eg the writers mentioned above and Corder (1973), whose view was quoted earlier in this zone of argument.

In now entering the account of the action research itself, the researcher declares that her system of shaping and executing her experiment was simply that system which is advocated in Mackey (1965) : the straight forward process of defining and applying the plan, the testing of matter and the measuring of results!

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                    3.0  CHAPTER THREE                     │
│                                                           │
│    THE ACTION RESEARCH: AN EXPERIMENT IN MODERN           │
│                                                           │
│           LANGUAGES TEACHING METHODS :                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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3.1   SECTION ONE : Origins And Processes

3.1.1   The genesis of the action research

This study has begun with a conceptual and analytical investigation of the nature and condition of Modern Languages teaching. Central to the study, however, is a localized inquiry into aspects of grammatical teaching, investigating the question of which of two specific and principal strategies of grammar delivery (G-E or G-I) might be perceived from a structured experiment to serve the needs of learners to the best advantage. This action research anatomizes pupils' pursuit of their GCSE course in a foreign language over three years, from September 1991 until their GCSE examination in June 1994. It was foreseen that the practical research exercise (which anticipates and activates the National Curriculum policy on teaching method) would then end with the official inception of the National Curriculum era in Modern Languages, originally envisaged for September 1994. Thus, in the researcher's department, the teachers would have prepared themselves in broad terms to meet with the new order.

Certain assumptions contained in the National Curriculum policy were placed at the centre of the action research which is about to be described. Specifically, conjecture about matters of methodology and grammatical teaching strategies persuaded the researcher to structure her experiment in a way which allowed her to explore and analyse, in a contrastive way, the methodological concepts of G-I (as 'M' for Method) and G-E (as 'M' with grammar summary), as outlined in the Introduction. It was intended that, through a co-ordinated programme of teaching, assessment and profiling, the department might be able to challenge the postulations of the National Curriculum and emerge with a language teaching method within a particular context, demonstrably beneficial for the participant-teachers' purposes as well as more appropriate to the needs and abilities of the learners. The researcher and her Modern Languages department expected to receive a number of benefits from their staging of a long-term, broad-based, ethnological and longitudinal study of specific Modern Languages teaching methods. These benefits were sought in order to enrich classroom action and enlighten the understanding and performance of particular teachers, but also to shed light on long standing questions concerning learning processes and pupils'

attitudes and performances in Modern Languages. This action research experience was seen as a tailored opportunity for the researcher and her colleagues to plan and stage their independent inquiry and to submit themselves to a process of exploration and discovery as a means of establishing *at first hand* some answers to significant matters related to their own and others' Modern Languages practice.

The subsequent sections of this chapter address the principal characteristics of the action research ...

3.1.2 The field and scope of the action research
(Introducing the year group and its ML 'action brief'; determining the settings and the time allocations)

At the beginning of the September term 1991, with certain method-related assumptions of the National Curriculum for Modern Languages in mind, the researcher launched her investigation into the effectiveness of grammar-summary as a device in the teaching of a modern foreign language. The investigation targeted the new intake of Year Nine pupils and proceeded with them throughout their three year course to GCSE in June 1994.

The research was based at the outset upon an overall sample of approximately 200 pupils, who represented the full ability range of the year group. Initially, it concerned itself with the two foreign languages which are the principal languages taught in the department in question, namely French and German (although, in its later stages, it concentrated only on French). About these it must be said that the pupils came to the High School with no experience of German but with two to four years of Middle School French, on the basis of which they were setted for the subject, with a view to continuing as far as possible within the same settings and certainly within the methodological framework, to GCSE.

At the High School, at the time of the experiment, all pupils were required to learn some German as well as French, but those who were selected to occupy the top sets in French were given more time for German than the others and had three years from scratch in which to prepare for GCSE in this second language, if they decided to opt for it later. It was expected that, once established, the researcher's experiment in methodology would run its course with the one foreseeable disruption of the Modern Languages Option, just alluded to, which is made available to pupils towards the end of Year Nine, in preparation for their

examination-related work programmes occupying Years Ten and Eleven. In these final two years to GCSE, the pupils are required typically to learn one foreign language but not necessarily two. This could affect the members of the top sets and their application to both of the languages offered to GCSE standard in the department. The researcher awaited with interest their decisions about their foreign language choices due to be made in May 1992. In the event, the numbers doing French were not seriously affected, whereas German suffered heavy losses. On the matter of setting, the researcher selected the broad representative sample of pupils to populate the experiment in methodology according to the table below. For timetabling purposes at that time, the school divided its clientele into half-year groups, structured in parallel. The researcher established her sets as follows:

Side A of Year 9		No.	No.	Side B of Year 9	
Set One (French)		29-30	29-30	Set One (French)	
Set One (German)		29-30	29-30	SetOne (German)	
Set Two (French)	)50% cross-)section of	26	26	Set Two (French)	)50%)cross-)section
Set Three (French) called here 'Set Two'	)combined)sets.)			Set Three (French) called here 'Set Two'	)of)combined)sets.
Set Four (French)		15	15	Set Four (French)	
Half Totals		99-100	99-100	pupils	
Overall Total		198-200		pupils across the ability range	

It is important to note that the allocations of time given in Year Nine for French and German over the ten day cycle, on which the researcher's school then structured its timetable and its curriculum, imply the fractions shown in the table which follows. This is assembled on a system of sixty (60) periods, each of fifty (50) minutes' duration, contained within a working cycle of two weeks.

Time allocations determined on a two-week work-cycle

Sets One :- French 4 : 60 = $\frac{1}{15}$ or 6.6%	German 2 : 60 = $\frac{1}{30}$ or 3.3%

Sets Two) :-   French 5 : 60 = $\frac{1}{12}$ or 8.8%
)
)
	German 1 : 60 = *$\frac{1}{60}$ or 1.6%

Sets Three) :- French 5 : 60 = $\frac{1}{12}$ or 8.8%	German 1 : 60 = *$\frac{1}{60}$ or 1.6%
Sets Four :- French 2 : 60 = $\frac{1}{30}$ or 3.3%	German 1 : 60 = *$\frac{1}{60}$ or 1.6%

NB.   The items marked * have not been included in the project for investigation by the researcher, because of the small amount of time given to the majority of pupils in all but the two Sets One studying German as a new foreign language.

Summary

The field and scope of the action research may be summarized *on a working week basis* as follows:

SIDE ONE OF YEAR GROUP 9	*Weekly* Time Allocation	SIDE TWO OF YEAR GROUP 9
G-I faction Set One (French) taught by researcher	100 mins	G-E faction Set One (French) taught by researcher
*¹'Set Two' (French) taught by colleague 1a	125 mins	'Set Two' (French) taught by colleague 1b
*²Set Four (French) taught by researcher	50 mins	Set Four (French) taught by researcher
*³Set One (German) taught by colleague 2	50 mins	Set One (German) taught by colleague 2

Some notes to the points asterisked above:

Point *¹ The middle ranks of the year group were organised into two parallel mixed ability sets for the purpose of allowing representation of the whole year group after the decision of one colleague to withhold her participation from the methodological experiment. These two sets are referred to as 'Sets Two',

although they represent a mixture of sets two and three. It is also perhaps important to recall that these sets were managed by "colleagues 1a and 1b", specifically two teachers who occupied a job-share. They decided, for the sake of the project, each to command one side of the contrastive methodology trial and to co-ordinate carefully their joint role in the action.

Point *2 The absorption into the experiment of the two Sets Four completed the researcher's response to her own requirement to involve the entire department in the project. However, in the category of bottom set status, these groups were acknowledged to have serious learning difficulties and attended French for only two sessions out of the optimum six of each 10 day work cycle, therefore they could cover only a part of the course. Consequently they concentrated on two disciplines only, namely Listening and Reading. Traditionally the lowest status groups were taught by the Head of Department. This continued to be the case in the context of the research project, the researcher being the Head of Department.

Point *3 The role of German in the first year of the project has already been noted. It was considered both interesting and relevant, at the outset, to examine the fortunes of the German sets in comparison with French, since the same students were common to both contexts. Their teacher is indicated in the analysis as colleague 2.

3.1.3 The action research rationale
   (a) **Establishing the basic principle as the departmental brief**
        In the Introduction to this thesis it has been observed that National Curriculum documentation for Modern Languages (eg the Proposal of October 1990 and the Non-Statutory Guidance, NCC 1992) argues that there are two methods of delivering grammar, namely (1) an 'active' teaching style, in which grammar remains implicit and is acquired by the learner, through the target language, inferentially, and (2) the same style to which, however, the teacher occasionally adds short items of grammatical summary expressed in English. The document appears to favour the first of these methods and implies some doubt as to whether grammatical summary, characteristic of the second method, is either necessary or measurably beneficial to learners' understanding and management of the foreign language and to their successful performance in it.

The researcher welcomed the opportunity to test this hypothesis through the work of her department! While no great change in classroom practice was

envisaged, the organisation, monitoring and assessment of classroom practice was more consciously structured and co-ordinated, by definition of its being at the heart of a team-based enterprise. This implied a co-operative, whole-department approach to its management and the opportunity for greater cohesion and more efficiency than before. The structure of the experiment was activated by each teacher's declaration of the method which she would prefer to use in her teaching in accordance with the contrastive principle of the methodology underpinning the experiment. As has already been stated in the Introduction to this thesis, both of the teaching strategies used in the action research (G-I and G-E) were equally legitimate and had been in use in schools since the inception of the GCSE, at least.

The Head of Department (the researcher) compiled, directed and refined the work, marked all the many common exercises of all kinds by which pupils' performances were appraised, monitored the progress, processed the information and recorded and published the outcomes across the participant teaching groups.

In the then current situation all Year Nine pupils were required to study French through the course book Tricolore 3 and the top sets learned German with the support of Zickzack 1. The classroom methodology was based in the delivery of lessons through the use of the target language (TL) whenever possible. Ideally, grammar and structures were intended to be taught and learned by implication and inference in foreign language terms and the process of learning and understanding was mostly consolidated through practice. This approach was maintained for the experiment also, but in addition, with certain pupil groups and not others, the feature of grammatical summary, conveyed in English, was used in the teaching. This device, and the scheme of its application, allowed the researcher to determine over time whether the delivery of grammatical summary in English (with notes) would make any really detectable, measurable difference to pupils' performances in using and understanding a foreign language in the context of their school work and whether it would affect pupils' prospects of attaining satisfactory results in their work generally and in the GCSE examination in particular.

The inquiry was a systematic one, made through the skill-related system of assessment, which was inbuilt in each of the language courses used, and ultimately through the GCSE course-and-examination system itself. As has been briefly noted already, the main study was concerned with French and with the

researcher's own teaching classes which were observed throughout in their performance as the principal research groups. These were, in fact, the top and bottom sets for French on each side of the Year Nine. The German context, in which the top sets also worked, were expected to provide some contrastive or comparative evidence of their performance, progress and outlook in that new language both in relation to the methodology trial itself and to their own performances in the two languages. Finally, the teachers and pupils of the middle groups for French, it was anticipated, would work as a check group preserving the equilibrium of the experiment and neutralizing the risk of subjectivity on the part of the researcher, as she proceeded with an investigation which was generated out of her personal interest and enthusiasm. In a situation in which pupils from all the levels of a whole year group were to be observed at work, the requisite number of teachers were, of necessity, involved, as has been noted earlier. This both aided in the control of an agnostic approach on the part of the researcher and implied a restraint on the experiment, since the associate teachers *might be, by nature of their distance from the ownership* of the research, less emotionally involved and therefore arguably more objective, in their attitudes to applying the research project in practice.

In keeping with the nature of her action research experiment, the researcher initially required three responses from her colleagues in association with their *classroom work:*

(1) that they should use the target language as the natural vehicle for their lessons, excluding the use of English, in the spirit of the NC
(2) that they should observe, in the strictest and most loyal terms, the methodological formula decided upon, namely 'M' and 'M' + X (or G-I and G-E).
(3) that in attending the departmental meetings scheduled by the school's management, they should offer feedback and discussion on the realities of these structured and closely defined, constrained and self-contained teaching approaches.

As the head of the department, the researcher felt entitled to make such requirements about the methods used in the department's classrooms. Those stated above, although they allowed no deviation, were the methods in favour in current times. Even without applying them in a research project, the prescribed exploratory and thought-provoking exercise could be only of benefit to the

department as a precursor to the official National Curriculum (and, co-incidentally, to the school's major inspection by OFSTED, which was imminent!).

For the purpose of facilitating the next section of this discussion, the department's arrangement for the teaching content of the research project may be summarized as follows:

Side A of Year 9	Staff	Staff	Side B of Year 9
Set One French	researcher	researcher	Set One French
Set One German	teacher 2	teacher 2	Set One German
Set Two French	teacher 1a*	teacher 1b*	Set Two French
Set Four French	researcher	researcher	Set Four French

It may be read that the two different sides of the Year group represented the two different sides of the experiment in methodology. The above table shows that of the four teachers who were involved with the experiment, two were committed to both aspects of it. The teachers whose references are marked with an asterisk were the job-share colleagues, alluded to earlier, who were used as one full teacher. In the spirit of the action research one of the pair taught French with grammar summary and her partner used the grammar-implicit approach. The two approaches are frequently referred to at the stages of this report as G-I (for 'Grammar Implicit') and G-E (for 'Grammar Explicit'). Otherwise the terms 'M' or M1 (denoting basic method) and 'M'+X or M2 (denoting basic method with the addition of grammar summary in English) are used.

(b) **Elaboration Of The Fundamental Departmental Brief**
(i) **The method to be used**
The department's experimental teaching method has already been alluded to in Chapter I of this thesis and more immediately in this present report. Even so, there may be reason to clarify it again here, in the same vein as it was clarified among the teachers prior to their inaugurating a cohesive approach to their classroom work. The following principles were confirmed:

(1) Both of the teaching approaches were ethically sound and orthodox in that they have been widely used in schools. This extended action research investigates them on this scale, contrastively, for the first time, however.
(2) All groups would be taught as far as possible in the target language.

(3) G-I groups would receive grammar information by implication - and without disrupting the use of the foreign language. Their learning and their experience of grammar would mature by application, by analogy and through practice. If some real explanation became necessary, this should be given in the target language.

NB! **The teaching team acknowledged this as their base method, calling it 'M'.**

(4) G-E groups, though for the most part also taught in the foreign language by the method 'M', would, in addition, receive English summarizing statements on all grammar points which they encountered and an end of unit lesson set aside for the purpose of consolidating the grammatical agenda by revising it explicitly in English.

NB! **The base method with this addendum of grammatical summary is described as 'M' + X.**

(5) By contrast, the end of unit lesson, described in iii) above, would allow the G-I groups the opportunity to consolidate their experience of grammar through application, practice and exploitation with the continued use of the foreign language.

(6) As an extension of their exposure to 'M' + X, G-E groups would write grammar-notes in English in their exercise books.

(7) G-I groups would not make grammar notes.

(8) G-E groups would be made aware of the grammatical summaries which the course-books make available to pupils. They would be encouraged to reference these as a further resource to aid their learning and revision.

(9) G-I groups, on the other hand, would not be made aware of this resource by their teachers, although it is understood that intelligent pupils explore their textbooks and use their familiarity with them to advantage. (Indeed, that is the very philosophy behind the principle of equipping pupils with such resources!). It must be accepted that pupils of the G-I groups, since they command the same textbook equipment as their G-E counterparts, are in a position to extract some explicit information from the grammar summaries which the course-books contain and which they demonstrate for their readers in the English language. For example, the contents-pages of Tricolore 3 expose the nature and availability of the grammatical matter treated in the Units. In addition, each Unit provides a final summary page - 'Sommaire' - on which all of the grammatical content of the main unit is revised, explicitly, in English, to the benefit of all inquiring pupils! The course-book Zickzack offers similar benefits to learners of German, whether they follow the G-I or the G-E principle of language pursuit determined by this experiment.

The description of the action research may be understood more immediately through the aid of the following formulating summary:

Side One of Year Group 9	Side Two of Year Group 9
implicit grammar teaching within an agenda delivered fully in the target language contrasted with	implicit grammar teaching and target language agenda-delivery plus explicit grammar explanations in English (ie. factor X)

Condensed to:

METHOD (M1) contrasted with	METHOD + X (M2)

Symbols to be used in this report:

G - I Grammar Implicit 'M' (M1) contrasted with	G - E Grammar Explicit 'M'+X (M2)

(ii) **The researcher's means of access to the lessons held**

The teachers involved in the experiment agreed that recordings on audio-cassette should be made at regular intervals in order that the dual methodology might be monitored and so that certain things could be learned from the inquiry, not least the following:

(a) how to improve the classroom strategies for the sake of the experiment itself,

(b) how the contrastive activity proceeded and what outcomes emerged,

(c) how to sustain good teaching practice as a priority and ensure that all pupils received full opportunity to learn and make progress, both generally and in the particular context of the GCSE,

(d) how each teacher might discover something more about the processes of teaching in general, of teaching by (a) specific method(s) (ie National Curriculum-related) and of herself as a teacher,

(e) how the department collectively might learn more about the psychology involved in Modern Languages practice to the benefit of pupils, teachers and outcomes.

Recordings would be made at two levels of the business in hand: (1) of the teachers discussing their impressions of their activity and their suggestions for improvements, stage by stage and (2) of the teachers delivering lessons with grammar content. The first type of recording would be made at least once in the course of a half-term's work. The teachers' discussion would bridge the work just completed in a unit and the work of the new unit to be begun. Problems and difficulties inherent in the contrasting teaching styles would be considered. The grammar points which were to feature in relation to the units would be identified, eg. the PERFECT TENSE, initially, for French. The recordings of lessons would demonstrate in 'M' or 'M'+X teaching modes the grammar areas which the teachers had agreed upon and which were important to both the pupils' agenda and to the experiment. Lessons with a grammatical content would be recorded as they arose. A fuller assay of the teaching methods in use in the action research occupies the later stages of this chapter in partnership with a survey of teachers' and pupils' attitudes.

(iii) **Techniques used to structure and assist the research**

The techniques related with this research may be listed in casual order as follows:

(1) The teachers' understanding and acceptance of the methodological proposal and of the three year time-scale, their expressed willingness to participate in the action and the approval given to the activity by the school's management provided the project with its license to start.

(2) As already noted, the audio-recording of all lessons featuring the two approaches to grammar delivery, also the audio-recordings of all discussions were made available to the researcher.

(3a) The written recording in group diary form of the matters of agenda, the progress made and the problems encountered by the individuals or the groups working on the experiment were constantly accessed.

(3b) Teachers' diaries reflecting the planned agendas, specifically the grammatical components and the teachers' reflections and shared insights, their feedback,

their comments out of experience and their suggestions for the way ahead informed the work at every stage.

(4) Teachers' and pupils' responses to regularly applied questionnaires explored matters relating to the action research principles and uncovered the attitudes, outlooks and reactions of the participants.

(5) The application of half-termly assessment and profiling routines (in line with the existing departmental policy) monitored pupils' progress, culminating in the final analysis of the GCSE. For the purposes of the research, and by nature of its having grammar as its principal focus, all assessment was determined with a dual function:

(a)   to establish competence results comparatively

(b)   to count successful grammar use comparatively.

(6) The "open door" (= the continuous access to the researcher, in order to keep her appraised of problems and difficulties generated by the research directives and to enable her to provide support and guidance) was perceived as being of paramount importance, since at no time should the researcher's personal ambition to carry out research supersede her commitment as Head of Modern Languages in the school and her responsibilities to the welfare and needs of the teachers and the pupils in her charge. The examination work, which was the actual brief for which she and her colleagues were professionally accountable, should always be attended to as the department's most important priority.

(7) Continuity in matters of agenda, content of lessons and assessment, plans for co-ordination in marking, marking schemes and the actual marking itself, effected through the research, were accepted by the researcher as her personal brief, ie. she drew up the plans of action and did all the principal marking across the groups throughout the duration of the collaborative project.

(8) Charts were designed and put to use providing for the need to profile, to record, to illustrate statements, to clarify appraisals, pursuits, plannings and overviews.

(9) A full range of communication with the researcher was enabled via a sustained diary and a rigorous system of 'notes to self'. Such diaries enabled the researcher to maintain her objectives and control her research plan.

(10) Regular communication with the University research-tutor, both in terms of meetings and of postal exchange proved invaluable as a means of keeping the researcher's outlook relevant, realistic and accountable but of enriching the process also.

3.1.4 The benefits gained by the Modern Languages Department through effecting methodological action research

A number of the benefits gained from the research have been alluded to intermittently in the discussion so far. However, for the sake of convenience they may be recalled briefly and put with a fuller list, as follows:

1. The department was able to consolidate its approach to classroom practice. The question of the place and effect of grammar in the teaching agenda could be objectively appraised and proper conclusions won.

2. The department was able to function more cohesively and more efficiently than before. This was to the benefit of the students, of the teachers, of the departmental industry and of the quality of the agenda, of the process by which it was delivered and of the end-product.

3. The department's teachers were given the opportunity to reflect consciously on their personal teaching performance and, through appraisal of this and observation of the teaching of colleagues, could strengthen and adjust their practice appropriately.

4. The department was able to prepare its ground well for the National Curriculum in Modern Languages, having already put its main principles into practice. Important lessons were learned for the start of the new structure, instead of still awaiting the department's attention at the formal inception of the National Curriculum in Modern Languages, Key Stage 3, in 1994 (deferred to 1995).

5. The department was able to operate a much more structured, detailed and co-ordinated system of assessment than hitherto. This was to the benefit of all.

6. The department was able actively, formally and seriously to test out advocated and imposed teaching approaches and form legitimate conclusions based on evidence about their value and effectiveness per se as well as in comparison with each other. In this way the department was able to equip itself with an informed voice, ie. an opinion based on trial and evidence, which it would be able to use in any relevant debate on methodology.

7. The department became able to offer a contribution to the historically protracted debate on methodology in Modern Languages pedagogy and specifically to the issue of grammar teaching.

8. In focusing close attention on teaching styles, in using a broad range of techniques to monitor teachers' and particularly pupils' performances, and quite particularly in providing a collective and powerful mechanism for feedback (lesson recordings, discussion recordings, interviews and questionnaires ...), the department opened a vista onto the reality of its pupils as learners, so enabling a

much improved understanding of what was viable or not viable for the learner and accessing a way into the ML learner's mind.

3.1.5 The problems which beset the research project over the course of its three year duration

Difficulties arose at the start to affect and influence the researcher's intention to put into action, sustain and maintain her methodological experiment. Her plan has been stated as a whole-school project, in its way, envisaging, therefore, as its base the complete Year Nine intake of 1991, with the full departmental staff of five ML teachers at work on it. It is important to envisage the research plan as being comprised of two stages:

1. an outer 'physical' plan, namely the embodiment stage and
2. the inner 'material' plan, namely the content stage.

The experiment set out with the expectation that, once the base was established, there would be a linear movement forward through the three years of longitudinal activity, which was foreseen as an undisturbed exploration. Accordingly, the outer and the inner forms of the exercise should remain unchanged. However, a number of disruptions occurred in contradiction to this assumption and a pattern of erosion set in, affecting both the inner and the outer stages of the enterprise.

1. Difficulties affecting the physical plan
(i) The withdrawal of one teacher

As already mentioned, one teacher was evidently unwilling to take part in the experiment. Her interpreted rejection had to be responded to and the act of excusing the teacher from the exercise in methodology on its own had the effect of disrupting it in its preliminary stage. The collegiate ethic and the intended broad based approach to the research project suffered as a result of this disappointing circumstance in a number of ways:

* It fractured the cohesive, whole staff involvement which had been desired
* It denied the participation of the full year group of pupils as two parallel classes (one on each side of the timetable arrangement) were of necessity allocated to that teacher, who was required by the school's timetable-manager to take a share of Year Nine teaching.

* It meant that two classes of learners learned their ML (French) by methods which were out of synchronisation or out of character with those used in the research classes.

* It necessitated the implementation of strategies to overcome the embarrassment, namely the decision to mix the abilities of the middle status sets (sets 2 and 3) in order to save the ethic of the research by keeping all learners' abilities represented.

(ii)   **The short-term involvement of German**

The research began with an important role given to German for reasons involving the principle of comparing and contrasting the performances of the top set learners between their two foreign languages, French and German. German held its place and interest in the research arena for only the first year of the longitudinal study, however, since, as an option subject on the school's curriculum for Years Ten and Eleven, it was made available to the end-of-Year Nine clients and received only sufficient uptake to form a single class of Germanists. This accordingly dismantled the contrastive study of German at the end of Year Nine.

(iii)   **The brief involvement of the Sets Four**

As has been seen in Chapter I, the two bottom sets of the Year Group, the Sets Four, were incorporated into the methodological experiment, even though they attended French for only one lesson a week and concentrated, therefore, on only the comprehension skills. The extent to which their contribution was interesting and was valued is made clear in later chapters which focus on the results of the work done. It was, indeed, regrettable that these sets were removed from their part in the research agenda as a result of timetabling policies, which disallowed their further pursuit of French with the researcher in their post-Year 9 education.

2.   **Difficulties affecting the internal content-plan**

(i)   **Deciding the two top sets**

At the outset the school could not equip the researcher with any data which would diagnose ability and aptitude. No "scientific" tests of any kind had been conducted with the year group prior to its intake into the High School. The system of NFER, used in the past as one of a number of aids to the task of classifying the variety of abilities and of setting pupils appropriately, was no longer available as an option. Therefore for the first year ever, there was no objective evidence in existence at the time which could have supported the

researcher's attempts to match *her sets appropriately and precisely and to have* any real knowledge of their members' abilities and aptitudes. In particular, the top sets posed the problem. It was important to determine the top set calibre and to have the two top sets across the timetable-divide well matched for the comparative exercise awaiting them. The bottom sets were decided by the school's Special Needs Organiser, so that they were imposed upon departments, as ready-made sets, as it were. (However, in their cases also, no objective evidence of abilities was made available to the researcher). Once the top and bottom sets were found, the middle range would be what was left over. Of that, a balanced half of the mix would be used for the experiment, as has previously been explained. Ultimately, the two all important top sets were determined by the following means:

*   discussion with the pyramid's Middle School French teachers and careful reference to Middle School French assessment;

*   careful reference to the English settings which were decided through discussion with the Middle Schools and on the evidence of tests negotiated within the pyramid;

*   collusion with the Mathematics department which had decided upon its settings for Year Nine via the same mechanisms as those used in English;

*   observation of the decisions made on settings by the High School's Science department.

Ultimately the composition of the top French sets was found to be generally satisfactory. Both the Sets One and 'Sets Two' were kept intact throughout their life with the project, with the exception of only some six cases of pupils, who moved sets at the end of Year Nine or Year Ten, because they were not working appropriately for the sets which first contained them. They remained within their original 'factions', however, ie. they adhered to the same method throughout.

(ii)   **The calibre of the Year Group**
The evidence which accompanied the intake's transfer *from the* Middle Schools and characterized the attainment and attitude of the year group in question, attested coincidentally to the High School's receiving a problematic intake of pupils in September 1991. The pessimism surrounding them did not prove incorrect, as their performances over the three years of their main schooling to GCSE showed, and as the GCSE results themselves in general ultimately corroborated. In attitude they were rejectionist in terms of any kind of imposed

discipline. In subject specifics this meant that it was very difficult for teachers to motivate them to do justice to their learning agenda. For the purposes of this methodological experiment, the researcher had to require herself to work objectively with the year group, aware that the preceding intake or the succeeding one - or any other year group at all - would arguably have both reacted differently to the exercise which was performed and generated different score-results throughout. Yet it is not appropriate to speculate what the ultimate broad conclusions would have been in the methodological challenge of 'M' contrasted with 'M' + X in different circumstances to those which were available.

(iii) <u>Understanding and effecting the method: 'M'</u>

Common to both sides of the methodological experiment, 'M' (Method), delivered in the target language with the grammar kept implicit, turned out to be a most obdurate difficulty (in particular for the teachers), a much greater problem in practice than it was in theory, as the lesson descriptions demonstrate (see the later sections of this chapter). In the teachers' discussion also, again analysed later, the talk often revolved around the method (M) and specifically around the difficulty of conveying a grammatical agenda by implicit means. Certain aspects of grammar were found to be more problematic than others. Moreover, the teachers had different visions of 'M' and differing opinions and experiences of what was relatively problem-free and what was problem-bound within the context of 'M'. More will be written on this matter at later stages but it may be emphasized here that the concept of implicit grammar delivery had to undergo frequent re-appraisal and some flexibility or compromise had to be allowed, as will be noted in the following paragraphs and, in greater depth, in the subsequent chapter sections.

(iv) <u>The difficulties of defining and transacting G-I in the classroom</u>

The teaching methods embracing G-E and G-I have been defined at intervals throughout this thesis, as features of both the historical review of Modern Languages teaching and also of the researcher's own action research in contrastive teaching modes. The concept was not an easy one to command and control, and the difficulties stemmed for the most part from the teachers' interpretations of 'M', which was the method common to both G-I ('M' itself) and G-E, which was 'M' + X. The factor X was not regarded as a problem or a threat to the teachers who used G-E. As the factor which added grammar summary within G-E or to 'M', it was regarded as a methodological 'insurance' or

'investment', and it was applied with a sense of optimism.

At this point in the discussion of the teaching strategies, it is relevant to disclose that the teachers' first difficulty in handling 'M' (common to both G-I and G-E) was encountered in practice as soon as the Year Nine lessons began and the first grammatical item intruded into the activity. Whereas after discussions teachers had professed to be clear on the nature of 'M' and on how it should be delivered, it quickly became obvious that it was a concept which could be occasioned more readily in theory than in practice. Teachers' discussions, studied later in this chapter, reveal their frustrations over this matter. Furthermore, an analysis of representative lessons transcribed from audio recordings, demonstrates the confusion and inconsistencies which persisted in teachers' perceptions of the two principles of G-I and G-E, which together motivated this research and formed the base and basis of its corporeality and its structure.

In certain instances the teaching modes were used interchangeably. Particularly the implicit mode (G-I which was 'M') became indistinguishable from its experiment partner (G-E), as will be evident in the later discussions. The extent to which such convergence affects the insights obtained from the research will be addressed again in later stages of this chapter and will influence also chapters four and five.

It was emphasized many times throughout the action research and it is repeated again here: the principles employed in the researcher's experiment for the delivery of any grammatical agenda were those defined in the National Curriculum for Modern Languages, and defined at stages of this thesis as a) G-I ('M'), language taught holistically through its own medium with the grammar implied as an integrated component and not disclosed but flexibly reinforced through appropriate exercises and b) G-E ('M'+X) which conceded the use of brief grammar summary in English as a means of reinforcing and consolidating the learning of grammatical matter. This whole conceptualisation is given further attention in the coming sections of this present chapter and again later in Chapter Five having already been implied in the discussion of teaching methods in Chapter Two.

(v) <u>The continuing difficulties with 'M' and their effect upon the attitudes of teachers and learners, with implications for the research plan</u>
As a result of the problem with implicit grammar teaching, outlined above, and in

the light of the pupils' generally unsatisfactory attitudes to learning, as described earlier also, a large amount of tension was absorbed into the action research. This occurred particularly in the middle ranks, where colleagues 1a and 1b were in charge of the two parallel 'Sets Two'. Eighteen months into the project, specifically in the February of 1993 at the point of the half-term, due to their suffering a loss of confidence in 'M' and G-I and a loss of confidence in their abilities to teach by that prescription, colleagues 1a and 1b informed the researcher that they were unable to proceed with the exercise. They claimed that it was proving to be stressful in every way and was now out of the reach of the coping powers of themselves and of their pupils. Concerned to restore their teaching/learning programme to its priority responsibility, namely the learners' GCSE-related needs and the GCSE examination-target, the researcher felt obliged to release the teachers and the classes concerned from their role in the action research.

Implied in this episode of loss, and in other episodes which are alluded to in this chapter, is a cautionary reminder to action researchers who have ownership of the project and rely on others to make a contribution to the practical running of it: they must not be surprised if the others' effort breaks down for whatever reason and produces setback. For such assistants are not bonded with the research and do not share the principal researcher's reason for doing it, enthusiasm for it and commitment to it. Therefore they are not motivated to remain with it at all costs.

3.1.6 The sequential scheme of the action research

On the University's acceptance of the research proposal (October 1991) the researcher undertook the following steps towards putting her action research plan into practice.

1. Paving the way

The researcher informed the Headteacher of her desire to do subject-related research in the Modern Languages department and sought his permission to go ahead with the plan, which she submitted for his attention, explaining also the benefits to be gained by the department from doing the exercise.

(i) She held the first of a series of meetings (see Section 3.3 of this chapter) with her colleagues in the ML department, explaining

- the nature of the research brief

- the requirements and demands which would be made on the participants
- the implied preparation for the imminent National Curriculum
- the advantages and benefits which would be on offer to the department as a result of its involvement with the research.

(ii) She conducted further meetings with ML colleagues in which the following situations were determined - (these are pursued in some relevant detail in later paragraphs) :-

- the organisation of the Year group into sets
- the placing of teachers with teaching groups
- the prescription of   a) a common teaching/learning agenda
                                 b) a common assessment/profiling principle
- the adoption of and adherence to the designed methodologies
- the satisfying of the research criteria according to the researcher's plan.
- the calendar for a system of meetings, enabling regular discussion of the practical exercise.

(iii) In the first week of teaching, in September 1991, the teaching groups were given a brief explanation of the teaching/learning style by which each one would cover its ML syllabus. This statement was included in a descriptive policy note to parents, which is normally dictated into pupils' exercise books at the beginning of each new academic year and referred to parents for their attention and signature. This means that pupils and parents were given simple cognizance of the business in hand.

(iv) Pupils and parents were informed that the progress made in ML would be compared with that made in some other commonly pursued subjects also, such as English, Maths and Science, as a means to gaining a better understanding of pupils' academic potential and to providing some benefit to their prospects in Modern Languages. In fact, the pupils' performances in English and Maths were studied in Year 10 in comparison with their performance in French, after enlisting the co-operation of the two relevant departments, which supplied some informal information based on internal assessment processes. In Year 11, the researcher of her own volition applied the two top sets (which were by that time the experiment's remaining cohorts) to formal (commercial) testing procedures in English and Maths. Ultimately she used the GCSE results of July 1994 for English Language, English Literature, Maths and Science to make the final comparative

study of performance as a route to producing some useful argument in the matters of the performance and results in French.

2. **Shaping the project**

With the defined methodology of 'M' versus 'M'+X as its purpose, and catering for ML classes labelled according to the way in which they were going to receive the foreign grammar, the project started as has already been discussed with a broad base scanning the whole Year 9 intake of 1991, thus:

Set One French German	'Set Two' 'French'	Set Four French	Set One French German	'Set Two' French	Set Four French

Method 'M'   Method 'M' + X
Classes G-I   Classes G-E

(i) As has earlier been seen, by the beginning of Year 10 and for the duration of half of the academic year until the end of February 1993, due to reasons beyond her control, the researcher found herself dealing with a considerably contracted experiment, in which certain elements were irretrievably lost. The situation is sketched as follows:

Year 10 - Phase A (Sept-Feb)

Set One French	'Set Two' French	Set One French	'Set Two' French

Method 'M'   Method 'M' + X
Classes G-I   Classes G-E

(ii) For the second half of the Year 10, ie. March to July, and for the whole of Year 11 the experiment contracted even more, with the withdrawal of the 'Sets Two', as described earlier. This left the researcher quite dramatically alone with her two principal classes and her contrastive methodological formula, thus:

Year 10 Phase B March to July and Year 11	SET ONE FRENCH Method 'M' Class G-I	SET ONE FRENCH Method 'M'+X Class G-E

(iii) Taking into account these stages of the action research the whole case development may be seen to have assumed a triangular shape. The contrastive work continued in the final phase of the project by the researcher and the two top French sets now forms the apex to this shape and becomes the climax of the experiment itself, thus:

The structure of the action research showing time in relation to physical shrinkage

1 ½ years — The research experiment with Year 10 (Year 11) March 1993 to July 1994 2 participant sets (French)

½ year — The experiment with Year 10 September 1992 to February 1993 4 participant sets (French)

1 year — The research experiment with year 9 (September 1991 to July 1992) 8 participant sets: 6 (French); 2 (German)
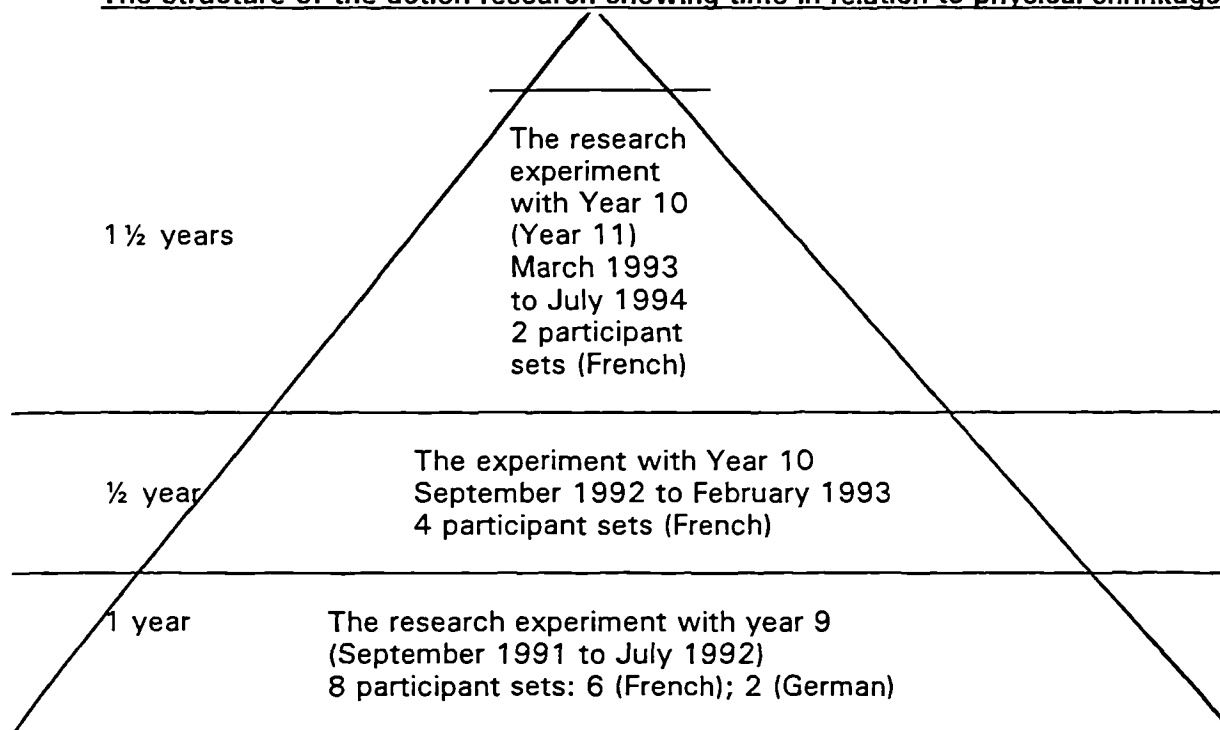
3.1.7 **The classroom agenda used over the three years of the action research**

(a) **Year 9: French (entire year group) and German (2 top sets)**

This aspect of the project involved both FRENCH (100 minutes per week with sets one: 125 minutes per week with Sets 'Two', 50 minutes per week with Sets Four) and GERMAN (50 minutes per week with Sets One). The course-books which were used were TRICOLORE 3 and ZICKZACK 1 respectively. The table which follows denotes the grammatical (or more exactly syntactic) agenda which was covered sequentially as the practice proceeded through the units of study which structured the courses in use. As can be seen, the major aim of the grammar in French was to continue the syllabus taught for two years in the Middle Schools beforehand and focus on verbs and tenses, before including some work on adjectives and pronouns. German required a broader and more general agenda to be delivered in order to introduce the basics of this new subject.

TRICOLORE 3 (Units 1-5)		ZICKZACK 1 (Units 1-5)	
Unit one	*the perfect tense *the verb 'devoir' *the negatives.	Unit one	*1st and 2nd persons singular of verbs sein, heiBen, kommen, wohnen (PRESENT), *Use of 'man' (implied passive).
Unit two	*the future tense *consolidation of the perfect and present tenses so that TIME becomes a concept.	Unit two	*the complete present tense verb: haben *3rd person sing. of above verbs *definite article and gender *indefinite article in nominative and accusative ie. as subject and direct object.
Unit three	*revision of the complete perfect tense *revision of the complete future tense *revision of the present tense *consolidation for tense (time) discrimination purposes *direct object pronouns *indirect object pronouns *position and sequence of pronouns	Unit three	*1st and 2nd persons plural (implying 3rd person also) of verbs in the present tense. *separable verbs *use of möchte
Unit four	*pronouns, direct and indirect *position and sequence of pronouns *adjectives (casually)	Unit four	*question forms *word order-inversion *present tense of the irregular verbs 'essen' and 'sprechen'.
Unit five	*the imperfect tense *differentiating the roles of the imperfect and the perfect tenses *revision and consolidation of the major tenses: present, perfect, future, imperfect *adjectival agreement *'qui' and 'que'. (relative pronouns) end of course-stage	Unit five	*expressions of time *the date; the use of 'im'/'am' with time *'will' + infinitive = modal verbs and word order *nouns with different gender forms, therefore different meanings. end of course-stage

(b) **Year 10: French** with the Sets One and 'Two'. (French with the Sets Four and German with the Sets One have by this time been excluded from the 'options' timetable, according to the school's curriculum policy). All groups had a time allocation of 150 minutes per week. The 'Sets Two' continued their involvement until February 1993. The course-book was TRICOLORE 4A; the agenda continued

and refined that of the previous year and introduced some grammatical idiom in addition.

Units (1-5)	TRICOLORE 4A
Unit one	*forming questions (several ways) *adjectival agreements
Unit two	*perfect tense (revised and extended))
Unit three	*imperfect tense (revised and extended)) concept of tenses) (TIME) consolidated
Unit four	*future tense (revised and extended)) *reflexive verbs)
Unit five	*venir de + infinitive *aller + infinitive *direct and indirect object pronouns and word order
	end of course-stage

(c) **Year 11: French with the two Sets One**. (The 'Sets Two' have withdrawn their participation in the methodological experiment by this time). The course-book was TRICOLORE 4B and the grammatical agenda revised that of the previous two years, which targeted verbs and tenses and introduced sundries which complete the grammatical syllabus at this level:-

Units (6-10)	TRICOLORE 4B
Unit six	*jouer à; jouer de (verb idiom) *plus; le plus) comparatives moins; le moins) and superlatives *meilleur; mieux: better, best as adjective or adverb. * emphatic pronouns: moi, toi etc * revision of the past tenses
Unit seven	*idiomatic use of reflexible verbs, as in 'to hurt oneself: implication for the reflexive pronoun ... *'en' and present participle *reported speech (only casually) *'qui', 'que', 'dont': relative pronouns *quel etc.: interrogative adjectives *lequel etc.: interrogative pronouns

Unit eight	*ce, cet, cette, ces: demonstrative adjectives including -ci, -là *celui, celle, ceux, demonstrative pronouns, including -ci, -là *revision of interrogatives *the possessives: mon, ma, mes, le mien, etc. *the pluperfect tense.
Unit nine	*verbs separated by 'à' or 'de' *the conditional tense
Unit ten	*revision of all grammar contained in the course TRICOLORE
	end of course-stage: end of course

The grammatical agendas, outlined above, were adhered to in a co-ordinated way and consistently by the team of teachers involved in the stages of the methodological experiment.

3.1.8 The system of assessment used over the three years of the action research

(i) **Formal assessment structured on external materials**

(a) **In Year Nine**

In order that the assessment of pupils' work and progress should be seen to reflect the spirit of the National Curriculum (DES 1990 and 1992) and not only to monitor performance but also to contribute to it, and to enhance, extend and consolidate the learning, it was agreed that the assessment systems, which were supplied unit by unit by the course authors as a supporting resource, should be used for this purpose. Their perceived suitability lay in the following advantages which they were understood to have:

* they had been custom-designed with the teaching units and were, therefore, directly and immediately relevant and cohesive,

* they structured the GCSE course and prepared the ground for the GCSE examinations,

* they extended the teaching/learning programme as well as monitoring it, in keeping with the requirements stated above,

* they provided excellent indicators of the strengths and weaknesses of the classroom practice and alerted to the need for remedial attention to problematic areas of both the learning and the teaching,

* they addressed the four language skills of LISTENING, READING, SPEAKING, WRITING and represented the two levels of GCSE testing, namely BASIC and HIGHER,

*   they offered an in-built sensible marking system with appropriate skill weightings,

*   they provided pupils' individual profile and progress charts, which communicated diagnostic data to the pupils as the course consumers and to the pupil's parents as the school's most interested clients, providing with each unit-related assessment a predictor of the sort of grade which the individual pupil might expect to receive ultimately in the GCSE. Pupils were encouraged to keep graphs of their results, unit by unit, and on the half-termly basis on which the teaching and assessment programme was structured.

In addition to the above-mentioned major assessment structure, which would embrace five half terms in relation to the five units and five related assessments of any course book, some testing was intended to be carried out through the use of GCSE past papers. Thus it was that the work for the action research group, as Year 9, concluded with the assessment of units five of TRICOLORE 3 and of ZICKZACK 1 for French and German respectively, but also with the application, in the case of French, of a set of past GCSE papers at 'Basic Level', specifically those of 1987, *testing pupils' performance in the four language skills of listening,* reading, speaking and writing and practising the anticipated ultimate examination challenge for the first time.

It must be emphasized that the purpose of the applied assessment process was two-fold:

(i)   to test, measure and promote pupils' actual subject performance and foreign language behaviour, to register the data on behalf of each of the two experiment groups, known as 'factions' in this thesis, and to compare the findings ie. their marks or scores,

(ii) literally to count the instances of correct grammar usage on behalf of each of the two factions, to register the data and to compare the findings, ie. the numbers of correct grammar uses made systematically over the time of the experiment by each faction.

The question which is at the heart of this thesis was in immediate focus at times of assessment:

Could the use of grammar summary be perceived to have an enhancing influence

upon the (attitudes and) performances of Modern Languages learners in the researcher's comprehensive school?

(b) **In Years Ten and Eleven**

(i) **Formal GCSE-related assessment**

It had been the intention to use in Years 10 and 11 the same system of course-related assessment supplied with TRICOLORE for French as had been used in Year 9. However, the teachers of the parallel 'Sets Two' had found the assessment arrangements too onerous in practice and even in the later stages of the Year 9 work, a more selective approach had had to be agreed and adopted where the 'Sets Two' were concerned. Therefore, in the two years remaining to GCSE, it was deemed inappropriate to continue to apply in full the former assessment structure since it had not been found universally satisfactory. The main complaints expressed were that the assessment:

* was occasionally irrelevant, testing inherently matter which had not been taught
* commanded too much time and
* was too stressful for the lower abilities.

Accordingly, it was decided that the TRICOLORE assessment units as a full system should be discontinued but used in part, relevantly, and that GCSE past papers should take their place as the major testing principle at intervals during Years 10 and 11. All of the four language skills would be assessed in the usual way. The problem of time consumption, associated with the 'speaking' skill was overcome by staging the speaking tests as whole class or whole group events in which the *responses were organised in written form.* This procedure made the marking of the oral tests a much easier exercise, furthermore. The use of GCSE past papers for assessment endowed receptive pupils with the experience to tackle the real GCSE of 1994 and was structured as follows:

Year 10 and Year 11

*	end of Autumn term 1992 :	past paper of May 1992 Basic Level.
*	end of Easter term 1993 :	past paper of May 1991 at Basic Level.
*	Whitsun 1993 :	past paper of May 1989 at both Basic and Higher Level. (Early GCSE 'Mock' by end of Year 10 stage).

| * | October 1993 | : | past paper of May 1992 at Higher Level. |
| * | Christmas 1993 | : | (trial GCSE Examination) the papers of May 1993 at Basic and Higher Level. |

(ii) **Informal assessment structured on agenda-related mechanical exercises**

A system of 'mechanical' assessment was used throughout the Years 10 and 11. The aim was to test and monitor the pupils' understanding and application of the grammatical agenda by a direct means. Implied also was the opportunity to detect and diagnose difficulties and remedy them. In addition, it facilitated the researcher's project of measuring grammar gain. The exercises used, in being designated 'mechanical', were of a variety of such types as:

* choose the correct word from the choices in brackets to complete the sense of the following sentences,

* make the words in italics match with the item they describe,

* choose between 'qui' and 'que' to complete the blanks as shown,

* put the action words, as underlined, into their correct time contexts, in relation to the person etc. performing the action,

* complete the following items by selecting from the multiple choice,

* how many describing words can you find in the following passage?

* how many instances of present time, future time, past time (etc.) can you detect in the following passage? ... etc.

* complete the sense of this passage by completing the sentences. Etc.

A calendar would show the application of sets of grammatical exercises as follows:

* consolidation and summary in retrospect of the Year 9 work

SEPTEMBER 1992

* classwork exercises from the course-book unit and from teachers' worksheets

SYSTEMATICALLY THROUGHOUT THE THREE YEARS OF STUDY

* as component part of some questionnaires, to demonstrate pupils' aptitude and memory function

QUESTIONNAIRES - FEATURED EVERY HALF TERM

* grammatical appreciation (as written exercises) of English texts to test grammar awareness in terms of L1 (specifically, W. Goulding's 'Lord of the Flies':

FEBRUARY 1993

* grammatical competence tested through the medium of French dictation, an uncommon exercise in the modern 'communicative', methodological context

MAY 1993

* grammar demonstration lessons via practical activity conducted by the teacher and video recorded: 1. cake-baking in French with informal grammatical inventory of activity; 2. Blind Date role play in French, not possible without a grammar-base.

NOVEMBER 1993

(iii) **Other measures used in the appraisal of performance**

In order to finalise her explanation of the assessment structure used in the action research, the researcher returns to her perceived need to provide herself with other insights into the performance of her pupils in the principal areas of their schooling. In this way she hoped to broaden her understanding of the youngsters themselves but particularly to sharpen and extend her perceptions of their performance in Modern Languages by enabling herself to view it side by side with their function in certain other major subjects. Hence, as has already been indicated, she looked to Maths and English, in the first instance, as follows:

* she requested and procured informal, internally derived statements of competence from Maths and English in June 1993 (end of Year 10),

* she independently and formally applied some literacy and numeracy tests cf the Staffordshire tests in computation for Maths and Hodder and Stoughton comprehension tests for 16 year olds for English (Year 11),

* she set up a contrastive study of the *final GCSE results of 1994* embracing French in juxtaposition with ENGLISH LANGUAGE, ENGLISH LITERATURE, MATHS AND SCIENCE. Within this study, the groupings which give the structure to the subject of French are maintained in relation to the other four subjects also.

The outcomes ie. results of the assessments named above are revealed in Chapter Four with all other assessments made. As has already been indicated, the process of assessment embraces the programmes applied in relation to both skill-related competence and mechanical proficiency. In both cases, results were measured both as mark-scores for performance in language and as points-scores for instances of correct grammar use, performance evaluation and grammar measurement being deemed equally important to the methodological issue at the heart of this thesis.

3.1.9 **Postscript to the study description**

Central to the process of the action research and featuring, indeed, as its very dynamic, are a) the teaching strategies used in the exercise of comparing 'G-E' with 'G-I' and b) the attitudes of the participating teachers, but particularly also of the pupils themselves, towards their task of learning a language by the designated method. These two aspects remain outstanding in the commentary on the process of the action research, offered in this chapter. However, their consequence to the research is such that it becomes necessary to structure separate chapter-sections upon them. In this way one succeeds in affording the appropriate scope which does justice to such prominent action research constituents, and one can incorporate into the discourse more generous samples of both transcribed or described matter from the recordings of lessons and discussions and more ample evidence of evaluation of the questionnaires and participants' written observations. The ensuing chapter-sections respond to this need.

3.2   SECTION TWO : The Teaching

3.2.1 Introduction

At regular intervals throughout the course of this thesis, the researcher has explained the nature of the two teaching methods which are investigated in the action research.   This present chapter-section provides the opportunity to transfer description of the research scheme from abstraction into reality. Through the means of the transcripts which the researcher made of the audio-recorded grammar lessons, or through the means of the diary notes and lesson plans which were structured in anticipation of lesson delivery, she is able to *illustrate* and *discuss* the most important business at the heart of this research: the methodological delivery of lesson agendas in two contrastive ways, in which on the one hand the grammar content is kept covert and at least contained as an integral component of the foreign language matter, and on the other hand is made overt and at some point is discretely and formally taught in first language terms.   This chapter-section deals with the teachers' interpretations of M1 (G-I) and M2 (G-E).

However, although the intention for the teaching agenda (already tabulated in Section I of this chapter) and the decision to adopt specific strategies or methods for its delivery form the plan of the classroom business, it is, in fact, *only* the teaching principle that they affect.   The variables and imponderables which influence the execution of the plan and eventually affect also the outcomes, are bound up with difficulties experienced from both outside and inside the plan itself.   Those relating specifically to the methodological experiment, which is researched here, have been discussed earlier in this chapter.   However, the difficulties which emerged from the nature of the methods being trialled and from their effects upon the people (ie. teachers and learners) involved with them have not yet been investigated in any appropriate depth.   Therefore these will be examined in the third stage of this chapter through an exploration of the attitudes of the participants, accessed from the recordings and transcripts of discussions and from the questionnaires, which were used to probe attitudinal matters at stages throughout the three years' direction of the methodological project.

Thus the appraisal of the methods will be seen to uncover the reality of their application in comparison with their conceptual ideal.   In addition to this, the later appraisal of the participants' attitudes and reactions will be seen to disclose an unforeseen, unforeseeable and hidden agenda of the situation, in which a

formally declared project is processed in the course of its being delivered by an agreed, well formulated and respected method. Later, in Chapters Four and Five, after measuring the results of the pupils' work, it will be interesting to observe whether these correlate with the positive and negative impressions gained from a study of their attitudes, expectations and management of the work.

3.2.2 **The contrastive methods in action in the French classrooms**

Of the two methods, M1 and M2, under exploration in this research, both, as 'M', observe the requirements of target language delivery of the lessons planned for the course, with the grammatical agenda kept discreet or implicit. M2 then distinguishes itself from M1 by adding overt, concise, formal, L1-delivered grammatical summary (the factor X) to its brief. The methods then become grammar-implicit (G-I; 'M' or M1) and grammar-explicit (G-E; 'M'+X or M2). The teachers who activated these methods in their classrooms (see Section One of this chapter) for the most part taught parallel classes across the methodological divide and attempted, therefore, to make this distinction clear through their teaching strategies and evident in their diary notes and in the audio-recordings of their lessons. This phase of the present chapter attempts to articulate their efforts in this area and their aim (1) to sustain the use of the target language throughout their work and (2) with the exception of grammar summary for the G-E classes, to not appear to be teaching grammar deliberately ie. to keep the grammar invisible, as a hidden agenda.

NOTE

It is the researcher's decision *not* to include in this section observation of the German lessons which were held with the two Sets One (G-I and G-E). The reasons for this are as follows:

1. The agenda was brand new and the grammar was not yet sufficiently formed to make method delivery to new classes an easy matter for the teacher concerned.

2. The German teacher was very inexperienced, having only just completed her probationary year by the time the action research began. She found it difficult to distinguish M1 from M2 in practice.

3. For medical reasons, the German teacher was obliged to take a prolonged absence from her post in the course of the first year of the action research. This seriously disrupted the agenda that she had planned for this stage of her work with the Sets One.

4. With a time allowance of only 1 period per week, this colleague faced insurmountable difficulty in her efforts to overcome the problems featured in the points 1, 2 and 3 above.

3.2.3 The teaching programme in Year 9

This was drafted in six stages in order to coincide with (1) the school year's natural divisions of six half terms and (2) the textbook's structure which provided five units of work, potentially accommodating the first five half terms of study and leaving the sixth half term free for revision, consolidation, alternative activities, end-of-year testing with diagnostic decision-making, in anticipation of the more selective curriculum offered as 'Options' to Year Ten. This structure became an integral part of the teaching and assessment plan throughout the three-year-course to the GCSE in 1994 and, therefore, throughout the duration of the action research.

3.2.4 The teaching agenda and the methodological approach pertaining to the first half term in Year Nine

From the first unit of TRICOLORE 3, three items formed the grammatical agenda:

ITEM	COURSE-BOOK LOCATIONS
1. the verb 'devoir'	p.12; p.35 (sommaire)
2. the 'negatives'	p.26; p.35 (sommaire)
3. the perfect tense	p.19; p.21; p.35 (sommaire)

All of the three items noted above were of interest to the teaching team, although the main emphasis was placed on the teaching of the PERFECT TENSE, which is always a problematic agenda in the French classroom. It is afforded some attention below.

In the interim, the remaining two grammatical agendas were dealt with as though they were simply items of vocabulary or idiomatic expressions. They were made familiar through practice and through repetitive reference in TL terms in the case of the verb 'devoir', and through target-language rationalisation in the instance of the 'negatives'. The commentary which follows is based upon the collaborative plan of *what* was to be covered and *how*; also upon the researcher's lesson plans and 'campaign' notes which were used by the

teachers to effect this first component of the work and put the action research into motion.

3.2.5 The verb 'devoir' (to have to; to 'must'), taught by the researcher

The lesson plan (conducted in the target language throughout) was structured on the two exercises accompanying the passage of text located in the course book. This process was fleshed out by the teacher via talk and supplementary exercises and games.

- reading aloud the passage "Devant le lycée" on page 12.
- the teacher reads it again, deliberately emphasising the parts of 'devoir' as she encounters them, writing each one on the blackboard, as she proceeds: ils doivent (attendre ..); tout le monde doit (laisser son vélo ..); je dois (rentrer ..); tu dois (rentrer ..); nous devons (finir ..). Thus the teacher uncovers the principal parts of 'devoir' with only the 'vous' person outstanding. This is picked up in the first accompanying exercise. "Pour bien profiter d'un séjour a Paris" (p.12).
- the exercise: "Pour bien profiter d'un séjour à Paris", embraces the six persons of the verb 'devoir'. These are embedded in six sentences which, when understood, are to be put in order of importance. The class collectively reads the sentences, reflects and deliberates on the possibilities of a hierarchy for them. A pause for silent reflection followed by some consultation with a partner, allows the pupils time to shuffle and reshuffle the sentences to form their individually decided sequences, and during this process they inadvertently practise the verb parts. In the subsequent hearing of the solutions, which are many and varied, according to the possibilities of permutation of the six sentences, the verb is practised further.
- the second exercise, offered on page 12 of the unit: "Vous êtes employé à l'office de tourisme", requires pupils to answer questions put to them on the unit-relevant subject of finding one's way around Paris as a tourist, by choosing the most appropriate response for each question from a selection of six responses offered in random order. In order to make the right choice, the learners must make sense of the incentives and of each response as a whole. They must also differentiate each 'devoir' - specific verb item, in order to determine which one is needed to validate their choice of response.

- Similarly, the two exercises on page 13 are used to reinforce this activity; the teacher goes around the class asking questions which require 'devoir' - related answers. She attempts to align these features with the vocabulary already practised in the work so far and with the theme being taught, namely "Visiting Paris". Some specific examples from a lightly edited recording now follow:

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Moi, quand je veux voir Paris, <u>je dois</u> mettre des chaussures confortables, Et toi, David? Qu'est-ce que <u>tu dois</u> faire?
David	Moi, quand je veux voir Paris, je dois prendre une semaine de congé.
Teacher	Et toi, Kate?
Kate	Moi, quand je veux voir Paris, <u>je dois</u> aller 'a l'office de tourisme pour demander un dépliant de la ville et un plan du métro.
Teacher	Julie, qu'est-ce <u>qu'elle doit</u> faire, Kate?
Julie	<u>Elle doit</u> aller ... etc.
Teacher	Sharon, David et Kate, quand ils veulent voir Paris, qu'est-ce qu'<u>ils doivent</u> faire?
Sharon	<u>Ils doivent</u> prendre une semaine de congé et demander un dépliant de la ville et un plan du métro.
Teacher	Très bien, Kirsty, toi et moi, qu'est-ce que <u>nous devons</u> faire, si nous voulons voir Paris?
Kirsty	<u>Nous devons</u> porter des chaussures comfortables et marcher partout. C'est plus intéressant comme ça.
Teacher	Lyndsey, demande à Mark ce qu'<u>il doit</u> faire en voulant voir Paris.
Lyndsey	Mark, qu'est-ce que <u>tu dois</u> faire quand tu veux voir Paris?
Mark	Moi, <u>je dois</u> acheter un carnet de dix tickets pour voyager en métro ou en autobus.
Teacher	Kerry, les filles là-bas, qu'est-ce qu<u>'elles doivent</u> faire pour consulter le plan électronique du métro?
Kerry	Elles <u>doivent</u> illuminer la route en appuyant sur les boutons. ... etc.

NB! A formal spoken observation and a written note of explanation about the conjugation and the use of the modal auxiliary verb 'devoir' were given to the G-E class. Emphasis was placed also on the juxtaposed verb in its *infinitive* form.

The class was invited to write down and learn by heart the conjugated verb in its present tense, as this is offered in the course-book on page 12.

3.2.6 The 'negatives', taught by the researcher

The aim was to 'experience' the six most common expressions known at this level as 'the negatives', as indicated on page 26 of the course-book:

1.   ne ..... pas   (not)
2.   ne ..... plus   (no longer)
3.   ne ..... jamais   (never)
4.   ne ..... rien   (nothing)
5.   ne ..... personne   (nobody)
6.   ne ..... que   (only)

Stage One

The first four of the 'negatives' listed above are embraced by the exercise in "Conversations" at the top of page 26. The teacher read aloud through each conversation and asked individual pupils to follow suit. During this process each 'negative' was written in its French form on the blackboard. The pupils in each set appeared to comprehend with ease the meanings which were intended as the purpose of the conversational sentences but, in any case, the teacher amplified them as far as possible through:

*   body and facial expression and/or
*   further examples or amplifying verbal adjustments.
*   the use on the blackboard of the simple symbol X to denote a contradiction or restriction to a positive statement, therefore indicating the presence of the 'negative' being taught.

Six examples, of which each one affects one of the 'negatives' alluded to here, are given below (the contextual matter is provided in italics):

		Book-text	Teacher-amplification of response
1.	Qu.	Avez-vous vu le film sur Napoléon hier soir?	*non-verbal amplification: shake of head; cancelling hand gestures; face showing regret, repeating:*
	Ans.	Non, nous <u>ne</u> l'avons <u>pas</u> vu.	Non, nous <u>ne</u> l'avons <u>pas</u> vu. *verbal amplification (spoken and written on blackboard).* Oui, je l'ai, vu, Non, je <u>ne</u> l'ai <u>pas</u> vu. x
2.	Qu.	Avez-vous acheté beaucoup de choses à Paris?	*non-verbal amplification: shake of head, cancelling hand gestures, face expresses regret, repeating:*
	Ans.	Non, je'<u>n</u>'ai <u>rien</u> acheté.	- Non, je <u>n</u>ai <u>rien</u> acheté. *verbal amplification: (spoken and written on black-board):* Oui, j'ai acheté beaucoup de souvenirs et de cadeaux et de cartes postales à Paris Non, je <u>n</u> 'ai <u>rien</u> acheté; pas de souvenirs x pas de cadeaux x pas de cartes postales x rien! absolument rien! x
3.	Qu.	Je voudrais des croissants, s'il vous plâit.	*non-verbal amplification: shake of head, cancelling hand gestures, face expresses regret, repeating:*
	Ans.	Je regrette, je <u>n</u>'en ai <u>plus</u>	Je regrette, je <u>n</u>'en ai <u>plus</u>. *verbal amplification (spoken and written on blackboard):* On avait des croissants hier On avait des croissants ce matin Mais les gens ont acheté les croissants La boîte est vide x *(showing the teacher's empty chalkbox as a similar example):* La boîte est vide x Il <u>n</u>'y en a <u>plus</u> x
4.	Qu.	Connaissez-vous Rome?	*non-verbal amplification: shake of head, cancelling hand gestures, face expresses regret, repeating.*
	Ans.	<u>Non</u>, je <u>ne</u> suis <u>jamais</u> allé(e) en Italie.	

Non, je <u>ne</u> suis <u>jamais</u> allée en
Italie
*verbal amplification (spoken and
written on blackboard):*
Non, je <u>ne</u> suis <u>jamais</u> allée <u>en</u>
Italie x pas une seule fois x
Je suis allée une fois en
Allemagne; *(holds up one finger)*
deux fois en France *(holds up two
fingers)* ; *(enthusiastically)*
chaque annee en Espagne;
mais .. *(cancelling hand
movements, regret evident in face
and voice, shrug of shoulder,
shake of head etc)*
.. en Italie? ... alors ... <u>jamais</u>! x

5. Qu. Oui, madame?
         Je voudrais un
         billet de train
         mais il <u>n</u>'y a <u>personne</u>
         au guichet.

*non-verbal amplification:
shake of head, cancelling hand
gestures, face expresses regret,
repeating:*
Non, il <u>n</u>'y a <u>personne</u> au guichet.
*verbal amplification: (spoken and
written on blackboard;* Le guichet
est vide   x
L'employe <u>n</u>'est <u>pas</u> là (au guichet)

Alors, il <u>n</u>'y a <u>personne</u> au guichet
*Amplification using different
examples:*
Maintenant la salle de classe est
pleine
Il y a trente et une personnes ici,
vous et moi.
Apres la leçon, vous trente
sortirez, dans la cour, moi, je
sortirai aussi; j'irai dans la salle des
profs. Cette salle sera vide. Il <u>n</u>'y
aura <u>personne</u> là.   x

6. Concerning 'ne ... que .. as the sixth 'negative', the example was taken from
    page 27, (as with previous example), as follows:

    Qu. Un aller simple pour
         Versailles s.v.p.
    Ans. Trente-cing francs.
    Qu. Je <u>n</u>'ai <u>que</u> ce billet
         de cent francs
         Ca va?
    Ans. Oui, voilà votre monnaie.

*this was performed as a role-play,
(with appropriate body and facial
expressions).*
then 'ne ... que' was replaced by
'seulement' and the role-play was
repeated stressing '<u>seulement</u>'

*(Appropriate non-verbal
amplification was added).
verbal amplification, using
alternative examples and
continuing with the non-verbal
behaviour. eg*

- Christine prend sept dépliants à
  l'office de tourisme. C'est ça?
- Non, elle ne prend que cinq dépliants
                    x
- Non, elle prend seulement cinq
  dépliants.   x
- Je voudrais passer dix jours à Paris.
- mais je ne passe que huit jours à Paris.
                x
- ... mais je passe huit jours seulement.
                x

Stage Two of this grammatical agenda: the negatives

An assortment of exercises is attempted in order to consolidate this grammar point which is regarded as an important one at this level since the grasp of it (or the failure to grasp it) may directly affect the delivery of and the understanding of meaning. The course-book delivers the point well, devoting four pages to it viz p.26 p.27, p.28, p.29. The teacher, therefore, has no urgent need to provide supplementary materials to the course-unit's exercises, which are:

- p.26	"Ce n'est pas vrai". A vous de corriger les phrases.
	Exemple : Le Centre Pompidou est le plus haut bâtiment de Paris. Correction : Le Centre Pompidou n'est pas le plus haut bâtiment de Paris.
- p.26	Je ne suis plus jeune: Faites les bonnes réponses aux questions.
	Exemple : Est-ce que vous travaillez? Réponse : non, je ne travaille plus.
- p.27	Encore des légumes mais plus de fruits.
	L'épicier a beaucoup de légumes, mais il n'a plus de fruits. Répondez pour lui ... Exemple : Qu. : Avez-vous des pommes de terre? Rep. : Oui, j'ai des pommes de terre Qu. : Avez-vous des oranges? Rep. : Non, je n'ai plus d'oranges. x Amplification : on les a achetées toutes ce matin. Demain, peut- être. etc.

- p.27	Je n'ai jamais dit ça :	
	Teacher: Indiquez les phrases qui sont fausses, tout en exprimant "pas une seule fois!" eg. J'ai visité Paris. Correction : Je n'ai jamais visité Paris etc.x	
- p.27	Rien de plus facile. Répondez au négatif.	
	Exemple : Vous avez visité beaucoup de monuments aujourd' hui? Correction: Ah, non, je n'ai rien visité aujourd'hui.x	
- p.28	Répondez pour l'épicier, qui est un homme très négatif:	
	This role-play requires negative answers. For every request which the shopper (Sabine) makes, the grocer can offer her only a certain amount of the item she requires. This exercise practises 'ne ...que (only) which is reinforced in the French through the use of 'seulement'.	

Summary of the 'negatives'

In the cases of both (G-I) and (G-E), using 'M', the negatives presented no problem for the teaching mode 'M'. They were exploited in a positive, cheerful way and provided a tension-free, fun-based, enjoyable agenda, which everyone claimed to comprehend well. It would be a matter of repeating the agenda at further intervals or as the appropriate occasion naturally arose, in order to consolidate and reinforce this learning point. Otherwise it would depend upon the learner's memory facility as to how much of this material would be retained and for how long.

In accordance with the method prescribed for the G-E (M2) sets, formal summary was made in English orally and with written notes to press this agenda home. References were made to the item's grammatical lay-out on page 26: "More about the negative, (saying something that is not, never, no longer ... happening)". The pupils were required to write out the rubric, emphasising the opening sentence: "Remember that to make a sentence negative in French you have to use *two* words which go round the verb: Je ne prends pas le métro". etc.

It is explained further that, in the case of the perfect tense, the auxiliary form of 'avoir' or 'être' is considered to be the actual working verb, and the past participle is placed once the negative has been established around the auxiliary. The matter is not complicated further and the exceptions to this last mentioned

situation of <u>ne</u> ... <u>personne</u> and <u>ne</u> ... <u>que</u> are not deemed a necessary part of the grammar at this stage.

3.2.7 <u>The Perfect Tense (taught by the researcher)</u>

This massive grammar item is considered no less than daunting by today's standards in grammar teaching and learning. It will be seen to dominate the syllabus for French throughout the three years of study, in that it is a ubiquitous part of the three year spiral curriculum, receiving more serious treatment and attention than the future tense, much more attention than its fellow past tense, the 'imperfect', and more persistent and explicit attention than the present tense, which (as the High School course leaves the Middle School course behind) is really - and quite unwisely - taken for granted.

Unit One of Tricolore 3 deals with the French perfect tense in its two clear stages:

1. the perfect tense with 'avoir' and
2. the perfect tense with 'être'.

The management of this agenda in terms of 'M' involved the pursuit of the following course components:

(i) p.18   "Cartes postales de Paris". Christine, during her visit to Paris, wrote five post cards. Some of the messages contained in each one are about things that she **has done**, therefore they are communicated in the perfect tense. For example:

Postcard A
"Hier matin, <u>j'ai fait</u> l'ascension de la Tour Eiffel".
"Je t<u>'ai acheté</u> une Tour Eiffel - mais plus petite, bien sûr!"

Postcard B
"Hier on <u>a visité</u> la Tour Eiffel
"Du sommet <u>on a pu</u> voir tout Paris ...
"Apres on <u>a fait</u> un pique nique ...
"Nous <u>n'avous pas mangé</u> au restaurant ...

Postcard C

"Tu <u>as</u> toujours <u>voulu</u> un portrait de ta soeur

"On <u>a visité</u> le Sacré-Coeur.

"Un artiste <u>a fait</u> mon portrait en silhouette.

Postcard D

"Hier matin on <u>a visité</u> la Tour Eiffel

Là haut, <u>j'ai acheté</u> une carte-postale.

Postcard E

"On <u>a visité</u> cette église toute blanche, le Sacré Coeur.

The teacher's first move was to read each postcard carefully with the class before requiring individual pupils to read aloud the postcards of their choice, allowing sufficient turns to be taken around the class to effect familiarity with the texts and with the 'feel' or the 'ring' of the information.

The teacher's next instruction was: "Prenez un crayon maintenant, et soulignez soigneussement les activités de Christine. Par exemple, moi, je commence par souligner l'expression de la première activité : hier matin <u>j'ai fait</u>. Alors, continuons ... et complétons l'exercice à travers les cinq cartes postales."

The pupils worked at pencil-underlining the perfect tense action items in silence. Teacher: "Maintenant, vous allez me dire les exemples que vous avez faits, et moi, je vais les écrire au tableau noir."

The teacher made a clear list on the blackboard of the extracted items, and unannounced placed, in brackets alongside, the infinitives from which the past participles had been derived, in the following manner:
... <u>j'ai fait</u> (faire); je t '<u>ai acheté</u> (achet<u>er</u>); nous n'<u>avons</u> pas <u>mangé</u> (mang<u>er</u>); on <u>a visité</u> (visit<u>er</u>); tu <u>as fini</u> (fin<u>ir</u>); ils <u>ont vendu</u> (vend<u>re</u>) ... etc. In this way the teacher used the devices of word juxtaposition and item and syllable underlining to delineate the patterns of the perfect tense, as this is demonstrated in its first phase with 'avoir'. The second phase involving 'être' received similar treatment and thus highlighted through symbols, brackets and colour-coding also the agreement implied between the past participle and the subject, as follows:

(i)   il <u>est entré</u> (entr<u>er</u>);   ⌐elle⌐   est entré(e) (entr<u>er</u>)

(ii)   il <u>est parti</u> (part<u>ir</u>);   ⌐elle⌐   <u>est parti(e)</u> (part<u>ir</u>)

(iii)   ⌐nous⌐ <u>sommes resté</u>(s) _ ⌐nous⌐ <u>sommes resté</u>(es)
         (rest<u>er</u>) OU

(iv)   vous <u>êtes sorti</u> (sort<u>ir</u>) OU ⌐vous⌐ <u>êtes sorti</u>(e)

OR   ⌐vous⌐ <u>êtes sorti</u>(s) OU   ⌐vous⌐ <u>êtes sorti</u>(es)

(v)   ⌐ils⌐ <u>sont né</u>(s) (naître) MAIS ⌐elles⌐ <u>sont né</u>(es) etc.

The teacher sensed that her pupils seemed to encounter little difficulty with this concept and assumed that this was because they were able to associate a word for word transference of this matter between L1 and L2. Realising that the real difficulty with this grammar episode lay in the matter of the irregular past participles, the teacher instigated some drills in which these were covered and ensured that the associated infinitive verbs were clearly spotlighted also, as in example (v) above. Consolidation was attempted through the application of ever more challenging exercises from TRICOLORE 3, such as:

<u>p.18</u>   "Répondez": which requires vigilance in a multi-choice exercise on the part of the learners, who must sometimes anchor their management of questions and answers in the present tense as a tricky change from the use of the perfect, which is the requirement currently.

<u>p.19</u>   "La Journée de Michel": is the upgraded version of the forerunning exercise, in that this time the choice box which aids the activity contains infinitive verbs which have to be converted into a complete 'person' of the perfect tense before being applied to the gaps to complete the sense of the text.

<u>p.19</u>   In an even more difficult exercise the learners were asked to *create* a cartoon strip showing six activities depicting stick people. This incremental story must be told in French, using the perfect tense, in the manner of the 'Christine' and 'Michel' exercises.

<u>p.20, p.21</u>   With a view to practising the thirteen most common verbs which use the present tense of 'être' to form their perfect tense, the pupils were asked to handle two exercises on the perfect tense. These together formed a strategy for persuading the learners to understand and produce increasing amounts of the agenda under focus:

1. the actions and escapades of Jacques Malchance ... This first exercise offers quite extensive reading matter structured on the grammar in question and containing very few gaps to be filled by verbs in order to complete the sense.

2. The second, related exercise offers very sparse reading matter with more significant and more *frequent omissions awaiting the pupils' making a perfect* tense provision to complete the intended sense.

The therapy was rounded off with a game played around the class, requiring pupils to create sentence examples featuring the perfect tense. This gave the teacher confidence that for the time being and until the subject re-occurred within the spiral agenda which characterised the French curriculum, the pupils of both G-I and G-E had formed an adequate grasp of the perfect tense concept. The following is a shortened and neatened version of the game:

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Jouons un petit jeu pour utiliser les dernières minutes de la leçon. Ecoutez! Oui, c'est ça! Ecouter. Les élèves ont ecouté le professeur. Maintenant! danser; mon ami(e) ...
Pupil 1	Mon amie a dansé sur la table. Chanter Tu,
Pupil 2	Tu as chanté une belle chanson française. Entendre; nous ...
Pupil 3	Nous avons entendu la musique. Aller; il ...
Pupil 4	Il a allé au concert ...
Pupil 3	Non, tu fais une faute.
Pupil 4	Il est allé au concert. Oui? Montrer; vous ...
Pupil 5	Vous avez montré votre passeport? Monter; elle ...
Pupil 6	Elle a monté l'escalier ...
Pupil 5	Non, tu fais une erreur.
Pupil 6	Elle est monté(e) l'escalier. Arriver; les trains.
Pupil 7	Les trains sont arrivés de bonne heure. Finir; l'enfant.
Pupil 8	L'enfant a fini ses devoirs pour l'école. etc

Note The formal, explicit teaching which was administered to the G-E class was given, as usual, the form of spoken and written summary of the perfect tense, delivered in English. The stages of this consolidation were as follows:

1. The purposeful reading of the grammar blocks on pages 19 and 21.

2.	Pupils were required to make notes from these blocks or write out their content into their exercise books.

3.	Pupils were advised to learn four things:

*	The principal rules of the perfect tense;

*	the verbs <u>avoir</u> and <u>être</u> in the present tense;

*	the list of irregular past participles;

*	the list of verbs taking être.

### 3.2.8	Some comments on the teaching which was delivered in the first half term of Year 9 (Sept. to Oct. 1991)

Note 1	The lesson descriptions, outlined in this report so far, reflect the methods discussed, agreed and used by the researcher and her colleagues for the delivery of TRICOLORE 3 Unit 1. The commentaries and observations are based upon diary entries and lesson notes compiled by the team, but principally upon those made by the researcher herself, whose lessons have been reflected here. No full-team audio recordings were successfully established at this initial point, due to the team's unfamiliarity with the research principle in action, and with the practical management of an action research project. However, the business of the teaching unit had been jointly planned and the teaching was co-ordinated on the basis of that plan. It was decided that all future lessons would be audio-recorded, so that the grammatical agendas would be harvested for future consideration.

Note 2	Special difficulties prevailed for the researcher in the contexts of the two Sets Four, because of the same paucity of time made available to them for foreign language study as that which characterized the top sets' study of German. With the Sets Four, however, the researcher experienced the further disadvantage of their low ability status. Despite these difficulties, she persevered, offering to these two classes simplified samples of the agenda delineated for the upper sets, in the context of the LISTENING and READING skills only, however. With them, and working on the reduced agenda, she managed to adhere to the methodological prescription. The results of this work arguably generate some interest (see Chapter Four).

Note 3	At the end of the first half term (and the end of Unit 1 of the course-book) the pupils' performances were tested, using the course's own in-built

assessment system. The outcomes are given, along with the assessment results corresponding with all other units, in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Note 4 Before proceeding with reflections of further units of teaching, the researcher wishes to reiterate, in order to clarify, that her intention is simply to offer *samples* of the teaching agenda that was shared among the members of her experiment team, in order to demonstrate the teachers' and her own approach to M1 and M2. These samples, some of which have been simplified or streamlined for convenience, simply attest to the delivery of the action research incentive, which the researcher claims to have designed and activated in her department.

3.2.9 **The teaching agenda and the methodological approach pertaining to the second half term in Year Nine (November to December 1991)**

From the second unit of <u>TRICOLORE 3</u>, one item formed the grammatical agenda:

Item	Course Book Locations
The FUTURE TENSE	p.41; p.58; p.66 (sommaire)

As with Unit One, featuring the major item of the perfect tense, Unit Two of the course produced a grammar which was deemed both a highly important syllabus-component and an exceedingly provocative challenge to the researcher's methodological experiment. It will be seen in the final section of this chapter that the French teachers had different reports to make upon it as the subject of their methodological efforts. For the reasons just mentioned, the researcher has decided to include the work on this 2nd unit as one of the evidence-components of her selection of lessons which illustrate the teachers' collective attempts to actuate the method-formula of the action research. The principal techniques common to the teaching are as follows:

COMMON APPROACHES	
RESOURCES in common	STRATEGIES in common
AGREED COURSE BOOK	- TEMPORAL ADVERBS to promote and rationalise tense work
AGREED REFERENCE PAGES AND EXERCISES	- TALK and CHALK (EXPLANATION (CLARIFICATION
BLACKBOARD AND CHALK	- with SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTING; IMPLY and SHOW; TURN TAKING WITH PUPIL PEER RATIFICATION EXERCISES FOR PRACTICE THERAPY, and CONSOLIDATION
TEACHER'S TALK	- EXPLANATION IN L1 for Grammar Explicit groups

3.2.10 Summary of the transcripts associated with the researcher's teaching of grammatical matter from TRICOLORE 3 Unit 2

Subject: The Future Tense

6 sets involved (2 x sets 1; 2 x sets 2; 2 x sets 4)

Set 1 (G-I) Tricolore 3 Unit 2 (Teacher = researcher)

Lesson One of two lessons (conducted by the researcher entirely in French)

1. referencing page 41 of textbook and requiring use of the blackboard.
2. Aujourd'hui / hier / demain

    Present   (Parfait Futur
                   (Passé

    je fais; j'ai fait; je ferai (je vais faire) ...

    and throughout the verbs ... je/tu/il/nous/vous/ils and with examples, which also practise the possessive adjectives!
3. Specifically the future tense.

    Teacher demonstrates examples of the 'shapes' of the verbs which emerged in 2. Goes through the future verb. Shows future stem and the important future 'r'. Then the endings are introduced.
4. Repetition of 'faire' in all three tenses.

    Further play on time words: aujourd'jui, hier, demain

5.   Exercise from Tricolore (p.41).   Read passage, ring or underline verbs in the future tense.   Analysis of verbs as they arise from the passage.   Structure is emphasized: the future stem, ending with 'r' and allying with future endings.

Lesson Two of two lessons with Set 1 (G-I) (conducted by the researcher entirely in French)

1.   When the future is used: demain; la semaine prochaine; dans un mois; etc.
2.   The characteristics of the 'future' format - stem ending with 'r' and the future tense endings.
3.   Examples exploited in whole sequence terms.   Pupils join in, apparently confidently.
4.   Attention paid to pronunciation.   Pupils are prone to slur over the important 'r' - feature.
5.   Attention is paid to the slight problem of the 'e' with 're' verbs like 'vendre'.
6.   Revision of the important features of the future tense = 'future' stem; the 'r' to end the stem; the tense-endings.
7.   Everyone manufactures a sentence in the future tense, based upon "demain" or "la semaine prochaine" or "dans un mois" ...
8.   After preparation time, the examples are heard around the class, corrected if necessary, and consolidation of understanding is sought (turn-taking).
9.   Typical grammatical compromises on the parts of the future tense offered by the pupils are:

   -      * Demain je visiter le cinema.
   -      * Demain je regarder au rugby.
   -      * Demain nous ecouteons la radio.
   -      * Demain je travaillai dans la maison.
   -      * Demain je serai visiterai mon ami.

10.   Further examples are required of the pupils, using other adverbial phrases of time and encouraging greater flair and more imaginative content.
11.   Some learning is given as a homework, so that the future tense might be consolidated for the next lesson.

__Set 1 (G-E) Tricolore 3 Unit 2 (Teacher = Researcher)__
__Lesson one, of three lessons,__ (conducted in French with a grammar summary in English)

1. Turning to page 40 in order to read a passage in French, the pupils are asked to underline - or ring in pencil - the verbs which feature in the text.
2. Teacher and class go through the examples, locating them by quoting line and word numbers as references.
3. Verbs appear in the purview like:

    -   il <u>a</u> quinze ans; il <u>habite</u> à Paris. Then:
    -   il <u>passera</u> ses vacances à Saverne ...' je <u>partirai;</u> en Alsace etc.

4. Of the verbs listed, the pupils are asked to group them as (a) verb-parts with which they are familiar and (b) verb-parts which are new to them.
5. Working on the blackboard, the teacher attempts to explain three time-aspects of verbs as 'present', 'past' and 'future'. She demonstrates this through verb-words in use with the adverbial phrases "aujourd'hui", "hier" and "demain", -

    -   aujourd'hui   je <u>fais</u> mes *devoirs.*
    -   hier   j'ai <u>fait</u> mes *devoirs.*
    -   demain   je <u>ferai</u> mes *devoirs.*

6. Out of single-part examples, whole verb-patterns are practised.
7. The endings-sequences become clear on the blackboard.
8. All three tenses have been practised to an extent. *The pupils seem to believe they understand.*
9. The teacher now introduces her spoken summary of the lesson in English language: the verb; the tenses; the characteristics of tense-work in grammar.
10. The pupils agree that of the three tenses which have featured in this lesson, the one which is new to them is the future tense. They look at the work on it. They will meet with it again in the following lesson.

__Set One (G-E) Lesson two of three lessons,__ (conducted in French, until point 5 below).

1. The lesson's agenda is given in French.

2. The key words 'aujourd'hui', 'hier' and 'demain' are established again, with examples.

3. The verbs used in the examples are explored in whole tense-sequences.

4. With some hesitation the pupils agree that they understand what is implied by the 'present' and the 'past'. Eventually all pupils affirm that they understand that 'j'ai fait mes devoirs' is 'past', even 'perfect', and that the perfect tense is composed with two words. The perfect tense sequence is fully explored as revision.

5. The teacher - using English - returns the class to the day's agenda, namely the future tense. Emphatically, the future verb is described as a one-word verb, whose tense is made obvious by the features seen in the previous lesson: (a) the 'r' (b) the stem (c) the endings.

6. The future-sequence is explored around the class and on the blackboard.

7. Verbs like 'vendre' are examined and the 'e' is made redundant for the purpose of the 'future'.

8. When the bell goes everyone understands the future tense except one boy.

Set One (G-E) Lesson three, of three lessons (conducted by the researcher in French except for a grammar summary)

1. Teacher's introduction and instructions in French. Agenda is described as (a) notes in English on the grammar of the future tense in French and (b) practice of the future tense, in French, through exercises and examples.

2. The "official" English summary is dictated by the teacher and taken down by the pupils in their exercise books.

3. Teacher reverts to the use of French for the rest of the lesson -

(a) some practice of the 'future', using regular verbs.

(b) some practice of the future, using irregular verbs.

(c) Verbs like 'vendre' are mentioned again.

4. Teacher gives class a choice of verbs and the expressions 'demain', 'la semaine prochaine' and 'dans un mois'. The pupils are asked to construct some sentences featuring the future tense.

5. After some minutes for reflection, the members of the group take their turns and parade their examples. There follows a collaborative correction-exercise as errors like the following arise:

- * Je <u>visite</u> à la Tour Eiffel dans un mois.
- * Tu <u>as mangeras</u> un yaourt la semaine prochaine.
- * Je <u>finir</u> la devoir demain/Je <u>finirerai</u> des devoirs.
- * J'<u>ai te visiterai</u> dans un mois.
- * Je <u>visiter</u> Paris dans un mois etc.

NB.   There were many good examples also.

6.   Homework is given, namely the study of pages 41 and 58 as consolidation work.

The researcher and the two low-ability sets taking French = Set 4 (G-I) and Set 4 (G-E)

The teaching was done through reading, through studying isolated items, through practising exercises and through highlighting differences in verbs' tense-shapes.

The lesson on the future, held with the Sets 4 was delivered in simple French. In the context of Set 4 (G-E) the lesson was supported by systematic English explanation. The (G-I) and (G-E) lessons were similarly structured. The (G-E) version, is summarized step by step below:

- The teacher talks of time ahead, future time: <u>soon</u>; also of time present: <u>now</u>.
- The teacher reverts to time future.
  Looks for signaling words for the English future.
  A pupil supplies the word "will".
- "Will" is seen as a device for the English future.
- A device or mechanism is seen to be needed for the French future.
- Some notes are dictated in English on the French future tense. Pupils' examples are used and their terminology is incorporated.
- Pupil's example, "adorer", is put into the future on the blackboard.
- The 'anatomy' of "adorer" in the future is explained: the stem; the important 'r'; the endings.
- Other examples are exploited.

NB.   In the lesson following this one, 'Tricolore' reading texts and exercises are used to reinforce the learning.

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3.2.11 The teaching patterns which emerge from the recorded lessons of colleagues 1a and 1b

Set 2 (G-I) the future, taught implicitly and in French (teacher = colleague 1a)

- Statement to recall past time : yesterday, last year ...

  eg. hier j'ai mangé ...; hier j'ai quitté ...; hier je suis arrivé ...; je suis rentré ...;

- Statement about future time : tomorrow ...

  eg. 'demain' used in contrast to 'hier' — hier j'ai mangé...; demain je mangerai ...

- Some interplay of aller + infin and real 'future'.

- Question and answer practice featuring examples around the class, to afford some consolidation.

NB. In this class pupils often use the future ending system in a cavalier fashion, denoting their uncertain grasp of the concept which has been treated.

Set 2 (G-E) the future, taught explicitly by colleague 1b, (partly in French with considerable classification in English. Therefore English was used to structure more of the lesson than merely the intended end-of-lesson-summary).

In discussions this teacher acknowledged finding great difficulty with the teaching of this concept by 'M'.

- Statement of three tenses already encountered. past/present/future.
- Time words like aujourd'hui, hier, demain necessitating use of tenses with verbs.

  Examples and full conjugations.
- Examining how to identify the different tenses eg. 'perfect' composed of two verb parts ... 'future' seeming to be structured on an infinitive, in any case ending in 'r' prior to taking endings derived from 'avoir'.
- Summary of the three tenses with examples of time adverbs and verb conjugations.
- Teacher gives clues - structure of verb/the 'r'/the endings.

3.2.12 The teaching agenda and the methodological approach pertaining to the third half term in Year 9: 1st January to 29 February 1992

This third unit of <u>Tricolore 3</u> produced a three-fold grammatical agenda as follows:

ITEM	COURSE BOOK LOCATION
(i) Revision of the Future Tense (ii) Revision of the Perfect Tense (iii) Revision of the above two in interplay	)) p.80, p.83, p.96 (sommaire))

There was the need to recapture the 'present tense'. The tenses themselves had to be consolidated and the pupils' perception of 'time' in general had to be reinforced.

NB. Two further grammatical elements offered themselves in this unit, namely 'direct object pronouns' and 'indirect object pronouns' (pp.78,86,96). The researcher's decision was that these should be taught by the methods M1 and M2 (and later assessed through tests) but that she would not require recordings of the lessons at this stage. Since the agenda would be repeated at a later stage, it would be addressed then. The magnitude of the tense work and the team-members' struggle to refine their methods and become more proficient in effecting them, persuaded the researcher to restrict the observation of this unit's grammar to the combined tense work. The grammar of tenses is judged in any case to be the most important to the examination course and to the needs of communication but it is also the most protracted and the most difficult grammar to deliver and to internalize for teachers and learners respectively. The researcher restricts the scope of this section around the trio of tenses and to representative samples of the lessons given by the teachers, in order to demonstrate their efforts in handling the agreed method(s).

The lessons conducted by the researcher with the two Sets Four

<u>With Set 4 (G-E)</u> the researcher took the reading texts on p.68 and p.70 of Unit 3 of the Coursebook TRICOLORE 3. In fundamental terms she discussed the time context of the verb, which was referred to mostly as the action word. Action words from the text were juxtaposed appropriately with adverbial expressions of time, called 'time words' in the context of the Sets 4, notably the

words	'aujourd'hui' or
	'maintenant' then
	'hier' and
	'demain'.

These were simplified in English as NOW, THEN, SOON, therefore as the concepts already encountered by the Sets 4 within their work on Unit Two. The verbs in the texts were extracted and placed, side by side on the blackboard with the highlighted expressions: NOW; THEN; SOON. The pupils were invited to examine the shapes of the verbs within their categories and discerned:

- one word representing the idea of: NOW
- two words in combination for: THEN
- one word showing 'r' plus special constant endings, denoting the idea of : SOON.

The agenda moved on to include some multiple choice comprehension on pages 80, 82, in which the pupils were required to select the correct option from three, in order to complete meaning. The lesson concluded with an explanation in English of there being "tenses of verbs (or times of action and situation) which affect the appearance of the verb (doing word) within its sentence. The three tenses learned so far are Present tense (NOW), Past tense (THEN) and Future tense (SOON). A brief collaborative ie explicit discussion in English about the appearances of the verb in these circumstances completed the lesson.

With Set 4 (G-I) the lesson was structured on the same reading passages and exercises. No attempt was made to involve complications in a lesson of this degree of difficulty, by embedding discreet grammar delivery in the L2, considering that this was an item which, for the classes' ultimate level of attainment was too sophisticated anyway.

The teacher simply relied upon making the group familiar with the grammar patterns. The sharpest pupils understood eventually the patterns which got them the right answers in relationship with the verb patterns which already existed in the incentives. Therefore, this became a purely mechanical exercise, with some pupils understanding it at more subtle, though still very basic, levels. The researcher's responsibility where these classes were concerned was to bring them to an understanding and a recognition of the grammatical matter

under focus, since their brief involved them with only the comprehension skills (and not the productive skills) at an equivalent of Basic Level GCSE.

The researcher and colleague 1a, having covered the two new tenses of the 'perfect' and 'future' in terms of the exercises on pages 80 and 82 of the course-book as the basis of their three-tense consolidation lesson, relied upon their classes to reach an understanding of the time principle through the process of increasing their recognition of patterns and their familiarity with the language which contains them. In this case, both of the teachers turned the practice exercises into the teaching method, therefore, and hoped that what was achieved receptively would convert into practical and productive application later. Short extracts from their lessons with Sets One and Two (G-I), in reverse order, then from Sets One and Two (G-E) run as follows:

Colleague 1a with Set 2 (G-I)

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Alors, nous allons enregistrer l'exercice
	"Projets de vacances", à la page 82, oui?
	Nous allons voir la différence entre le présent, le futur et le passé.
	Oui? ...
Pupils	Oui, oui.
Teacher	.... Alors, répondez pour Vincent ...
	Qu'est-ce que tu feras pendant les grandes vacances?
	A. Je passe un mois en France.
	B. Je passerai un mois au Canada.
	C. J'ai passé un mois en Afrique ... Craig?
Craig	A.
Teacher	En français. ... Dis-moi.
Craig	Je passe un mois en France.
Teacher	Non. .... Je passe un mois en France. ... C'est correcte, ca?
Craig	Oui.
Teacher	Qu'est-ce que tu <u>feras</u> pendant les grandes vacances?
Craig	Je passerai, ...
Teacher	Oui, c'est ça : je passerai un mois au Canada. Numéro deux. ...

A turn-taking process developed and served the need of this exercise, with greater awareness and accuracy resulting as the agenda proceeded. Then the teacher transferred her attention to the exercise "Faites des phrases correctes" p.82) which was also based on the multiple choice principle. By this time the pupils were in command of a technique for acquiring the correct answers, because they clearly *recognised* the patterns they were dealing with. Furthermore, by emphasising the time adverbs which were associated with the exercise items, the teacher successfully cued the verb tenses needed and facilitated, ie manipulated, the correct selection from the multiple choice. The class appeared to derive an amount of fun and satisfaction out of this lesson, as there was applause from pupils whenever a member of the class arrived at a correct answer. This collective attitude contributed to the learning process.

The researcher with Set I (G-I)

Step 1: The researcher, using French, introduced the lesson as "une leçon de révision, de récupération : "On a déja rencontré des situations qui se passent au présent, au futur ou dans le passé. On va distinguer ces choses en faisant des exercices du troisième chapitre, etc. etc."

Like her colleague 1a, the researcher used the agreed practice exercises as the teaching aid and method. The pupils seemed to understand and did the exercises well.

Step 2: The researcher, still using French, then gave verb infinitives at random, and persons of the verb and time indicators, so that pupils might create an appropriate part of the verb in the tense required.

Step 3: The items of the exercise on p.80 were taken and extended into other verb parts, with voluntary pupil-interaction, eg:

Speaker	Text
Teacher Pupil	Vous mangerez des sardines ce soir. Tu. .. Tu mangeras des sardines ce soir.

The researcher with Set 1 (G-E)

The same lesson was delivered to this group as to Set 1 (G-I). Again the course exercises formed the substance of the lesson and the classroom business was conducted in the L2.

However, the lesson was concluded with a brief summary which was delivered by the teacher in English, explaining:

- that this had been a revision lesson of the tenses so far learnt in French,
- that the tenses of the verbs encountered were 'perfect', 'future' and 'present' and were easily recognisable from each other because of individual characteristics.

In a nutshell, however, it was emphasized that:

- the 'perfect tense' was composed of two words (a part of the 'present tense' of 'avoir' or être' and the past participle, which usually would end in e, i or u).
- the 'future tense' was composed of one word of which the mainstay was most often an infinitive, but in any case a stem ending in 'r', to which was added an ending from the range ai; as; a; ons; ez; ont.
- the 'present tense' was composed of one word and did not show the characteristics of the other two tenses. It may show endings from the three most regular ranges:

  e, es, e, ons, ez, ent

  is, is, it, issons, issez, issent

  s, s, -, ons, ez, ent.

NB. Each of the researcher's classes, Sets 1 (G-I) and (G-E), were asked to make verb choices from six items of the "Projets de vacances", Tric. 3 Unit 3 p.82, and to write down in English their reasons for making their specific choices.

G-I matched the patterns up or looked for clues in meaning and sense. G-E tried to work things out by the tense rules.

Colleague 1b with Set 2 (G-E)

Although the grammatical agenda of this unit (Tric. 3 Unit 3) was based on revision of previous agendas with the aim of pulling in each section to form an integrated whole, the colleague 1b did not find it an easy agenda to deliver by the agreed principle, in her case G-E. Perhaps because of the 3 difficult components structuring the agenda, colleague 1b lost her hold on the targeted method and delivered a lesson in explicit terms, in which L1 summary became confused with, and at the least intermingled with, the larger general agenda delivered in L2. Thus were revealed a) the teacher's personal characteristic as a performer and b) the evidence of her vintage and former experience of practice as a teacher, from the time of her encounter with teaching styles which were in vogue in her earlier teaching years and the option open to teachers to be flexible, didactic, eclectic, explicit ... In the lesson observed here, the teacher targets the three-tense-agenda and the need to a) consolidate the former teaching and learning of the three tenses and b) draw together and integrate the three grammar strands. For the purpose of the lesson, colleague 1b produced a 'freelance' agenda, as follows:

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Right, so far in this unit, in fact right through the book ... you've had three tenses ... which tenses have your learnt?
Pupils (inter-mingled):	'Past', 'present' and 'future' ...
Teacher	We spent quite a long time trying to sort that out. Right?
Pupil;	Il y a trois tenses ... (corrects to "temps").
Teacher	Quand on parle d 'aujourd'hui, on parle du présent. Du présent, oui? Aujourd'hui, maintenant, aujourd'hui c'est le présent. Oui? Je joue au football ...; tu joues au football .. ou il joue, elle joue, nous jouons, vous jouez, ils jouent au football. Hier, lundi ... hier ...
Pupil	Yesterday.
Teacher	Ou parle dans le passé ... dans le passé. Aujourd'hui je joue au football. Hier j 'ai joué ... tu as joué; il a joué; elle a joué; nous avons joué au football. Hum? Le passé. Demain ..... c'est quel jour demain? Aujourd'hui, c'est mardi, C'est quel jour demain?
Pupil	Mercredi
Teacher	Mercredi, oui. C'est le futur. Alors, on parle dans le futur. Aujourd'hui je joue. Hier j'ai joué. Demain je jouerai. Oui? Je jouerai, tu joueras, il jouera, nous jouerons, vous jouerez, ils joueront.

Speaker	Text
	Hier: c'est le passé. Aujourd'hui: le présent. Demain: futur.
	(Writes on blackboard and the pattern of verbs in their tenses
	and time-signifying adverbs becomes evident).
	aujourd'hui - je joue
	hier - j'ai joué
	demain - je jouerai.
	Can you see the difference? ... Can you hear the difference? ...
	First of all between the three? ... How can you identify them?
	... What gives it away, if you like, the fact that we are talking
	about the past?
Pupil	It's got two parts to it.

The rest of the lesson became an analytical study of the three tenses in English and contained much question-and-answer-strategy. The pupils knew and gave some technical jargon with their answers, for example items such as: 'tense'; 'infinitive'; 'agreements' ...

With respect to the adverbial phrases: *aujourd'hui, demain, hier,* pupils were able to appreciate that these evoked the need to use the verbs in specific tenses. Teacher's talk, chalk and the course-book were the materials used in this session.

3.2.13 The teaching agenda and the methodological approach pertaining to the fourth half term in Year Nine (1 March to 30 April 1992)

Unit Four of the course-book presented three grammar items for consideration:

ITEM	COURSE-BOOK LOCATION
(i) nouns and adjectives	p.128,129, 32, 137 (sommaire)
(ii) comparative and superlative	p.134, 135, 137 (sommaire)
(iii) direct and indirect object pronouns	p.123, (previous chapter locations)
	p.137 (sommaire)

In reaching this half way stage of the work planned for Year Nine, several situations became clear, namely that

(1) teachers, having applied themselves to the agreed methods in three bursts of activity now felt the need to take stock, knowing that some evidence was showing of what was easily viable or less easily viable material for the methodological variation which structured their brief. For example, verbs and tenses were deemed to form a highly complex grammatical agenda which almost defied their efforts to deliver it steadfastly by 'M'. The teacher's difficulty was compounded by the learners' lack of analytical understanding (or even of *recognition*, in some instances!) of the same concepts in English. *Indeed, ironically, the process of conceptualising the L2 was enabling clarification of the L1.*

(2) the researcher's colleagues were reporting signs of "strain, stress and weariness" on their own and on their classes' behalf. This was attributed to the unremitting use of the target language and the need, as it were, to circumvent the issue of the grammar, rather than freely tackle it, which they were accustomed to doing, as need and convenience made this appropriate. *Learners were placed in the position of having to infer sense out of the teaching, therefore of having to work harder at their learners' role than usual.* Whereas this could have meant that pupils were valuably stretched, colleagues concluded that it implied increased stress and frustration for learners generally, as well as for themselves also at times.

(3) the assessment pack, which formed part of the TRICOLORE course and which was applied systematically after the teaching of each unit, tested pupils' performances, therefore the quality of the learning, which in itself reflected the effectiveness, or the inherent weakness, of the teaching in relation to the matters covered in the various units. The assessment system, viewed at this half way stage, was deemed by colleagues to be too unwieldy, to be excessive and overly time-consuming, rather than merely thorough. Teachers claimed that pressure was generating unacceptable levels of stress for all in their classrooms.

This combined difficult state of affairs was deliberated in the teachers' discussions at this time and recorded in the then current log book. In a letter to her colleagues, the researcher addressed the two points of *the method* and the *assessment programme*.

On the matter of *the method*, and with the imminent unit of study in mind, she wrote:

> "The grammatical agenda of this fourth unit is not so clearly defined as
> that placed in the preceding units. The *pronouns* could have featured

more prominently in the unit's agenda and in the associated assessment exercises, ... the matter of *nouns* and *adjectival agreement* is also rather casually treated. I suggest that we should be 'grateful' to have such a vague chapter in this particular half term which is too short, in any case, to allow us to deal with such 'problems' in a really satisfactory and informed way. Vague treatment of matters of grammar in the course-book allows us arguably to try less hard, using 'M', in our own classroom treatment of them".

On the matter of *assessment*, the researcher reduced the amount to be applied by reneging on the arrangement to use the course's full system and, instead, applying a considered selection of exercises from each skill section. It appeared reasonable and acceptable to incur this 'lull' period, in order to defuse the tensions alluded to above. It was assumed that the grammar matters entrusted to the teaching of Unit Four could be taught as an *integral* part of the lessons-agenda, in target language terms for the most part, and passed off, as it were, as part of the natural vocabulary and idiom of the topics treated in the unit. In particular, noun-plurals and adjectives denoting the gender and number of their nouns, simply were to be enunciated carefully and written clearly and precisely on the blackboard, their endings underlined. Similarly, when used on worksheets, their endings, as they occurred, would be impressed and made noticeable. No explanation of the grammatical phenomenon seemed necessary. Time, experience and growing familiarity would bring this item home. Furthermore, the matter was known to be a naturally recurrent component of the comprehensive, spiralling syllabus. Its extension was the 'comparative and superlative' of adjectives, here treated as the vocabulary items 'plus' and 'le/la plus' respectively. Occasions of encounter and use would tap these into the learners' minds. Thus these factors were considered potentially unproblematic. The teachers' attention was given, therefore, to the matters of 'direct and indirect object pronouns', which the team agreed to teach to their classes by the prescribed formulae.

The Object Pronouns: Tricolore 3 Unit 4

This textbook unit does not structure the pronoun-grammar for discrete and explicit study. It exists as an incorporated element within the unit and as an extension of its presence within Unit 3 also. However, it merits a place in the end-of-unit summary. The too scant attention paid to this item was the teachers' primary reason for addressing it deliberately as a grammatical agenda.

The second reason for tackling it lay in the fact that pupils often try to make French statements containing pronouns and find this exceedingly difficult:

- they do not possess the pronoun words and repeatedly and erroneously make phrases like 'moi' and 'ça' into items to suit all occasions;
- they are ignorant about the positions required by pronouns in relation to the verbs in the sentence, ie. to the rules of word order generally. Hence the loss of word order and the lack of the correct pronoun.
- incorrect vocabulary or the lack of it can frustrate the intention to get a meaning across.

Agreeing to subject this grammar to M1 and M2, the teachers collaboratively involved in their treatment the practice-exercises offered on pages 124 and 125 of the course-book, specifically:

p.124 Exercise: Questions et responses (Complétez):
1.   Philippe, je .. parle. Tu m'entends?
2.   Tu me téléphoneras ce soir? Oui, je ... téléphonerai après huit heures. etc.

p.124 Exercise: Trouvez la bonne réponse:
1.   Qu'est'ce que vos amis vous envoient à Noel?
(a)   Ils nous envoient des cartes.
(b)   Ils t'envoient des cartes.
(c)   Ils leur envoient des cartes. etc.

p.125 Exercise: Dialogues, Complétez les phrases
1.   Dans la rue
-    Ça ... intéresse aller au cinéma ce soir?
-    On passe le nouveau film de Woody Allen.
-    Oui, je veux bien. Tu peux venir ... chercher?
-    Bien sûr. Je viendrai ... chercher vers huit heures. etc.

p.125 Exercise: 'A l'office de tourisme (Faites le bon choix):
-    Bonjour Mademoiselle. Pouvez-vous (me/lui/te) donner des renseignemants sur la ville?
-    Bien sur, Monsieur. Je vais (nous/vous/leur) donner un plan de la ville et quelques dépliants ... etc.

The transcribed samples of the teachers' lessons on pronouns highlight their individual approaches to their methodological brief.

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Colleague 1a, using M1, performed almost entirely in the target language, with many examples of indirect explanation and emphatic 'highlighting' built into her teacher-talk. (Almost involuntarily, however, she checked out in English the items 'it' and 'them' as though needing confirmation of her pupils' having comprehended their lesson. Colleague 1b, teaching by M2, conveyed her lesson on a TL base with what was by now her recognisably characteristic interspersal of L1 fragmentary explanation, used as a matter-confirmer, consolidator and enhancer. By this means she reassured herself that all was well. The researcher used TL wholly with her G-I class and the same lesson with grammar summary with its counterpart. She applied worksheets to supplement the course-book exercises and operated altogether more expansively, using visual aids to compensate and support her performance. She differed from colleague 1a, in that she adhered to the principle of M1 and allowed herself absolutely no English. Also she differed from colleague 1b, in that she pursued M2 strictly in accordance with the proposition that the factor X should be kept to the last as a brief grammar summary, delivered in L1.

SAMPLES OF TRANSCRIPTS

Colleague 1a, teaching the 'direct object' pronouns by M1

Speaker	Text
Teacher	On fait aujourd'hui les pronoms en francais. .... J'ai un stylo, oui? .. LE stylo. Je donne le stylo à Michelle. Oui? Je donne le stylo à Michelle. ..... Je LE donne à Michelle. ... Oui? Je LE donne à Michelle. .... J'ai ici une cassette. .. LA cassette. Oui? .. Je LA donne à Andrew. ..... Je LA donne à Andrew. .... Le stylo, je LE donne à Michelle. ..... La cassette, je LA donne à Andrew. .... Ici, j'ai deux stylos. Oui? J'ai deux stylos.
	Les stylos. Je LES donne à Michelle ... Je LES donne à Michelle ... Alors ... LE stylo: Je LE donne à Michelle ... LA cassette: Je LA donne à Andrew ... LES stylos : Je LES donne à Michelle ... (The pupils have interjected throughout with repetitions of sentences and frequently voiced "oui").
Teacher	Alors, LE, LA, LES. Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire en anglais? LE, LA, LES ..... David?
David	The.
Teacher	Mais aussi? Je LE donne; je LA donne ...?
David	It
Teacher	Oui, c'est ça. (Seeks clarification similarly for LES as 'them').

Speaker	Text
Teacher Pupil Teacher Pupils Teacher	... OK. Qu'est'ce que c'est? Un stylo. Un stylo. Lisa, je te donne le stylo. (Repeats). Donne le stylo à Leanne. ... Elle donne le stylo à Leanne. Donne le stylo à Claire. Elle <u>LUI</u> donne le crayon. Claire, donne le crayon a Simon. Elle <u>LUI</u> donne le crayon. ..... Il <u>ME</u> donne ..... il <u>TE</u> donne. ..... il <u>LUI</u> donne le stylo. Listen to what I'm saying ... (writing and emphasising her examples on the blackboard. Je <u>LUI</u> donne le stylo. I give her the pen; I give him the pen. Je <u>TE</u> donne le stylo. I give you the pen. Elle <u>ME</u> donne le stylo. She gives me the pen. <u>ME</u>, <u>TE</u>, <u>LUI</u> ... these are the words that I'm stressing. There's another two. What do you think they will be? ..... Ils <u>NOUS</u> donnent des bonbons. ..... Ils <u>VOUS</u> donnent des chocolats. <u>VOUS</u> has got to mean what? You. (talks in English about the difference between <u>TE</u> and <u>VOUS</u>, coinciding with the already familiar difference between <u>TU</u> and <u>VOUS</u>, as subjects of the verb). .... Add to today's lesson the pronoun words that we learned last lesson. What were they? Cast your minds back to Unit Two: ... J'aime <u>LE</u> garcon; Je <u>l</u>'aime. J'aime <u>LA</u> jeune fille?: Je <u>l</u>'aime. J'aime <u>LES</u> enfants: Je <u>les</u> aime. ..... Do you see where these words go each time? They go before the verb, don't they? ..... What do these words mean? What does this replace? (pointing to <u>l'</u> in relation to "le garcon"). It replaces LE, doesn't it? ... Now, why do I have to use an apostrophe here? ..... I have to get rid of that 'e' because it's going in front of a vowel. it's the same with the other 'l' which stands for <u>LA</u> in front of a vowel. ... What is the difference between <u>LE</u>, <u>LA</u>, <u>L'</u> and <u>LUI</u>? For example: Je <u>l</u>'aime; je <u>lui</u> donne le stylo? (working on blackboard and showing the examples with the pronouns emphasised). This (drawing an arrow towards the 'l') simply means 'him' or 'her' and this (drawing an arrow towards 'lui') means '<u>to</u> him' or '<u>to</u> her'.

The researcher used the same strategy as her colleagues to associate the 'the' words (ie. the definite article: LE, LA, L', LES) in the minds of her pupils as the 'him', 'her', 'it', 'them' pronouns. The teacher's talk with blackboard writing (emphasized by underlinings, pointing arrows and colour-codings) aided, abetted and actually facilitated the learning. Pupils found no mechanical difficulties with all of this and were able to deliver a set of examples of their own to illustrate their understanding of the points which had been taught. Their examples were, for the most part, correct, and a number of them, albeit not all correct, are given below:

Speaker	Text
Pupil 1	Mon frère dort dans la chambre.
	Mon frère la dort. (Pupil reflects, then changes his mind).
	Mon frère le dort.
Teacher	Non. Ça ne va pas .... je regrette, mais cela n'est pas possible, ... ne se dit pas. Je vais te l'expliquer plus tard. ... Et vous autres?
Pupil 2	Le garçon mange le gâteau.
Teacher	Et la deuxième phrase?
Pupil 2	Le garçon le mange ...
Pupil 3	Le garçon regarde la télévision.
	Le garçon la regarde.
Pupil 4	Ma soeur écoute des disques.
	Ma soeur les écoute ...

The class proceeded with this drill, changing the subjects, verbs and adding imaginative objects, which they redirected successfully into pronoun objects, even when they were extended to include adjectival phrases, egs.:

*   Ma soeur mange une glace délicieuse

Ma soeur la mange.

*   Mes amis préfèrent les gâteaux au chocolat.

Mes amis les préfèrent.

The teacher consolidated the agenda by means of classroom games (eg. 'Pick a Victim'), a quiz-feature, turn-taking and pair work. She taught word order by means of the expression "devant le verbe". It was easy to teach "devant" positionally through visual and tangible example-making and through contrasting examples constructed with the already familiar term "derrière". In the cases of both Sets One, all pupils claimed to understand the point of the lesson, and all the evidence seemed to support the collective optimism. Even so, the researcher adhered to the prescription of providing the G-E class with grammar summary. This was furnished both orally and in the form of written notes, thus:

"We have learnt two types of pronouns so far. The first pronoun is the one which does the action of the verb and which we use automatically with the verb as we learn it. These are subject pronouns,

eg.   Le garcon écrit son devoir

        Il écrit son devoir

The full list of subject pronouns is je; tu; il; elle; on;

                                            nous; vous; ils; elles.

The second pronoun is the one we have just learnt.

It is called an object pronoun. So far we have demonstrated three object pronouns, namely le; la; (l'); les, meaning him/it; her/it; them.

Remember: (1) The subject pronouns PERFORM the action of the verb and the object pronouns SUFFER the action of the verb.

        (2)   The subject pronouns go in front of the verb and the object pronouns are placed in between the subject pronoun and the verb, therefore before the verb.

Let us repeat the previous example:

```
Le garcon écrit son devoir

↓

Il      écrit son devoir

              ↓

              le

          /

Il      l'      écrit   ".
       (le)
```

The teachers' observations and comments *relating to the pronoun-grammar as to all other depicted grammars* are noted in a later stage of this chapter. However, it may be pertinent to record here that the pronoun-grammar and associated word-order rules were found to be easy to teach by 'M'. However, the extended grammar of 'indirect object pronouns' and the more complicated matter of the associated word order, when approached, caused difficulty and dismay for the learners and their teachers alike. The following short transcribed excerpt from the teaching of colleague 1b demonstrates how, on sensing mounting difficulties with her class of Set 2 (G-E) pupils, she hastened through her agenda, almost irreverently, cutting her losses in simply shedding it:

Speaker	Text
Teacher	What is the difference between this word 'le' and that word 'lui'? 'Je l'aime'; 'Je lui donne le stylo' or 'Je le lui donne' ... ? This simply means 'him' or 'it' and that one simply means 'to him' or 'to it'.

It was decided eventually by the teachers that there was little to be gained from lengthier pursuit of the grammar of the 'indirect object pronouns' (even though the less complicated 'direct object pronouns' had been well received on the whole) since this was not an item which was essential to productive language use in GCSE terms. The two expressions 'lui' and 'leur' were practised in the exercises derived from the course-unit. They were taught otherwise as vocabulary items in the G-E context and internalised as such in the G-I classes, along with their fellow expressions 'me'; 'te'; 'nous', 'vous'. They would be easily recognisable in comprehensions. It was thought that cleverer pupils would work out for themselves how to use all the pronouns accurately and knowledgeably (even the difficult 'leur') if they felt disposed towards applying

them. Equally, cleverer pupils would understand how to avoid the issue by continuing to apply nouns.

Even the 'direct object pronouns', it transpired, had been learnt or internalized as a mechanical formula by the majority, as an item, therefore, which was regarded as a discrete episode, which the majority never applied later in their speaking and writing exercises, no matter how many opportunities presented themselves to do so. The learners had got by hitherto with 'ça' and 'moi' and, despite an interval of apparently "successful" and at least enjoyable teaching and learning, in which certain things seemed to have been made clear and ready for use, that is also what they reverted to later, for the most part.

3.2.14 The teaching agenda and the methodological approach pertaining to the fifth half term in Year Nine (1 May to 30 June 1992)

Unit Five of the course-book presented two principal grammar agendas for study.

ITEM	LOCATION IN COURSE-BOOK
* THE IMPERFECT TENSE (L'IMPARFAIT)	p.152; p.153; p.155; p.157; P.177 (sommaire)
* QUI and QUE (RELATIVE PRONOUNS)	p.165; p.166; p.177 (sommaire)

With regard to the grammatical business of this unit, only the researcher's two top sets were recorded and observed in the spirit of the action research, since her colleagues had no hesitation in judging the 'imperfect tense' to be beyond the scope of the mixed and restricted abilities of the Sets 'Two', and surplus to their GCSE-related needs, since the learners in these settings were already determining themselves as candidates for the Basic Level examination, fundamentally. In any case, the most important 'imperfect tense' items (était; étaient), had already been introduced in the course-book as items in the vocabulary lists, eg p105. The teachers adopted the same line of argument over 'qui' and 'que' knowing that their pupils were unable to apply the English concept and its case-dependency with understanding and would remain ignorant, therefore, of its real mechanics in L2, and unable to distinguish correctly the one term from the other. Their performance in the GCSE would

not be hampered by gaps in their understanding or production of French, caused by failure to come to grips with 'qui' and 'que'.

Accordingly, only the researcher committed herself to this unit's agenda. As will be noted from the passages of transcript given below, she did, in fact, encounter some of the difficulty which her colleagues had anticipated, with the result that she compromised on 'M' and delivered an <u>explicit</u> lesson in TL terms to each set.

The Imperfect Tense taught to the two top sets by 'M' (as M1) and as the main substance of M2).

The Shape of the Lesson

1. The teacher had already written ten sentences on the blackboard, expressing activities which took place in the past. She expected that the pupils would detect the different nuance of 'pastness' which was suggested when specific adverbial phrases were used:

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Aujourd'hui, c'est la discussion à propos du passé. Les verbes! Toujours les verbes! – notre cauchemar. ---- Vous avez dix phrases au tableau noir. Vous allez les étudier, les comprendre, les écrire et vous allez souligner les verbes. Prenez un crayon comme toujours ---. Commençons: . Je suis venu(e) à l'école à huit heures ce matin. Soulignez le verbe! Numéro deux : . Je venais à l'école à huit heures du matin, chaque matin. Soulignez le verbe. Numéro trois : . J'ai vu mon ami vendredi soir. Soulignez le verbe. Numéro quatre : . Je voyais mon ami le vendredi soir, chaque semaine. Soulignez le verbe. Etc.

The classes proceeded through the sentences which were varied in their verb choices and in the context which influenced their meaning, although the first few, as shown, were in the first person singular, which, indeed, usually starts the sequences of examples.

2. The teacher required the class to (a) reflect on the sentences individually and (b) discuss them with a partner, in French if possible ---

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Est-ce que vous comprenez que vous avez plusieurs situations dans ces phrases? Oui? Vous avez la situation d'une fois et vous avez la situation de toujours ou de régulièrement, peut-être une situation 'répétitive', ou une situation incomplète, interrompue. Regardez les phrases en paires (avec un partenaire) et discutez-les.

3. The teacher summarized and sealed the rule :

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Dans la phrase qui nous parle d'une fois, on doit mettre le parfait, le verbe à deux mots. Pour les autres situations : 'répétitives' ou régulières ou intérrompues (incomplètes), on met l'imparfait.

4. The teacher needed to define the make-up of the new tense : the derivation of the stem and the endings - sequence :

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Faites vos paires. Examinez les verbes à l'imparfait. ---------- Donnez-moi tous les verbes dans vos textes qui sont à l'imparfait (c'est à dire, qui ne sont pas au parfait). Je les mets au tableau noir.

In this way the teacher procured representative examples of all the subject pronouns and their appropriate verb parts, eg :

Je voyais (mon ami le vendredi soir, chaque semaine).
Tu venais (à l'école toujours en autobus).
Il faisait (ses devoirs chaque soir avant de manger).
Elle etc.

Then one verb was exploited from first person singular through to third person plural:-

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Prenons un verbe entier à l'imparfait : disons 'venir'. Regardez : J'écris au tableau noir : Je venais à l'école à huit heures du matin. Tu venais à l'école à huit heures du matin. Il venait à l'école à huit heures du matin. Elle venait à l'école à huit heures du matin. Nous venions à l'école à huit heures du matin. Vous veniez à l'école à huit heures du matin. Ils venaient à l'école à huit heures du matin. Elles venaient à l'école à huit heures du matin.

As the teacher proceeded to work with these examples, the lesson developed according to the abbreviated transcript which follows; (the associated contextual details are given in italics) :

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Très bien. Avec un partenaire, considérez ces choses. Qu'est -ce que vous voyez? ----------

Speaker	Text
Teacher	Quels sont les terminaisons *(underlines endings of the examples on the blackboard, in order to signal what she means by 'terminaisons'.)*
	Pupils collectively chant the endings :
Pupils	— ais; ais; ait; ions; iez; aient.
	Because the most difficult step is yet to be taken, the teacher asks :
Teacher	C'est facile ou difficile, ça?
Pupils	C'est très facile.

Teacher	Et maintenant, nous allons trouver la base du verbe à l'imparfait.
	(Draws a chalk line under the verb stem of 'venir' at each point that it features in the demonstration on the blackboard. Egs :
	Je <u>ven</u>ais à l'école à huit heures —
	Tu <u>ven</u>ais ---------- etc.)
Teacher	Voilà, c'est la base. Pour trouver la base du verbe à l'imparfait, il faut chercher l'infinitif. Quel infinitif cherchons-nous ici maintenant?
Pupil	Venir.
Teacher	Oui, c'est ça. *(Writes 'venir' on blackboard).* Merci — et pour trouver la base de l'imparfait, on fait le présent pour 'nous'. Rebecca?
Rebecca	Nous venons.
Teacher	*(Writing on blackboard)* nous venons.
	(Writes further) nous <u>ven</u>ons.
	Et pour le verbe 'manger'?
Pupil	Mangeons.
Teacher	*(Writes on blackboard)* <u>mange</u>ons.
	The teacher and class proceed through a list of verbs in this way. The 'eccentricities' of irregular verbs show up as they go along and it becomes clear, without explanation, why the 'nous' form, rather than the infinitive, serves as the origin of the base for the imperfect tense).
Teacher	Maintenant donnez-moi un verbe entier à l'imparfait. *(The class perform 'manger', then 'faire').*

5. Consolidation

The lesson, which has been abridged above, was later consolidated through exercises taken from TRICOLORE 3 UNIT 5, specifically :

p153, En ce temps-là,

p155, Où étiez-vous vendredi?

p156, Le régime 'Vitagros',

p158, Accident de voiture; Une interrogation; Avez-vous une bonne mémoire?

Some teacher-made worksheets and classroom games (quiz; turn-taking; team games; around the class games, such as 'Random Choice', "Pick a Victim", "Ask Me Another") completed the consolidation in class, before relevant homework was set.

6. The application of 'factor X' in the context of Set One (G-E), learning by M2

The explicit grammar summary was given in English to the G-E class as follows :

"The imperfect tense of the verb is used when the action of the verb took place in the past :

- on a regular or repetitive basis or

- as an incomplete or interrupted action.

Very often it implies 'used to do' or 'was) doing'.
were)

It differs from the 'perfect tense' in that the 'perfect' is used to denote an action which occurred in the past ONCE only and was completed.
The 'imperfect tense' is formed as a single word; the 'perfect tense' is formed as two words in French. The following are the guidelines for forming the 'imperfect' :

(a) Go back to basics : - start with the infinitive,

- find the 'nous' form 'present tense'

- discard the 'nous' and the 'ons' ending

- this gives the stem needed for the
  'imperfect'

(b)   To the stem add the appropriate ending from the list of 'imperfect tense' endings.   These are :

ais   ;   ais   ;   ait   ;   ions   ;   iez   ;   aient
↓   ↓   ↓   ↓   ↓   ↓
je   tu   il,   nous   vous   ils, elles
                    elle,
                    on

(c)   Follow these examples of the imperfect tense :

finir = to finish		prendre = to take		manger = to eat	
nous = finis sons		nous = pren ons		nous = mange ons	
↓					
stem					
je finiss<u>ais</u>	nous finiss<u>ions</u>	je pren<u>ais</u>	nous pren<u>ions</u>	je mange<u>ais</u>	nous mange<u>ions</u>
tu finiss<u>ais</u>	vous finiss<u>iez</u>	tu pren<u>ais</u>	vous pren<u>iez</u>	tu mange<u>ais</u>	vous mange<u>iez</u>
(il finiss<u>ait</u>	(ils finiss<u>aient</u>	(il pren<u>ait</u>	(ils pren<u>aient</u>	(il mange<u>ait</u>	(ils mange<u>aient</u>
(elle	(elles	(elle	(elles	(elle	(elles
(on		(on		(on	

3.2.15 The teaching programmes in Years 10 and 11

It is not the researcher's intention to explain and illustrate the lessons which delivered the content of the French syllabus for the year groups 10 and 11, even though these claimed the bulk of the time allotted to the GCSE course.   The fact of the matter is that the teaching styles remained the same in this two-year context as those demonstrated in the lessons depicted for the Year Nine teaching plan.   Since this is so, since the characteristics and difficulties which were encountered throughout the three years remained constant, and since the researcher, after the February of the Year Ten, remained the only teacher to be involved with the experiment, it would seem reasonable to allow the picture given for the Year Nine to tell the story, representatively, of the methodological approach in practice.   In any case, the syllabus-contents for the Years Ten and

Eleven repeat the content of the Year Nine programme, which has been described already. In order to confirm this, however they are sketched in summary as follows :

Year Ten	Year Eleven

How to form Questions *
The negatives *
The tenses : Imperfect)
        Perfect) Revision
        Future   )
Object Pronouns *
	Comparatives and Superlatives *
	Emphatic Pronouns * *
	Relative Pronouns
	Definition Adjectives and
	Pronouns * *
	Expressions of Possession

The items marked with an asterisk posed no real problem for the teaching by 'M'. Other items were more difficult because they were not recognised as language concepts by the learners of either faction and some (marked * *) were given scant treatment. If it is true that learners refer to their L1, in order to identify concepts or, in any case, go to seek knowledge when understanding eludes them (see Chapter Two, Zones 2, 3, 4), then it must be acknowledged that these processes will have been activated by the learners of the researcher's Sets One, not least of the class G-I. However, relatively little understanding is achieved nowadays by the route which references L2 with L1, since the teaching of English (certainly in the researcher's school) no longer is done analytically and structurally, ie grammatically. The exercise in grammatical analysis of the GOLDING passage from "Lord of the Flies" (1954), observed briefly in Chapter Four, and contained in the Appendices, bears this out.

3.2.16 The teaching methods (M1 and M2) in practice; summary and conclusion

In deciding to make the base method for the experiment 'M' and to elaborate it to 'M'+X in order to enable a contrastive study of teaching styles, the teachers whom it concerned understood that they pledged themselves to follow a number of agreed rules and strategies in order to trial aspects of the methodological ideology of the National Curriculum.

-     Teaching by 'M' involved :
  - *   teaching wholly in the target language
  - *   conveying grammatical agendas by implicit means, such that, whenever possible, grammar went unexplained, at best even undeclared.

- Using 'factor X' involved :
    * adding concise grammar summary to lessons which have dealt with a grammatical agenda; summarizing explanations in L1 are delivered to designated classes in talk and in writing.
- Understanding grammar involved :
    * accepting and addressing the *inclusive notion* of grammar that is represented by or implied in the agendas which the teachers selected for treatment in the action research.

<u>NB!</u>   It has been observed that this rationale for 'M' has been adhered to in the action research described in this chapter-section in relation to the smaller matters of grammar.   These, it has been seen, have been integrated with the L2's vocabulary and idiom, as part of its natural characteristic, therefore. *However, the tenses-agenda proved too large and too complicated for treatment by 'M' in its original description.*   When the tenses-agenda became too overpowering and defied the withholding of explanation, in particular from the (G-I) classes, the teaching strategy M1 was made more elaborate in order to allow tentative explanation, but always the delivery of matter was made in L2 and never with written notes.   This concession was established, the more the agenda centred on verbs and tenses and the closer it approached the imperfect tense.   Without some form of explanation, clarification and tense-differentiation, the verbs-syllabus threatened to become irretrievably frustrated and lost to the learner.   The learners are typically placed in the position of having this convoluted syllabus thrust upon them within the limited space of their Year Nine curriculum, which offers them the very antithesis of immersion learning (3 x 50 mins per week!) in which to come to terms with their FL challenge.   Somehow the PRESENT, PERFECT and FUTURE tenses had to be kept clear from confusion, since the understanding and production of meaning, crucial to the communicative purpose of the learners' course, are often influenced by these features of time.   The IMPERFECT is usually more easily dispendable at this level.   Learners acquire the useful items 'avait/avaient/était/étaient' as vocabulary, in any case, and the cleverest learners maximise on their learning opportunity in this context as in others, in their characteristic way.   However, since the 'imperfect' may not be omitted entirely from the schedule, it provides potentially 'the last straw' to the tenses-related grammar.   Quite simply : occupied at this level of their learning, and with no diagnostic understanding of the composition and function of their L1 to advise and sustain them in their L2 endeavours, youngsters may manage to distinguish the three most distinct

concepts of time (PRESENT, PAST/PERFECT and FUTURE) and perceive the need to apply them in order to negotiate a temporal context for a communication. However the appearance of the 'imperfect tense' frustrates the convenient logic of the time grammar, demanding a more refined perception in the L2 than the learner has acquired in L1. The methodologist, working to GCSE, must proceed with the teaching brief carefully and fulfil the teacher's responsibilities sympathetically with the learners' needs and difficulties in mind.

It will have been observed from the foregoing representative summaries of lessons featuring M1 and M2, that certain staple strategies were used by the teachers commonly for the purpose of conveying their lessons. These are included among the approaches applied, which are summed up as follows :

- reading with emphasis/reading repetitively,
- writing emphatically and with applied coding on the blackboard,
- sentence - work around the class; sentences given by the teacher, exploiting the grammar-parts; similar sentences invented by the pupils,
- variety of exercises from the course-book and from the teachers' worksheets,
- games played by the pupils; fun strategies; activities with a visual appeal; action-based exercises; higher order role play,
- time given for alternative classroom management : individual/independent study; resource-based study; peer tutoring; pair-work and group-work –
  –- etc,
- variations of 'therapy' : multiple choice exercises, open ended/closed or direct requirement exercises; gap filling tasks; course-related materials; teacher-made materials; eclectic materials; learner-made materials; materials related with the four learning disciplines; exercises in differentiation of agenda-point,
- use of non-verbal language : body and face expression, accompanying teacher-talk, emphasizing and cueing the teaching matter,
- use of opposites, contrasts, analogies, similarities etc,
- use of grammar summary in L1 for the G-E sets whose brief was to learn by M2.

For the most part the participant teachers understood what was meant by the 'methodological divide' which was designed for the action research. They were clear in theory about the requirements and implications of teaching by 'M' and

about those involved with the factor X as the potential ie hypothetical value added principle, which converted M or M1 (G-I) into M2 (G-E).

Generally, drills and exercises, exposure to practice based on example, were a common feature of 'M'. With G-E classes, the colleague who employed the device of explicit grammar summary in L1 (factor X), usually preferred to sprinkle disjointed, fragmentary explanations in L1 throughout her lessons, rather than equate with the researcher and attach the agreed formula-résumé of a grammatical content at the end of a lesson or set of lessons in which grammar had featured.

The researcher and colleague 1a (but particularly perhaps the researcher herself, as the more expansive teacher) often demonstrated through their practical work in the classroom the difficulties involved in 'implicit' teaching. *Manifestly, their efforts to perform this teaching mode often took diversions into 'structured' teaching targeting a recognisable grammatical agenda, albeit without there being the formal attachments of spoken and written explanations in L1 terms.* Moreover, the team taught its syllabus by TRICOLORE, itself at most a compromise structural/communicative course, a ground-breaker marketed for the mid-1980s (its various sections published between 1982 and 1985), rather than fully a product of the 'communicative' language teaching movement. The researcher considers that the nature of the TRICOLORE course had an influence upon the teachers' whole approach to their lessons during the period of their joint participation in the action research, particularly since they required to use common materials in order to work (teach and assess) consistently and uniformly for a common purpose, which had been explicitly designed and agreed. The materials which the department possessed at the outset, and in any case used in order to operate its main school curriculum, were contained in this course. Indeed, the same course was currently in use in the Middle School/High School 'pyramid' and there seemed to be some advantage in the AR pupils' being already familiar with it as part of their ongoing Modern Language experience as they made their transfer from their respective Middle Schools to the High School in September 1991.

If the AR teachers were by training and experience structure-dependent, this highly organised teaching course, with its positive attitudes to grammar, arguably increased the sense of challenge implied in their efforts to discharge their agenda by means of 'M'. One stage later, resourcing its pupils' needs in the context of the National Curriculum, the department has provisionally

invested its trust and its capitation in the course AVANTAGE, which in its nature and function is very different from TRICOLORE. One can only speculate as to whether the AR team's articulation of 'M' would have been different if it had been underpinned by an alternative course such as AVANTAGE. However that may be, and whatever the difficulties surrounding her action research, the researcher claims to have demonstrated within the compass of her work that even structured teaching can be carried out fully and effectively in the target language medium.

In spite of all the potential complications, the researcher and her colleagues made a clear and positive effort to differentiate between teaching styles. Their attention to this differentiation, their experience of putting their selected styles into practice in their classrooms and their observations of the resulting effects have all influenced their comments and commentaries in the discussions which concerned their efforts and which took place at intervals during the course of the 'fully manned' action research, namely from early September 1991 until late February 1993.

Taking into account the points of the foregoing explanation and discussion of the AR teaching methods, the researcher ventures to claim that the action research team, having set out on a defined methodological mission to exercise two teaching styles in a contrastive way, managed to give a life-span to their proposed experiment and discerned certain characteristics in relation to their pupils' performances. Since the researcher was able to continue the action research to its foreseen natural end, it might be argued that the conclusion was a successful one in that the fundamental intention was realised.

The forthcoming chapter (Chapter Four) unfolds the results of the contrastive exercise which was carried out. Before that, the final sections of this present chapter reveal the attitudes, reactions and perceptions of the teachers and learners who populated the action research and put its principle into effect.

3.3   **SECTION THREE : The Attitudes And Perspectives Of The Teachers**

3.3.1   Introduction

Certain observations have already been made at intervals in this thesis on some of the matters to be discussed in this chapter-section.   Quite particularly, the researcher has commented on the early reactions of her colleagues to the action research in which she wished to involve them.   These are described in Section One of this chapter as being difficulties which conspired to taper the action research and give it a triangular form.   Also, as the researcher has explained, she made herself accountable to the pupils of the year group concerned by declaring that dual methods would be put into action for the GCSE course, which would run between the years 1991 and 1994.   Via letters home, parents were also informed.   All such announcements, including the explanation given to the school's senior management team, were justified on the grounds of the National Curriculum's requiring of teachers and learners a more dedicated engagement with the communicative teaching method and in particular their commitment to the all-purpose use of the target language.   No objections could be placed in the path of the AR team's application of the 'New Generation's Methodology' (ULEAC's term 1995/6), which indeed had been at least toyed with in classrooms all over the country for some time.   Accordingly, there was no formal objection to the methodological proposal in principle, even though there was no practical enablement of it at school level, as the discussion in Section One has explained.   Thus the way was prepared for the teaching team to set to work with their research classes in September 1991, teaching French to GCSE through the use of the method 'M'.

It was, indeed, the enactment of the selected action research principle which stirred reactions in the hearts and minds of the clientèle who served it.   Their collective   disposition   was   monitored   through   discussion   and   through questionnaires at regular intervals during the course of the experiment.

The researcher was able to draw on this evidence, which filled her diaries over the three years on the action research, to inform the subsequent sections of this present chapter.

The process of systematically entering her observations and transcripts has given her access to the following resources:

(i)   the researcher's own observations on the development of the project;

(ii)   the transcripts of the audio recordings of discussions;

(iii) the researcher's analyses of the questionnaires given at times to replace recorded discussions.

The evidence was collected strategically at calendar points during the shared first half of the course.   (Unless otherwise stated, ie in the instances of questionnaires' having been used and analysed instead, the following commentaries are based on the evidence allowed by the audio recordings of discussions).

3.3.2   **Stage One : anticipating the action research**

* **7 May 1991**   (This unit derives from the preparations which were in the making for the action research to begin in the September, on the department's admission of the year-intake from the Middle Schools and also, in relation to this, from the department's broader need to come to terms with the National Curriculum for Modern Languages).

The Head of Department introduced to her staff a file for each person, equipped with

(i)   reference sheets containing excerpts from the NC policy, namely those which were to be at the crux of the action research : the use of TL; implicit grammar teaching,

(ii)   an explanation of the methodological experiment,

(iii) the rationale on the action research which had been passed ie allowed by the school's senior management staff.

Some discussion of the National Curriculum and the action research ensued and the reactions of the ML staff were articulated, as the following paragraphs describe.

In the first instance there was shock.   Some individuals admitted fear about what the experiment seemed to imply for them : TL use and the rigid implementation of M1 and M2.   Gradually three of the four teachers conceded interest in the challenge of the action research as a preparation or 'dry run' for the National ML Curriculum, which they understood they would have to address in identical terms in a formal way, inescapably, officially as from the September of 1994.   Thus the action research became an opportunity for exploring,

practising and familiarising themselves with their NC brief. At this time of initial discussion, the implicit method already proved to be a matter which caused considerable concern to the AR teachers who, although they had used it in the past in a fairly desultory way, had never before been accountable for employing it to the degree envisaged for the experiment and for their teaching thereafter.

* **6 June 1991** The three members of the department, who accepted the action research brief at the last meeting, remained with this positive decision but remained also very anxious about 'M', concerned particularly about what this implied for their abilities as teachers and for the performance and prospects of their pupils. As a result of this general feeling, the researcher arranged for some in-service support in order to plan, prepare and co-ordinate the agenda and the methodological approach to it for the duration of the experiment.

3.3.3 **Stage Two : the start of the action research (Year Nine)**

* **2 September 1991** Anxiety prevailed concerning M1. Still further discussion proved necessary in order to establish the sense of confidence which was needed for the start. In addition, the researcher had to establish certain basic principles regarding M2 in order to try to co-ordinate the teachers' approaches to the delivery of grammar summary. The following excerpt is transcribed from the relevant audio recording :

" --- every time that grammar in any measurable form has been the feature of a lesson, sum it up briefly in English and allow brief notes to be made in exercise books. Grammar summary in English should also be made at the end of each completed unit in the case of G-E classes, whereas G-I classes should be given a variety of practice exercises for consolidation purposes."

The teachers agreed to record their grammar - containing lessons, in whole or in part, representatively, in the case of each unit of the course. They were reminded of the strategies by which they would be encouraged to provide feedback : discussions, questionnaires and written comments. At this very early stage of the business, the mood among the teachers was one of anxiety based on doubt and uncertainty. There was the expectation that self confidence would increase with time and experience, and as the novelty and the initial tensions of the project wore off.

In order to effect maximum consistency and a state of co-ordination throughout the assessment procedures, the trawling of results and the analyses of outcomes, and in order to avoid giving her colleagues the impression of their being burdened with a mass of special marking to do in addition to the special teaching, the researcher established the marking and the interpretation of the marking as her own responsibility. In any case, she would then encounter the pupils' performances at first hand, as she focused on them and appraised them. The other teachers would get their classes' results fed back to them.

3.3.4 End of October 1991 : the discussion concerning the work on TRICOLORE 3 Unit 1

The teachers' observations included the following points :

- It was proving difficult to adhere loyally to one teaching style and not take easier and varied routes to target.

- Whatever the design, purpose, importance and justification for the process, one was always seriously concerned about the product.

- It was proving difficult to teach one's agenda, practically, by inductive means, using exercises and games.

- It was proving difficult to sustain the teaching by 'M', ie keeping grammar covert and using the TL for all purposes.

- The grammatical agenda attached to this unit was a formidable one (perfect tense, 'devoir' and the negatives). The pupils' inability to grasp underlying concepts, their lack of English language awareness and their lack of good study skills were perceived to be obstacles standing in the way of progress. The perfect tense itself, in French, is a massive grammatical challenge filled with worrying sub-challenges like the fact of the auxiliaries 'avoir' or 'être', the rule about which one to apply, the rules about subject-related agreement with 'être' and object agreement with 'avoir' (later), the regular verbs and their various conjugation - determined past participles, the irregular verbs and their irregular past participles etc. To deliver all of these agendas in the subtle terms of 'M', in the TL, to learners who had no cognition of the equivalent agendas in English, proved an awesome prospect for the teachers and acutely difficult to effect in reality.

The teachers had attempted to teach this matter by example, exploration and the processes of applying analogy and building understanding through invoking inference - making and pattern recognition.

- It was proving very difficult to teach 'M' as M1 without involving factor X because, without that additional recourse one felt one's responsibilities keenly and worried about the limitations that its noninclusion might imply for the learners. Whenever any difficulty occurred, one was tempted to bend the rules - but did not! In fact, the principle of recording the lessons provided a means of focusing one's control over the selected methodology. Moreover, time and practice brought experience and a greater facility for the practitioners involved with the restricted and restrictive M1.

The teachers made two further observations:

(i) The pupils were supposed to have covered the perfect tense particularly, but also 'devoir' and the 'negatives', as part of their Middle School French syllabus, yet they had no memory of these items, therefore no initial experience with which to connect subsequent revisitations.

(ii) As a year group the pupils were not nearly so advanced in their learning, nor at all so positive in their attitudes and outlooks as other Year Nine groups were, typically. It has already been explained in earlier stages of this thesis that this untypical year group transferred to the High School without any form of official evaluation describing their aptitudes and their school performances. Certainly, no such data was available at the times of the researcher's inquiry.

Understandably, in their discussions, the AR teachers explored a number of avenues which would account for the nature of the year group and the problems experienced in teaching them. Since the team's early deliberations, the impression of the year group's different and more negative disposition to their school life and to their responsibilities at school has been borne out in three ways:

1. In a discussion conducted by the researcher with the school's long-serving Key Stage Four Co-ordinator and Pastoral Head (Appendix D), it was possible to observe the year group in a perspective with other previous year groups, drawing upon the colleague's long experience of dealing with them, his

immediate native knowledge of their historical, social and economic background and his being privy to all the information concerning them of a pastoral and cross-curricular nature. (Transcribed excerpts from this discussion are placed in Appendix D).

2. The year group's QSL (Quality of Student Learning) test, analysed by the University of Newcastle, with whose research team the school works on a regular basis, with a view to advancing the interests of its learners, produced an unusually negative analysis in the case of this year group. (See Appendix E).

3. A member of the school's Senior Management Team, conducting an 'Aiming High' project, uncovered retrospectively data which corroborated the pessimistic reasoning which permeated the discussion on this year group. (See Appendix F).

Having aired their thoughts on their first experience of using the methods and having articulated their first reactions accordingly, the teachers agreed to keep an open mind for the second stage of the experiment, namely:-

3.3.5 **Christmas 1991 : the discussion concerning the work on TRICOLORE 3 Unit 2**

This discussion focused on the delivery of the future tense by 'M'. The teachers emerged from their exercise largely dissatisfied with their efforts and concerned that this important grammatical agenda had not been well delivered to their pupils, therefore not well conceptualised by them in their turn. The researcher herself admitted to having experienced unexpected difficulty in transacting the grammar satisfactorily by 'M' in the TL medium. Accordingly, she feared that both of her Sets One had been affected by this difficulty and that Set One (G-E), taught by M2, must have gained an advantage over Set One (G-I) on being given a grammar summary in English (the factor X). The researcher's concern was repeated by colleague 1a, who also employed M1. At the same time, colleague 1b, co-user with the researcher of M2, echoed the researcher's sense of relief in having been allowed recourse to factor X with her class. The shared frustration over the matter of teaching the future tense through 'M' derived from three principal conditions, as follows:

1. The future tense is an item which lends itself perfectly to structured, didactic teaching. It was difficult resisting resorting to that style in this instance, having used it so often in the past effectively and confidently, by methods involving the application of factor X to a greater or lesser degree.

2. The teachers were finding that their own backgrounds as eclectic practitioners got in the way of their desire to teach with loyalty to the agreed AR method. Because of this they were finding it difficult to feel positive about the lessons they were giving in the context of the future tense and in other contexts. Repeatedly, each teacher had to remind herself of the method formula and in particular of the ethic relating to 'M', in order to keep herself focused.

3. With every lesson taught, they were discovering the complex reality of implicit teaching. As practitioners in modern times, they thought that they had already made it a familiar concept in their work. However, when faced with it on a large scale as the exclusive and inescapable context of their classroom remit, they began to understand what it implied for their own teaching skills and for their pupils' learning powers. The teachers shared a clear vision of the pupils' vulnerability in the classroom as the receivers of their ML syllabus, delivered either exclusively or largely through 'M'. They were in their teachers' hands for good or ill. Accordingly, the feeling of responsibility on the part of the teachers was more intense than usual.

The researcher's positive response to her colleagues' statements of diffidence was based in her having appraised the recording of their lessons in which the future tense was delivered. These, in her opinion, had succeeded in two ways :

1. They had seemed successful as instances of good practice featuring 'M'.
2. They had seemed to leave the pupils satisfied with their lessons and apparently equipped with some knowledge of the matter taught.

The teachers' discussion disclosed their accumulating awareness of the responsibilities of teachers in every context and of the relative complacency with which one normally goes about one's work, accepting the learner's situation within the context of this work without undue soul-searching. Quite abruptly the experiment had produced a different perspective on this. The enigma of the learner and the learning process was suddenly foremost. Discussion continued on the perceived attitudes of the learners in their pursuit of their ML subject-studies:

(i) That there seem to be "right times" in the development of learners for certain items of their syllabus to be acceptable for learning to take place, therefore these are also the right times for the teaching to be done. These were

discussed as "points of preparedness or readiness" for the internalization of certain concepts (by any method).

(ii) That when one is not in concurrence with such "right times for learning", learners simply do not learn and it does not matter how vigorously they have been taught. Through their not actively examining the material for the learning, they do not apply their long term memory to the matter. Consequently the lessons become ineffective and gaps are incurred in the necessarily incremental yet accumulative and inter-linked syllabus, with the result that progress and performance are frustrated. This thwarting of the objectives causes vexation for the teacher, whose complaint is centred in the search for a convenient equation in which TEACHING equals LEARNING. Instead, teachers so often put the question : "If I've taught, it, why don't they know it?"

Such concerns, it was felt, may arguably be worsened through the application of 'M' and the absence of factor X. The group was encouraged by the researcher to proceed cautiously, well prepared and rehearsed, teaching empathetically, always with regard to the needs of the learners in relation to the lesson targets and using their experience gained from their efforts with the action research thus far, since this would surely inform this work and make their relationship with 'M' easier and more cheerful.

3.3.6 **Spring Term 1992 : the discussion concerning the work on TRICOLORE 3 Unit 3**
The third phase of the Year Nine work was designed as a tense-consolidation programme and contained no new agenda. It was anticipated, therefore, that it would prove undemanding and that the teachers would be able to use this stage as the opportunity for experimenting freely with 'M' and for shedding some of their tensions about it. However, this was not to be the case. Indeed, their concerns intensified for the reasons given below:

- The pupils were unable to distinguish clearly among the tenses (present, perfect, future). The French grammar was proving to be a very difficult concept and their experience of English (L1) gave them no basis or point of reference from which to appraise this syllabus. Indeed, they had never had the syllabus in its English format raised to their awareness in their English subject classrooms. Their English was the sum of the L1 that they had accrued as young individuals over their time since birth, living unequal lives in unequal circumstances. In current times, the classroom activities, which characterized their pursuit of English as a subject, relied upon this accoutrement as the medium to fulfil them.

-   The learning of a foreign language was manifested as an irksome task, which many pupils sought to avoid taking on. However, the teachers conceded that, whereas the programme of the teaching and the learning was not disproportionate with the GCSE requirement, the AR team had established a too vigorous, too time-consuming and therefore too onerous assessment plan. The researcher agreed to screen and adjust the assessment requirements for the future stages of the course.

-   The matter of the importance of a method to classroom success arose in the discussion. Given the teachers' quite pessimistic feelings about 'M', explored earlier, it might have been argued that the teaching of the syllabus purely by 'M' could be deemed responsible for low performance, a greater reluctance to work and a noticeable lack of comprehension on the part of the learners. However, in the researcher's case, the class Set One (G-I), taught by M1, was perceived to be more homogeneous and to demonstrate a more positive and a more cheerful disposition to the subject than its counterpart, Set One (G-E), taught by M2. This and related observations caused the teachers to speculate that a specific method may, after all, have little to do with pupils' success in a subject. Certainly, pupils' positive attitudes and their state of motivation were vital factors affecting their performance and prospects. This much was clear, but less clear was the relationship of a TEACHING METHOD to PUPILS' MOTIVATION and to their effecting good LEARNING STRATEGIES and producing successful OUTCOMES.

Having two classes involved in the contrastive methodological study, and having already perceived a difference in the degrees of optimism within their attitudes to the subject, the researcher was better placed than her colleagues to reflect further on this matter. She observed that motivation was apparently more robust in classes which enjoyed good relationships with each other and with their teacher (such as in the case of the researcher's G-I class). Yet she was sure that the positive, beneficial relations did not depend on the choice of a method (in this case 'M' as M1) but rather on the individual types, the whole group chemistry and the effects which such factors produced upon the teacher, bringing the best attitudes, reactions and dynamics out of her and her charges. Thus the AR teachers concluded that

EFFECTIVE TEACHING SATISFACTORY LEARNING	is reflected in due to
positive, whole-class in which class members share	RELATIONSHIPS MOTIVATION

Significantly, despite the researcher's personal optimism where her own brief of trialling the AR methods was concerned, there was general pessimism among her colleagues on their awareness of the extraordinarily complicated task of delivering their lessons largely by means of 'M' to the least cheerful and least committed year group within their experience at the school - and to the lower ability sets within that year group!   On this note, the team approached their work on the course's fourth unit.

3.3.7 **Easter 1992 : The discussions concerning the work on TRICOLORE 3 Unit 4** were conducted through the medium of a questionnaire when, at this point at the end of the fourth half term, namely Easter 1992, no opportunity was found to hold and record a live discussion on how this stage of the work had proceeded and what its effects had been upon the AR personnel.   Through this device the researcher aimed to discover the following:

1. her colleagues' (a) satisfactions and (b) concerns regarding the present unit of work and the assessment associated with it;
2. whether her colleagues continued to understand the methods to be used for the action research;
3. whether they in fact continued to use these methods;
4. what, if any, problems they may have encountered since the last discussion;
5. what further observations they may be in a position to make about their pupils' learning;
6. what they could say about their pupils' performance and progress;
7. which items of the teaching agenda they had taught best and worst by their selected method, and why they perceived this to be the case.

The teachers' observations were recorded in writing and they are summed up in the following points:

Referencing the questions	The teachers' responses :
1a. The satisfactions	Assessment was now satisfactory due to the pruning down of the assessment programme. There was a more cheerful response from the pupils, due to the removal of part of their work-load. It was hoped that this would lead to heightened motivation and an increase in their interest in their work and results. More effective teaching would be possible if individual and collective strengths and weaknesses could be more easily diagnosed and maximised or repaired appropriately. It was thought that the pupils' test-weariness could be remedied eventually, if caution over the assessment agenda was sustained. This might have a positive knock-on effect on their general outlook and prospects. The teachers reported an improved performance in 'reading' and 'listening'.
1b. The concerns	The skills of 'writing' and 'speaking' remained worryingly disappointing. There was a lack of pride, care and thoroughness in the pupils' presentation of their work, as a general rule. French was perceived by many pupils as having become too difficult. German, on the other hand, seemed very easy. (The course was still in its initial stages). There were undercurrent plans to effect large scale defection, at 'option' time, from French to German.
2. The understanding of the methods	Colleagues 1a and 1b claimed to understand what was required in terms of their teaching methods. (Their interpretations of their methods and, in particular, colleague 1b's interpretation in practice of M2 and the application of factor X have already been alluded to in Section Two of this chapter). However, they felt obliged to confess that, as job-share colleagues acting as one full teacher in terms of the action research, they sometimes suffered some disorientation within the context of their planning of their shared brief. Colleague 2, teaching German to each of the two top sets (G-I and G-E), admitted to experiencing confusion in her understanding and use of M1 and M2, indeed in her ability to command and control 'M'. The reasons for her difficulty have been explained in the previous section.

3.	The application of the methods	The teachers (except for colleague 2) were satisfied that they were continuing to put the methods into action according to the requirements of the action research plan. However their comments implied that some compromising of the theoretical "vision" of the AR method formula had occurred in the practice of it.

The teachers reported that the difficulties of teaching by 'M' increased all the time. They concurred that some grammar matters were more easily taught by 'M' than others.

However, the teachers disagreed on the actual items which fell into the categories of (a) viable by 'M' and (b) resistant to 'M'. For example, of the two G-I teachers, colleague 1a branded pronouns, adjectives and plurals (the whole of the Unit Four agenda) as being beyond the power of 'M', whereas the researcher felt that she had encountered little problem with these elements. On the other hand, the researcher, as the only teacher other than colleague 2 to teach by both M1 and M2, and trying to keep the basic teaching by 'M' parallel in both classes, sensed that in her concern and search for parity, she tended to deal with the implied grammatical agenda in an explicit way. (This feature of the researcher's performance has been alluded to in Section Two of this chapter). In discussing this tendency, the researcher resolved to remain conscious of it and to try to remedy it.

Colleague 2 articulated her awareness of the prevailing difficulty of using 'M' and the TL medium to teach the first year rudiments of a highly structured language like German, in which the early learners' lack of knowledge, experience and acquisition of the FL depresses the process of working in terms of 'M'.

It became clear that this very factor, as well as the teacher's own limited experience as a class-room practitioner, could account for her difficulty in differentiating between M1 and M2. |
| 4. | The problems prevailing and emerging since the previous discussion and | All of the difficulties which had previously been alluded to in connection with the earlier units prevailed : issues concerning PERFORMANCE, RELATIONSHIPS, MOTIVATION etc. |
| 5. | The continuing discussion | The learners' general lack of enthusiasm and their reluctance to take responsibility for their own learning continued to impede progress with the year group as a whole. |

The bright pupils might be perceived to appreciate analysis of the matter being taught to them. There was not the will to discover things for themselves, particularly in the cases of the lower status pupils.

At best, pupils seemed to have short term objectives only.

Pupils nowadays were not broadly accustomed to coping with the learning requirements which typified FL pursuit : the systematic, "drip-feed" learning of vocabulary, idiomatic and grammatical expressions; the systematic practice of the language skills in order to enhance and streamline performance. They were preoccupied with the business of attending to the assignments and course-work which structured their commitments in other subject areas. There was, in any case, a universal propensity for POSTPONEMENT of their work so that deadlines for submissions became confused and serious work congestion became a problem. At every stage of this process of neglect, many pupils demonstrated particular negligence towards their Modern Languages studies. Indeed, their FL needs became an irritant to them at this time, as they grappled with their other subject concerns, particularly those based in assignments and continuous assessment.

6. Comments on pupils' performance and progress

From the teachers' discussion of this point, the following pattern of numbers of pupils in each class making discernible progress emerged :

	G - I	G - E
	M1	M2
Researcher	8/28	4/28
Colleagues 1a, 1b respectively	2/28	7/28
Colleague 2	0/28	3/28
Total	10/84	14/84

Significantly, in French, the researcher was noticing greater success with the G-I class than with the G-E class, whereas colleagues 1a, 1b and 2 were reporting the opposite effect. One recalls the characteristic traits of their teaching styles, since these could have a bearing on the tendencies shown :

1a, teaching by M1, adhered to the principle
1b, teaching my M2, reinvented factor X
2, teaching by both methods, was ambivalent in their use.

The responses to this two part question may be presented as follows :

7. The items taught best and worst

	BEST	WORST
Researcher (M1 and M2)	NOUNS PRONOUNS ADJECTIVES	PERFECT TENSE FUTURE TENSE
Colleague 1a (M1)	PRONOUNS	NOUNS ADJECTIVES
Colleague 1b (M2)	NO GRAMMAR SOME TOPICS	NOUNS ADJECTIVES
Colleague 2 (M1 and M2)	TIME VERB ENDINGS	GENDER

With many impressions forming and now consolidating their opinions on the issues connected with the methods being tested, the team moved on to Unit 5 and the new grammatical agenda, from which the relevant discussion emerged.

3.3.8 Whitsun 1992 : the discussion concerning the work on TRICOLORE 3 Unit 5

Since it was thought that very little had changed, and that any commentary that could be made had been made already, little fresh discussion was set up at this stage. Unit Five of the course book was the final unit of the course-stage and of the year's work. Its agenda was the 'imperfect tense' which, having an easily definable structure and only one exception to its general rule, was in theory easy to teach as a structure, even by 'M'. However, the rationale for its use, the logic surrounding the questions 'WHY USE IT?' and 'WHEN TO USE IT?' provoked considerable frustrations for learners. The researcher felt satisfied that her own lessons on this item had been successful, in that her pupils had

seemed to cope well with it, (even though subsequently they very rarely applied this tense except for 'avai(s)(t)' and 'étai(s)(t)'). On the other hand, colleagues 1a and 1b found that their pupils rejected the task of learning yet another tense. The resistance was strong and caused the colleagues to press for still further adjustments to the project.

3.3.9 Concluding the Year Nine research stage

The discussion held in the sixth half term of Year Nine, ie in June/July 1992

In view of the first year's work on the methodology experiment, and after consolidating the results of the assessment which had been applied systematically over the period of the Year 9 course, 'M' seemed to emerge as a viable proposition for use with upper set pupils, whereas it could be seen to lead to a degree of misery for the lower status sets and for the teachers responsible for them. It was agreed that this method asks a great deal of the teachers' expertise and could exclude the learners from a full share of the classroom action, preventing them from assuming a real role in the interactive teaching/learning partnership which is judged to be desirable in the modern classrooms and is at the heart of the modern methodological ideal.

The AR teachers were reminded by the researcher that all teaching, even the least direct teaching, is essentially a process of raising matter to the learners' consciousness. This, therefore, applied to 'M', whether in its pure form of M1 or in its extended form of M2.

The researcher and her top sets, though these were not perceived to be typical of sets of this status, had so far withstood the challenges set by the project and had come through with the methodological formula arguably still intact. On the team's considering the performances of these two top sets, it appeared that M1, delivered to Set One (G-I), had enabled INTUITIVE learning and unpremeditated, naturally expressive competence and performance to develop. On the other hand, M2, delivered to Set One (G-E), seemed to have encouraged the CONSCIOUS production of the foreign language and a cautious, considered competence and performance, which focused on HOW to express a message rather than on the actual COMMUNICATION of it. It was tempting to conclude at this stage that, of the two top sets, the G-I set was intuitively better at French and the G-E set was consciously better at grammar. Indeed, the observation over time of the learners' developments, as these would be mirrored

in their performance results and in their rates of applying grammar correctly, would endorse this conclusion, or prove it false, or indicate curves of change.

NB   At this stage of the action research, at which one year of the three prospected years of the run of the methodology trial reached completion, the researcher and her teaching sets were arguably in a strong position to proceed to the next stages.   On the other hand, the relationship of the 'Sets Two' with the research activity was quite seriously weakened.   At this point, furthermore, the German contribution and that of the researcher's Sets Four (a silent adjunct in this debate so far!) fell away from their positions in the experiment, as has been explained in Section One of this chapter.   The research progressed into its second phase, namely as the work to be done in French with the Sets One and 'Two' in Year Ten.

3.3.10 Stage Three : The action research in Year Ten
October 1992 : the discussion concerning the work on TRICOLORE 4A Unit 1

During this period, the work brief addressed the grammar of QUESTIONS, ADJECTIVES and the INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS (Qui, Que, Dont) in addition to a revision plan of the previous year's remit.   The pupils' attitudes in this opening stage had been carefully observed by the teachers and the impressions which were gained informed their subsequent discussions, which were recorded and analysed in the usual way.

The teachers, in fact, remarked on the further decline in their pupils' attitudes and performances, which had become quickly evident as the school resumed after the Summer break.   The teachers expressed acute disappointment over matters of attitude which they listed as follows :

- lack of concentration in class;
- lack of value/respect for the subject;
- lack of willingness to learn;
- resistance to their responsibilities in the subject;
- general complacency;
- failure to retain any learning from the previous year's work;
- lack of awareness; lack of ability to perceive patterns and discriminate between what is correct and what is incorrect;
- lack of 'hunch knowledge';
- inability to apply the 'laws' of analogy;

- inability to deal with more than one item (structure) at a time, eg an adjectival *agreement and a tense requirement*.

It was felt that the pupils had put their minds out of reach of the agenda and, therefore, of the teachers. Colleague 1a (teaching by M1) posed the question : "Well, just how <u>do</u> you teach them?" And on the matter of adjectival agreements, she touched upon one of the difficulties : "It's all very well to say this is masculine, this is feminine, this is plural — as long as they are 'regulars'. But as soon as you get into the 'irregulars'— I found it impossible to actually teach them. I couldn't do it by the method (M1)".

By this stage of their experience of using M1 and M2, the teachers felt equipped to take issue with the principle of 'M' as a viable and justifiable means of teaching a foreign language. Colleagues 1a and 1b doubted whether any practitioner, however gifted or committed, could do full justice to their brief through the medium of 'M', as defined by the researcher in accordance with the perceived National Curriculum ideal. The teachers discerned one of the greatest difficulties with 'M' to be latent in its mercurial, potentially unstable nature, *which made it vulnerable to the variables and the imponderables which beset it* in their classrooms. The researcher recognised and experienced to some extent the problems discussed but, unlike her colleagues, she was not discouraged by the difficulties which were emerging, specifically the problems of resourcing 'M', of planning lessons flexibly and imaginatively in order to structure 'M', of using the foreign language flexibly at a number of registers and ranges, and cunningly enough to get the matter of the agenda across to pupils as well as soliciting the TL responses or the appropriate non-verbal responses from them. However, even at the early stage of this second year's experimental work, the researcher had become aware of changes which were occurring in the situation of the G-I, G-E performances. The following is extracted from the teacher's discussion at the time and refers to the researcher's own case and top set classes :

Speaker	Text
Researcher	"We (teachers) feel that we are trying to prove whether the teaching method 'M' is going to produce any measurable difference (to performance in the subject). What we proved (in my own case) last year was that it didn't work to disadvantage — The present 1OK1 (G-I Set 1) produced much better French than 1OG1 (G-E Set 1) and they had no English input. The other set at the same time coped better with the mechanics. <u>But not this time, it seems, and I don't know quite why!</u> I am not trying to prove at the outset whether one method is better or not. I'm trying to prove whether the presence or absence of English makes any difference to the development of pupils' COMPETENCE and PERFORMANCE. The question of superiority can be discussed, once the importance or significance of the English component has been established. To this end, I'm not looking just at the teaching method. I'm looking also at the learning styles of the pupils."

The discussion included a clarification of the method 'M' and of what was considered 'legal' for the English grammar summary. Colleague 1b had extended the parameters of the gramma summary clause and was now encouraged to adhere to the original definition of it as a brief extension and summarising clarifier of any agenda containing grammar. Colleague 1b admitted to experiencing insurmountable difficulty with the practice of the factor X, despite the fact that the theoretical rationale seemed perfectly viable. With the revised awareness of what she should have been doing, teacher 1b envisaged working her way through the further stages of Year Ten accordingly. She articulated her reaction to this prospect as follows :

"I have had to do implicit teaching all along — and I just <u>couldn't</u> do it!"

Within this discussion about 'M', several impressions were implied by the colleagues 1a and 1b, namely :

- that 'M' is very difficult to execute;
- that the teacher, accordingly, finds herself making a solo performance in 'M', leaving the class behind as unequal TL exponents;
- that the teacher, always in theory concerned that the learners should take responsibility for their own learning, by using 'M' actually runs the risk of disabling or disempowering the learners, rather than enabling them to engage in the work and make progress in it;

- that 'M' requires the teacher to be a facilitator rather than a didactic instructor and some teachers, entrenched in the latter category, will find it difficult adapting to the former one;
- that, accordingly, the lesson matter must be managed in a circumspect fashion so that it shapes up in the most natural way allowing no seams and edges to show through;
- that the method 'M' must be viewed realistically as an unattainable ideal for many teachers, a humbling challenge to the experiment team, a method for the very gifted few and a not wholly feasible possibility for the teachers of the current times, in which the imposition of much bureaucracy has eroded the opportunity to apply really useful amounts of time to the preparation and monitoring of the practical classroom agenda.

At this point the researcher's colleagues together declared the research exercise to be, in their opinion, the victim of its own focus, namely 'M'. Because of the complex nature of 'M', colleagues 1a and 1b deemed the use of it to be too difficult for themselves and beyond the scope of their classes of learners, the two Sets 'Two' :

- These classes seemed to have cut off from the work.
- It was impossible to encourage and motivate the pupils, when the teachers themselves felt discouraged and demotivated.
- It was a problem keeping the learners on task and on GCSE target.

The teachers now questioned their teaching approaches much more seriously than before and sometimes lost confidence in what they planned to do, before the plan was ever put into practice. However, the colleagues 1a and 1b stood at different levels of their conundrum. Manifestly 1b had drawn a finishing line to her effort with the use of 'M' + X. Knowing that she was incapable of it, she preferred to halt her effort with it. She saw herself trapped between two responsibilities, on the one hand her responsibility to her AR partner and their joint role in the AR, and on the other hand to her pupils who deserved clear and reliable delivery of their French GCSE course. For her part, Colleague 1a faced her crisis by deciding to give the experiment a second chance over a period of time in which she would try to revive a positive outlook towards 'M' as a valid methodological force for herself as a competent, experienced and qualified teacher, anticipating her need to apply 'M' in the imminent National Curriculum reality. Clearly, the decision of this teacher to continue her participation in the

AR at this time, implied the same decision for her job-share partner, who, despite the problems she was experiencing, shared the sentiments of colleague 1a on the subject of the valuable experience that the AR had given them in requiring them to explore methods in a serious, analytical and accountable way. This had removed them from their usual system, their personal 'rut', and had demanded an objective outlook to the work with special attention being paid to the roles of their colleagues, to the importance of the teaching team and to the position of the learners. Each teacher, therefore, claimed to have discovered something more about herself as a teacher, something more about the nature of the job she set out to do, something more about the subject and something more about the highly complex identity of the learner, as a person whose psychology affects the learning process (and could/should therefore also affect the teaching process) and whose actual learning process is a highly involved process in itself. As has already been witnessed, colleague 1a has had the propensity to express her frustrations and lack of insight into the learner's world through questions such as these:

"If I have taught it, why haven't they learnt it?" or
"If I have taught it, why don't they know it?" and
"If I feel that my lessons were good (or poor), why do they often give the opposite verdict on them?"

This discussion closed with the decision that the colleagues 1a and 1b would continue to contribute to the action research for the time being and would adapt their approaches to the method principle which underpinned the action research. It was hoped that they would proceed with less anxiety and with a sense of having regained possession and control of their real classroom brief. Indeed, reduced urgency in the application of the method formula seemed at once quite feasible since the major grammar issues had been covered in the work to date, and the work in prospect for the Sets 'Two' contained a much slimmer grammatical content and concentrated mainly on skills practice. It was, however, agreed that the target language would continue to feature as the medium for conveying the course. It was hoped that in the half term to follow the two Sets 'Two' and their teachers would find it possible to settle down to a satisfying continuation of their work and a new, more relaxed régime.

3.3.11 **End of January 1993 : The discussion bridging the work on TRICOLORE 4A Units 1 to 3**

The researcher was keen to learn whether the Sets 'Two' and their teachers had made progress since the last discussion. The most recent grammar to be covered had been the IMPERFECT TENSE and this had been the catalyst to a major reaction already encountered earlier and recorded in this report on the appearance of this grammar. The reaction was based in the agenda's over-indulgence in verbs and tenses and in the pupils' own inability to recognise a word as a verb or to understand the arguments for employing a tense. In order to make their feelings clear on how hard they were finding their French course, the Sets 'Two' were boycotting assessments. At the last assessment before the discussion, only two members from one set and nine from the other put in an appearance!

Once again the question arose : What can be done to restore the plummeted morale and increase motivation, therefore remedy the existing deteriorating performance? The Sets 'Two' had lodged serious complaints about the use of the target language for lesson delivery, complaining that this allowed all the matter to merge together and the agenda to become meaningless.

The researcher offered the Sets 'Two' and their teachers a solution to their dilemma by releasing them from their participation in the experiment and, with the GCSE interests of the pupils in mind, it was decided that their lessons would henceforward be principally taught through the medium of English and would be free of new grammar encumbrances. In short, the pupils' needs, always of paramount importance, were reappraised at this half way stage of the GCSE course. Furthermore, the teachers were free to set up assessments of their own designing and scheduling. On the matter of assessment, including the ultimate GCSE examination, the performances of the Sets 'Two' would not be compared with those of the Sets One. In the meantime, the two Sets One would continue with their work in the manner consistent with the method formula of the action research. However, on the matter of the discussions, one final discussion was deemed necessary within the course of the Year 11 work, in order to ascertain the post-AR situation of the Sets 'Two'.

3.3.12 Stage Four : the post-collaborative situation

The teachers' final discussion of the Spring Term of 1994

After investigating the situation of the Sets 'Two' and their teachers after their departure from the action research, the researcher received the following answers to the questions which she placed with her colleagues (on this occasion through the medium of a questionnaire) :

The Questions	The Responses
1. Had the change of method positively affected the pupils' attitudes to the subject?	NEGATIVE
Did their current performances seem to have gained from the change of circumstance?	NEGATIVE
Had the prospects for positive results in the GCSE improved?	NEGATIVE
2. What benefits had they expected to encounter after leaving the restrictive action research?	REVITALISATION OF THE CLASS-ROOM PRACTICE AND OF THE PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND PROSPECTS
3. What proportion of these benefits had, in fact, taken shape?	NONE

The team finally reflected that the apparently unco-operative attitudes which had characterized the Sets 'Two', also the apparently more co-active attitudes of the Sets One, were possibly those attitudes which would have typified the same classes in any teaching circumstances focusing on a foreign language. The comparatively poor quality of the year group was called to mind. Also one recalled the fact that the Sets 'Two' were in reality a combination of the middle and bottom rankings (Sets Two and Three) within the GCSE framework and that it was traditionally difficult to motivate this band to persevere with their Modern Languages studies, even when no methodological constraints were applied. However, in this instance, the teachers' very conscious efforts to serve the special requirements of imposed methods placed the methods themselves in the forefront of their minds, so that their importance to the classroom business grew out of proportion and became the ruling principle by which the business of their classrooms would stand or fall. On reflection and in hindsight, the Sets 'Two' teachers exonerated the method 'M' from the blame that they had assumed it to have in relation to their problem with their GCSE sets. Indeed, they now were clear that "no method is wholly accountable for pupils' success or failure in a

course". The pyramid shape, symbolising the physical structure of the method application has already been shown in Section One of this chapter.

3.3.13 Conclusion to this section

This present chapter section has attempted to show the inner psychological content of the AR teaching team's struggle to conduct the GCSE foreign language course by the teaching method which was specifically designed for the action research. This commentary, in its turn, has reflected some aspects of the psychological content of the pupils' struggle to effect the learning by the same means. The following section extends this latter insight by revealing some evidence of the **learners' attitudes** and, particularly, it enlarges upon the inquiry into those of the two top sets, which have not received prominent attention thus far but with which the research project was continued and concluded. The information used in the coming section has been collected from the learners' own perspectives, expressed directly in questionnaires and discussions, rather than through their teachers' observations of them.

3.4 SECTION FOUR : The Attitudes And Perspectives Of The Learners

3.4.1 Introduction

At half termly intervals during the three year period of the action research, the researcher extracted information in the form of responses to questions from the pupils of the year group concerned in the first half of the project and ultimately from the pupils of her own classes, with whom she completed the work. Thus she was able to investigate their attitudes to their work and their thoughts on the teaching methods which were applied and on how these affected them. The researcher attempted to explore the learners' psychology in relation to their FL studies generally, and specifically with a view to discovering something about their outlook on the treatment of the grammar and the impact of its mode of delivery within the target language framework. The pupils' responses were collected and recorded and are discussed in this chapter section in terms of the broad messages which they contain. For the sake of clarity, the researcher chronicles the feedback in the actual calendar sequence in which it was sought.

3.4.2 The first questionnaire, occurring Oct/Nov 1991 on completing the work and assessment on Tricolore 3 Unit 1

This questionnaire inquired into the following areas:

1. the pupils' state of self confidence in using the FL
2. the perceived clarity of the lessons (performed in 'M')
3. their ability to name some items they had learnt
4. the possible requirement for more teaching on specific items
5. pupils' familiarity with the contents and layout of their textbooks
6. whether the October tests had been perceived as easy or hard
7. the number of pupils for whom the term 'grammar' was a concept which they could explain.

The responses to the first questionnaire

1. The Sets One (G-I and G-E) were equally divided on claiming to have self-confidence or the lack of it in their management of the subject. However, the responses of the Sets 'Two' showed only sparse self-confidence in this

respect. This is significant, bearing in mind the systematic erosion in their participation in the experiment and their early capitulation.

2/3 All the sets found their lessons clear, in general. Out of 161 pupils (including the Germanists), 24 answered in the negative on this;

78 attempted to name an item of the agenda that had been taught, most popularly the PERFECT TENSE and the PLURALS OF NOUNS, (the latter being a residue from the Middle School syllabus and not a feature of the current work programme). There was some demand for more explanation, presumably grammar, and more skills practice, on a scale of 1:2 respectively.

4. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to confirm familiarity with the course books, Only 21 pupils out of 161 negated this.

5. The learners of French (102) found their tests difficult, with 21 exceptions.

6. Only 2 learners out of the 161 thought that they understood the term 'grammar' enough to define it.

3.4.3 <u>The second questionnaire, occurring Christmas 1991, on completing the work and assessment on Tricolore 3 Unit 2</u>.

This questionnaire explored the following areas:

1. pupils' perceived difficulties
2. their recall of the last term's agenda
3. their requirements, if any, of further teaching
4. their assessment of the lessons viz. pace, clarity
5. pupils' understanding of the matter taught and their state of self confidence.

<u>The responses to the second questionnaire</u>

1. The greatest difficulties were named as STRUCTURES, VERBS and some THEMES (eg travel).

2. The most popular recall of the agenda of the previous term focused again on STRUCTURES, VERBS and some THEMES.

3. STRUCTURES, VERBS and some THEMES were deemed in need of extra teaching, moreover.

4. The majority of the learners complained about the fast pace of the lessons and the overcrowded agenda.

5. The overwhelming majority ie. 160/180 claimed to have clear memory of the previous term's agenda but only 68/160 could attempt to describe it or name any of its features.

6. 130/180 pupils claimed to be happy and self-confident in their ML studies this time.

3.4.4 The third questionnaire, occurring February 1992, after completing the work and assessment on Tricolore 3 Unit 3

This questionnaire concentrated on exploring the following matters:

1. what the pupils felt they knew most about in their foreign language studies;

2. what the pupils felt they knew least about;

3. whether the process of learning and using the FL was perceived to be the same for them as the process of 'learning' English;

4. whether the process of learning the FL had extended their understanding of English.

The responses to the third questionnaire

1. All the groups claimed to know most about the PRESENT TENSE. This was a residue of their Middle School syllabus, as also was their use of the term: PRESENT TENSE. Moreover, (and ironically) there was very little competent use of the present tense in the Year 9 work.

2. The majority of the group claimed to know least about the PERFECT TENSE; the G-I groups were, understandably, more numerical in this context than the G-E groups.

3. To the question exploring the learning of L1 as compared to the learning of L2, the responses showed the following perceptions:

→ the G-I groups : 7% found the processes the same

93% found the processes different

→ the G-E groups : 27% found the processes the same

73% found the processes different

→ overall   :   17% found the processes the same

                        83% found the processes different.

The reasoning attached to this analysis featured similar arguments for both sides of the debate, however:

ENGLISH (L1)

* is easier
* absorbs all of one's available time
* surrounds the individual
* is used flexibly
* has been "got" naturally
* is "traded" unconsciously
* features in all contexts
* it needs not be teacher-directed
* there is no concern about L1 growth
* it is a part of you, like a skin or a necessary body part
* is used/understood at speed
* (the processes of English are hidden
  (we are unaware of processes in L1
  (L1 has no rules therefore no processes
  (there is nothing to process in L1
* English is an ocean of language
* English is used at less speed
* sounds are clear in English
* we learn English at first hand
* an authentic context, setting
* natural learning through use
* it resources our lives
* L1 is a habit

* one is usually positive and uncritical about one's L1
* in English you can produce 'talk' for almost any context
* in English you can edit your 'talk' as you go along
* in English you can find ways around difficulties in 'talk'

FRENCH (OR L2)

* is very hard
* is given very little time
* is experienced in small packs
* is used only in a number of set phrases
* has been "got" unnaturally
* is premeditated before written or said
* features in certain school contexts
* it needs to be teacher-directed
* there is always concern about L2 growth
* it is not a part of you; you have to manufacture it and a need for it

* use/comprehension are much slower
* L2 is full of difficulties/problems)
  rules are implied even if not seen)

* L2 is a drop in the ocean of language
* L2 is unnatural, contrived, forced
* French is made hard by its speed
* sounds are indistinguishable in French
* we learn French at second hand
* an artificial (pretend) context setting
* pressure learning through drills, exercises
* it resources our lessons and subject tests

* one is usually negative and critical about one's L2
* in L2 you can produce limited 'talk' for very few contexts
* in L2 you are not flexible enough to edit your 'talk'
* in L2 you can either 'say' it or you can't

4. To the question about the effect of L2 learning upon L1 awareness the following response emerged:

The "factions" →

	G-I	G-E

Yes, L2 learning affects L1 awareness : 33% 28%

No, L2 learning does not affect L1 awareness: 67% 72%

The principal arguments which this poll presented were as follows:

<u>YES, L2 learning influences L1</u>	<u>No, L2 learning does not influence L1</u>
* *You learn L2 consciously, therefore* you think more about L1	* *L2 is "bitty" and contains gaps; it is useful only for games really.* Therefore there is not enough L2 available to service L1.
* *You discover items with special names and functions in L2 and you* look for them in L1 as well	
* L2 conditioning makes you proceed more fussily with L1	*"I never want French to influence English. I <u>never</u> want to say: He ran away with all his legs".
* L2 learning makes you realise that language is structured and L1 is therefore, structured also. This comes as a surprise and changes your attitude to it.	* The L1 should be allowed to help the L2, and influence it to drop its structures in order to become a more natural, free flowing language.
* You discover things about English that you didn't know before, mainly that it is a complex system and not just made up of strings of words.	* My English is perfect and can't be helped ie. made better. My L2 is imperfect anyway, so how could it help my L1?
* You learn a lot about L1 from learning L2 but not the other way round.	* Knowledge of L1 can't plug L2 gaps.

NB. Two major differences in outlook on the value of a relationship between L2 and L1 are expressed below:

Pupil A

IN APPROBATION OF A RELATIONSHIP

"I do both French and German and I am amazed how French and English have things in common; German and English have things in common and French, German and English have things in common. I find this astounding! I see my own language in a totally different light and think about other cultures differently, too, knowing I would be able to relate with them, given the need and opportunity. Ideas are common to us all and there are many forms of language by which to share them!"

Pupil B

IN REPUDIATION OF A RELATIONSHIP

"The French and the Germans are different to us. Their cultures and languages and ideas are different. I don't expect to know their languages in order to communicate with them, any more than I would need to understand or communicate in "Mars" or "Moon". And no, they obviously do not affect my use of my own language."

3.4.5 **The fourth questionnaire, occurring Easter 1992, on completing the work and assessment on Tricolore 3 Unit 4**

This questionnaire explored the following issues:

1. how much time the pupils gave to French and/or German homework in a cycle of two weeks;

2. whether or not they revised for end of unit assessments,

3. and if "yes", what exactly did they do?

4. whether they learned vocabulary;

5. what problems, if any, they had with the FL;

6. whether they would intentionally go absent from school in order to avoid

   (a)   FL lessons

   (b)   FL assessment

7. what things the teacher could do in order to make the teaching clearer?

8. what things the pupils could do in order to increase their learning and progress.

The responses provided the following information:

RESPONSE TO ENQUIRY 4	PERCENTAGE RETURNS	
	(G-I) /76	(G-E) /86
1. Giving NO time to homework	16/76 (21%)	0/86 (0%)
Giving between 1 and 2 hours	41/76 (54%)	78/86 (90%)
Giving as long as it takes	19/76 (25%)	8/86 (10%)

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2.	Showing a positive attitude to assessment	55/76	(73%)	77/86	(90%)
	Showing a negative attitude to assessment	21/76	(27%)	9/86	(10%)
3.	Revision activities included:				
	- revision of structures and vocab	13/76	(17%)	19/86	(22%)
	- revision of course unit content	27/76	(35%)	22/86	(26%)
	- study of work in textbook and ex. bk.	2/76	(3%)	19/86	(22%)
	- study of sommaire and special items	13/76	(17%)	7/86	(8%)
	- negative response, see above	21/76	(27%)	9/86	(10%)
4.	Whether they learned vocabulary				
	YES	35/76	(46%)	40/86	(46½%)
	NO	21/76	(28%)	6/86	(7%)
	SOMETIMES RARELY	20/76	(26%)	40/86	(46½%)
5.	The FL-related problems were listed as:				
	- structures like verbs and tenses	21/76	(28%)	28/86	(33%)
	- skills like writing and speaking	17/76	(22%)	28/86	(33%)
	- topics like petrol stations	4/76	(5%)	3/86	(3%)
	- pace of lessons, difficulty of subject	12.76	(16%)	9/86	(10%)
	- problems with memory/vocab etc.	10/76	(10%)	11/86	(13%)
	- problems of linking the language up	6/76	(8%)	3/86	(3%)
	- no, can't list them	6/76	(8%)	4/86	(5%)
6.	On the possibility of absence from school to avoid FL lessons and assessment	10/76	(13%)	8/86	(9%)
	LESSONS YES	66/76	(87%)	78/86	(91%)
	NO	8/76	(11%)	6/86	(7%)
	ASSESSMENT YES	68/76	(89%)	80/86	(93%)
	NO				
	As the responses detailed here show, very few pupils admitted to a preparedness to go absent in ML lessons and assessment. The reasons given by the few were BOREDOM, SUBJECT DIFFICULTY and POOR RESULTS.				

	RESPONSE TO ENQUIRY 4	PERCENTAGE		RETURNS	
		(G-I) /76		(G-E) /86	
7.	The following are responses to the questions of what the teacher could do to make lessons clearer:				
	- slow down the pace of lesson delivery	16.76	(21%)	25/86	(29%)
	- use more English, less French (FL)	12/76	(16%)	6/86	(7%)
	- practise and vary the skills more regularly	9/76	(12%)	13/86	(15%)
	- go over things more often and involve more worksheets	16/76	(21%)	6/86	(7%)
	- explain the structures ("workings") more exhaustively, with more blackboard work	3/76	(4%)	19/86	(22%)
	- acquire more subject time on the timetable	1/76	(1%)	0/86	(0%)
	- no advice offered; don't know	10/76	(13%)	13/86	(15%)
	- lessons satisfactory as they are now	9/76	(12%)	4/86	(5%)
8.	To the inquiry about what the learners could do to increase their learning and extend their progress, the responses were:				
	- don't know	4/76	(5%)	7/86	(8%)
	- BAN THE SUBJECT!	2/76	(3%)	2/86	(2%)
	- learn more things, more efficiently	5/76	(6%)	18/86	(21/5)
	- revise more often	36/76	(47%)	27/86	(31%)
	- listen more, concentrate more, in class	19/76	(9%)	27/86	(31%)
	- spend more time on the subject; do a little FL every night	7/76	(9%)	5/86	(6%)
	- do regular, careful homework	1/76	(1%)	0/86	(0%)
	- attend all lessons and be involved	4/76	(5%)	0.86	(0%)

3.4.6 The fifth questionnaire, occurring Whitsun 1992, on completing the work and assessment on Tricolore 3 Unit 5.

This questionnaire explored the following issues:

1. features of pupils' programmes of learning which they considered to be most important-;

2. pupils' feelings about the use of the target language;

3. whether the use of the target language had made them more familiar with the foreign language;

4. whether they had made good progress with their courses;

4. whether they had made good progress with their courses;

5. aspects of study which they relied on repeating in Years 10 and 11;

6. whether they were ambitious to do well in the real GCSE;

7. the grade which they targeted ultimately.

The responses were as follows:

	RESPONSES TO ENQUIRY 5	PERCENTAGES			
		(G-I)		(G-E)	
1.	The most importance features of the learning programmes were named as:				
	- Topics: shopping for food	14/30	(47%)	14/25	(56%)
	don't know	16/30	(53%)	9/25	(36%)
	holidays	0/30	(0%)	2/25	(8%)
	- Structures: tenses (time with verbs)	16/30	(53%)	0/25	(0%)
	don't know	14/30	(47%)	24/25	(96%)
	adjectives	0/30	(0%)	1/25	(4%)
2.	On the pupils' feelings about the use of the target language, the responses were:				
	- OK, comfortable with it, accept it	17/30	(57%)	11/25	(44%)
	- would prefer more English	13/30	(43%)	14/25	(56%)
3.	On whether TL use had brought familiarity with the foreign language:				
	YES	22/30	(73%)	18/25	(72%)
	NO	8/30	(27%)	7/25	(28%)
4.	On whether the pupils had made good progress with their courses:				
	YES	15/30	(50%)	25/25	(100%)
	NO	1/30	(3%)	0/25	(0%)
	Don't know	14/30	(47%)	0/25	(0%)
5.	On the aspects of study they would rely on repeating in the next two years:				
	general structures	4/30	(13%)	8/25	(32%)
	verbs and tenses	11/30	(38%)	15/25	(60%)
	everything	4/30	(13%)	1/25	(4%)
	don't know	7/30	(23%)	1/25	(4%)
	the tests	1/30	(3%)	0/25	(0%)
	certain topics	3/30	(10%)	0/25	(0%)
6.	On whether they were ambitious to do well in the GCSE in Year 11:				
	YES	24/30	(80%)	25/25	(100%)
	NO	4/30	(13%)	0/25	(0%)
	Not sure	2/30	(7%)	0/25	(0%)
7.	On what grades they would target:				
	C to A	28/30	(93%)	23/25	(92%)
	Below C	2/30	(7%)	2/25	(8%)

3.4.7 <u>The sixth questionnaire, occurring Christmas 1992, on completing the work and assessment on Tricolore 4A Units 1 and 2 (and on closing the first term of Year 10)</u>. (The language which now features is exclusively French)

This questionnaire explored the following issues:

1. what the learners understood by the terms 'grammar' and 'structures';

2. what language rules or knowledge they had learnt in connection with any language, including their own;

3. what special knowledge (implying grammar structures) they thought was needed in order to manage

    (a)   language in Speaking and Writing

    (b)   language in Listening and Reading;

4. whether they could list three areas of structural/grammatical difficulty or difference between French and English;

5. whether they were able to judge for themselves (implying instinctively) that what they said or wrote in English or in the foreign language was correct or incorrect;

6. whether they could explain on what grounds their spoken or written French would be correct or incorrect;

7. what they considered to be the most important aspect of their foreign language work;

8. whether they valued the fact that their FL lessons were delivered in the foreign language;

9. whether they had to think a thing out before they spoke it or wrote it;

10. what they considered the most reliably effective teaching tactics to be;

11. what they considered the most effective learning strategies to be;

12. whether they made conscious efforts to learn or whether learning was, for the most part, a natural and unconscious thing for them;

13. whether they had coped well with the revision/consolidation work, bridging Years 9 and 10;

14. whether they could do small grammar tasks:

    (i)   make a simple question out of a statement

    (ii)   re-write 5 phrases, applying adjectival agreements where necessary.

The responses of the learners to the above enquiry were as follows:

		G-I		G-E	
1.	On the ability to explain grammar or structures: - some satisfactory explanation given - no satisfactory explanation given	21/54 33/54	(39%) (61%)	29/44 15/44	(66%) (34%)
2.	On the invitation to name some language rules, concerning any language: - citing verbs; tenses; adjectival agreements; gender; question-making; noun plurals; "'i' before 'e' except after c'"(in English); not starting a sentence with 'and' (in English); punctuation and pronunciation ... - no examples offered	33/54 21/54	(61%) (39%)	38/44 6/44	(85%) (13%)
3.	On the opinion whether grammar/rules and structures/special language knowledge ... is needed in using language: (i) in speech and writing 　　　'YES' 　　　'NO' or 'Don't know' (ii) in listening and reading 　　　'YES' 　　　'NO' or 'Don't know'	 35/54 19/54 30/54 24/54	 (65%) (35%) (56%) (44%)	 42/44 2/44 31/44 13/44	 (95%) (5%) (70%) (30%)
4.	When invited to list 3 areas of structural difference or difficulty separating English and French: - affirmative responses, perceiving difficulties like: (* the use of <u>avoir</u> where <u>être</u> is expected (* the use of verbs as one word in the (continuous situation (* the lack of direct equivalents in the two (languages (* the importance of gender across the board (* differences in word order ... etc. - negative responses (no differences perceived)	 31/54 23/54	 (57%) (43%)	 38/44 6/44	 (86%) (14%)
5.	On whether they could judge their FL as correct or incorrect: 　　　YES 　　　NO	 29/54 25/54	 (54%) (46%)	 27/44 17/44	 (61%) (39%)
6.	Whether they could explain the criteria for judging language correctly 　　　YES 　　　NO	 14/54 40/54	 (26%) (74%)	 25/44 19/44	 (57%) (43%)

		G-I		G-E	
7.	On naming the most important aspects of their FL work:				
	- structures	22/54	(41%)	26/44	(59%)
	- skills	11/54	(20%)	14/44	(32%)
	- mixed other	21/54	(39%)	3/44	(7%)
	- 'don't know' or facetious other	0/54	(0%)	1/44	(2%)
8.	On the value or not of teaching the FL (French) in the TL:				
	YES	22/54	(41%)	30/44	(68%)
	NO	29/54	(54%)	14/44	(32%)
	- prefer half and half mixed of L1, L2	3/54	(5%)	0/44	(0%)
9.	On whether they had to think an item out in L1 before speaking or writing it in L2				
	YES	33/54	(61%)	38/44	(86%)
	NO	10/54	(19%)	1/44	(3%)
	Don't know	11/54	(20%)	5/44	(11%)
10	On teaching strategies: numbers of learners who felt capable of naming specific, beneficial techniques				
	- (could) YES	32/54	(59%)	36/44	(82%)
	- (could not) NO	22/54	(41%)	8/44	(18%)
11	On learning strategies: numbers of learners who professed an awareness of effective measures				
	- (could) YES	34/54	(63%)	40/44	(91%)
	- (could not) NO	20/54	(37%)	4/44	(9%)
12	On whether they learned consciously or unconsciously:				
	- consciously	13/54	(24%)	14/44	(32%)
	- unconsciously	31/54	(57%)	24/44	(54%)
	- mixed, don't know	10/54	(19%)	6/44	(14%)
13	On whether they had remembered the consolidation work bridging Years 9 and 10				
	- in whole or in part YES	25/54	(46%)	23/44	(52%)
	NO	29/54	(58%)	21/44	(48%)
	- don't understand the reference	3/54	(6%)	0/44	(0%)
14	Concerning the responses on the grammar tasks set:				
	- pupils able to give responses	27/54	(50%)	44/44	(100%)
	- pupils unable to give responses	27/54	(50%)	0/44	(0%)

3.4.8 <u>The seventh questionnaire, occurring in the Spring Term 1993 at the conclusion of Unit 3 of Tricolore 4A, and on closing the second term of Year 10.</u> (Only the researcher's two top classes remain involved at this stage)

The pupils were asked in this instance to do the following things:

1. to name the tenses of verbs which were given in a list;
2. to say whether they recognised the tenses easily or with difficulty now;
3. to say whether they could produce their verbs "out of their heads" or whether they looked them up;
4. to say whether they had learnt a lot or only 'little' about verbs and tenses so far;
5. to say whether they felt "comfortable" or "uncomfortable" about French at this stage of their studies.

The pupils' responses to this questionnaire were as follows:

		G-I		G-E	
1.	Ref. the first task of naming tenses; - total number of correct responses	173/27 (av.6.4)		165/25 (av.6.6)	
2.	Ref. whether they could now recognise the tenses: - YES NO	10/27 17/27	(37%) (63%)	10/25 15/25	(40%) (60%)
3.	Ref. whether they worked their verbs out mentally before use or looked them up: - worked them out - looked them up	9/27 18/27	(33%) (67%)	6/25 19/25	(24%) (76%)
4.	Ref. whether they had learnt much about verbs and tenses so far: - YES NO	20/27 7/27	(74%) (26%)	17/25 8/25	(68%) (32%)
5.	Ref. whether they felt "comfortable" about their French at that time: - YES NO	17/27 10/27	(63%) (37%)	10/25 15/25	(40%) (60%)

3.4.9 **The eighth questionnaire, occurring in the Summer Term 1993 at the conclusion of Units 4 and 5 of Tricolore 4A, and on closing the third term of Year 10**

The pupils were asked for their responses to the following items:

1. whether they found the teaching method clear;

2. whether they could make any comment on this;

3. whether they would recommend changes in the teaching method

4. whether they were making satisfactory progress in French;

5. what they thought it was that enabled this progress;

6. whether they were pleased with their assessment results;

7. how much concentration they had, on a scale of 1 to 10;

8. what kind of memory they had.

The pupils responded to these matters in the following way:

		G-I	G-E
1.	On whether they found the teaching methods clear: - YES, clear NO. not clear	8/21 (38%) 13/21 (62%)	12/28 (43%) 16/28 (57%)
2.	On whether they could comment on this: - YES, able to NO, unable to	All (100%) 0 (0%)	All (100%) 0 (0%)
3.	On whether they would make changes in the teaching approach: - YES NO	13/21 (62%) 8/21 (38%)	20/28 (71%) 8/28 (29%)
4.	On whether satisfactory progress was being made: - YES NO	11/21 (52%) 10/21 (48%)	14/28 (50%) 14/28 (50%)
5.	(a) On whether the positive respondents understood what enabled this progress: - YES NO (b) On whether the negative respondents understood what impeded this progress: - YES NO	11/11 (100%) 0/11 (0%) 10/10 (100%) 0/10 (0%)	14/14 (100%) 0/14 (0%) 14/14 (100%) 0/14 (0%)
6.	On how much concentration they had on a scale of 1 to 10: Averages	117/21 (5.5)	148/28 (5.3)
7.	On what kind of memory they had: the most popular answer given by both G-I and G-E was derived from 'writing' and 'reading'	VISUAL	

3.4.10 **The ninth questionnaire, occurring at the end of the academic year, July 1993, at the conclusion of Unit 5 of Tricolore 4A and on concluding the work of Year 10**

The queries presented to the pupils were placed to investigate the following matters of interest:

1. which of the four skills best consolidated the learning;

2. whether they had good powers of recall;

3. whether they had a visual or an audio memory;

4. which skills they would prefer to increase their involvement with, if any;

5. whether they took sufficient responsibility for their own learning:

6. in the recent trial GCSE tests (end of Year 10 "mocks") how their French results compared with those of the other subjects;

7. whether they found it easy to keep on working;

8. whether they were easily distracted;

9. what they would describe as the difficulties of being a teenage learner.

The pupils' responses to these questions were as follows:

		G-I		G-E	
1.	On the skills favoured for consolidation of the learning:				
	- active skills	3/22	(14%)	1/26	(4%)
	- passive skills	19/22	(86%)	25/26	(96%)
2.	On their perceived powers of recall:				
	- good	4/22	(18%)	10/26	(38%)
	- poor	18/22	(82%)	16/26	(62%)
3.	On whether they had visual or audio memory:				
	- visual	15/22	(68%)	23/26	(88%)
	- audio	7/22	(32%)	3/26	(12%)
4.	On which skills they might welcome more involvement with:				
	- active	8/22	(36%)	3/26	(12%)
	- passive	14/22	(64%)	23/26	(88%)
5.	On taking sufficient responsibility for one's own learning:				
	- YES	6/22	(27%)	8/26	(31%)
	NO	16/22	(73%)	18/26	(69%)
6.	On how French compared with the other subjects after testing:				
	- better	0/22	(0%)	1/26	(4%)
	- worse	13/22	(59%)	20/26	(77%)
	- the same	9/22	(41%)	5/26	(19%)
7.	On how easily they keep on working				
	- easy	6/22	(27%)	2/26	(8%)
	- hard	10/22	(46%)	9/26	(34%)
	- average	6/22	(27%)	15/26	(58%)
8.	On whether they were easily distracted from their work:				
	- YES	18/22	(82%)	21/26	(81%)
	NO	4.22	(18%)	5/26	(19%)
9.	On what it is like being a teenage learner under pressure:				
	- positive responses	1/22	(5%)	10/26	(38%)
	- negative responses	21/22	(95%)	16/26	(62%)

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3.4.11 **The tenth questionnaire, occurring at the end of the Autumn/Winter term 1993, after the completion of Units 6 and 7 of 'Tricolore' 4B and the Christmas 'Mock' GCSE examinations (the first questionnaire of Year 11)**

The questions which were put to the Year Eleven pupils were as follows:

1. whether the 'Mocks' were easy, hard or half and half.

2. which paper pupils considered to be the h ardest

3. and which the easiest

4. any valuable lessons which had been learnt from the experience of the 'Mocks'

5. whether they had got the results they wanted, (expected, deserved)

6. whether they had got a good result or a poor result

7. their plans at this stage for the real examination

8. the grade which they targeted for the real examination

9. which would now be more important for a successful outcome: the TEACHING or the LEARNING

10. which of the above two things has been most relied on so far: the TEACHING or the LEARNING

11. the points they would make in advising a friend on the best way to approach the GCSE course and examination in French.

The pupils' responses to the above questions were as follows:

		G-I		G-E	
1.	On how they found the 'Mocks':				
	- easy	2/25	(8%)	2/30	(7%)
	- hard	7/25	(28%)	8/30	(27%)
	- half and half	16/25	(64%)	20/30	(66%)
2.	On the perceived "hardest" paper:				
	- Writing	12/25	(48%)	1/30	(37%)
	- Reading	1/25	(4%)	0/30	(0%)
	- Listening	8/25	(32%)	16/30	(53%)
	- Speaking	3/25	(12%)	3/30	(10%)
	- equally, ALL	1/25	(4%)	0/30	(0%)
3.	On the perceived "easiest" paper:				
	- Writing	1/25	(4%)	5/30	(16%)
	- Reading	16/25	(64%)	21/30	(70%)
	- Listening	2/25	(8%)	2/30	(7%)
	- Speaking	5/25	(20%)	2/30	(7%)
	- can't say/don't know	1/25	(4%)	0.30	(0%)

		G-I		G-E	
4.	On the lessons learnt from the 'Mock'GCSE experience:				
	- REVISE and CONSOLIDATE the work	23/25	(92%)	26/30	(87%)
	- NO LESSONS LEARNT	2/25	(8%)	4/30	(13%)
5.	On how many of the pupils got the results				
	- wanted	11/25	(44%)	21/30	(70%)
	- expected	17/25	(68%)	8/30	(27%)
	- deserved	22/25	(88%)	25/30	(83%)
	- good	15/25	(60%)	20/30	(66%)
6.	On the plans made in preparation for the real GCSE:				
	- more intensive revision	19/25	(76%)	27/30	(90%)
	- other plans	5/25	(20%)	0/30	(0%)
	- no plans	1/25	(4%)	3/30	(10%)
7.	On what grades the pupils now targeted:				
	- clear A	6/25	(24%)	5/30	(17%)
	above grade C	6/25	(24%)	10/30	(33%)
	- happy with C	5/25	(20%)	1/30	(3%)
	- borderline C/D	6/25	(24%)	9/30	(30%)
	- below C/D	2/25	(8%)	5/30	(17%)
8.	On whether they had so far relied on the teaching or the learning:				
	- the TEACHING	18/25	(72%)	16.30	(53%)
	- the LEARNING	5/25	(20%)	13/30	(43%)
	- both EQUALLY	2/25	(8%)	1/30	(4%)
9.	On the advice they would give to a friend doing GCSE French:				
	- learn systematically and keep a positive attitude	24/25	(96%)	28/30	(94%)
	- can't say	1/25	(4%)	1/30	(3%)
	- don't take it	0/25	(0%)	1/30	(3%)

3.4.12 The eleventh questionnaire, occurring at the start of the Whitsun break in the final teaching week, prior to 'the block release' and the onset of the GCSEs (May 1994)

This final questionnaire explored the following issues:

1. the types of lessons which the pupils liked best;

2. the advice they would give to prospective GCSE pupils about:

    their prospects for learning generally

    their prospects for learning grammar specifically

their prospects for learning grammar specifically

their prospects for good results;

3. whether they felt confident about their GCSE examinations;

4. the revision processes which they intended to follow;

5. the changes which they would make to the teaching/learning styles if they had their time to do over again;

6. whether they would have preferred to be in the other set, giving reasons for their answers;

7. what they envisaged would be the hardest part of the examination for them (of the four skills);

8. and the hardest thing of all for them to do;

9. whether their awareness of grammar ($\pm$) would play a role in their performance and attainment;

10. what were they mostly concerned with wh en performing the skills:

11. their view as to the most important thing of all for the pupil in the business of achieving a good outcome to the teaching and the learning;

12. whether they would do much revision for the actual French GCSE.

The results of the above questionnaire emerged as follows:

		G-I	G-E
1.	The most preferred lessons in order of preference were: 10 options in order of preference (1 = top preference)		
	i group work	1	4
	ii single skill : L R S W	4	2
	iii didactic with much teacher talk	2 =	3
	iv pair work	7	1
	v teacher and blackboard	2 =	5
	vi mixture of everything	5	6 =
	vii worksheets	6	6 =
	viii heads down, writing	8	6 =
	ix mixed skills	10	9
	x other	9	10

		G-I	G-E
2.	On their advice to the new generation of GCSE French learners:		
	- go over the lesson later	✓	
	- don't waste time and opportunity	✓	
	- don't despair, you'll get used to things in time	✓	
	- LISTEN and it's easier than you think	✓	✓
	- exposure to the target language training you in using it	✓	
	- BLACKBOARD work clarifies things for you	✓	✓
	- keep motivated by learning as you proceed	✓	
	- you'll worry a lot. It's hard work		
	- you'll get fed up; it's boring		✓
	- avoid as much of it as you can; it's difficult		✓
	- engage with it and make notes	✓	✓
	- don't skip lessons	✓	✓
	- CONCENTRATE	✓	✓
	- stay off school		✓
	- give it up if you get the chance		✓
3.	On their prospects for learning the subject generally:		
	- make lots of notes always	✓	
	- hard work guarantees success	✓	
	- establish a sensible pace of work	✓	
	- accept your responsibilities to the work	✓	
	- there are very good prospects for workers	✓	✓
	- engage with the teacher	✓	✓
	- learn vocab and verbs as insurance		✓
	- concentrate and be willing		✓
	- everything's OK if you listen		✓
	- FL involves extra work. Revise!		✓
	- seek help if you need it.	✓	✓

		G-I	G-E
4.	On learning the grammar!		
	- It's vital to proper language use	✓	✓
	- try to figure it out but don't worry	✓	
	- you have good prospects for understanding it if	✓	
	you figure it out by examples	✓	✓
	- LISTEN HARD and you'll eventually get it. Look out for the aspects	✓	
	- Revise after lessons whenever you can	✓	
	- memorise the examples and build other examples on them.	✓	
	- grammar is invisible therefore it must be a natural thing, an easy thing	✓	✓
	- grammar is hidden inside the vocab. If you learn the vocab, you must be learning the grammar	✓	✓
	- there's LOTS OF IT, so work at it!		✓
	- it's hard work; difficult but possible		✓
	- Ugh! No comment		✓
	- bad staff! Does your head in!		✓
	- you have no choice but to learn it thoroughly. If you don't, you're doomed		
	- it's the stuff that French has lots of - like mathematical and scientific formulae - and English doesn't have		
5.	On the prospects of getting good results in French:	✓	
	- good prospects if you WORK and REVISE	✓	
	- don't think ahead to results; you'll PANIC	✓	
	- simply work hard from DAY to DAY and the results will look after themselves		✓
	- don't build your hopes up		✓
	- you're grade will reflect the effort you've made over time and it will be what you deserve		✓
	- results means opportunities		✓
6.	To the question about the state of the pupils' confidence in their anticipation of the GCSE examination in French:		
	- Positive	16/23 (70%)	16/27 (59%)
	- Negative	7/23 (30%)	11/27 (41%)

		G-I	**G-E**
7.	On what revision processes they would follow to this end: - Sundry positive responses - Sundry negative responses	23/23 (100%) 0/23 (0%)	22/27 (81%) 5/27 (19%)
8.	On the changes they would make (if they did the course again) to the teaching/learning business: (- more explanation (- slower pace (- more use of English (- more practice (- increased, more intense, learning - no changes to the business	14/23 (61%) 9/23 (39%)	15/27 (56%) 12/27 (44%)
9.	On whether and why (why not) they may have preferred to be in the other set! - it must be easier) Yes - a certain person is not there) - "I like this set") - "you learn more here") No - I would not like/ I prefer the) English component)	3/23 (13%) 20/23 (87%)	9/27 (33%) 18/27 (67%)
10.	On what the hardest part of the examination will be: - Listening - Reading - Speaking - Writing	2 = 4 2 = 1	1 4 2 3
11.	On what was going to be the hardest thing of all for them to do (in rank order; 1 is hardest): i listening ii learning iii applying iv recalling v tense work vi speaking vii revision	6 3 = 3 = 3 = 2 6 = 1	1 = 1 = 5 6 = 6 = 4 1 =
12.	On whether the awareness of grammar will play a role in their performance and attainment - YES - NO - Can't say, don't know	16/23 (70%) 4/23 (17%) 3/23 (13%)	15/27 (56%) 12/27 (44%) 0/27 (0%)
13.	On what they will be mostly concerned with in the exams - Vocabulary - Grammar	13/23 (57%) 10/23 (43%)	14/27 (52%) 12/27 (48%)

		G-I	G-E
14.	On defining the most important criteria for good achievement. In order of priority, (One (1) is the highest priority out of 5 items cited.)		
	- motivation	1	1
	- self confidence	2	2
	- teaching styles	5	4
	- learning strategies	4	3
	- completion of tasks	3	5

3.4.13 The benefits gained from applying the action research questionnaires

- The application of the questionnaires kept the pupils focused, on task, serious and consistently engaged with their project.

- It kept the pupils (the researcher's pupils at least) keyed with the disciplines imposed by the action research in terms of the full employment of the target language and the implicit teaching method.

- It kept the pace of the classroom work uniform.

- It kept the learners (especially of the two Sets One) aware that a special exercise (the AR) was being carried out without their having to be overtly reminded of the fact. This allowed the researcher to persuade her groups to agree to do extra exercises and tests which incommoded them at various times (eg. the French dictation test, the Maths and English competency tests which feature in the Appendices B and C respectively).

- The questionnaires allowed the researcher some insight into the groups' respective attitudes and approaches to their work and later, when the focus was narrowed and concentrated onto the two Sets One, the researcher was able to acquire a clearer perception of the difference in approaches between the Set One (G-I) and the Set One (G-E). Some of these perceptions can be traced to the broad messages borne by the pupils' responses to the questionnaires. The outcomes of the

questionnaire-based enquiries are reiterated, some with comparative scores, in the following summary:

3.4.14   A condensed version of the enquiries and the information they disclosed

	✓ is given for POSITIVE SCORES			
	G-I		G-E	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2
1st enquiry **Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 29/29; Set 2 = 26/26** **(G-E) Set 1 = 26/29; Set 2 = 22/26** Almost no-one understood what grammar was, although most pupils found their lessons clear and attempted to name some structures. There was a demand for more explanation; tests were found difficult. There was equal state of self-confidence.	✓¹	✓²		
2nd enquiry **Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 29/29; Set 2 = 25/26** **(G-E) Set 1 = 26/29; Set 2 = 22/26** The greatest difficulty in the business of the classroom was ascribed to grammar. Pupils were aware of its existence but could not detail it. Lessons were judged to be paced well and delivered clearly. The state of self-confidence and optimism prevailed.	✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹	✓² ✓² ✓² ✓²		 ✓²
3rd enquiry **Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 28/29; Set 2 = 26/26** **(G-E) Set 1 = 29/29; Set 2 = 25/26** Tense-work dominated the classroom agenda and the difficulties implied in it coloured the pupils' outlooks onto the subject. The pupils denied a correlation between the experiences of learning L1 and L2 (ie. the learning processes were perceived as different and the actual language processes themselves also). Pupils denied that the learning of L2 affected the learning of L1.		✓² 	✓¹ ✓¹	 ✓²

| | ✓ is given for POSITIVE SCORES | | | |
| | G-I | | G-E | |
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2
4th enquiry Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 28/29; Set 2 = 24/26 (G-E) Set 1 = 29/29; Set 2 = 26/26 A fairly positive attitude was adopted towards the L2 at this time. Homework and revision were being addressed. The course and the assessment were attended by the majority of the pupils. There was some awareness of their own responsibility towards the learning of the subject and about the strategies that they could employ in order to reinforce the learning. There also was, however, some rejection of the disciplines imposed on the classes by the teachers, affected by the degree of difficulty implied in the subject. Clear ideas were expressed about how the teachers could improve the teaching package and the teaching process.			✓¹ ✓¹	✓² ✓²
5th enquiry Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 17/29; Set 2 = 13/26 (G-E) Set 1 = 25/29; Set 2 = 24/26 This explored the pupils' feelings about the role of the target language, about what course elements they were aware of needing to repeat and what their expectations were for the outcomes of their courses. G-I were more "comfortable" with the TL use than G-E, even though G-E was happier than G-I about the progress made so far in the course. Both factions made VERBS and TENSES the items that they would need to repeat and both sides were keen to do well. (G-I was slightly less confident in their grades - ambitions generally, although they were equal to G-E in their hopes of attaining Grades C to A in the final analysis).	✓¹		✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹	✓² ✓² ✓² ✓²

	✓ is given for POSITIVE SCORES			
	G-I		G-E	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2
6th enquiry **Attendance :** (G-I) Set 1 = 29/29; Set 2 = 16/26 (G-E) Set 1 =28/29; Set 2 = 25/26 G-E felt more able to define GRAMMAR/STRUCTURES than G-I and to offer examples of grammar to illustrate their understanding of it as a concept in both L1 and L2. Both factions, however, claimed equally to understand the significance of grammar to language use and comprehension. G-E felt quite able to judge language to be correct and claimed to appreciate the use of the target language more than did G-I. However, to a greater extent than G-I, G-E had to work ideas out in the L1 before they committed them, by a kind of translation, to the L2. Not surprisingly, by definition of the teaching method that had been employed in their context, G-E claimed to be able to name specifics of the grammar that featured in the business of the L2 teaching and learning programme. At a number of levels, their responses seemed to bear this out.	✓¹ ... ✓¹	✓²	✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹	✓² ✓² ✓² ✓² ✓² ✓²
7th enquiry **Attendance :** (G-I) Set 1 = 27/29; Set 2 = N.A (G-E) Set 1 = 25/29; Set 2 = N.A The responses to the questions in this enquiry brought a number of rather surprising contradictions. The overall claim to grammar knowledge and awareness on the part of G-E was understood so far to be positive and based in self-confidence. Yet in this new enquiry the optimistic impression is seen as undermined. In the actual first task given, namely of naming tenses, G-E emerged very nearly with identical success as G-I. On the matter of the recognition of tenses, G-E lagged slightly behind G-I and more members attested to looking the verbs and tenses up rather than working them out in their heads. Even though they agreed to the same extent as G-I that much verbs-grammar had been covered, they admitted to being much less assured about their subject than the other class, although they had learnt a lot.	✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹		✓¹ ✓¹	

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	✓ is given for POSITIVE SCORES			
	G-I		G-E	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2
8th enquiry Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 21/29; Set 2 N.A (G-E) Set 1 = 28/29; Set 2 N.A Both the G-E class and the G-I class now found their teaching methods unclear for the greater part. Whereas all the pupils who took part in this survey claimed to know why this was the case, only the greater part of each class would have made changes to the approaches used. Half of each class claimed that satisfactory progress was being made and all of the learners felt able to account for the occurrence of the progress or the lack of it. The average perceived concentration levels were almost identical and the pupils of both classes claimed to have predominantly visual memories.			✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹	
9th enquiry Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 22/29; Set 2 N.A (G-E) Set 1 = 26/29; Set 2 N.A Both classes named the passive skills as responsible for the consolidation of the learning, and as the skills with which they would welcome more involvement. Therefore it is not surprising that both classes claimed to have poor powers of recall. On being asked again to name the nature of their memory from the two choices of 'audio' and 'visual', they chose the latter by a very large majority in each case, but even more determinedly in the case of G-E. Both classes made emphatic admission to neglecting their responsibilities to their learning and placed French lower on their scales of successes than their other subjects. It is perhaps particularly significant that G-E depicted a sadder picture than G-I of their relationship with French in comparison with the other subjects. Both classes equally claimed to be easily distracted from the work, though more pupils in G-I than in G-E found it easy to pursue the work actively. On the other hand, more members of G-E had positive things to say about their position as teenage learners working under pressure, with all that the world of the teenager implies for the work situation.	✓¹ ✓¹		✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹	

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| | ✓ is given for POSITIVE SCORES | | | |
| | G-I | | G-E | |
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2

10th enquiry

Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 25/29; Set 2 N.A   ✓¹ (G-E Set 1)

(G-E) Set 1 = 30/30; Set 2 N.A

The major "Mocks" had been found neither easy nor hard by the greater part of each class. The hardest paper for G-I had been the "Writing" and for G-E the "Listening". Significantly, the second most difficult paper in each case had been the most difficult for the other class. Furthermore, the least difficult paper for both classes had been the "Reading". These at least, were the classes' own perceptions of the most and least difficult papers. These assessments remained constant when the same question was put from the angle of the easiest paper. They even remained the same when the question was put again as part of the eleventh questionnaire. Hence the classes certainly seemed to know their own minds on this matter and this may be a significant factor in the discussion about the effects and influences of the methods used in the classrooms during the time of the experiment. There was some interesting psychology expressed in the responses to the question concerning the nature of the results achieved, those desired, expected, deserved and deemed good. It is interesting that the two classes, for the most part, considered that they got the results they deserved and largely good results. Some difference lodged in the areas of the ✓¹ ✓¹ (G-E Set 1) 'wanted' and 'expected' categories of outcome. The spread of the grades targeted in the actual GCSE was quite an even one in the case of G-I and rather an uneven one in the case of G-E, of ✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹ (G-I Set 1) whom only 3% claimed that they would be happy with a Grade C but 47% admitted to setting their sights below that line. The greater part of each class claimed to have relied on the TEACHING for their knowledge more than on the LEARNING. In preparing their position on the real GCSE, both classes ✓¹ (G-I Set 1) planned to upgrade their learning strategies and do thorough REVISION.

Almost all the pupils in each class would advise younger colleagues to approach their work in the subject with a positive attitude and the intention to work systematically and methodically, emphasising the important value of PROACTIVE APPLICATION.   ✓¹ (G-E Set 1)

	✓ is given for POSITIVE SCORES			
	G-I		G-E	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2
<u>11th enquiry</u> **Attendance : (G-I) Set 1 = 23/29; Set 2 N.A** **(G-E) Set 1 = 27/30; Set 2 N.A** The jointly preferred lesson structure was group work and pair work, but didactic teaching with much featured teacher talk was a close runner-up to this, according to the preference statements of both classes.			✓¹	
The device of asking again for a summary of the advice they would offer younger learners was the means of persuading the pupils to analytically chart the most constructive steps to effective and efficient learning. These were: - going over everything after the lessons - making notes - concentration and listening. Some emphasis was placed on the value of beneficial relationships with each other and with the teacher.	✓¹		✓¹	
The commentary on how to learn the grammar was much less specific but seemed to allude to the use of analogy and the benefit of learning examples as prototypes. There was also the persistent impression of tension in the responses on grammar and the overall message about its difficult nature.				
Overall a positive attitude was expressed that good results would follow if hard work was done. For the most part and particularly with G-I, the outlook and the state of self confidence were good. Specifically where plans for revision were concerned, both classes were positive and optimistic. In each case the majority of the pupils were pleased to have belonged to their particular 'faction' and they were satisfied with the work that had been staged on their behalf.	✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹ ✓¹		✓¹ ✓¹	-

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	✓ is given for POSITIVE SCORES			
	G-I		G-E	
	Set 1	Set 2	Set 1	Set 2
The ESSENCE of the research, in which the pupils of the Sets One (G-I) and (G-E) played a part, was GRAMMAR. In this final enquiry, having already alluded to grammar in their responses to certain questions as a difficult and amorphous subject, they maintained that grammar would indeed play a role in their performance and attainment at GCSE, ie. in their subject success. Significantly, G-I expressed greater certainty than G-E on this. Indeed, in the case of G-E opinion was more equally divided, with 44% negating the importance of grammar to successful achievement (as opposed to 17% negative response in the case of G-I). When choosing the more essential language influence between vocabulary and grammar, however, both classes gave slightly more importance to vocabulary. In their final response within this final enquiry, the pupils of both G-I and G-E, ordering the hierarchy of the most important criteria for good achievement, placed MOTIVATION in first position, followed by SELF CONFIDENCE. Working with five criteria in all, G-I placed TEACHING STYLES in 5th hierarchical position to G-E's 4th position for this, and LEARNING STRATEGIES in 4th position as opposed to the 3rd place which G-E afforded it.	✓[1]			
(measured in ticks) whole attendance	7✓		10✓	
(measured in ticks) Sets One attendance	4 ✓		7✓	
(measured in ticks) Whole attitude appraisal (not including attendance) Sets One attitude appraisal	25✓ 20✓[1]		32✓ 21✓[1]	

3.4.15 A commentary on aspects of the overall enquiry

The response to the final question of the final questionnaire, noted immediately above, is of considerable interest to the whole argument presented in this thesis. Already in sections of Chapters Two and Three the matters of learners' states of MOTIVATION and SELF CONFIDENCE have been discussed and found of paramount importance to successful outcomes for learners. In discussion, the importance of these states has been taken in speculation beyond the significance and value of any teaching style but considered within the context of good classroom relationships with peers and teachers.

The discussion featuring MOTIVATION and SELF CONFIDENCE is arguably an appropriate one with which to end this section, since it precludes the

temptation to make decisions on the superiority of teaching styles, notably between the teaching modes M1 and M2, as this might have been interpreted out of the perspective of the G-I/G-E learners. Yet the argument made here does allow for interest to be expressed later on the possible relationships between:

1. the nature of a class or of classes and the degrees to which learners may be made motivated and self confident through interaction within their group(s) and within their relationships with their teacher(s);

2. the possibility that certain classroom teaching methods and learning strategies may play an influential role in the pattern of cause and effect characteristics which is implied here for desirable and efficacious states of MOTIVATION and SELF CONFIDENCE to occur.

The evidence produced in the questionnaires pertaining to this overall enquiry might take the emphasis away from METHOD and place it with the personal and collective NATURE and the inter-group CHEMISTRY of the young people who populated the classes used in the action research and, as has been said already, with the RELATIONSHIPS which they formed among themselves and with their teacher(s). The product of all the levels of interaction which are implied here emerges as a dynamism which is structured on a number of psychological positives:

- a positive outlook, a sense of interest and enthusiasm;

- a sense of optimism: the I WILL, I CAN, I DO development;

- an awareness of goals and the ambition to achieve them;

- a constructive approach to the work;

- an understanding and acceptance of personal responsibility and personal accountability for the work and outcomes;

- an acceptance of the teacher's guidance, full use of the teacher's knowledge and the use of the teacher as recourse according to the dictates of personal need;

-       an ability to work with peers as a means of self support in a give-and-take situation which allows the subject matter to be thoroughly explored to the benefit of each individual and at a whole group level.

The researcher has already expressed her persistent impression (which has seemed well supported, furthermore, in the patterns which have emerged in this section) that the Set One (G-I) was generally a much more uniformly positive and constructive unit than the Set One (G-E). However, an examination of the numbers attending class at the times of the questionnaire-tasks' being applied and responded to in itself seems to suggest a contradicting argument, and at the least a conflicting one, arguably, since ATTENDANCE ± is used, in educational matters featuring people, as a reliable indicator of performance and outlook. It is by no means the researcher's intention here to suggest that the situation of absence under discussion is one which issues out of pupils' reluctance to attend their French lessons as such, but rather one which reflects their general preference to displace their schooling. The issues affecting attendance, its causes and its effects, are taken seriously as formal indicators of learners' relationships with their education, their progress and outcomes (as observed eg. in The Ofsted Handbook 1995 (p.67), and in the Ofsted PICS1 of Autumn 1996, section 3).

Perhaps, therefore, with respect to the researcher's more positive impressions of her class G-I, it should be remembered that its lower rates of attendance, disclosed in the questionnaires (from the point of the action research's becoming an investigation into the performance of only the two top groups!), are repeated in the context of the assessments, as will be witnessed in Chapter Four! Taking into account also the cursory search for more positive reactions applied to the questionnaire summaries, it may, however, be that the researcher's impression of the positive calibre of her Set One (G-I) was founded on generalisations, and that the class members were at best pleasantly casual and relaxed in their approach to their subject specifically as also to their education at school generally.

These perceptions will play their part in the forming of subsequent analysis. In the meantime, it is possible to proceed to the RESULTS chapter, Chapter Four, with an open mind.

m' ella

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