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**Practice Makes Permanent:
A Longitudinal Study of Fossilization and Fluency
in an ESL Learner**

by

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A thesis submitted to
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In partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This longitudinal case study of an adult second language learner with highly developed meta-linguistic knowledge explores the concepts of fossilization and fluency in interlanguage. It posits that each learner's personal factors—*affect, motivation, language learning strategies and awareness*—contribute important reasons for the balance between accuracy and fluency that each learner finds in her second language. It suggests that, along with the concepts of accuracy and fossilization, fluency be considered an important interlanguage characteristic and that each learner's sacrifice of accuracy to fluency, or of fluency to accuracy, is heavily influenced by personal factors as well as by the degree of formality necessary in different types of language production. However, a learner's motivation and her awareness of her place along the interlanguage continua do not necessarily lead to appropriate language-learning strategies. There is strong evidence that positive reinforcement of this learner's emphasis on fluency at the expense of accuracy throughout her second language learning experience has led to fossilization of certain structures within her second language.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Fossilization and Fluency in an ESL Learner

1.1. Introducing EJ

I never approach others just to learn language. I'm just like talk and I'm just interest things. I'm just hello, say hello but I think they think I'm approach them to learn English. (EJ, 2003)

But right now I just speak all the time English. No Korean and no Arabic, only speak English is just my major language and so it's different, even though I have to do some observation ...Some friends I found they still writing first in their own native language and then they transfer later. But mine doesn't work that way, even though quick and short whatever, I..., I'm doing in English. English is kind of my way of thinking and writing is... just work that way. (EJ, 2004)

I survived anyhow and but later now I'm living here and then yah and of course my English is a lot better than 5 years ago. But I found, I think all English is really, really hard, Think more than before.. So that's because I know, because maybe that time oh yah just start learning English so I have certain excuse and but after like I spend 5 years more than 5 years just speaking English. I'm but you know I found just ah all mistake and still have inconfident, inconfident of my writing and then ... yah I feel kind of sometimes it's hopeless. It's very desperate at the same time very hopeless. (EJ, 2005)

They asked me in Korean and then I answered in English. And I found more comfortable....Ya I found comfortable, and then my English actually, has been improved. I found that and I feel...it's still....I found that it doesn't mean that I found it easy, no. I found it's more challenging because before, my situation is I was ah, the learner, so maybe it's OK to make a mistake. People understand, but now I...I compete with ah native speaker. (EJ, 2006)

1.2. Background

This thesis tells the story of one Korean adult's English learning experiences in Canada over a three-and-a-half-year period.

I first met EJ in September 2002 when she came to live in my house and I was immediately captivated by her love of talking, her ease of communication in spite of her imperfect English, her vivacity, her enthusiasm, and her determination to embrace Canadian life. Her willing participation in this three-and-a-half-year longitudinal case study is one indication of that enthusiasm and I am grateful that she has given me the opportunity to make a unique contribution to the field of adult second language acquisition. The above quotations, one from each year of the study, encapsulate not only her English idiolect showing her fluency at the expense of her accuracy, but also her struggle to progress as a speaker of English, her developing awareness of her task, and her determination to fit into Canadian society.

1.3. Interlanguage

The speech produced by individual adult second language learners shares many common characteristics. Researchers such as Bley-Vroman (1989) have argued that adult second language (L2) learning is a very different phenomenon from child first language (L1)

learning and from child second language learning. It is learning that is already heavily influenced by knowledge of a first language, and by an adult's fully developed general cognitive abilities. It is a constantly shifting, *interlanguage* (IL). It can shift in either direction—both towards and away from the target language norm. This natural, but at the same time unnatural language, has been recognized and acknowledged for its unique characteristics for many years, but it was Selinker (1972) who coined the term "interlanguage" - the term that was finally adopted. Below is a definition of interlanguage taken from an encyclopedia of language and languages. Interlanguage is

a language system created by someone who is in the process of learning a foreign language. This intermediate state contains properties of both the first and the second language, and varies according to the learner's evolving system of rules. (Crystal 1992. pp. 190-191).

Of the many characteristics particular to interlanguage, one of the most prominent as well as one of the most puzzling is fossilization, or the cessation of learning accurate second language forms before the learner has reached the target language (TL) norm (Selinker, 1972; Long, 2003; Han, 2003, 2004; Han & Odlin, 2006).

Another characteristic of non-native-speaker (NNS) speech production, especially in the early stages of learning the language, is the lack of fluency compared to native speakers (NS), although native speakers can also differ in terms of the fluency of their delivery in

their mother tongue. Although fluency has been the subject of both theoretical and empirical studies (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Weinert, 1995; Wood 2001, 2002), it has not been examined as a particular characteristic of interlanguage. It has been argued (Brumfit, 1979, 1984; Eskey, 1983; Nobuyoshi & Ellis 1993; Truscott, 1998) that as learners' interlanguage develops, they must make choices (not necessarily consciously) about whether to focus on accuracy or on fluency. In this light, I would like to propose in this thesis that fluency, as well as accuracy, be considered as a characteristic of interlanguage, and that in a study of second language learning, these two characteristics should both be considered.

In addition to these two interlanguage features—accuracy and fluency—a number of personal characteristics related to the learner herself can also be considered. Each learner's IL is unique according to that learner's individual language learning history, personality, affect, motivation, language learning strategies, and her awareness of her place along the interlanguage continua. These individual affective characteristics in turn influence how the learner perceives the importance of accuracy over fluent communication or fluency over accurate use of the language. This balance point between accuracy and fluency is a crucial factor in any attempt to explain how, why, and when fossilization occurs.

1.3.1. Fossilization as an interlanguage characteristic

It has been widely noted that all children, unless they are too handicapped or damaged to learn, are successful in learning their first language. In contrast to this, most adults fail in varying degrees at learning a second language (Selinker, 1972). In other words, certain aspects of an adult's interlanguage can become fossilized before reaching the target language (TL) norm.

Selinker (1972) in his seminal article on adult interlanguage and fossilization notes that adults, despite their motivation, their superior cognitive abilities and learning strategies and their fluency in their native language (NL), fail to master their second language to an acceptable degree. In other words, adult second language learners fossilize. Or, according to Birdsong (2003), they reach their "ultimate attainment" short of native-likeness. This failure to fully attain a second language has been defined by Selinker thus.

...fossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL tend to keep in their IL relative to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation or instruction he receives in the TL.... Fossilizable structures tend to remain as potential performance, reemerging in the productive performance of an IL even when seemingly eradicated. (Selinker, 1972, p. 215.)

So, why do adult second language learners fossilize, and why do they do it to such varying degrees? Why do they seem to reach this "permanent plateau" and cease learning (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 45)? This intriguing question remains unsolved despite many decades

of intensive research from all angles within the second language acquisition (SLA) field.

1.3.2. The role of fluency in fossilization

How does each learner achieve successful communication while possessing an inadequate vocabulary and grammar in the TL? Each individual learner must find her own unique balance between accuracy and fluency. By studying this balance point, unique to each learner, much light can be shed on the puzzle of fossilization.

In the early stages of learning a language, the interplay of accuracy and fluency is more straightforward than in the more advanced stages. The learner must choose from among her few L2 words and piece them together using her simple grammar, usually with limited accuracy and a halting delivery, using context and non-verbal means. At the later stages of language learning, however, the relationship between accuracy and fluency becomes more complex and more interesting (Woods, personal communication, 2007). Attention to fluency can compete with accuracy as the learner acquires enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to make choices as to how a message is conveyed and to keep the flow of conversation going without awkward pauses. It is at this stage—the

time when the learner begins to be able to communicate effectively and comfortably—that the danger of fossilization looms.

1.3.3. The role of the individual learner

In order to answer the question of why learners fossilize, not only does the language produced by learners need to be examined, but also the learners themselves. Their feelings about the target language (TL) and its culture, their reasons and motives for learning, the strategies they use to attain their language learning goals, and their awareness of their abilities in comparison to the target language norm all contribute to the individual learner's degree of success in learning the L2.

What personal characteristics help or hinder people in their language learning? The role of personal affect, for example, is important (Schumann, 1997). What are the learner's fears, discomforts, joys and aspirations in the L2? As well, what is her motivation to try to communicate in the L2 (Dörnyei, 2001)? What language learning strategies does she employ to act upon her motivation and to fix her perceived problems with the TL (Oxford, 1990, 1995)? Is she aware of any differences between her L2 and the native-speaker version (Robinson, 1995)? What problems does she notice?

The learner's feelings, motivation, awareness and perceptions will also come into play in questions related to fluency. How driven is a particular learner to be among people and communicate? How important to that learner is the ability to communicate with accuracy in the L2? Some learners use the strategy of focusing on the message; others will focus on how accurately they are able to convey that message (Pawley & Syder, 1983; Weinert, 1995; Wood 2001). This interplay of accuracy and fluency will manifest itself differently for each individual language learner according to personality, background, beliefs, motivation and choice of language learning strategies.

For researchers to be able to identify and study this balance point, individual learners must be followed over a significant period of time, their language errors tracked and recorded and their personal affective characteristics examined. In a longitudinal case study, the individual learner takes a prominent position enabling questions such as those mentioned above to be asked and answered. Individual characteristics such as personality, motivation, past experiences and current goals play large roles in second language learning outcomes. They make significant contributions in explaining why adult L2 learners vary widely in their level of ultimate attainment in the L2.

1.4. Interlanguage research: The need for longitudinal case studies

Although fossilization has been widely recognized and acknowledged in adult SLA research, it remains a puzzle. Most studies that attempt to explain it have been cross-sectional 'snapshots' of the interlanguage of many learners rather than longitudinal case studies tracking one learner over time. The literature on adult second language acquisition calls for more of these longitudinal case studies (Ellis 1988; Selinker & Han, 1996; Long, 2003; Han 2004; Han & Odlin, 2006). Larsen-Freeman (1997) suggests that "we need a camcorder, not a camera to do our research." In other words, rather than cross-sectional *snapshots* we need more longitudinal *movies*.

Although there have been several IL longitudinal studies, for example Schumann's 1967 "Alberto" study and Schmidt's 1983 study of "Wes", there is an understandable dearth of such research. Longitudinal studies take a long time. They require the participation of one or more willing learners. It is difficult to set up such a study and to sustain it over an extended time.

A longitudinal case study tells the story of an unusual and intense relationship. Both the researcher and the participant bring their histories, personalities and agendas to the table. The researcher

does not start with a clear goal, a single research question, an elegantly constructed data-collection instrument or a hypothesized outcome. Instead, the story unfolds, the questions are revised, the data-collection instruments diversify, and the outcomes are discovered according to how the study evolves.

What kinds of data collection methods are most appropriate for a study needing a wide variety of formal and informal, spoken and written language? A learner's IL varies, chameleon-like, in both accuracy and fluency according to the type of task (Tarone, 1999). Discrete parts of the IL, for example verb tense use, can become more target-like, less target-like or remain consistently variable over time. A qualitative, emergent approach to research together with quantitative measures of certain facets of the learner's IL seems to be the best fit for collecting and sorting the wide variety of data types over a long time-period needed in this kind of longitudinal study (Watson-Gegeo, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Schumacher & McMillan 1993). The final product that emerges is a unique creation brought to light through the collection of the data, the interaction of the two personalities and the goals of each participant. The data themselves drive the study and determine from stage to stage where the next step will lead. Tracking one learner through several years is a fascinating process. Data can be collected on many different

aspects of the participant's language use and, consequently, can be triangulated. A successful qualitative study combined with quantitative data can result in a detailed and robust picture of the learner's interlanguage and shed much light on the puzzling question of why individual adult learners fossilize at different points in their interlanguage development.

1.5. Our stories

I am both an ESL teacher in the Intensive program at Carleton University and an MA candidate in the School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies for the master's degree in applied language studies. My particular interest lies in fossilization—when and how adults tend to fossilize and how fossilization can be prevented. As well, I teach adults how to play the cello, an instrument that is usually for them, a second instrument. I have found that there are many similarities between learning a second language and learning a musical instrument as an adult. Fossilization tends to happen in both.

Although EJ came to Ottawa in July of 2001 and took courses in the Carleton ESL intensive program that year, I did not meet her until September 2002 when she rented a room in my house. As I worked my way through my courses at Carleton, my interest in adult second language learning and its general rate of failure compared to first

language learning grew. By the time I had decided to write a thesis about it in 2003, EJ was no longer living with me but was willing to participate. I started to collect data from her in September 2003. The journey of discovery from that first session to the last in March 2006 has been full of surprising turns and revelations.

EJ is a Korean female in her mid 30s. Her story is an unusual one. Her positive attitude towards embracing other cultures and her enthusiasm for living and communicating fully within them are awe-inspiring. She began her studies of English in the traditional Korean way, in middle school. There, she was intrigued by her English teacher, who was a Korean but who seemed somehow foreign and exotic. She also liked the sound of English and used to practice making the sounds on the way home from school. She excelled at speaking and at story telling in English. Each year the school would have a public-speaking competition in English. EJ was always chosen to speak. In high school, she continued her English studies. Although there were no more public speaking competitions, she gained the reputation of being fluent in English. Other students were hitting the grammar books, but EJ gained her strong reputation by talking. Her grammar book remained pristine and unopened after the first few chapters. At university, her English studies continued. All through high school and university, English was a subject of major

importance. Throughout university, she maintained her reputation as a fluent speaker of English.

After completing an honour's degree in history with a minor in archaeology and gaining a post-graduate teaching certificate, she worked for two and a half years in a museum specializing in traditional Korean handicrafts, basketry in particular. Her dream, however, was to go to Egypt and become an Egyptologist. She started learning Arabic from a Korean man who had spent 10 years in Egypt.

In 1996, she went to Cairo, enrolled in both Arabic and English courses, took belly-dancing lessons, became an excellent cook of Arabic dishes, and went to lectures at the British Council's Egypt Exploration Society. She stayed in Cairo for five years. During that time, she taught at a school for the children of Korean diplomats living in Cairo. In 1998, she met and married a Canadian man who was working there. For the next four years, she spent her days teaching in Korean, doing daily chores in Arabic and living her social life in English with her new husband and a variety of European and North American ex-pat friends. During this time, she was taking English lessons and studying it actively at home. At work in the Korean school, whenever there was a need to translate into English, EJ was asked to do it.

In July of 2001, she moved to Ottawa with her husband and enrolled in the Intensive ESL course at Carleton University in September 2001. She was placed in the top-level class. In January 2002, she wrote the Canadian Academic English Language assessment (CAEL) and placed into credit-level English 1500, the middle of three levels. She also studied art history.

EJ's marriage did not last, so September 2002 found her renting a room in my house and having to make some very important life decisions. She started volunteering in The Museum of Civilization's children's program and enrolled in a Certificate for Teaching English as a Second Language (CTESL) programme at a local college. Life at my house was very lively during the year she was with me. She was a marvelous cook and made both Korean and Arabic meals for us. She brought home new friends made at the CTESL course and shared stories about the wonderful things she was doing with the children at the museum. She played my piano and created lovely works of art. She did not finish the CTESL course. At a certain point, her imperfect English abilities, especially the accuracy of her spoken English, prevented her from completing it. She switched to a course in Early Childhood Education at the same college.

In September 2003, she moved into her own apartment, which she shared with a Norwegian student who was taking courses at Carleton University.

From October to December 2004, EJ took a break and went home to visit her family in Korea. By this time, she was living with her new partner and working at two part-time jobs, one at a daycare and the other at an After-Four program.

In August 2005, EJ and her partner bought their own home. She spent a good deal of time wondering about whether she wanted to become an elementary school teacher rather than an Early Childhood educator. In considering the differences between these two careers, she became increasingly aware that her English was an obstacle, a significant hurdle that was preventing her from reaching her goal. Her growing awareness of the inadequacies of her English led to much frustration, and it motivated her to seek ways of surmounting this problem. We spent a lot of time going over the pros and cons of transferring her teaching certificate to the Ontario system, doing a B.Ed. at Ottawa University, doing an M.Ed. at the same institution, or taking more courses at Carleton University. She thoroughly researched all options. Those projects seem now to be on hold. She currently has a full-time job at a daycare near her home from which she is on maternity leave.

1.6. The unique qualities of this study

Unlike the participants in most longitudinal studies, who have for the most part been naturalistic learners with no clear academic goals for their English, EJ has an academic background and an impressive amount of meta-linguistic knowledge from a term spent in a CTESL course. She was highly motivated to learn and to improve her English so that she could attain her goal of becoming an elementary school teacher in Canada. She had a total commitment to integrating into Canadian society while at the same time keeping her Korean culture and roots. I know of no other longitudinal case study in which the learner was so highly educated or so highly motivated to achieve such a clear goal. As well, I was there not only as a researcher but also as a teacher, or coach, if she chose to use me as such. The time we spent together was primarily shaped and driven by my participant and not by me. This study had the triple aim of a) observing and collecting language samples over the years from an L2 learner in order to determine whether fossilization of any structures had occurred, b) making myself available to her as a coach or teacher, and c) noting how she chose to use me as a resource in order to help herself improve her English to meet her goal.

1.7. Research questions

Because this was an emergent study, the research questions tended to change over time. As I collected more and more data from EJ, and as our interactions as study participants evolved, the questions became more focused and more specific. In the end, the questions fell into four broad categories that guided the research:

1. Questions about accuracy

- I wanted to know if the errors I had initially noticed would remain or disappear. In other words, could we say that these aspects of her English had fossilized?

2. Questions about fluency

- Why did she appear so fluent yet at the same time so inaccurate?
- Was there a relationship between the two concepts?

3. Questions about personal factors

- What was the relationship between her linguistic abilities and her personal characteristics such as goals and motivations, emotions and affect, and her own strategies for improvement?
- How aware was she of the characteristics of her interlanguage and her difficulties with accuracy?
- How did these personal characteristics contribute to the unique nature of her idiolect, in terms of both accuracy and fluency?

4. Questions about pedagogy

- Were there any pedagogical activities that would help her to de-fossilize and enhance her interlanguage development?

CHAPTER 2
Theoretical Framework and Literature Review
of the Key Concepts:
Interlanguage Characteristics and Personal Affective Factors
in Adult Second Language Acquisition

Introduction

In second language acquisition research, there are two main factors to be taken into consideration: the interlanguage itself and the person who speaks it.

Among the interlanguage characteristics traditionally researched, the most well-documented and perhaps the most puzzling is the concept of L2 fossilization. Why is it the case that adult second language learners do not acquire the second language to the level of accuracy achieved by native speakers? One argument is that accuracy is related to fluency. Once a learner becomes communicatively fluent and thus able to get along comfortably in conversation, there is less pressure on the system to become more accurate. The concept of fluency, however, although it has been examined in the SLA literature, has not been recognized as an interlanguage characteristic. In this literature review, I propose to include the concept of fluency together with fossilization as an interlanguage characteristic.

However, there is also a personal side to interlanguage development. Why is it that, even after spending years in the target language culture, some learners retain many inaccuracies in their L2 and others relatively few? Why is it that some learners sacrifice accuracy to fluency and therefore fossilize, while others take such pains to speak accurately that they sacrifice their fluency and give the impression that their L2 is not as good as it really is?

Among the personal factors prominent in the SLA literature are affect, motivation, language learning strategies and learner perceptions or awareness. These personal factors—how learners perceive themselves in relation to the new language and how they act upon those perceptions—play a vital role in explaining the wide variation in the success rates of adult second language learners. In particular, these personal factors influence greatly the balance between the two interlanguage factors of accuracy and fluency in individual learners.

This chapter will first explore the literature that defines some of the general formal characteristics of interlanguage. Next, it will describe studies of one of the main attributes of interlanguage—fossilization—giving definitions of and reasons for it. After fossilization, studies of interlanguage fluency will be explored. Then some of the literature about personal factors involved in explanations

of interlanguage—affect, motivation, language learning strategies and awareness—will be discussed together with an explanation of how these personal factors influence the balance between accuracy and fluency in interlanguage. Finally, a sampling of studies suggesting pedagogical treatments for fossilization will be described.

2.1. Interlanguage: Its characteristics

The concept of a distinct, rule-based, natural learner language has been recognized for many years. Corder (1967) was the first researcher to define a distinct “learner language” which was not simply a defective version of the target language. However, the term *interlanguage* was coined by Selinker in 1969, and through his seminal paper of 1972 it gained acceptance as the name for “a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner’s attempted production of a TL norm” (Selinker, 1972, p. 214).

Selinker compares a learner’s interlanguage to a supposedly perfect target language norm. But Cook (1996), like Corder before him, suggests not comparing interlanguages to the target language at all, but rather seeing them as legitimate languages in their own right. He argues for a “multicompetence” model of viewing learner interlanguages. This view eliminates the concept of failure in adult L2

learning and instead stresses the learners' abilities in more than one language—a more positive construct than one comparing the interlanguage to a perfect target language.

Unlike Cook, Birdsong (1999) chooses to see the learner's IL in terms of the TL, but not as a system in constant flux doomed to ultimate failure. Instead, he sees the IL as asymptotic. Language learning is built of many disparate factors—vocabulary, pronunciation, grammatical structures, borrowings from the L1, etc. Some, if not all of these will gradually approach the TL. Within one learner's interlanguage, some systems within the L2 will become more native-like than will others.

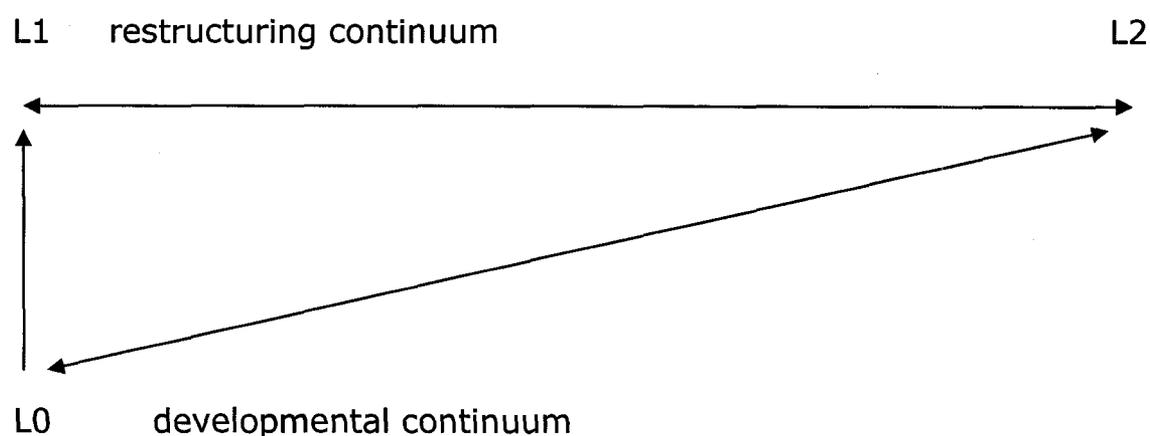
Interlanguage as a concept, is characterized by contradictions and dichotomies. It can be considered both as a defective L2 and as a language in its own right. It is both stable and variable. It includes both analyzed and unanalyzed language. It does, and does not draw on the L1. It both fossilizes and continues to improve. It contains both universal linguistic characteristics common to all learners and features unique to each learner. For each speaker, there is an interlanguage. Thus, the concept of interlanguage is multi-faceted and it cannot be explained from any one 'monolithic' standpoint (Han 2003, 2004; Han & Odlin, 2006). Many different aspects must be

considered and included in a comprehensive construct of interlanguage.

According to Corder, there are two interlanguage *continua*, - one progressing from the L1 to the L2, and the other progressing from no L2 knowledge to full L2 acquisition (Corder, 1978).

The figure below shows these two continua as well as the L1 continuum growing from no language knowledge to full L1 acquisition.

Figure 2.1 The interlanguage continua



The first he calls a restructuring continuum. "This envisages the learner as engaged in a process of progressively adjusting his mother tongue system to approximate it even more closely to the target." (Corder, 1978, p. 75).

The second type of continuum is a *recreation or developmental continuum*. This continuum starts from no knowledge of the L2 and progresses towards total L2 acquisition following a path similar to that

of a first language learner. However, no adult starts to learn a second language from scratch. Corder (1967), following the assumption that second language learners are in some ways like first language learners, posited a *built-in* syllabus for second language learners. This hypothesis proposes both a strong and a weak form. In the strong version, "... all learners of a particular second language follow roughly the same sequence of development, whatever their mother tongue. A weak version of the hypothesis states, "all learners having a particular mother tongue will follow the same sequence in the acquisition of some second language." (Corder, 1978, p. 77).

Bley-Vroman (1989) focuses on the recognition that adult L2 learning is not the same as child L1 learning. He states that adults must rely on their general cognitive abilities because they do not have direct access to the universal processes of acquisition (access to Universal Grammar (UG)—innate knowledge of a set of principles common to all languages). In his Fundamental Difference Hypothesis, he states that the adult L2 learner

...is not a Martian, nor a hypothetical blank-slate infant. But because the indirect knowledge of UG possible through the native language is incomplete and accidental, and since it also depends on the individual learner's ability to construct a UG-surrogate, one can expect some partial success, little chance of perfect success, and some considerable individual variation. (Bley-Vroman, 1989, p. 53)

One of the main distinguishing characteristics of interlanguage is its variability, as Bley-Vroman states in the above quotation. R. Ellis, (1985a) recognizes the unique characteristics of this separate linguistic system and proposes a "variable competence model of second language acquisition." He maintains that an IL is a progressively organized system of form-function relationships. According to Ellis's hypothesis, a learner's L2 knowledge varies depending on the context of use. The context of use determines how analyzed or how automatic the IL is at any one time. Early in the L2 learning process, simplification allows communication. As the learner progresses and complexification occurs, the simplified forms do not disappear; they remain in the L2 and add to the variability in the learner's IL. This variability can be used to explain contradictory findings in the literature.

Natural language is unstable and so is subject to invasion by new forms. Interlanguage is a special type of natural language in that it is characterized by a very high level of instability. It is subject to constant bombardment by new linguistic forms, many of which are 'taken in', when, to begin with, they exist side by side with existing forms. (Ellis, R. 1985b. p. 125)

Tarone (1999), like Ellis, stresses the variability of interlanguage. She states that an interlanguage is like a chameleon, varying according to the context of use and the amount of attention paid to accuracy at any given time.

This variability is also found in the research of Bialystok and Sharwood Smith (1985). They caution that there are two parts to IL systems: knowledge and control. They use the analogy of a library. Not only must the library contain items but it must also be well organized in order that the information can be efficiently accessed. Both IL representations and retrieval systems can be defective. Thus, they conclude that increased sophistication does not necessarily mean increased accuracy, that reanalysis of the TL grammar does not necessarily mean more complexity, and that increased competence or analysis does not necessarily mean increased awareness (pp. 106-107).

Thus, adult learners' second languages or interlanguages are, at the same time, stable and unstable, systematic and variable, progressing towards the target language and backsliding away from it. They can be viewed as imperfect L2s or as valid languages in their own right. Why is adult SLA such a strangely contradictory, and ever-changing phenomenon? Why is it that so few adult learners are completely successful at learning their second language? I now turn to the branch of SLA that looks not at learners' acquisition of correct L2 forms but at their non-acquisition: fossilization.

2.1.1. Fossilization: An interlanguage characteristic

In *Rediscovering Interlanguage* (1992), Selinker tells an amusing story about a group of SLA researchers debating whether fossilization really does exist. Do people really cease development of their IL, or would it be possible for them to continue to improve towards the TL given rigorous enough circumstances? One of the group maintains that you could become native-like in your L2 if your life were at stake. This is an interesting idea and it would be a fruitful seam to mine if it were not so unethical. It would hardly be appropriate to threaten learners with death if their L2 did not become native-like and then sit back and observe the result! Perhaps interviewing international spies would be the solution here.

- **Defining fossilization**

The phenomenon of fossilization, although difficult to define and even more difficult to establish whether it has occurred or not, is well recognized in SLA research. (See Selinker's definition below.). L2 learners who are living in the TL culture and speaking the TL every day, who have normal or above-normal cognitive abilities and who have the necessary motivation to learn, more often than not stop short of the native-speaker norm. Why does this happen?

Again, Corder (1967,1971,1976) was one of the earliest SLA researchers to notice the phenomenon of fossilization. He attributed it to satisfaction of communicative needs. Once the learner could communicate as well as perceived necessary in the L2, then learning would stop.

Following Corder, Selinker is a prominent researcher in this field both by himself (Selinker 1972, 1988, 1992, 1996) and in collaboration with others, (Selinker & Han, 1996, 2001; Selinker & Lakshmanam, 1992; Selinker & Lamendella, 1978, 1979; Han & Selinker, 1996). Selinker (1972) defines fossilization thus:

Fossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL will tend to keep in their IL relative to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the TL.... Fossilizable structures tend to remain as potential performance, reemerging in the productive performance of an IL even when seemingly eradicated. (p. 215).

ZhaoHong Han is today perhaps the leading expert on fossilization studies. Han (2003, 2004) gives us excellent overviews of the fossilization literature to date. Her article (2003), her book (2004) and her book edited together with Odlin, C. (2006) draw together all the facets of this puzzling L2 phenomenon stressing that no one monolithic explanation is possible and that many different factors must be considered in any construct of the fossilization phenomenon. Han (2004), citing her own doctoral dissertation of 1998, proposes a two-tier definition that takes into account innate,

cognitive and also external, performance-related factors of fossilization.

COGNITIVE LEVEL: Fossilization involves those cognitive processes or underlying mechanisms that produce permanently stabilized IL forms.

EMPIRICAL LEVEL: Fossilization involves those stabilized interlanguage forms that remain in learner speech or writing over time, no matter what the input or what the learner does. (pp. 19-20).

Thus, Han's definition acknowledges fossilization as both a process (cognitive level) and a product (empirical level). It attempts to capture the cause-and-effect relationship between the two levels, the cognitive level giving rise to the empirical level. This definition highlights the multi-dimensional nature of fossilization.

- **Linguistic reasons for fossilization**

Because the phenomenon of fossilization is so multi-faceted, many theories have been suggested to explain its existence. The following studies give formal linguistic reasons for fossilization. These explanations are not specific to the learner but rather can be applied to any learner. Individual, personal reasons for fossilization will follow in the next section.

One of the reasons given for adult language learners seeming to stop short of native-speaker attainment of the L2 is that there is a critical period for language learning (Lenneberg, 1967), or a language learning instinct that is separate from our general cognitive learning

abilities (Pinker, 1994). This ability gradually fades during puberty making any language learning experience very different for an adult than for a child.

Bley-Vroman (1989) building on this Critical Period Hypothesis, states that the L2 is not the same type of phenomenon as the L1 with his "Fundamental Difference Hypothesis". Children learning their L1 have access to Universal grammar (UG) with no other language interfering. Adults have either no access or less access to UG as well as an L1 interfering with the L2. They must build their L2 on top of their L1 and make use of their general cognitive abilities. Their knowledge of an L1 and their lack of access to UG, or their access to UG only through their L1, are seen as hindrances to language learning. These hindrances can lead to fossilization.

Selinker and Lakshmanan (1992) acknowledge fossilization as a given, and they propose the Multiple Effects Principle (MEP) as an explanation. They suggest there are many factors that contribute to successful or unsuccessful SLA. Those factors can include language transfer, lack of sufficient exposure to the L2, faulty teaching, and symmetry or non-symmetry of structures between the two languages. They hypothesize that "where two or more SLA factors work in tandem, there is greater chance of stabilization of IL forms leading to

possible fossilization.” (p. 198). Thus, interlanguage fossilization can be explained in terms of how two or more SLA factors interact.

The focus of Lardiere’s (1998) longitudinal study of “Patty” is case and tense acquisition. Patty, an L1 Mandarin speaker moved to the USA when she was 22. Patty had married an American and was living her life 95-98% in English. Lardiere started her study of Patty 10 years later. She collected three audiotaped data samples over 8.5 years.

Lardiere analyzed the data for past tense markers and found that Patty’s suppliance of these had stabilized at 34% correct, an average well below the criterion for acquisition recommended by Schumann (1978) at 90% correct suppliance in obligatory contexts for 3 consecutive samples. In stark contrast, Lardiere found that Patty’s suppliance of pronominal case markings was 100% correct. Thus, Lardiere’s study demonstrates that different structures within the interlanguage can fossilize or improve independently of one another.

Nakuma (1998) explains fossilization from the perspective of language transfer. He hypothesizes that fossilized forms are those that the learner deliberately avoids learning because he thinks that they are the same as in his L1 and therefore he has no need to reset his parameters.

The above studies posit linguistic reasons for fossilization in adult L2 learners. However, accuracy, or the lack of it, is not the only factor that should be considered in a study of interlanguage. Fluency complements fossilization as an interlanguage characteristic.

2.1.2. Fluency: An interlanguage characteristic

Fluency has not traditionally been considered an interlanguage characteristic to be studied alongside fossilization. In Han and Odlin's 2006 comprehensive overview of fossilization studies, there is no mention of "fluency" in the index of keywords; nor is it presented as an interlanguage issue. However, fluency interacts with accuracy in ways that contribute significantly to fossilization. Therefore, I posit that examining the concepts of both fluency and fossilization together as interlanguage characteristics will shed new light on the field of interlanguage studies; in particular it will help to answer questions about why second language learners fossilize and at such a variety of distances from the target language.

- **Defining fluency**

Crystal (1992) defines fluency as "smooth, rapid, effortless, accurate use of language" (p. 139). He states however, that second language learner fluency is not the same as native-speaker fluency.

A second language speaker may be able to carry on a complex conversation and make herself understood without the accuracy or rapidity of a native-speaker. Within the SLA literature fluency is generally defined using two criteria: a) speed of utterance and b) memorized lexical formulae or chunks.

Pawley and Syder (1983) give the following criteria for speed of utterance in native-speakers:

- The largest unit of discourse is 8 to 10 words.
- Native speakers utter one clause at a time.
- Native speakers utter from 270 to 300 syllables per minute.
- More than 50% of fluent units are complete grammatical clauses.
- Pauses are no more than 0.5 seconds mid-clause and 2.0 seconds at clause boundaries. (p. 202)

Non-native-speaker utterances can be measured against these criteria to establish how easily their speech flow compares with that of native speakers.

Memorizing phrases or sentences is one of the strategies that language learners employ in order to appear fluent in their L2. These have been called chunks, formulae or pre-fabs in the research (Bolander, 1989; Ellis, N. 1996; Pawley & Syder, 1983; Weinert, 1995; Wood, 2001, 2002). These formulae can express a large body of meaning without placing too much cognitive load on the speaker. The problem is that the L2 learner does not use these chunks in the same way that a native speaker does.

N. Schmidt (2000) summarizes the literature about lexical chunks thus.

Although vocabulary has conventionally been conceptualized as individual words, it has now become clear that much of lexis consists of sequences of words which operate as single units. Traditional approaches have long dealt with multi-word units (MWU), wherein a single meaning is attached to more than one word, for example, phrasal verbs ('give up'), compounds, ('freeze-dry'), and idioms, ('burn the midnight oil'). But corpus-based research has shown that collocation (the tendency for words to occur together in discourse), extends far beyond the level of such MWUs. In fact, it appears quite common for longer sequences of words to pattern together. Some of these recur frequently enough to be treated as units in their own right, e.g. to make a long story short. Numerous terms have been coined to refer to this type of sequence, but the most commonly used are lexical chunks and lexical phrases. (p. 400)

- **Linguistic reasons for fluency**

When children learn their first language, they memorize many of these chunks, or formulae, but later they start to analyze them grammatically and use them in ways that are more flexible. Adults learning a second language do the same but they often do not analyze the chunks correctly. (Weinert, 1995)

N. Ellis (1996) proposes that much language learning is memorization of sequences of phonological and lexical units, which are then used as a database for learning grammar. Individuals differ in their ability to remember verbal strings in order. Interaction between short-term and long-term phonological memory allows chunking and fine-tuning of a language system. Ellis's paper proposes

mechanisms for analysis of sequence information that results in knowledge of the underlying grammar.

Pawley and Syder (1983) compare native-speaker fluency with non-native-speaker fluency and note the differences. A native speaker will choose a native-like phrase from a wide selection of grammatically correct possibilities. For example, he will say, "I want you to marry me" rather than "My desire is that I be married to you." Both sentences are grammatically correct, although the second would be considered strange. A non-native-speaker, on the other hand, might say, "I want that you marry with me." This sounds fluent and is comprehensible but a native speaker would never say it. Why not? These are the puzzles that the authors allude to in their title – "*Two puzzles for linguistic theory: nativelylike selection and nativelylike fluency.*"

Much of what we say consists of "chunks" rather than single words pieced together into grammatical sentences. Some of these chunks can have fillable slots in them. ("I'll see you tomorrow", or I'll see you next week.) The authors call these "lexicalized sentence stems". These can be either memorized wholes that can be conveniently slotted into an utterance, or they can contain slots to be filled.

A lexicalized sentence stem is a unit of clause length or longer whose grammatical form and lexical content is wholly or largely fixed; its

fixed elements form a standard label for a culturally recognized concept, a term in the language. (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p. 191)

This kind of chunking behavior makes talking easier. Second language speakers use chunks too; however, they often vary these chunks more than would a native-speaker. Native usage is more restricted. New interest in corpus-based linguistics may shed light on reasons for this. (Sinclair, 1991)

Weinert (1995) presents a survey of the research on formulaic language. She states that there is a continuum in languages that goes from highly systematic, rule-governed usage to unanalyzed chunks. Like the interlanguage continua going from the NL to the TL, or from OL2 to full L2, a learner's language can also look like this.

Figure 2.2. Weinert's formulaic-creative continuum



The arrow points in both directions. The L2 speaker's interlanguage can slide back and forth between analyzed, rule-governed groupings of words and unanalyzed wholes. This is consistent with the characteristic of variability in interlanguage systems.

L2 learners create their own formulae that can be unidiomatic.

The view of language as a formulaic-creative continuum suggests that the units of knowledge and production may vary, including fixed formulas, mini-grammars, and general rules. Language may be

represented in dual or even multiple form and analyzed at various levels. (Weinert, 1995, p. 198)

Thus, an L2 speaker's interlanguage is a combination of analyzed grammatical structures and unanalyzed, memorized chunks patched together, sometimes with accuracy and sometimes not.

2.1.3. The accuracy / fluency balance in interlanguage

In order to communicate effectively in the TL culture, the learner may feel she has to sacrifice accuracy in order to become fluent; thus, certain language learning strategies are discarded in favour of communication strategies (Tarone, 1983, 1999). In any adult learner's L2, the point of balance is the place where accuracy meets fluency. This is the battleground where casualties are recorded, new strategies are implemented or trusted old ones adhered to, and repairs are made. To fossilize and be fluent or to be accurate and halting in the L2, this is the dilemma of every adult L2 learner. Past research has recognized this accuracy / fluency balance as an important SLA issue.

Bialystok and Sharwood Smith (1985) write

... fluency is independent of knowledge to the extent that a speaker may be spontaneous and fluent in speech, but the grammatical foundation of that speech is seriously deviant from that of a native speaker. Similarly, we expect some learners to have mastered with considerable success aspects of the grammar of the target language but be unable to retrieve that knowledge within the time constraints

imposed by ordinary conversation. The result is hesitancy and difficulty in oral interactions. (p. 109)

One of the questions that Weinert (1995) asks about learner speech is "What is the relationship between formulaic language and analysis/rules in L2 development?" (p. 181). Some researchers think that learners' attention to rules and use of formulae vary according to the L2 task. (See Ellis's 1985 variable competence model discussed above.)

Ghazemi's (2003) study *Fossilization and the Role of Attention in Adults' Second Language Learning* explores the issue of IL variability according to the task. The author explores the chameleon-like nature of fossilization (Tarone, 1999) and focuses on style-shifting, attention, and formality/informality in different English-producing tasks. Rather than collecting samples of her participants' English at its most informal (unstructured conversation), she gives them a variety of tasks graded by their level of formality. She then measures their level of grammatical accuracy for each task.

Ghazemi studied three participants and gathered data in four 45-60 minute sessions over a period of 5 months. The tasks were as follows:

- An interview
- A follow-up interview
- An elicited imitation task
- 3 story retellings — 2 oral and 1 written

Her purpose was to elicit differences between spontaneous and controlled speech; in other words, speech that required a lot of attention and speech that did not require much attention. She found that the more attention paid to speech production, the more accurate the speech samples she obtained.

Ghazemi suggests that because fossilization is premature automatization, it is important to delay automatization (or too much fluency) until it can be balanced with an acceptable degree of accuracy. Ghazemi recommends that automatization of speech at the expense of accuracy not be allowed too early in second language learning.

Wood (2001) focuses on the relationship between memorized formulae and automaticity in language production. The more automatic your L2 becomes, the more you have "acquired" it. The table below sums up the reasons why fluency can overtake grammatical accuracy at a vulnerable point in a learner's acquisition process and can therefore lead to fossilization.

Table 2.1. Wood's automatic versus controlled language processing.
(p.579)

Automatic processing	Controlled processing
Fast and efficient	Slow and inefficient
Effortless	Requires effort
Not limited by short-term memory	Limited by short-term memory capacity
Not under voluntary control	Under subject control
Inflexible	Flexible
Inaccessible to introspection	Partly accessible to introspection

Thus, it seems that speakers who can communicate fluently in their second language are victims of their own success. Practice makes permanent. Becoming too fluent too quickly can lead to the fossilization of inaccuracies in the L2, inaccuracies that are very difficult or even impossible to eliminate, as Selinker maintains in *Rediscovering Interlanguage* (1992).

2.2. Personal factors in adult SLA

When studying any second language learner's interlanguage, both accuracy and fluency must be taken into consideration. However, each learner creates this accuracy/fluency balance according to her personal experience — her feelings towards the TL, her motivation, her language learning strategies, and her awareness of her task and her process of learning. Without an exploration of each learner's personal factors, questions about how that learner balances accuracy against fluency cannot be adequately answered.

Perdue and Klein's (1992) longitudinal case study of two very similar subjects indicates that degree of success in L2 learning depends on personal characteristics. They studied two Italian, unschooled learners in England over a period of two years. Data about 15 grammatical morphemes were collected three times over the two years in a series of personal narratives, interviews, descriptions of future plans and film-retellings. The interesting findings in this study were that, although both participants had the same L1, similar exposure to the TL and similar backgrounds, they progressed at very different rates in their learning of English. Perdue and Klein conclude that, "levels of stabilization in adult learners appeal to other factors – be they psychological, social, or even biological" (p. 269).

The above study demonstrates that even when learners come from the same L1 background, have similar levels of education, and have similar social status within the target language culture, they can vary considerably in their attainment of the L2. Thus, formal linguistic reasons for fossilization cannot adequately explain this variation across learners. Each learner has her own story to tell. These personal factors play a significant role in explaining the wide variation in second language learning success.

Within the literature, the following four individual learner characteristics have been studied in depth:

- Affect (Vigil & Oller, 1976; Schumann, 1967, 1978, 1997)
- Motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 2001)
- Language learning strategies. (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Oxford, 1990; Bialystok & Sharwood Smith, 1993)
- Awareness (Schmidt & Frota, 1986; Block, 2000; Birdsong, 1989, 2004)

Many of these researchers have noted the relationship between learners' personal factors and their interlanguage accuracy/fluency balance.

2.2.1. Affect

Studies of language learner affect began with Schumann (1967, 1978) who made a longitudinal study of Alberto, a 33-year-old untutored Costa Rican living and working in the USA. These "Alberto" studies became a book, *The Pidginization Process* (1978). Schumann studied Alberto for 10 months and tutored him in several grammatical structures. He came to the conclusion that Alberto was indeed fossilized and posited that this was because Alberto wanted to keep distant both socially and psychologically from the target culture. The reasons for Alberto's fossilization, according to Schumann were personal, affective ones.

Schumann (1997) in his book *The Neurobiology of Affect* explores the importance of personal feeling in language learning. He argues that all people have innate homeostatic and sociostatic value systems that establish a basic somatic value – preferences and aversions.

These three values systems form an emotional memory, which acts as a filter that appraises current stimuli according to novelty, pleasantness, goal/need significance, coping mechanisms and self and social image. These appraisals guide our learning and foster the long-term cognitive effort (action tendencies) necessary to achieve high levels of mastery or expertise. The appraisals also curtail learning, producing variable success. (p. 36)

Emotional memory and “stimulus appraisal” play large parts in our motivation to learn and thus in the effectiveness of our language learning. Schumann uses diary studies to demonstrate how emotions affect learners’ ability to progress in their L2. Diary studies are rich sources of information about the personal aspects of language learning (Schmidt & Frota, 1986; E, H.A. 2002; and Lim 2002).

Schmidt (1983) is the author of another well-known longitudinal study. His participant is “Wes”, a 33-year-old Japanese man living in the USA. Wes was a successful artist who, like Alberto, had no formal training in English. Unlike Alberto, however, Wes was outgoing and had very low social and psychological distance from the target culture and language. He had many TL-speaking friends and used English from 75 to 90% of the time. Schmidt collected data from Wes over a 3-year period, mostly via 18 one-hour audio taped monologues about

his life. There were also three hours' worth of informal conversations, and extensive field notes.

Schmidt concludes that Schumann's acculturation model of fossilization is false. Wes was very well integrated into his target language and culture, yet he failed to achieve a high level of English.

Schmidt explains Wes's failure in terms of the dynamics between the interlocutors.

In native/nonnative conversations, the interlocutors face essentially the same task: to understand and be understood by someone who is speaking a radically different version of the "same" language. Each party must...make an attempt to bridge the gap.... Nonnative speakers...do not expect to do all the work or to reach perfection. (p. 167)

The trouble is that "In real-world interaction native speakers seldom provide explicit focused corrective feedback for grammar in conversation with NNS." (p. 166).

Wes and many other second language speakers do not receive the type of negative feedback that they need in order to improve in their L2 because their interlocutors already understand them well enough for the conversation to flow. (See the Vigil & Oller 1976 study below.) These second language speakers are victims of their own communicative success. In other words, the more fluent they are, the more likely they are to fossilize.

Whether one considers Wes to be a good language learner or a poor language learner depends very much on one's definition of language and of the content of SLA. If language is seen as a means of initiating, maintaining and regulating relationships and carrying on

the business of living, then perhaps Wes is a good learner....Grammar teachers, on the other hand, generally consider him a disaster, possibly beyond rescue. (p. 168)

Wang (2000) made a 13-month study of the acquisition of eight grammatical morphemes by a 16-year-old Mandarin speaker called Lan who is living and studying in Canada. At 16, Lan is not yet an adult and is perhaps still within the critical period for language learning. However, the author of this longitudinal case study, done as a master's thesis, concludes that Lan is already fossilized.

The reasons are personal, affective ones. The author writes

Her initial enthusiasm for learning and improving English had been replaced by a concern about how to find a part-time job and how to get into a good university... Her oral English was fluent and very casual ...with a lot of fillers (like, um, okay, I think, yeah), and with quite a few errors... She seemed more interested in expressing her thoughts than in paying attention to any grammatical rules. I was under the impression that her discourse was fairly stable by then. (p. 118)

Again on page 129, Lan displayed characteristics similar to those of Wes in the Schmidt study:

I think, on the one hand, her willingness to take risks strengthened her ability to communicate in her L2, and resulted in more fluent English. On the other hand, because of high risk-taking, she paid less attention to accuracy. She seemed to care more about conveying her meaning and being understood than paying attention to detail. (p 129)

And again:

In Lan's case, her high risk-taking nature enabled her to find many opportunities to practice her second language and to be aggressive and active in language learning. On the other hand, it also led her to neglect grammatical details in the target language.... She was very seldom bothered with grammatical details such as tenses, cases or

plurals when communicating with people. Communication was more important to her than accuracy. This might be one of the major reasons behind her high fluency and low accuracy. (p. 139)

This sacrifice of accuracy to fluency by both Lan and Wes was very much influenced by their personal feelings about communicating in their second language. This emphasis on fluency at the expense of accuracy caused them to fossilize at a level adequate for purposes of communication but not acceptable in more formal situations.

The question of what constitutes success in language learning is one worth revisiting. Again the metaphor of a sliding scale, or continuum, can apply. What is acceptable in one situation may not be acceptable in another. Wes may be "a grammar teacher's nightmare" and Lan may have trouble getting into a good university; but both are capable of communicating easily in their L2.

2.2.2. Motivation

Like affect, motivation has been a topic of much interest in SLA research. Motivation is critical for success in language learning, just as in any other type of learning. But what is motivation? At a glance, it seems clear. However, a closer look reveals that, "the exact nature of motivation is not so clear" (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 349).

Motivation, as it relates to L2 learning, is closely tied to the learner's goals, attitude towards the target culture, perceptions of self and of

the target culture, personality, self-expectations and the expectations of others. (Gardner & Lambert 1973; Gardner, 1985; Dörnyei, 1998; Barker, 2003)

“Motivation involves four aspects, a goal, effortful behaviour, a desire to attain the goal, and favourable attitudes towards the activity in question.” (Gardner, 1985, p. 50). Motivation can be either *integrative* or *instrumental*, *intrinsic* or *extrinsic* (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1985). A learner who is integratively motivated has a genuine interest in becoming part of the target culture. An instrumentally motivated learner has goals that are more pragmatic such as passing an examination or getting a good job. *Intrinsic* motivation has to do with the way a learner feels about learning the language, its affective value. *Extrinsic* motivation has to do with the use to which the learner puts the new knowledge or skills. All types of motivation have been shown to be effective in language learning success.

Motivation, however, appears to be a two-part concept. First, there is the desire or need to learn the language, the enthusiasm and the intentions. Next must come the implementation of these intentions, the action. Both Gardner (2001) and Dörnyei (2001) make the distinction between ‘*orientation*’, or a person’s reasons or goals for learning a language and ‘*motivation*’, which is the

implementation part, the actual carrying out of the learning. The second does not always follow the first. Barker (2003) asks "... are students doing what they say they should do in order to learn a language or are they just saying it..." (p. 293). In other words, one can pay lip service to the goal, but does one also 'walk the talk'? Do good language learning strategies inevitably develop from keen motivation? It would be reasonable to suppose that they would. The relationship between motivation and language learning strategies is, however, not a straightforward one.

2.2.3. Language learning strategies

Much SLA research has focused on the personal attribute of motivation. Motivation to succeed leads to actions to improve the L2. One's actions become one's language learning strategies. Does what we say and think about our motivation lead to appropriate actions? How does a learner's motivation—or 'orientation', to use Gardner's terminology—relate to her actions, or language learning strategies? The connection between the two may or may not be straightforward.

Wenden and Rubin (1987) and Oxford (1990) are authorities on language learning strategies. Both not only offer advice about effective language learning techniques, but also take care to point out

that there are many different types of language learning. Different people learn best in different ways.

Wenden and Rubin (1987) specify two main categories of learning strategies: cognitive and communication strategies. Cognitive strategies include clarification, monitoring, inductive, deductive and practice strategies. Communicative strategies include content clarification/verification, production tricks, and social management. (pp. 88-89). Oxford (1990) also divides her list of strategy systems into two main groups: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategies include memory, cognitive and compensation strategies; indirect strategies include meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies. (pp. 17-21).

Bialystok and Sharwood Smith (1985) acknowledge that attempts to define the term 'strategies' have not been successful. They cite Faerch and Kasper (1983) and Tarone (1980) when offering this definition. "Strategies...are defined as procedures invoked when problems are perceived." (p. 113). They propose two categories—learning strategies and communication strategies—and then add, as suggested by Tarone (1980), 'production' and 'reception' strategies.

There is an interesting relationship between what language learners believe about their language learning and what they actually

do about it. Woods (1996, 2003) is an authority on the subject. He asks ...

...to what extent are one's beliefs separate and separable from one's actions, and when can actions be said to be consistent with beliefs and under what circumstances can they be said to be inconsistent. This is an important issue if we claim that we are trying to discover learners' beliefs in order to improve their language learning strategies, i.e. the actions they take to learn the language. The second is the question of to what extent are one's beliefs different from one's statements about one's beliefs. This is important in our assessment of the validity of the data we collect. (p. 213)

and notes that ...

what we say we believe may not always be the factor which influences our actions, and individuals can carry out actions which seem to be inconsistent with what they say their beliefs are. (p. 216)

Thus, learners' feelings, beliefs and motivations about using their second language do not necessarily lead to effective language learning strategies. Motivations can be acted upon selectively without appropriate insight into or awareness of what strategies would be the best under the circumstances.

2.2.4. Awareness and meta-linguistic knowledge

It has been recognized in SLA research that a learner's awareness and meta-linguistic knowledge play a huge part in her ability to develop her interlanguage accuracy and fluency. How is the concept of awareness defined in SLA studies?

Block (2000) quotes Tomlin & Villa (1994) in this definition of awareness.

Awareness refers to a particular state of mind in which an individual has undergone a specific subjective experience of some cognitive content or external stimulus ... three specific criteria must be met in order to determine whether an individual is aware or not. Individuals must (a) show some behavioral or cognitive change due to the experience, (b) report that they were aware of the experience, and (c) describe the subjective experience. Methodologically, awareness is often assessed by noting a behavioral change...and whether or not the subject can either report having some subjective experience (meta-awareness) or can simply demonstrate the experience directly... (Block, 2000, p. 193).

What role does knowledge *about* language, or meta-linguistic knowledge, play in successful language learning? Are learning and acquisition truly separate, or can learning become acquisition through automatization? How aware do we have to be in order to be successful in our L2? How do we put our awareness and beliefs into practice? How much attention do we have to pay to accuracy and structure of the language and how much to conveying meaning? The answers to these questions are different for each individual learner.

In order to answer questions such as these, much research from many different perspectives has been carried out. Block (2000) in a cross-learner study, studied the meta-pedagogical awareness of EFL learners in their classrooms over a 10-week period in Barcelona. Birdsong (1989, 2004) in another cross-learner study, researched near-nativeness via grammaticality judgment tests in non-native-speakers. Schmidt, in a longitudinal case study in Schmidt and Frota

(1986) explored his own acquisition of Portuguese and his awareness of the process in a series of diary entries.

Birdsong (1989) states that in some learners, but not in all, the process of learning an L2 is a conscious effort.

Depending on cognitive style and learning/teaching environments, some learners may approach the target language as a series of rules to apply; they may seek or be given explicit accounts of morphology, syntax, and sound-symbol correspondences; they may profit from error corrections in written or spoken modalities, etc. For others, linguistic rules and patterns are acquired inductively, making the accumulation and representation of linguistic knowledge less analytic and less controlled. (p 86)

Therefore, some learners appear to acquire the L2 without much conscious awareness of the process while others use their general cognitive abilities to analyze the L2 rules. Awareness of the task, noticing the gaps between one's own interlanguage and the target language, and degree of meta-linguistic knowledge are personal factors. An effective way to understand these personal factors is to get to know the learner well via longitudinal case studies.

Most of the longitudinal fossilization studies to date have been of "naturalistic" learners, those who have had little or no explicit teaching in their L2. Hanania and Gradman's Fatima (1977), Schumann's Alberto (1978), Schmidt's Wes (1983), Huebner's Hmong speaker (1983a) and Perdue and Klein's two Italian participants (1992a) all fall into this category. Their awareness of their task is not articulated in any of these studies. On the other hand, Schmidt and

Frota's study (1986) of Schmidt learning Portuguese shows that Schmidt—a linguist himself—is very aware of his challenge. Similarly, Wang's study of Lan (2000) contains many references to Lan's awareness of her language-learning task. Lan expresses her anxiety about her English being inadequate for getting into university and even for getting a job.

Thus, the relationship between a learner's affect, beliefs, motivation, awareness and her actions is not necessarily a clear one. What a learner says she does or wants to do and what she actually does should be carefully compared. If the two seem to be in opposition, questions should be asked. Why are beliefs, awareness and motivation to learn often not consistent with actions taken when learning a language? Why does a learner's sound meta-linguistic knowledge of the L2 grammar not always lead to awareness of production errors in her speech? Answers to this question may be as varied and numerous as there are second language learners.

2.3. Pedagogical issues

Personal factors as well as linguistic ones contribute to second language learners' degree of success in the target language. Some learners achieve near native-like success; others fossilize at puzzlingly low levels despite many years in the target language

culture and plenty of opportunity to use the L2. Many researchers have noted this phenomenon and have experimented with treatments for fossilization.

Is fossilization impossible to reverse? Would it be possible to prevent fluent but fossilized communicators from communicating too freely in their L2 and thus help them to focus more on accuracy? There are several studies, both cross-learner and longitudinal case studies that offer pedagogical solutions to the fossilization/fluency phenomenon. Some of these studies advocate the discouragement of fluency until an acceptable degree of accuracy can be attained.

Vigil and Oller (1976) propose a model for “rule fossilization” based on the types of feedback that learners receive—positive, negative or neutral—and whether learners expect that feedback. They examine these types of feedback along both cognitive and affective communication channels and conclude that the most effective conditions for de-stabilization of the IL happen when the learner receives *unexpected negative* feedback. The de-stabilization that follows can lead to more learning.

Higgs and Clifford (1982) use The CIA Language School and The American Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in obtaining their examples of fossilized L2 users. The CIA Language School uses a Performance Profile reporting form to evaluate its learners. This form uses a scale

from 0 to 5 when rating its students' proficiency in their L2. Higgs and Clifford noticed that most classroom-trained foreign language students fossilized at level 2 or level 2+, an unacceptably low level for work in the foreign service. These students typically have a large vocabulary and are capable of communicating successfully in the L2 for survival or "tourist" purposes. However, they lack the grammatical accuracy and the depth of knowledge of their L2 for successful communication at a higher level, for example, negotiating a treaty. They attribute this level 2 fossilization to an overemphasis on communication at the expense of accuracy in their classes.

But what happens when the communication function becomes more complex, when a student's goal is to do more than merely survive in a generally friendly environment? Broadening the range of language proficiency expected from our students absolutely changes the rules of the game. Paralinguistic communication strategies become inefficient and counterproductive, and speakers whose communication repertoires are thus limited are rendered incapable of efficient or even marginally successful communication... While survival is possible with a minimum command of the language, integration is not. (Higgs & Clifford 1982, p. 61)

Higgs and Clifford's study implies that too much communicative success too soon can do more harm than good, causing students to fossilize at early stages of their language learning with negative consequences later on when they try without success to eradicate these errors. They recommend an emphasis on grammatical accuracy even at low levels of language learning.

Vallette (1991) using Higgs and Clifford's terminology calls these students "terminal 2s". She does not approve of communicative language teaching methodology. In school-based learners

The terminal cases ...all came from language programs that either were taught by instructors who themselves had not attained grammatical mastery of the target language – and hence were unable to guide their students into the correct usage – or by instructors who had chosen not to correct their students' mistakes for philosophical, methodological, or personal reasons. (P 326).

Similarly, Johnson (1992) has noticed that many students learning in communicative language classrooms suffer from "intermediate-itis". Again, like Higgs and Clifford and Vallette, she stresses the dangers of language teaching methodologies that emphasize fluent communication at the expense of accuracy. She recommends the "Tennis Clinic" strategy. In tennis, you can practice and correct your technique, but each game is a two-way, unpredictable encounter. She stresses the need for practice and correction in the communicative language classroom and recommends delaying communication until sufficient experience with the right forms has been achieved.

Swain (1993) stresses the importance of learner output for four reasons:

1. It provides meaningful practice permitting the development of automaticity.

2. It may lead the learner away from semantic processing and towards syntactic processing.
3. It allows for hypothesis testing.
4. It may provide useful feedback from interlocutors.

For the classroom, she suggests group work tasks stressing collaborative learning and negotiation of meaning.

Swain and Lapkin (1993) have experimented with four types of negative feedback—explicit hypothesis rejection, explicit utterance rejection, implicit negative feedback and indirect meta-linguistic feedback—in a study involving 100 adult Spanish-speaking ESL learners. The study focused on the English dative alternation because this form presents problems for learners using a problem-solving approach to grammatical structures. Therefore, this structure relies on negative feedback if it is to be learned correctly. They found that all four types of feedback groups yielded better results than the control group; however, the group receiving explicit hypothesis rejection, in other words, meta-linguistic feedback, had the best results.

This study suggests that explicit negative feedback together with meta-linguistic information concerning the grammatical rules for the structure in question can be effective in helping learners to hone their TL accuracy.

One form of unexpected negative feedback takes the form of *recasts*. R. Ellis (2006) has explored the use of recasts in second language acquisition studies. He notes that there are many different forms of recasts and that they can perform many different functions. Although most research on recasts has examined them from the cognitive perspective, there is also a social aspect that should not be ignored. Learners can interpret recasts in a variety of ways. A casual recast implicitly given in an informal conversation may not be noticed and therefore may not be repaired.

Even though all interlanguages share common characteristics, each learner's interlanguage is also unique. Each learner, according to her past language learning experiences, personal affect, motivation, language learning strategies, and awareness will find her own balance between accuracy and fluency. No single construct of the universal linguistic phenomenon of fossilization can explain this multi-dimensional puzzle. Each unique story adds to the knowledge and understanding of how adults learn second languages and why they mostly fall short of the target language. It is for these reasons that most researchers in the field call for more longitudinal case studies. Each new study adds a piece to the puzzle and helps to explain how, where, and why accuracy and fluency interact.

Chapter 3

Study Design Rationale, Data, and Research Methodology

Introduction

The idea of following a motivated, aware, well-educated ESL speaker living in the target culture over a long period was intriguing. I wanted to know why EJ's interlanguage was so uniquely hers. I wanted to know what would happen to her English over time. Would she improve or not? This initial curiosity evolved into four broad categories of enquiry that guided my research:

1. Questions about accuracy: I wanted to know if the errors I had initially noticed would disappear. In other words, had these aspects of her English fossilized?
2. Questions about fluency: Why did she appear so fluent yet at the same time so inaccurate? Was there a relationship between the two concepts?
3. Questions about personality: What was the relationship between her linguistic abilities and her personal characteristics, goals and experiences. How did they contribute to the unique nature of her idiolect?
4. Pedagogical questions: Given the arguments in the literature that awareness seems to play a crucial role in de-fossilization, were there any pedagogical activities that would increase her awareness and enhance her interlanguage development?

This chapter will first explain the rationale for the design of the study, then go on to describe the data and how it was collected, and finally give a detailed account of the research methodology used in order to answer the research questions.

3.1. Study design rationale

My study had to be designed to produce data that could be used to help answer these very different types of research questions. In order to answer these four categories of research questions, first I needed information about change, or lack of change, in EJ's interlanguage over time. Second, I needed to learn about her personal language learning history, her motivation, her language learning strategies and her awareness of her task. I needed to be able to get under her skin and hear her story in her own voice. Finally, I needed to be able to collaborate with her, to experiment, to try out some treatments and consciousness-raising exercises suggested by both EJ and by me to see if they had any effect on her interlanguage. Only in a longitudinal case study would I be able to establish a relationship close enough and to obtain data adequate enough to attempt to address the research questions.

Additionally, a longitudinal case study of a second language learner was chosen because of the gap in the research of such studies as noted in chapters 1 and 2. Each case study contributes to the breadth and depth of our understanding of adult SLA. Although each study is unique, throughout each one there are themes that will resonate with other studies and other researchers, making generalizations possible.

Because the concept of fossilization is so multi-faceted and so hard to operationalize, the problem of establishing whether or not it has occurred has occupied many researchers and has led them to establish rules for determining its existence. Most of these researchers advocate longitudinal studies as being the only way to establish whether fossilization has or has not occurred (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982; Han & Selinker 1996; Long 2003; Han, 2003, 2004, Han & Odlin, 2006).

Schumann (1978) has the following recommendations for longitudinal studies:

- Subjects should be assessed on many variables: aptitude, attitude, motivation, ego-permeability, LL experiences and social adjustment.
- They should keep diaries about their language learning.
- They should be interviewed every 2 weeks.
- They should take a monthly achievement test via oral interview. (p. 116)

Long (2003) suggests the following criteria:

- "...the subject(s) chosen for study need to have had the ability, motivation, and opportunity to acquire the L2 for many years
- "... then, accompanied by evidence of continuing ability, motivation and opportunity, repeated comparable observations are required over time (perhaps five years or more)..."
- "...ideally involving ample samples of the spoken vernacular, supplemented where appropriate by elicited data of various kinds..."
- "...Analyses should be carried out at the level of token, as well as type, with a rational account provided of the analyst's treatment of the inevitable synchronic and diachronic variation..."
- "...If a resulting fossilization claim is specified to apply to certain IL subsystems, data should be provided to show that one or more other subsystems continue to develop."
- "... If a claim is specified to apply within a certain discourse domain, context, task, or other unit, the unit(s) concerned need to

be defined operationally before the analysis begins, and data need to be provided to show that the linguistic elements covered by the fossilization claim continue to progress in one or two other discourse domains, etc..." (pp. 520-521)

These are stringent criteria. Relatively few longitudinal studies of fossilization that satisfy all of these criteria exist. There have, however, been several studies that claim to have established fossilization in their participants despite failure to meet all the criteria listed above. The most famous, perhaps, have been Schumann (1976, 1978) and his study of "Alberto" and Schmidt (1983) and his study of "Wes". Hanania and Gradman (1977) studied Fatma, an Arabic speaker living in the United States. Lardiere (1998) in her study of "Patty", and Huebner (1983) in his study of a Hmong speaker also make claims of fossilization.

This longitudinal case study fulfills many of the criteria recommended above by Schumann and Long. My participant was accessible over a period of several years, was willing to participate, was motivated, and had the opportunity to hear and to continue learning the target language in her daily life. There was ample opportunity for triangulation of different types of elicited language samples, including many samples of her most informal, least-monitored speech as Tarone, (1999) suggests. It allowed for a "thick description" of the participant's acquisition, and for an emergent analysis, as a wealth of data of different types was collected.

In addition, as the project progressed, it became increasingly collaborative. In fact, it was my participant who drove this project, determining the nature of the data, her goals in participating, and the outcomes of her participation. I was there as a collector of data, as a sounding board, as a teacher if needed, and as an occasional advisor.

Dick (2005) gives a good description of these characteristics in research done by:

...using a cyclic or spiral process which alternates between action and critical reflection and in the later cycles, continuously refining methods, data and interpretation in the light of the understanding developed in the earlier cycles.

It is thus an emergent process which takes shape as understanding increases; it is an iterative process which converges towards a better understanding of what happens.

In most of its forms it is also participative (among other reasons, change is usually easier to achieve when those affected by the change are involved) and qualitative.

I believe that EJ and I are adding 2 significant factors that no other case study has included:

1. EJ is unique not only in that she is so well-integrated into Canadian society, using only English for work, study and domestic and social life, but also in that she is a teacher—has been a teacher in the past, is a teacher at the ECE level now, and wants to be a teacher at the elementary level in the future either teaching a regular elementary class or teaching Korean in the Heritage Languages Programme. Her level of meta-linguistic knowledge about language learning is high because she has done half a CTESL course. To my

knowledge, no other participant in a longitudinal case study fits this description. Because of her high level of knowledge about language learning, her high motivation, her high level of education and her full integration into Canadian society, EJ is able to shed light on language learning from a unique perspective.

With reference to Long's (2003) requirements for case studies of fossilization, EJ has had the opportunity to acquire English for over 10 years before this study began. (This includes her years of English study in middle school, high school, university and her five years in Cairo as well as her two years in Canada before collection of data began.) There has certainly been "evidence of continuing ability, motivation and opportunity" to learn English as this study will show. In addition, "repeated, comparable observations" have been carried out, recorded and analyzed over a period of three and a half years.

2. My involvement in the study was also unique. I was not only a passive observer and collector of data, I was also there as a teacher. I was at her disposal. The relationship was both give and take. It was understood that I was there for her to use to her own advantage in her language learning. My role as a teacher was to be non-prescriptive. She would be in charge of her own learning and would determine the course of these meetings. She would lead them and I would try to contribute what she wanted. As she was so highly

educated and as she had teacher training and CTESL, we planned for her to devise her own learning plan and I would follow. I was free to make suggestions and she was free to choose whether to follow these suggestions. This was, as far as possible, a learner-directed process. She was generously sharing with me her language learning efforts, ideas, strategies and outcomes. I was sharing my expertise as a teacher.

All the above elements of our collaboration add strength to the argument for positive outcomes in reversing fossilization in a learner, if indeed she had fossilized. EJ's meta-cognitive knowledge and her experiences as a teacher add a potent ingredient to the mix. If she does prove to have fossilized in certain aspects of her L2 and remains unresponsive to treatments and consciousness-raising, the notion that fossilization truly exists and is untreatable, as stated by Selinker (1992), will be strengthened.

3.2. The data

In order to follow my participant's journey through her language learning experiences and in an attempt to answer my four major research questions about her accuracy, fluency, her personal factors and attempted treatments, it was necessary that I:

- record and compare her informal spoken L2 production over time.

- collect data from many different sources: spoken, written, formal and informal.
- understand the nature of her language-learning environment.
- create a collaborative situation and observe what would happen with it.
- collect information about her personal factors to determine how they affected her relationship to her L2.
- triangulate all the data in order to shed light on the relationship of her accuracy to her fluency.

The data collection process occurred in a series of 18 sessions over the course of 3.5 years. The first two sessions, in 2003, and the last session, in 2006, were at my house and took place with EJ, my niece and me present over dinner, including a bottle of wine, the significance of which will be revealed in the section on motivation. The last session was designed to match the first session as closely as possible in personnel, in environment and in topic of conversation. All the other sessions were at EJ's home with just the two of us present. Each session was approximately two hours long and consisted of approximately 50% informal conversations about our lives and 40% talking about language learning – strategies, awareness, opinions, attitudes, motivation. The remaining 10% dealt with treatments.

My data list consisted of the following:

1. 18 taped and transcribed conversations used as:
 - a) speech samples
 - b) personal narratives
2. three grammaticality judgment exercises
3. two grammar awareness exercise.

4. two taped conversations partially transcribed by my participant.
5. six written reflective learning diary entries
6. two questionnaires designed to shed light on her language learning style and her awareness of her level of English.

- **The taped and transcribed conversations**

I taped and transcribed the 18 sessions described above. Some conversations were informal chats and others were constrained by more formal tasks such as questionnaires, grammaticality judgments and other awareness-building exercises together with their accompanying think-aloud protocols. These tasks were administered as separate data-gathering instruments or as consciousness-raising exercises or treatments and will be described below.

As data, these conversations played two roles. I used them as:

1. *Speech samples* to answer the research questions about accuracy and fluency
2. *Personal narratives* to answer the research questions about EJ's personal factors.

Except for the specific tasks such as the questionnaires and language awareness exercises that I asked her to carry out during our sessions, EJ herself led these conversations. She decided what we would talk about and what we would do. The total duration of all these 18 conversations was 990 minutes or 16.5 hours.

- **The grammaticality judgment exercises**

There were three grammaticality judgment exercises in all. I administered these to EJ during our meetings, and her reactions to them became part of the taped and transcribed conversations. The first exercise was created from one of her Early Childhood Education course written assignments. The second and third grammaticality judgment exercises were constructed using transcribed sentences taken from our conversations.

These grammaticality judgment exercises played a double role. They were used both to help determine EJ's meta-linguistic knowledge and to help her focus on her errors. In other words, they were used both to explore her awareness of her IL, and as a treatment. They will be described in detail below in the section on personal factors and in chapter 5 as treatments.

- **The grammar awareness exercises**

I chose some of EJ's common errors from our conversations and constructed exercises so that she could practice correct versions. Like the grammaticality judgment exercises, these were discrete-point sentences taken out of context and specifically designed to focus on some of her most common errors. These were errors that did not

interfere with meaning in conversation, but that I suspected of having fossilized.

These exercises, like the grammaticality judgments, played a dual role. They were both data used for determining her meta-cognitive awareness and used as treatments. They will be discussed below under the section about her awareness analysis and in chapter 5 as treatments.

- **EJ's own transcriptions**

On two separate occasions, I asked EJ to take sections of her taped speech from the conversations and transcribe them herself. She transcribed the first one for homework and the second during one of our sessions together. She not only transcribed a section of each sample, but she also rewrote each transcription correcting her errors.

These data were used to examine EJ's awareness of her informal speaking style. They were also used to draw her attention to her conversational style in order to help her to focus on her language rather than on the topic of conversation. As such, they were used as a treatment and will be discussed in chapter 5. Would she be able to clean up her IL of extraneous verbiage by means of these transcription exercises? These self-made transcriptions provided a link between EJ's spoken and written language.

- **The learning diaries**

The learning diaries consisted of a collection of EJ's written reflections on her language learning experiences. These were done at my suggestion. There are 6 entries in all, September 28th and 30th, October 1st, 5th and sometime near the end of October and November 2nd. All six entries are from 2005.

When I introduced the concept of the learning diaries to EJ, I gave her some examples of diaries that had been written by students working on master's degrees in applied language studies, one by a student whose first language was Chinese and the other by a Korean first language speaker (E, H.A. 2002 and Lim, H.Y. 2002). She read these samples before starting to write her own diary. I did not demand that she write a new entry every time we met; I simply suggested that it might be an interesting and revealing thing for her to do.

I had three reasons for suggesting this learning diary. The first was so that I could collect more written data from EJ in order to triangulate the information about her meta-linguistic knowledge that was collected via the conversations and grammar exercises. I needed another sample of her writing to supplement the two examples I had from her course work from her ECE assignments. By 2005 it had become clear that EJ was more a speaker than a writer. I had

accumulated a lot of spoken data but very little writing. My second reason was to use the diaries to focus on consciousness-raising. I wanted EJ to reflect on her language learning experiences in writing as well as in speaking. My third reason was to be able to compare EJ's oral and written language, since any L2 speaker's IL will vary according to task and degree of formality.

- **The questionnaires**

I administered two questionnaires to EJ during the study. The first was done at the beginning of the study during our second session in November 2003 and the second questionnaire at the end of the study during our last session in March 2006. Both questionnaires are included in the appendices.

The first questionnaire served as an introduction to the study for EJ and as an introduction to EJ for me. It was used to collect background information about EJ, to assess her awareness of her interlanguage in relation to the target language, and to find out about her language learning strategies and her preferred ways of learning. It consisted of three parts.

1. The first part collected general information about her vital statistics – age, number of years learning English under what circumstances, number of years in Canada and so on.

2. The second part asked her to evaluate on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, her level of the 4 skills in English--listening, speaking, reading and writing--compared to that of a native speaker.
3. The third part asked her to write about 4 aspects of her learning – learning strategies, the type of learner she considers herself to be (based on a short article about learning styles), her problems with the language, and solutions to those problems.

The second questionnaire was administered at the end of the study. It was used, as a conclusion to the study, to check her awareness of her IL in relation to the TL and how it might have changed over time between the years 2002 and 2006. It asked her once again to rate her English compared to that of a native-speaker, first for 2002 and then for 2006, this time on a scale from 1 to 6 to avoid having a score land in the middle. Seven categories were used:

- Listening / understanding
- Speaking / fluency
- Reading / understanding text
- Writing / being understood
- Pronunciation / being understood
- Vocabulary / understanding
- Overall ability in English

This large and varied collection of samples of EJ's English, both formal and informal, spoken and written, together with all the different kinds of elicited data we amassed over the years provided many opportunities for triangulation.

3.3. Research methodology

My manipulation of this rich and varied collection of samples fell into three broad categories, the same as my first 3 broad categories of research questions:

1. Analyses of EJ's interlanguage accuracy
2. Analyses of EJ's interlanguage fluency
3. An examination of the contribution of her personal factors to her IL

Some of the data described above also served as pedagogical treatments in the form of awareness-building exercises. These treatments are discussed separately in chapter 5.

3.3.1. Interlanguage analyses

In analyzing EJ's interlanguage I looked at speech samples taken from our conversations and analyzed them for both accuracy and fluency. Each type of analysis—accuracy and fluency—included both quantitative measures and descriptive taxonomies. In the case of the fluency analysis, there was also an experiment that extracted all extraneous 'gap-fillers' from two utterances and compared EJ's use of these devices over the span of the 3.5 years. I used the term 'gap-fillers' for words or short phrases that were used not to add any meaning to utterances, but as devices to avoid silences in the conversations thus giving the impression of fluency.

Accuracy analyses

For the accuracy analyses, two types of grammatical error analysis were attempted—a statistical count of three pre-selected discrete grammatical items and a taxonomy of all errors within a specific utterance. Each analysis spanned the three-and-a-half-year period of the study so that I could track any changes in EJ's grammatical accuracy.

- **Discrete-point grammatical error analysis**

One of the tasks using the taped conversations was a statistical grammatical analysis of three structures for the purpose of tracking EJ's accuracy over the three and a half years in her least formal, least monitored style. I wanted to notice changes in grammar use so that I could determine whether certain structures were improving. U-shaped behavior and backsliding are common phenomena in language learning, as are restructuring, variability and improvement. I wanted to know if her grammar had improved, worsened or if it had fossilized.

First, I chose four speech samples from among the conversations—one sample from each year—2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. I selected conversations that were the most chatty and informal. These recorded conversations were the most accurate

examples of EJ's unplanned, informal English according to the criteria set by Ellis (1985a). "The most direct way to facilitate unanalyzed knowledge is by providing opportunities for the learner to contribute to unplanned discourse." (p. 57). In other words, it could be argued that these records represented her true level of acquisition of English through the years 2003 – 2006.

Next, I chose the structures to track over the length of the study. I took for my model Schumann's analysis of Alberto's grammar in Schumann (1978). I also referred to Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, S. (1982) for a list of grammatical categories, a review of such studies and some possible problems.

Schumann's criteria for acquisition to have occurred were:

- The item had to be correct in 90% of obligatory contexts.
- It had to be correct for three consecutive samples.
- There had to have been five obligatory contexts.
- Acquisition was counted as having happened for the first of the three consecutive samples.

Unlike Schumann, who analyzed Alberto's auxiliary verb system in its entirety, I limited myself to three broad categories of error:

1. Copula 'BE'
 - "I never afraid",
 - "It is appear..."
 - "We are really serious exam."
2. Auxiliary 'BE'
 - "I'm just like talk and I'm just like interest things."
 - "I kind of tutoring students which preparing..."

3. Certain categories of ING errors

"She can dealing with it."

"English is a major subject to deciding to go to university."

Not all of EJ's error categories were easy to pick out from the conversations. For example, in "He goes shopping..." Is the 3rd person singular 's' missing or not? And in this utterance - "*...now I'm sitting in my desk and then you know put that book everything there are then it just to listen and directly do the look in...*" - I found it impossible to pick out clear grammatical categories to analyze. The three categories of errors chosen were ones that EJ made often. It was also relatively straightforward to find these errors and her correctly used examples for these categories.

From each transcript chosen, I counted all examples of errors and all correct examples for each of the three grammatical categories and calculated the percentages of each out of all the obligatory contexts. I also recorded all examples of errors and correct items in a table. The results of this analysis are described in chapter 4.

- **Utterance-based grammatical error analysis**

It proved so difficult to tease out discrete points to analyze from EJ's grammar that I began to question the value of this type of analysis. EJ is no Alberto! Nor is she a Patty. She is more like Wes

in her ability to defy grammatical analysis on the sentence level. I was not satisfied with analyzing EJ's speech in the same way as Schumann had done with Alberto's. The fit was wrong. Therefore, I tried a different method, a more holistic one. Instead of extracting discrete grammatical items from the conversations, I selected one long utterance from each year and listed all the grammatical errors from each utterance. I have defined the term *utterance* not in the Bakhtinian sense, but rather as "a stretch of speech typically preceded or followed by silence or by a change of speaker." (Crystal, 1992, p. 407).

First, I chose utterances from the conversations as speech samples for analysis. I took one utterance from each of 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006. All utterances in this analysis are of a similar length and all are focused on recounting happenings in her life, rather than on language awareness activities. Therefore, the focus is on conveying meaning about a familiar topic, and her speech is as informal as possible. Next, I looked for all errors including non-native-speaker formulaic idiosyncrasies in each of the chosen utterances. Finally, I recorded in a chart, with one column for each year, all instances of all errors within each utterance.

Fluency analyses

Speakers of second languages may be able to communicate rapidly and effectively, getting their meaning across without difficulty but without the accuracy of a native speaker. It seemed obvious to me from my analysis of EJ's interlanguage grammar that she was perfectly fluent and able to get her meaning across in her L2 at any level of complexity despite her many errors. In this sense, she is a very successful second language learner. However, like Wes, she is "a grammar teacher's disaster", at least in informal conversation (Schmidt 1983). I reasoned that a fluency analysis, examined in conjunction with the accuracy analyses described above, might shed some light on the nature of EJ's interlanguage.

The fluency analyses, like the accuracy analyses, consisted of both quantitative and descriptive taxonomical measures of EJ's interlanguage—a statistical word per minute (WPM) / syllable per minute (SPM) count, and a taxonomical list of her formulaic chunks and gap-fillers. Finally, I included an analysis that separated out and calculated the percentage of her gap-fillers from two utterances—one from our first and one from our last conversations—in an attempt to compare her use of them over time, and to try to understand how she managed to be so fluent and articulate while at the same time so inaccurate.

- **The WPM and SPM count**

Four speech samples were taken from the transcribed conversations from 2003, 2005 and 2006. No sample was chosen from 2004 because we had only one taped session that year and there was no extract of a suitable length and topic of conversation to match the others. There are two samples from 2006, one of which is informal, unplanned conversational speech and the other is an example of EJ reading out loud from a children's book. Each sample was chosen to be, as far as possible, the same length. Each sample was timed from the tape and the time noted. Then the words and syllables were counted and the words per minute and syllables per minute for each was calculated in order to compare it with native-speaker norms as recommended by Pawley and Syder (1983) in chapter 2.

- **The gap-filler and formulaic language taxonomy**

The next focus was EJ's use of gap-fillers, which seem to be phrases of unanalyzed or partially analyzed formulaic language—extraneous words and phrases thrown into her discourse to maintain the flow. I divided these devices into two types, 1) single-word or two-word 'gap-fillers' and 2) 'formulaic phrases'.

There are differences between native-speakers' and non-native-speakers' use of these fluency devices. Common native-speaker gap-fillers include "like", "sort of", "ummmmm" etc. Common native-speaker formulae are, for example, "to all intents and purposes", "in spite of the fact that", "with all due respect", "not only...but also", etc. Non-native-speakers use many of the same formulae and gap-fillers; however, they use many of them in non-native-speaker ways. Gap-fillers may be overused, inserted in inappropriate places in the utterance or simply be non-native-speaker forms. Formulae may be unanalyzed and so may be used incorrectly or in several non-native-speaker variations.

In order to clarify further EJ's appearance of fluency, I compiled a list, or taxonomy of EJ's typical, incorrectly used gap-fillers and formulae from the same samples as were used for the discrete-point grammatical analyses. This list consisted of a record of each item EJ used often but incorrectly as a gap-filler or a formula. The list is divided into two parts—gap-fillers and formulaic chunks.

- **Gap-fillers per utterance count**

I chose speech samples from our first (2003) and our last (2006) conversations and focused on the gap-fillers that EJ uses to patch together her utterances. I had set up these two meetings to

be as identical to each other as possible. Each was a dinner party at my home; each had EJ, my niece and me present and both topics of conversation were EJ's past English learning experiences. Each utterance was approximately 260 words long and the topic of each was the same.

Next, I highlighted in red all the words and phrases I determined to be superfluous or repetitious and highlighted all the rest of the text in black. In this way I tried to determine what percentage of each 'sentence' was filler; in other words, what percentage was used to keep the flow of talk going. Finally, I separated out the gap-fillers and calculated their percentage in relation to the whole utterance for each example.

3.3.2. An exploration of personal factors

Why is it that adult second language learners end up in such a wide variety of places along the interlanguage continua? Why are some more successful than others in their second language learning? Adult learners are similar in that they are past the critical period for language learning, they all have a first language firmly under their belts, and they all are able to rely on their general cognitive abilities to help them learn a new language. However, they differ widely in their personal histories. Not only does their education in their L2

differ, but also their personal experiences and feelings about language learning, their motivation, their language learning strategies and their awareness of the task. Each adult learner brings her own history and personality into the mix.

I turned to some of these personal factors that have helped shape EJ's interlanguage into the unique phenomenon that it is. I divided these personal factors into four categories:

1. Personal affect
2. Motivation
3. Language learning strategies
4. Awareness and meta-linguistic knowledge

I put special emphasis on the *awareness* category. Because this learner is well educated and has had access to a CTESL course, she has a high degree of meta-linguistic knowledge. I hypothesized that she would be highly aware of interlanguage characteristics and her place along the IL continua in relation to the target language.

I used her personal narratives and speech samples taken from the transcribed conversations, the learning diaries, the questionnaires, the grammaticality judgments and the grammar exercises to explore these personal factors.

- **Affect**

Our feelings about ourselves, our personalities and the experiences we have when learning and producing our L2, both pleasant and unpleasant, all contribute to our success or failure in learning it (Schumann, 1997). Taking a close look at EJ's accounts of her English-learning history and her stories about her triumphs and struggles sheds light on how her English has developed and answers some of the questions about her unique idiolect and the relationship between accuracy and fluency in her spoken English.

I used data from the transcribed taped conversations as personal narrative and her six learning diary entries to look for examples of EJ's accounts of how her experiences and her feelings about them had influenced her journey along the interlanguage continua. I went through each transcript and each diary entry as if reading a story and pulled out any comments that she made about her personal feelings about learning English. When all these comments were read together, would they shed light on her emphasis on communication over accuracy?

- **Motivation**

One needs to be motivated in order to learn a second language. Certainly EJ seems to be highly motivated / oriented not only to improve her English, but also to fit herself comfortably into Canadian society. Her outgoing personality, her commitment to her Canadian partner and her English-speaking friends, her enthusiastic pursuit of courses and volunteer work, her determination to find employment and her participation in this study have all indicated that she is highly motivated in her goals.

This section takes a closer look not only at her behavior as an indication of her motivation, but also at her motivation as expressed in her own words. What exactly does she say she is motivated to do and how does she put that initial articulation of her motivation to use? As well as observing EJ's behaviour, I also searched through the conversations as personal narrative data for her own articulations of her motivation. I paid particular attention to our first two conversations, from 2003 and our last, from March 2006. These had all been dinner parties at my home with one other person present. They had included a bottle of wine and had been more relaxing and convivial than our other sessions. R. Ellis (2004) quotes Wallace Lambert from the late 1950s as advising

... the best way to learn about someone's integrative motivation was probably to sit quietly and chat with him over a bottle of wine of an evening. (p. 529).

I extracted and listed quotations from all the personal narratives just as I had done for affect.

- **Language Learning Strategies**

What strategies does a highly motivated, highly educated learner experienced in SLA theory employ in order to improve enough to reach her goal? What aspects of her L2 does she see as most in need of change? How does she go about pursuing her goal? Does she get bogged down along the way? As EJ accumulated work experience and was forced into the position of communicating with colleagues at work, she began more and more to doubt her proficiency in English. What gained her so much praise in school in her native Korea—her fluency—did not serve her well in her quest to become a teacher in Canada. What served well in Cairo as the lingua franca for a multinational ex-pat community was no longer adequate for a working life among native speakers. In what ways did her strategies change in response to her growing awareness of her place along her interlanguage continua compared to the target language? Taking a close look at a learner's language learning strategies can yield interesting information about how that learner balances fluency against accuracy in the L2.

In exploring EJ's strategies for improving her English, I have used my own observations of EJ's behavior, the personal narratives, her learning diaries, my field notes as well as her test scores and a list of her collection of reference books. As well, I used the language learning taxonomies from Wenden & Rubin (1987) and Oxford (1990) to identify specific strategies.

I divided my search into two parts:

1. Her former strategies, used when English was a foreign language (EFL strategies)
2. Her ESL strategies used in Canada

I found and triangulated examples of her language learning strategies according to these two categories using the sources described above.

- **Awareness and meta-linguistic knowledge**

One cannot change a behavior effectively without an awareness of a problem and the need to change it. How aware is EJ of her place along the interlanguage continua? If she is able to correct errors and explain the grammar in meta-linguistic terms, will she then be able to use that knowledge to improve her production of English? Given her university degree and her experience as a student in a CTESL course, it seemed logical to predict that she would have a high degree of

awareness of the quality of her English and of what she needed to do to improve it.

This section on awareness includes the greatest number of experiments with the data. It is divided into two parts. The first part attempts to determine whether EJ is aware of her grammar errors or not; the second part explores EJ's own articulations of her awareness of her interlanguage.

The first part consists of four exercises:

- the grammaticality judgments
- the grammar exercises
- An oral versus written language analysis
- EJ's own transcriptions

The second part includes three explorations:

- the questionnaires
- the learning diaries
- the personal narratives

Each of the seven types of analysis used will be described below.

The grammaticality judgments

I wanted to know if EJ was aware on a meta-cognitive level of her errors catalogued in the discrete-point grammatical error analyses. Grammaticality judgments (GJs) are used to help reveal a second language speaker's conscious understanding of the structures

of the second language, or, in other words, her meta-linguistic awareness. If incorrect examples are taken from a learner's language and are explicitly set out as discrete sentences and mingled with correct examples, will the learner be able to pinpoint her errors, explain why they are errors, and correct them?

I devised two kinds of grammaticality judgments. The first was based on a written assignment for her Early Childhood Education course from 2004. I extracted 20 sentences from this writing, each of which contained a typical EJ error. Error types included the following:

- omitted main verbs,
- omitted auxiliary verbs,
- ING forms incorrectly used,
- ING omitted,
- passives used incorrectly.

For each of these incorrect sentences, I wrote a correct version so that there were 40 in total, but presented in a random order. I then asked EJ to point out the mistakes, correct them, and explain why they were mistakes.

The second GJ task was created from errors taken from her informal transcribed conversations with me and was administered twice – once in writing, and again, three months later, orally. The first draft of this GJ was tested on four native speakers, and samples that were unclear when taken out of context were eliminated. There were 64 sentences in all. Half contained errors and the other half

were the correct versions of the first 32. Forty-two sentences focused on typical EJ errors: modal verbs with ING added to the main verb ("We can making..."), and omission of auxiliary verbs, (I going...). There were 22 distracter sentences based on ING/ED errors and plural "s". I wanted to focus on her awareness of two of the frequent errors analyzed statistically—the modal verb errors and the omission of the auxiliary verb "Be". Did she realize that she made these errors when they were taken out of context?

The first time she took this test was in June 2005 in the written version. The second time was in September of the same year and was an oral version of the same test. The oral version contained only 50 sentences, 25 incorrect and 25 correct versions of the same sentences. Again, some distracters were included. All GJ tests were administered in EJ's home during our meetings. Just the two of us were present at each session.

The grammar exercises

Like the grammaticality judgments, the grammar exercises were designed to discover whether EJ was aware of her errors. The same two kinds of errors were targeted as in the second grammaticality judgment—the auxiliary verb "to be" and modals plus main verbs. These were two of the three error-types analyzed in the

discrete-point grammar analysis. Standard written fill-in-the-blanks exercises were created focusing on these two points and administered during one of our sessions, (20.09.05).

By focusing EJ's attention so blatantly on these grammatical structures, I reasoned that it would be a straightforward way of learning whether or not she had a meta-linguistic knowledge of these rules.

The oral versus written language analysis

I looked again at the three grammar structures I had used in the grammaticality analysis, (copular "to be", auxiliary "to be", and ING verb forms used incorrectly with modals and infinitives). I compared her use of these structures in a speech sample taken from the conversations and in a sample of her writing from the learning journals. Both samples were approximately the same length and were about the same topic, her feelings about having to write in English. The oral sample was taken from the year 2004 and the written sample from 2005.

EJ's own transcriptions

I used an example of EJ's transcript of her own speech from the conversations to focus on her awareness of her spoken IL as compared to the TL. Then I compared her transcribed version to her corrected written version. This enabled me to look at EJ's speech converted into writing. This exercise is also discussed in chapter 5, treatments.

The next three explorations allow EJ to articulate her awareness of her meta-linguistic knowledge in her own voice.

The questionnaires

Early in 2003 at the beginning of our collaboration, I gave EJ the 3-part questionnaire described above. She completed this questionnaire for homework and gave it back to me at our next session, (08.05.04). During this session, we went over her answers to the questionnaire. Her comments about it were recorded and transcribed.

At the end of our final meeting in 2006, I gave her the other questionnaire described above asking her to compare her English when she first arrived in Canada in 2002 and in 2006 when we ended our sessions. This questionnaire uses a Likert scale from 1 to 6. (The template for the questionnaires can be found in the appendices.)

The learning diaries

As described above, these learning diaries were written at my suggestion after showing EJ two models taken from diaries written by L2 speakers of English who were both working on masters degrees in applied language studies. These diary writers had a lot in common with EJ, and I thought that they might inspire her to keep a similar diary. Writing, however, was not EJ's natural method of communication. She produced only six short entries. Each of these was well written and thoughtful. They were fruitful sources of information about EJ's meta-cognitive awareness. I extracted and recorded examples of her awareness of her strengths and weaknesses from these diaries.

The personal narratives

Just as I had done for the exploration of EJ's affect, I read through the personal narratives looking for clues to EJ's awareness of her place along the IL continua and of her errors. For each year of the study, I pulled out and listed quotations that indicated her level and quality of awareness and meta-linguistic knowledge.

Taken together, these different data sources yielded a clear picture of EJ's awareness of her place in her IL.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings from the three types of analyses and explorations described in chapter 3—the interlanguage accuracy analyses, the interlanguage fluency analysis and the exploration of EJ’s personal factors. When combined, they contribute to the emergence of a rich and complex multilayered story about one L2 speaker’s interlanguage and how it came to be that way. Following the findings from each type of analysis is a discussion of some of the issues, problems and caveats that emerged.

4.1. Interlanguage analyses findings

This section presents the findings from both types of accuracy analysis—the quantitative grammatical error analysis and the holistic error descriptive taxonomy—and from the three types of fluency analysis—the quantitative comparison of EJ’s speech rate to that of the native speaker norm, the descriptive taxonomy of her use of gap-fillers and formulae, and the gap-fillers per utterance count.

Accuracy analyses findings

There were two types of accuracy analysis, a statistical discrete-point analysis of three structures over the three-and-a-half-year

period, and a taxonomical holistic utterance-based analysis focusing on all error types within utterances chosen from each year, 2003 to 2006.

- **Discrete-point grammatical error analysis**

My results from the discrete-point grammatical analysis spanning examples from three and a half years are shown in the table below.

Table 4.1. Grammatical errors for all obligatory contexts

YEAR	Copula "to be"	Auxiliary "to be"	ING verb forms
2003	13/99=13%	16/22=73%	9/24=38%
2004	3/77=4%	18/28=64%	6/43=14%
2005	7/53=13%	15/26=58%	6/26=23%
2006	26/219=12%	19/38=50%	16/63=25%

Average error rate for copula "to be" = 10.5%

Average error rate for auxiliary "to be" = 61.25%

Average error rate for ING verb forms = 25%

For the copula "to be", for 2003, the error rate was 13%; it then dropped dramatically in 2004, sliding back to its original rate in the years 2005 and 2006. Unlike copular "to be" errors, EJ's errors for auxiliary verb "to be" decreased steadily over the 4 years. As with the copula, there was a dip in ING verb form errors for the 2004 year; then the error rate increased again for 2005 and 2006 although it did

not reach the high for the first year, 2003. Again, EJ showed evidence of improvement. As with the copula, the error rate for ING seemed to settle for the two final years, in the case of the copula, at 12-13% and in the case of ING, between 23 and 25%, too high a percentage to meet Schumann's (1978) criteria for attainment.

The dramatic drop in copula errors for 2004 seemed to be an anomaly. The topic of conversation for that speech sample was the questionnaire that I had given her the previous time we met. I have no clear explanation for why EJ made so few copula errors in this conversation. Perhaps it was because the conversation focused on the topic of her language learning skills and style and so was more familiar to her and easier for her to control. In addition, some of her talk consisted of reiteration of the questions rather than speaking in her own words. Perhaps the cognitive load was not so high. The nature of the errors, however, was similar for all four years' samples. She had a tendency to omit copula "to be" before statements with negatives. "I never afraid..." (2003). "I never good at following instruction." (2004), and when she confused an adverb with a verb. "I back in Korea."

The auxiliary "to be" errors, on the other hand, decreased steadily over the 3.5 years. Does this mean that EJ's use of auxiliaries will continue to improve until it reaches a native-speaker

level of competence; or will it stabilize at an unacceptable level? Only further tracking of EJ's speech will determine the answer to this question.

ING-type errors, like the copula errors, remained consistently high over the years averaging out at 25%.

According to Schumann's definition of acquisition, a structure had to be correct 90% of the time for three consecutive samples out of at least five obligatory contexts. These structures, with the possible exception of the copula BE, have not been acquired in EJ's speech even after more than 10 years of English study and 5 years of living in the target language culture. Does this mean they have fossilized; or will they continue to improve, as Birdsong (2004) suggests, asymptotically towards the native-speaker norm?

There were so many anomalies to deal with in this analysis that finding clear categories was not at all straightforward. My field notes were full of records of my own false starts, experimentation with different approaches, selection of different grammar points that seemed to defy categorization and general indications of frustration. Because of the difficulties that I experienced in trying to find clear categories for EJ's errors, the results of this discrete-point grammatical analysis are somewhat unclear. Dulay, Burt and

Krashen (1982) carefully points out the pitfalls in doing this type of grammatical analysis.

An adequate explanation of language learners' verbal performance seems much too complex to be squeezed into taxonomic formats which were originally designed to classify rocks, flowers and other concrete observable phenomena... Using taxonomies to pinpoint source of error assumes:

- an error has a single source
- specification of source is simple.

...any error has both external and internal sources. (e.g transfer-based errors... and pressure to communicate and learned strategies). (p.144)

EJ's errors do not have a single source, nor is the specification of their sources simple or straightforward. The idea for doing the utterance-based analysis grew out of what I had learned from this first grammatical analysis.

- **Utterance-based grammatical error analysis**

While the first analysis was a statistical count of three specific grammar errors—copula “to be”, auxiliary “to be”, and ING verb forms—from samples taken over three and a half years, the next analysis focused on all errors found within the four selected samples, producing a descriptive taxonomy of categories of errors from those samples.

My results from the utterance-based grammatical analysis are shown in the table below. I found the following types of errors in all

four extended examples taken from transcripts from 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006.

Table 4.2. Utterance-based analysis of all errors with examples of each error.

-unusual gap-fillers and formulaic speech e.g. "andbut"	<p>"... and she looks <u>some kind of</u> very western <u>something</u>..." "...I'm visual learner andbut applying in classroom..." (2004.p.13)</p>
-tense/aspect/ number variation within a single statement	<p>"...and the lecturer <u>came</u> from England so that everything <u>is</u> English but <u>it's</u> very British English so I <u>had</u> a really, really hard time to understand, but I <u>persevered</u> to sit there and watch the slide andbut that time might be I <u>understand</u> the lecture probably 30%...."</p>
-word order	<p>"And <u>just</u> a this course is someone who already pass exam..."</p>
-articles	<p>"And so, for that, when I even <u>the</u> listen..."</p>
-vocabulary/ word form	<p>"...I really tried to pronounciate..."</p>
-pronunciation (word stress)	<p>"<u>MIS</u>take"</p>
-pronouns (errors and omissions)	<p>"...and so ah...from the beginning I like. Just I like and the class.."</p>
-verb omissions	<p>"It was interesting, <u>when I back</u> there again..."</p>
preposition omissions	<p>"...this course <u>is someone</u> who already pass exam..."</p>
-ING	<p>"...whenever I <u>attending</u> lecture, I got only about 30%..."</p>
-AUX	<p>"So I speaking but the same time I attended the lecture..."</p>
Repairs: "Correcting" already correct versions to incorrect.	<p>"...and so it's um easier to get started... I mean get start."</p>

Two elements that stood out for me in doing this analysis were first, that no single "sentence" was without multiple errors and second, that EJ used many non-native-like and native-like chunks, and extraneous bits and pieces of language or gap-fillers. Thinking of language in this way, as a combination of grammatically constructed sentences and memorized analyzed or unanalyzed formulae strung together led me to question how these two concepts interacted. How did L2 learners balance the one against the other? I explored this point further in the fluency analyses below. EJ, like Wes, has attained a high level of fluency and communicative competence in English, but this achievement has been at the expense of accuracy.

Fluency analyses findings

The findings for the statistical WPM and SPM counts, the descriptive taxonomy of EJ's formulaic speech, and the gap-fillers per utterance count analysis follow.

- **WPM and SPM**

My results from EJ's word-per-minute and syllable-per-minute rate analyses are shown in the table below.

Table 4.3. Word-per-minute (WPM) and syllable-per-minute (SPM) count.

Date and type	WPM	SPM
2003. conversation	135	171
2005. conversation	184	229
2006. conversation	156	208
2006. reading	124	151

As we can see, according to Pawley and Syder (1983), she has not quite achieved native-speaker level speed in English of 270 to 300 SPM. The lower SPM rate in the last example occurred because she was reading slowly and clearly from a book for very young children. This last WPM/SPM count is a clear example of how the learner's fluency can vary according to the task (Tarone, 1999). In spite of her word and syllable count being lower than those of a native-speaker, when listening to EJ one does not get the impression that she is a slow talker. Her speech flows easily and without hesitation.

- **Gap-filler and formulaic language findings**

In the table below is a taxonomy of gap-fillers and variable formulaic chunks used often by EJ in her informal, unmonitored speech. Representative examples for each item are included. As stated in chapter 3, they were extracted from the same transcripts

that were used for the discrete-point grammatical error analysis, one transcript from each year. The table represents her incorrectly used gap-fillers and formulaic chunks.

Table 4.4. Gap-fillers & formulae

Non-native-speaker gap-fillers	
Item	Examples
andbut / butand/ sobut/ andor	"...I'm visual learner andbut applying in classroom..." (2004.p.13) "...they are sometimes British andbut you know they are mostly European..." (2006.p.16)
just	"... and just this course is..." (2005.p.4) "... so just you know English part..." (2006.p.20)
something/everything	"...and you know something try to find..." (2003.p.11) "... might be we can, I can, we can something similar concept." (2006.p.29)
the	"and with the later on I started..." (2003. P.4) "... and then put the my study English..." (2005.p.6)
thing/ things	"... and then go thing so this thing I need..." (2004.p.20) "...and then those thing..." (2006.p.8)
repetition	"...and just like pile pile of them..." (2003.p.12) "... it's became long and long..." (2004.p.17)
Formulaic phrases	
Formulaic phrase	Examples
and so those thing/ so those kind of thing/ and those things	"...so those kind of thing is..." (2003.p. 8) "...and so those thing and then before..." (2004.p.15) "...speaking in natural way and those thing and so and but now..." (2006.p.18)
but the same time / at the same	"... it's a textbook at the same comes with a tape..." (2004.p.9)
but thinks is / but certain thing/ but things is	"... but thinks is when you think a possibility..." (2005.p.6) "...but things is about before I did also..." (2005.p.11)
it's + verb / it is + verb	"...it is appear..." (2003.p.8) "... it's give me..." (2003.p. 14)
long times ago	"I took IELTS course long times ago..." (2005.p.8)
might be	"... might be we can, I can, we can something similar concept." (2006.p.29)
which / which is	"...which is you don't have to speak at all..." (2003.p. 12) "... two months course which is I can be elementary school teacher..." (2005.p.2)

EJ also used many of these devices correctly although somewhat excessively, for example, '*you know*', '*like*', '*I found that...*', '*which is/are*' and '*at the same time*'. These native-speaker gap-fillers were not included in this analysis. The list consists only of non-native-speaker-like examples. While children learning their L1 also use formulaic phrases, they are gradually able to break them down into their grammatical structures and analyze them. Adults learning an L2 are less able to do this accurately (Wood, D, 2002). EJ's use of these non-native formulae demonstrates this lack of analysis.

It appears that adults tend to use formulaic sequences as do children, but whether they apply processes of segmentation, analysis, and fusion to them to further development in other aspects of language is unclear. It is likely that the established cognitive and learning styles of adults make for more variety in the route of language acquisition generally and with regard to use of formulaic sequences specifically. Some may be analytic and seek to infer rules from chunked units or from pieces of input, whereas others, such as [...Wes]... may rely heavily on acquired formulas, and not attempt to break them down or analyze them. (Wood, 2002. p 6.)

Like Wes, EJ appears not to have analyzed many of the chunks that she uses. She concentrates so hard on creating the illusion of fluency in her speech that she sacrifices attention paid to accuracy.

- **Gap-filler per utterance count**

The table below shows the results of the analysis comparing EJ's use of gap-fillers in speech samples from her first and last conversations with me. The topics of conversation were the same.

Table 4.5. Gap-fillers analysis

	2003	2006
Total word count	256	260
Total gap-fillers	47	72
Percentage of gap-fillers	18%	28%

These results show that EJ's use of non-native-speaker gap-fillers increased over the years. These results could be interpreted in light of EJ's personal and professional situation. As she integrated more and more into Canadian society and worked more and more among native-speakers, perhaps her need for fluency in her L2 increased. In 2003, she was a student. The stakes for her English were lower, but in 2006 she was no longer in the protective atmosphere of the language school but rather working out in the world among people who were neither ESL students nor teachers. The stakes became much higher, the pressure to appear fluent much greater. Possibly, one unconscious strategy was to increase the number of gap-fillers in her speech in order to appear more fluent.

It is significant that the subject of both these utterances was EJ's success in the English public speaking competitions at school. Her strong point was speaking. She was very aware of that. Her fluency in English was her emphasis. This emphasis on the

importance of seeming fluent clearly helped to create the illusion of easy flow in her L2. However, as she realizes below, this can be a very inefficient strategy.

...I found that it's not only matter about correct, but I found it's a just you know doesn't make a sense, because there is a I can hardly find any sentence at the same time it's not only matter about I missed the verb, I missed the article, it's a matter about I'm doing and repeat, repeat so I just you know the talk maybe you know 5 minutes but I, I think I could even shorten to the even 1 minute, so I talk a 5 minutes but the amount of, amount of information I wanna talk it's a just maybe 1 minute. (28.03.05)

EJ realizes in the above statement not only that she sacrifices accuracy to fluency but also that this is an ineffective strategy.

4.2. Exploration of personal factors findings

Why has EJ's English evolved into this rather patchy combination of the analyzed and unanalyzed? What personal factors have influenced her development? This section will explore the evolution of her interlanguage, looking closely at personal factors— affect, motivation, language learning strategies, and awareness. These findings include illustrative examples from her personal narratives using her own words. A clear and vivid portrait of EJ as a language learner emerges. This portrait goes a long way towards answering many questions about her unique English idiolect.

- **Affect**

In this section examples are given of EJ's feelings about her English learning and how those feelings were reinforced. The examples are taken from her personal narratives and her learning diaries. It is evident that the experiences that she underwent related to English and her affective response to them had a lasting effect on her present interlanguage characteristics.

Right at the beginning of her EFL learning experiences, she was intrigued by her first English teacher and by the sound of the language.

Um I liked it, because um maybe it's part of my nature. I always liked something new and interesting. Ya, so um even teacher looks different. Teacher looked very, very like kind of westernized. She had very high nose and then sound was very interesting so even I didn't have to remind myself oh ya I have to you know practice and doing it just onon the way home I just you know like ah myself ah practice whatever I learn so I basically memorize everything in the textbook. (11.03.06)

She tells stories about the public speaking competitions in her middle school and how she was always chosen to represent her class. Right from the start, her fluency and ability to convey her message were rewarded.

I really enjoy those kind of thing. And it's helpful 'cause I never afraid being in front of people. (28.09.03)

From her autobiographical account of her life (2003), she told me that she had travelled with her sister in Europe. EJ was the one

who did the talking during these travels even though her sister's English was more careful and more accurate. People understood EJ better. Thus, her fluency was again rewarded.

But my sister try to use the vocabulary it's exactly indicate that meaning, but I'm more like ah discontruck ah disconstruct, more like ah describe way. And so people understood me, but they couldn't understand my sister, so I always ... my, my sister say and then I have to translate it. (28.09.03)

Since moving to Canada, however, EJ began to feel less comfortable about her fluency. She was now among native-speakers. When she spoke to native-speaking Canadians the most important thing for her was to seem fluent and be able to get her message across; at the same time, she was very aware that her vocabulary was inadequate. She did not feel up to the task. She compensated in two ways. She made sure that her speech flowed by filling in all silences, and she repeated the same idea in different ways to ensure that she had made herself clear despite a lack of vocabulary.

Fill the gap at the same time, make sure... the person understand me, and so I tend to explain again and again, which isn't necessary. (03.11.05)

Discomfort was beginning to creep in. No longer was she the expert communicator in English that she had been in non-native speaking environments. In the example below, she is realizing that, in order to work as a teacher in Ontario and communicate with native English-speaking colleagues, she will have to change her focus from

just communication of ideas to accuracy as well as fluency in communication. No longer is she getting such positive feedback for her English communication skills. Her awareness of the need to change her whole approach is dawning as she receives more and more negative feedback from colleagues.

People say I'm very articulate... but at the same time...just sometimes, you know, around the bush. Not exactly getting to point, and so official meeting I have limited time. I have to make concise and clear opinion or any thing but you know I just have a on and on and then what's the point? You know and so I just a tried not to talk a lot and you know say something clearly and then I just a have to focus on the content more forgot about the grammar part. And so that's why you know like I feel really, really nervous cause I have to care both of that... (17.05.05)

Throughout the personal narratives, there are strong examples of EJ's joy and satisfaction at being able to communicate so well in her L2. From her earliest encounters with English in Korea, through her travels in Europe with her sister, her long stay in Egypt, her ESL and other classes taken at university, right through to her setting up a home with her native-speaking partner, she had always been positively rewarded for her L2 communication skills. Only recently with her decision to become an elementary school teacher and with her ECE job working with native-speaking colleagues has she run up against any negative feedback. Working in a native-speaking country with native-speaking colleagues is very different from using English as a foreign language abroad or being an ESL student. Will this change

in her own perception of her abilities in her L2 have an effect on her English? Will the shock of this new negative feedback help her to monitor her speech more and pay attention to the differences between her own English and that of the native-speakers around her? Further data-gathering of EJ's informal speech will help to answer these questions.

- **Motivation**

The affective responses noted above were transformed into a desire to succeed in learning English – a motivation that had particular characteristics ultimately resulting in particular language learning strategies.

Early on in EJ's English learning she was motivated to communicate fluently by her love of the sound of English and by her fascination with her teacher who looked foreign and exotic even though she was Korean. This early enthusiasm was positively reinforced by her success as a public speaker. She was fortunate to have teachers who promoted these speaking contests. Not all schools offered them. They were ideal vehicles for her preferred style of language learning – oral communication.

I like that and the so through the my middle school ah that was a the good thing cause all the student kind of recognize me cause I win all the way selected to be... I always chosen and I'm a... but I never exactly the won a the first prize. I was second. (28.09.03).

She soon gained a reputation for being a good communicator in English. That reputation continued in the small Korean school where she taught in Cairo. The other teachers asked for her help when they needed to communicate in English. Even her sister, a top student whose English was more accurate than EJ's, bowed to her superior communication skills when they were traveling together in Europe. In Cairo EJ's English skills served her well and she continued to develop her communicative abilities. There was no motivation to polish her accuracy. She was a success.

But in school situation was awkward because I'm the only one can communicate and talk so everybody kind of believes me so Korean society believes me I'm the really kind of English genius so they think I can do everything.... The parents ask me "How can we improve English?" ...They don't consult English teacher, whenever they have English problem they always consult to me.(21.11.03)

In Canada, however, she had to start thinking about getting jobs in a native-speaking environment. Her English began to destabilize. Her motivation to improve became keener and more focused. Not only was she motivated to integrate as much as possible into Canadian society, she was also instrumentally motivated by the necessity to find a good job. She began to see English as a barrier to the type of job she wanted.

My conversations with and observations of EJ revealed that once in Canada she enrolled in several ESL courses, took an Art History course, started but did not finish a CTESL course, subjected herself six times to tests of ESL, did volunteer work with children at the Museum of Civilization and made friends with many native-speaking Canadians and non-Korean speakers. She was certainly acting upon her desire to improve her English.

The quotation below is from her personal narrative in our first conversation. It is about her EFL learning in Korea when she was in middle school. From the start, she was motivated to communicate in her L2.

I never approach others just to learn language. I'm just like talk and I'm just interest things. I'm just hello, say hello but I think they think I'm approach them to learn English. (11.03.06)

The following is from our last conversation in 2006 and is about her job in a daycare centre. She is talking about the children's language, how good it is and how she is inspired to emulate them. Now her focus has changed from communication to accuracy, to being a good model for the children.

And then their language is really really good... and then wow! I also wanna memorize that. And, that also that's why you know really for a teacher, being a model is very important. (11.03.06).

It is clear from EJ's story, her actions, and her goals for the future that she is a highly motivated individual. However, appropriate choices need to be made. Effective strategies must be chosen and implemented.

What may be important is not what orientation this or that learner has but rather the extent to which they are prepared to pursue their learning goal, i.e., motivational intensity and perseverance. (Ellis, R. 2004. p.537)

EJ has clear reasons to be highly motivated in her pursuit of better English. However, as stated in chapter two, the relationship between one's motivational orientation and one's implementation of that motivation is not a straightforward one. Are EJ's language learning strategies effective in helping her to achieve her goals?

- **Language learning strategies**

The findings from the exploration of EJ's language learning strategies come from my own observations of her actions, the personal narratives, the learning diaries, and my field notes. I will focus first on her EFL strategies before she moved to a native-speaking environment, then on her ESL strategies after she moved to Canada.

In the past, during her EFL studies, EJ was deliberate in her use of certain strategies in preference to others. In middle school when

she first started learning, she used to practice her pronunciation of English words on her way home from school. Her strategies all focused on communication in speaking rather than on analyzing English structures. Her classmates admired her facility with English.

They ask me "How do you do that?" and I don't know, I just think only I can say I just love it. (28.09.03)

She used her dictionary a lot but not her grammar book. In grammar tests she relied on her intuition to choose the right answers.

I just pick that one if something sounds OK. (28.09.03)

When she went to Cairo, she brought a set of cassette tapes for learning English. She listened to them and tried to mimic them while she went about her daily chores. She did not bring the book that went with the tapes. In addition, she took lessons both from a private tutor and from a language institute, and she spent her personal time communicating in English because her partner was Canadian. However, she was uncomfortable when her teacher corrected her.

... and then as soon as in front of him I have to speak correctly, grammatically correct, so I couldn't speak. And then I just speak and then he just say you know indicate my mistake and grammatically ... I couldn't speak anything. (28.09.03)

She explicitly told her partner not to correct her.

...from the beginning I told my partner "Don't fix it because you are not my teacher and so I don't wanna do that". (21.11.03)

She clearly felt most at ease in English when allowed to communicate freely and informally with her friends. She noticed, however, that her love of talking was a problem.

My problem is I like to talk. I'm a fast talker and so I just talk before thinking I just talk. And so I just think it's very difficult to fix it later on although people think I'm fluent because a lot of talk. They think first. They think a lot and so it took always time so already they are just talking something else. They moved on but they stillAt least I don't have to think.... For me I pick and then I understood... (28.09.03)

These strategies, with their emphasis on fluent communication at the expense of accuracy, not only paid off in school where she gained a reputation for being good at English, but also in Cairo and on her travels in Europe with her sister where she enjoyed more success at making herself understood than did her more careful sister.

When EJ arrived in Canada, however, she had to reorient herself in relation to the language. Taking courses and writing ESL proficiency tests have been two of EJ's language learning strategies since she arrived in Canada.

Upon her arrival in Canada, EJ immediately took the CAEL test (Canadian Academic English Language test) and was allowed to enroll in an EAP credit class at university. She also took a course in art history. Since that time she has also completed half a CTESL course and an Early Childhood Education certificate course. As part of her exploration of the Ontario education system, she has also taken an

orientation course for foreign-trained teachers hoping to qualify as teachers in Ontario. EJ is not a 'street learner'; she sees education as the key to her success and has done extensive research into what courses might help her achieve her goal.

Tests figure prominently in her language learning strategies. She has taken the CAEL test three times, the TOEFL once and the Canadian Language Benchmarks test twice. She has also studied for but not yet taken the IELTS. (See the appendices for a list of tests taken and their dates.)

EJ considers courses and tests important indicators of her abilities in English. She wants to know where she stands as a speaker of English as a second language. If she somehow 'passes' English, then the glass ceiling that she continues to hit will disappear.

Reading has played a large role in EJ's language learning. She reads the newspaper every day and says she understands about 80% of what she reads. She is a frequent visitor to the Ottawa Public Library from which she borrows book-and-tape sets to read on the bus. She chooses books that interest her – books about Egyptology, childcare and psychology.

EJ owns a large reference library of ESL books—dictionaries, grammar texts, vocabulary-building books and books of readings for ESL students. She frequents bookstores, garage sales and second-

hand shops where she picks up useful books. She has also expanded her already extensive vocabulary by studying inventory lists from her job at the daycare centre. She is by now an expert on the names of all the sandbox toys!

EJ sees vocabulary as an obstacle and she works hard at expanding it through reading, studying vocabulary-building books and by asking her partner for definitions. She acknowledges, however, that her vocabulary is continuing to expand.

Perhaps her best strategy is communicating exclusively in English. Her outgoing and engaging personality ensures that she gets plenty of practice. In fact, she mentioned to me during one of our meetings that she was afraid that she was losing her Korean because she spoke it so seldom.

In spite of all these excellent language-learning strategies, EJ's talk still gives the impression of being haphazard and riddled with non-native errors. In many dimensions, her English is developing towards a native-speaker level asymptotically, but in others, it seems to have fossilized. Many of her formulaic chunks remain unanalyzed and she still feels driven to produce English at a fast rate; this leads to an inordinate number of non-native-like gap-fillers and unsystematic variation in errors.

It was interesting to explore language-learning strategies with EJ. Her use of them was varied and imaginative. It was interesting to note which strategies she used and which she did not, which worked successfully for her and which did not and to ask the question "why"? Just as an L2 speaker changes from being a speaker of a foreign language to being a speaker of a second language in a native-speaking country, so does the focus on what needs to be done. Similarly, the change from being an ESL student in a classroom to being an employee in a job highlights a need for a shift along the continua. As EJ so well put it,

I found it's more challenging because before, my situation is I was ah, the learner, so maybe it's OK to make a mistake. People understand, but now I.. I compete with ah native speaker. (11.03.06)

Although EJ uses a wide variety of language learning strategies, both direct and indirect, cognitive and communicative, according to my observations and according to the strategies list from Wenden & Rubin (1987), EJ focuses almost exclusively on "production tricks" which come under the heading of communication strategies. These include the use of synonyms, paraphrase, repetition and examples to convey meaning. (p. 89). She uses very few cognitive, analytical strategies.

- **Awareness, and meta-linguistic knowledge**

This section, the exploration of EJ's awareness and meta-linguistic knowledge, became the focal point of the explorations of the personal factors. EJ was in the enviable position of having had a good education at the tertiary level and, in addition, the meta-linguistic knowledge that a CTESL course offers. Seven different types of data were analyzed and triangulated to construct a clear picture of this learner's awareness.

The results from the grammaticality judgments, the grammar exercises, the oral versus written language analysis, and EJ's own transcriptions of her speech samples indicated that EJ had a high level of awareness of her errors. As well, the findings from the questionnaires, together with a careful reading of the learning diaries and the personal narratives show that she also had a keen sense of her place in English compared to native speakers and of the difficulty of the task ahead of her, and she was able clearly and eloquently to articulate this awareness.

The grammaticality judgments

In the first task taken from her essay, EJ was able on her own to pinpoint and correct 80% of her errors in writing. She is aware of her errors and she has considerable knowledge of pedagogical grammar.

My results from the second grammaticality judgment task are presented in the table below categorized by error type.

Table 4.6. Comparison of written and oral GJs by type

Type of error	Written GJ. 64 items		Oral GJ. 50 items	
	correct	incorrect	correct	incorrect
auxiliary omissions ("I going...")	18/22	4/22 = 18%	9/14	5/14 = 36%
infinitive + verb + ING (" He wants to going...")	6/6	0/6 = 0%	4/6	2/6 = 33.3%
Modal + verb + ING. ("We can making...")	10/14	4/14 = 28.5%	3/11	8/11 = 73%
Distracters = ING/ED ("I was boring...")	11/14	3/14 = 21%	6/11	5/11 = 45%
Distracters = plural 's' ("They made cookie.")	6/8	2/8 = 25%	5/8	3/8 = 37.5%

With respect to the written version of the exercise, it is shown that EJ was able to correct over 75% of her errors in all but the modal + verb + ING category. She made no errors in the infinitive + verb + ING category. Although the two versions of the second test—written and oral—were not identical, by percentage there were many more errors in the oral version than in the written version. Even so, EJ was able to correct over 60% of all errors except for the problematic modal + verb + ING category. Given time and attention (Ghasemi, 2003), EJ is aware of her errors and able to correct them more

effectively than she is in informal situations when constrained by time.

All three of these grammaticality judgment tests indicated that when EJ allowed herself time to focus on accuracy, she was able to correct most of her errors and to give reasons for these corrections. The percentage of corrections she made was not high enough, however, to meet Schumann's criteria for acquisition – 90% correct in all obligatory contexts. Her meta-linguistic knowledge is impressive; however, much of it has not been assimilated into her spoken English. If EJ is aware of her errors to this extent, will she, if she pays attention, be able to correct them so that they can become integrated into her most informal, unmonitored speech in the future?

Grammaticality judgments and the grammar awareness exercises will be explored further in chapter 5, which deals with treatments and their outcomes.

The grammar exercises

EJ recorded her answers to these two straightforward exercises and then wrote them down. She was able to fill in all the blanks correctly. She knew the rules behind these grammar points and, when they were pulled out of a conversational context and highlighted

in a familiar type of grammar exercise, she had no trouble with accuracy. She was 100% correct.

The oral versus written language analysis

When EJ's informal conversation and her written diary were compared, taking samples of similar length and on a similar topic, some striking differences were noticed. These differences are recorded in the table below.

Table 4.7. Comparison of EJ's spoken and written English.

	Oral errors	Written errors
Copula "to be"	1/11 = 9%	0/11 = 0%
Auxiliary "to be"	2/5 = 40%	0/2 = 0%
Verbs + incorrect ING endings	4/16 = 25%	1/9 = 5%

Although the samples taken from EJ's informal conversation and from her written diaries were small, they are both typical of her oral and written English. The figures shown here indicate that EJ makes fewer errors when she writes than when she speaks.

The contrast between EJ's spoken and written language is striking. EJ is very aware of her success in communicating in her L2 when she speaks, so she speaks easily and flowingly without paying very much attention to accuracy. She has had so much positive

reinforcement of her speaking style that she relaxes and does not monitor her speech. Instead, she concentrates on getting her message across. Her writing is a different matter. Many times during our conversations, she has expressed anxiety about her writing. She feels insecure when she writes and therefore she takes great care to be accurate. She monitors herself with vigilance and achieves considerable success. It is noteworthy that the gap-fillers that EJ relies on so much in her speech are, of course, not used in written language, so the patchwork chaos of her conversation is eliminated when she writes. That, taken together with her more careful monitoring of her writing, makes her a much more accurate writer than talker.

EJ's own transcriptions

When allowing herself time to focus on her language use in these self-transcriptions, EJ was able to correct all her errors and non-native idiosyncrasies except the articles. The difference between her spoken, informal conversation and her carefully transcribed and corrected version of the same utterance was remarkable. The difference can be seen in these two transcripts.

(Uncorrected) "They took the English test because they want to know my level of English. So when I enter the class room, the teacher set the exam and first time she gave us writing. The writing topic's about mistake. So which is a the mistake is not all the time bad. So they ask me write about mistake which I've learned something which is kind of the something

positive mistake I've made in the past and so they acquired several paragraph which is has a certain heading and body and conclusion."
(19.03.05)

(Corrected) "They gave me a English test because they wanted to know my level of English. When I entered a class room, the teacher had already prepared the exam. The teacher gave us a writing task. The writing topic was about mistake that I'd learned a lesson from. The task also required a essay form with headings, body and conclusion."

Except for articles, EJ managed to correct all her errors and eliminate her extraneous gap-fillers. This exercise was remarkably successful in helping EJ to focus on linguistic aspects of her L2 rather than fluency.

The next three explorations of the data collected from EJ focus on her own articulations of her awareness and her meta-cognitive knowledge.

The questionnaires

I found that her answers to the first questionnaire, recorded on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, showed that she had a very good understanding of where she stood in relation to native speakers. My own judgments of her abilities were similar. (Results are recorded in the table below, with the results from the final questionnaire.)

EJ's difficulties with questions 7 (about learning style) and 8 (about problems) yielded some interesting results. She did not answer this part of the first questionnaire in writing, but when we

talked about it later in the 2004 transcript, she described herself as mainly an auditory learner. I think that the reason for her not completing this part of the questionnaire was that she is not as confident about her writing as she is about her speaking. She is reluctant to write. All through our collaboration she consistently chose talk over writing as our method of communication. In both questionnaires, she rated herself lowest in writing.

However, as has been demonstrated above, EJ's writing gives the impression of being more accurate than her speaking. The point at which fluency and accuracy meet must be judged differently in speaking and writing, and indeed even in formal versus informal speaking both for native and non-native-speakers. In filling out page 2, question 3 of the first questionnaire, EJ gave two answers instead of only one. In judging her speaking, she gave herself 4 out of 7 for formal speaking and 5 for informal talk. Not only is she aware of her L2 compared to the TL, but also she is aware of the distinction between formal and informal situations and her own tendency to change her interlanguage depending on her language environment like Tarone's chameleon. (Tarone, 1980, 1999)

In the second questionnaire, she was asked to compare her English from two years, 2002 and 2006. Was she aware of any

changes? Did she feel she had progressed, fossilized or degenerated?

The following table shows results from both questionnaires.

Table 4.8. Results from the 2 questionnaires.

	First questionnaire 2003	Second questionnaire 2002	Second questionnaire 2006
	Scale of 1-7	Scale of 1-6	Scale of 1-6
Overall ability	5	3.5	4
Listening/understanding	5	4	5
Speaking/fluency	4=formal 5=informal	4	4
Reading/understanding	4	3	4
Writing	3	2	4
Vocabulary/understanding	-	4	4
Improvement?	yes		yes

As can be seen in the table above, in the second questionnaire, EJ rated herself as having improved in most categories except "Speaking/Fluency" and "Vocabulary/Understanding". In "Overall English ability", she recorded her improvement as only 0.5. (3.5 to 4 in the space of four years.) I believe that this self-evaluation indicates an accurate awareness of her English abilities and her rate of improvement. She indicated that she had improved consistently in

the more formal, thought-out aspects—reading and writing—but was unchanged in speaking and fluency.

Yet, speaking and fluency were her strongest, most positively reinforced language skills throughout her childhood learning and in her experiences with English as a foreign language during her travels with her sister in Europe. These were and are the skills that she prefers to use and practice most in her English speaking life in Canada. The data that I collected from her in these questionnaires show her preference for informal talk and her focus on fluency rather than the more controlled, formal modes of communication. Yet, at the same time, these same skills are the ones she indicated as having not changed in the direction of more native-like performance, nor have they slid back to become less native-like. Is it possible that her informal speaking style has fossilized through too much informal, haphazard use without enough attention to accuracy? Or, now that she is living and working among native speakers rather than with other non-native-speakers in ESL classrooms, is she becoming more aware of the need to monitor more carefully what she says? There are indications in her learning diaries and in her conversations with me that she is indeed becoming more aware.

The learning diaries

The six diary entries show that EJ thinks deeply about her language learning and can write about it with eloquence and accuracy.

She is confused about the apparent conflict between the communicative approach taught so widely in Canada and the way she learned in Korea with extensive use of reference books.

Although I heard so many times that it's not a good way to look it up in a dictionary whenever we come across an unknown word, it is necessary at some point. As an adult learner, I need as confirmation that I totally or even partially understand and process in some way. In this retributial process, I need authoritative media such as a dictionary or grammar book. The fear of misunderstanding holds back my confidence in English. (diary entry September 2005)

In the quotation below, she notices the improvement in her writing and wonders how she achieved such improvement.

Once I couldn't make any conversation in English, but now I do. Once I couldn't write, or I was afraid of writing a short e-mail in English, but now I can write a few pages without difficulty. Regardless of mistakes. Then what was the key of the success? What have I done? (diary entry October, 2005)

She then lists many diverse strategies that she has used in order to improve her English. These will be examined in the section on strategies.

It was obvious to me that there was a dramatic difference between her spoken and written English. The diary entries are eloquent and much more accurate than her spoken English. To what

extent is one's idiolect an integral part of one's personality? Can EJ rethink her own definition of what it means to be fluent so that she need not fear to allow herself the occasional pause to collect her thoughts, or shed some of the verbiage she uses in order to keep the conversation flowing?

There is no doubt that EJ is aware not only that there are many different valid language learning strategies, but also that her own personality and language learning history have led her to learn in particular ways and develop particular strengths and weaknesses.

The personal narratives

I used the transcripts of our conversations to track EJ's awareness of how she has shaped and strengthened her English throughout the years.

In the following example, she was talking about her EFL learning in school in Korea. Already she was leaning towards communicating fluently rather than being accurate.

My problem is I like to talk. I'm a fast talker and so I just talk before thinking I just talk. And so I just think it's very difficult to fix it later on although people think I'm fluent because a lot of ??? they think first. They think a lot and so it took always time so already they are just talking something else. They moved on but they stillAt least I don't have to think.... For me I pick and then I understood..... (28.09.03.)

However, already she was becoming aware that she was beginning to fossilize.

...the most of students are busy with they have really this thick TOEFL book so they just finish from first to end and so I always feel I never finish so I start the lack of confidence with English. I feel, first time I was like grownup I feel certain stage I feel like stopped there. (28.09.03)

She is even aware of and can explain one of the affective reasons for her fossilization. She knows that she received a lot of positive reinforcement for her fluency and so she stopped paying attention to accuracy.

... my feeling toward my English because even my parents has impression of me you know my English is really really good and then, I fell, because I've been told a lot of a lot of oh ya, how can you do that you know even among the peers. So I feel always I really really good at English but I found that getting my mark is still good but never like extremely good. I found that get you know higher higher with the more higher, grade you know the more the gap I found that. That part is I have to certain time, you have to fill the gap through your own study if you want really really reach top top top. I'm always just study in the class you know I didn't put the extra effort outside work and so... (11.03.06)

On the other hand, when talking about her time in Cairo, she compares the first and second times she went to lectures and is very much aware of how much she has progressed.

I registered Egyptian explorian? Society which is Egyptian archaeology society, um based in England and the lecturer came from England so that everything is English but it's very British English so I had a really, really hard time to understand, but I persevered to sit there and watch the slide and but that time might be I understand the lecture probably 30%.... So I speaking but the same time I attended the lecture and but I found that time whenever I attending lecture, I got only about 30%. It was interesting, when I back there again and I came to Canada and then 2 years ago I back to Egypt and I attended the same lecture which they have a uh regular lecture for twice a month and a free public lecture twice a month and still the British ??? a same. But I found that I... my understanding really, really has improved a lot. That time I think I understand 70%. (08.05.04)

She shows her awareness of discrete points of grammar. She is aware of her omission of past tense /ed/ and that it is a pronunciation rather than a grammar mistake.

Ya I couldn't pronounce that. So instead of "I wanted" I just "I want to" and but might be when I writing I don't think I made that mistake. I probably made /ed/ but just it doesn't come out. At the same time I spoke fast and so I didn't give enough time to pronounce in the ending properly (17.01.05)

I noticed that although she was able to repair 'pronunciate' to 'pronounce' after I modeled it for her, she soon reverted to 'pronunciate.' More will be said about repairs in the next chapter.

All of the data collected from these five sources indicate that EJ has a very high level of awareness of where she stands in her L2. She has a keen sense of the difficulty of the task of changing her approach from one of smooth communication at the expense of accuracy to a more careful, thoughtful one, one with more planning and less verbiage.

4.3. Conclusion

So, now after all these explorations and manipulations of the spoken and written data gathered from EJ over the years, is it possible to answer the research questions about her interlanguage accuracy and fluency and about how her personal factors have

affected her language learning? The first three categories of research questions first asked in chapter 1 are revisited below.

1. Questions about accuracy

- I wanted to know if the errors I had initially noticed would remain or disappear. In other words, had these aspects of her English fossilized?

The interlanguage analyses have shown that, over the three and a half years certain structures within EJ's interlanguage appear to have fossilized. As well, her use of idiosyncratic gap-fillers and unanalyzed formulae has not decreased. In fact, between 2003 and 2006, it has increased.

EJ's informal spoken English has remained idiosyncratic. She will always be recognizable as EJ. She has set her individual stamp upon the language. Perhaps she has entered a native English-speaking environment well past the critical period for shedding her accent and for eliminating certain non-native grammatical structures. Perhaps she has had too much practice and too much success to be able to change these errors easily. On the other hand, perhaps she is constructing herself in this idiosyncratic way; perhaps her unique idiolect is an important part of her personality. (Janna Fox, personal communication, August 31, 2007).

2. Questions about fluency

- Why did she appear so fluent yet at the same time so inaccurate?
- Was there a relationship between the two concepts?

There is no question that EJ is a fluent speaker of her L2. She speaks at length and with ease. She is able to communicate not only basic, everyday survival information, but also complex ideas. She is a successful communicator. However, the ability to communicate ideas with ease does not always equal success in all contexts. In order to become a teacher in one's L2, one's accuracy must be virtually, if not actually, at the native-speaker level.

Fluency and accuracy balance differently in each individual L2 speaker. In EJ, it was clear that her focus had been on the communication of ideas at the expense of grammatical accuracy. Her personal history, her personality and her relationship to her L2 shed much light on the reasons for this particular balance.

3. Questions about personal factors

- What was the relationship between her linguistic abilities and her personal characteristics, goals and experiences?
- How did they contribute to the unique nature of her idiolect?

EJ has an outgoing personality; she enjoys being with people and communicating with them; she is vivacious and imaginative; her interests abound. Her gregarious personality has led her to focus on

communicating with people, on speaking, on getting ideas across and not on the analysis of grammatical structures. There are many indications of this throughout the data. Although her motivation to learn both English and the Canadian way of life have been keen, she has not sacrificed her Korean heritage. Her home is filled with Korean artifacts and she still cooks traditional Korean foods. While in Egypt, she learned Arabic belly dancing and cuisine and had a working knowledge of Arabic for survival purposes. Because of her enthusiasm and positive attitude towards life, I feel she would be a communicative success in any language and culture she chose to embrace.

But would she be able to learn a language with enough accuracy in order to become a teacher in that culture? I would guess not, unless she was willing to monitor her speech very closely and to think carefully before she speaks. EJ has in the past been a victim of her own success. As long as she can communicate without breakdown of meaning between her and her interlocutor, she will probably continue to use her well-worn communicative strategies without paying close attention to accuracy.

Certainly personality, motivation and awareness each play a large part in successful language learning. However, they then must be acted upon. If one suddenly becomes aware of an anomaly in

one's spoken L2, does one always make the effort to change it? It depends on how important one perceives that anomaly to be, how much effort one is willing to expend on changing it and how much it grates against one's personality to do so.

Why do we sometimes act upon our awareness of what needs to be done but not always? Is it fear of failure? Fear of success? Fear that it will take too much effort? Would it simply be too inconsistent with who we are? Language is so wrapped up with personal factors that to change a well-practiced aspect of one's L2 would be tantamount to changing one's personality.

Back in school in Korea, EJ's grammar book remained unread while she concentrated on the public speaking contests. In Cairo, she expressed a negative reaction to having been corrected by her English teacher. As well, she was clear about asking her partner not to correct her. Her trajectory through her English studies followed a clear path; communication was more important than accuracy from the beginning.

Will EJ be able to use her highly developed meta-cognitive knowledge and her keen awareness of her place within her interlanguage to improve her accuracy? The next chapter will describe some treatments designed to draw EJ's attention to the discrepancy between her very inaccurate informal speech and her

more accurate use of the language when she concentrates on her accuracy rather than on communicating a message.

Chapter 5

Treatments and Outcomes

Introduction

The findings from the analyses and explorations done in chapters 3 and 4 tell the story of a vivacious and outgoing new Canadian, a highly adept and imaginative communicator in her L2 and an enthusiastic participant in Canadian culture. They also show an L2 learner who, in certain aspects of her L2 grammatical accuracy and use of non-native-like formulaic phrases, appears to have fossilized. Why, despite many years in school studying English as a foreign language, speaking it during her years in Cairo, and after seven years living in the target culture and using the target language virtually all the time, has she kept these inaccuracies in her spoken English? Is she aware of them? Her written English contains few errors and reveals that she knows the grammar rules well. Is she aware of the marked difference between her spoken and written English? Is she aware that she does not apply the rules when she speaks but does when she writes?

The treatments described below were designed to help EJ develop her awareness of her errors in her informal spoken English and also to draw her attention to the contrast in accuracy between her spoken and written English. They contributed insights that helped

to answer my final category of research questions about L2 pedagogy as stated in chapter 1 and reiterated here.

- Given the arguments in the literature that awareness seems to play a crucial role in de-fossilization, were there any pedagogical activities that would increase her awareness and enhance her interlanguage development?

EJ is university-educated, highly motivated, and has enough meta-linguistic knowledge to give her insight into the rigours and pitfalls of adult SLA. I am an ESL teacher working in a university. Could the two of us working together generate enough awareness of the nature of EJ 's errors to help her start to de-fossilize any of the structures in her speech analyzed in chapters 3 and 4?

The consciousness-raising exercises/treatments used to help EJ to notice her inaccuracies fell into three categories:

1. Oral: the use of spoken recasts as part of natural, informal conversation
2. Written: grammar exercises focusing on two discrete points from the analysis in chapters 3 and 4
3. Comparative: two self-transcription exercises whereby she transferred her spoken language into writing and then corrected it

I did not focus on explicit, unexpected negative feedback except in one specific instance: the recasting of EJs variations on "the thing is..." This experiment is described below.

5.1. Oral Recasts

Rationale

One of the ways in which language teachers make corrections in their students' speech is by repeating students' incorrect utterances but with corrections. These are called *recasts*. Recasts can be a non-invasive way of helping learners improve (R. Ellis, 2006). Because they can provide negative feedback in response to a learner's output, they can help the learner to notice the gap between her own IL and the TL (Swain, 1993). During our sessions over the years, I used recasts to help EJ restructure some of her English errors. I did not use them as part of a deliberate experiment, but rather in a natural manner as would any native-speaker talking to a non-native-speaker. There was one exception to this as will be described below.

A student alert to the structure of the language, when hearing a recast, then has the opportunity to *repair* the utterance by repeating back the correct form. I wanted to determine to what extent EJ used these naturally occurring recasts to repair her errors. Was she totally focused on communicating or did she reserve a part of her attention for the structure and accuracy of the language itself?

Method

Again, I made use of speech samples in the transcribed conversations. I chose six transcriptions at random and counted the number of times EJ repaired a recast correctly, and the number of times she ignored it or repeated it incorrectly.

- Example A: A recast correctly repaired

EJ: I stuck there.

L: You got stuck.

EJ: Yah, I got stuck there.

(28.09.03)

- Example B: A recast incorrectly repaired.

EJ: ...I remember I really tried to pronounce the "thank you"...

L: and you liked to pronounce "Thank you".

EJ: Yah. But a certain thing probably you know it's a became um.. the...I

the.. pronounce but the certain the wrong way too. (28.09.03)

- Example C: An unrepaired/ignored recast.

EJ: I definitely agree but thing is, whenever I read even examination, they give you a lot of material, and often there are not enough time.

L: There is ... there isn't enough time...

EJ: So always have kind of a train, probably you can do if you have a time, they give a time maybe two hours and you have to finish that, probably you will get all answer. You will get all right answer. (10.11.05)

Findings and Discussion

Out of 46 examples in total, EJ made 31 repairs correctly and 15 were either incorrectly repaired or ignored, 33% of the total. These repairs both correct and incorrect were always made (or

ignored) very quickly. She appeared to repeat my recasts almost absent-mindedly, brushing them off as if they were getting in the way. Rarely did she stop and dwell on any of them. Her attention was usually on the content of her message, on keeping the talk flowing. Her repairs, both correct and incorrect, were bounced back like echoes, and then forgotten. I have called this phenomenon "the echo effect". Echoes depend on timing. The repair is made immediately with the sound of the correction still ringing in the listener's ears. It sounds like a repair, but it has not been processed by the learner; it is merely an unanalyzed echo of what she has just heard.

The following is an example of an echo. It is not a recast in that I have not made a correction of an error. It is, rather, a question I asked her and that she echoes back to me. Instead of merely answering "yes" or "no", she repeats my words immediately in her answer. It is a good example of an echo bounced back, the sound of my words still ringing in her ears and then quickly forgotten.

1. A correct echo

L: Is it on a tape?

EJ: It's on a tape but the from the speaker.

(28.09.03)

EJ's first repaired recast in example A above, echoing my words as soon as I have said them, is also a correct echo. However, when a

bit of time elapses between my question and her answer, her answer is no longer an echo, nor is it repaired. Again, this example is a question from me that she answers.

2. Not an echo.

L: And they're all teachers?

*EJ: Yah ... from Iraq and Korea. They are all used to teacher and ...
(17.01.05)*

In the first example, my words "on a tape" are repeated (echoed) immediately. In the second example, she does not echo the words back right away. Instead, she affirms, "yah", and offers new information "from Iraq and Korea" before repeating my words. Notice that she repeats them wrongly. "They are all used to teacher...". The individual words are there - "they", "are", "all" and "teacher" - but she gets it wrong. The "echo effect" in EJ's case seems to be very dependent on timing. If even 2 or 3 seconds elapse before her echo, she will not make the correction. Therefore it can be suggested that EJ does not analyze these repairs and echoes. Instead, her focus is entirely on communication of meaning.

The third example that highlights the importance of timing—a repair—shows EJ echoing me immediately and then reverting back to the incorrect form.

3. A correct, then incorrect repair.

EJ: ...but things is my pronunciation. I couldn't pronunciate that.

L: You couldn't pronounce that.

EJ: Yah I couldn't pronounce that. At the same time I spoke fast and so I didn't give enough time to pronunciate in the ending properly.

(17.01.05)

These examples of echoes demonstrate that EJ does not give herself time to process the correct models given to her by her interlocutor.

There was one special exception to our way of handling repairs. I had noticed that EJ used a particular gap-filler very often and in several different variations. These were:

"the thing is" / "thing is" / "things is" / "thinks is" / "the thinks is".

Whereas most of my recasts had been a natural part of our conversations, I decided that I would not let this one go. Every time she misused it, I recast it for her. I corrected her on it seven times in a row within the same conversation before she started using it correctly. Then she used it correctly six times in a row and has always used it correctly since. In recasting this particular chunk each time it was misused, I was interfering with the pattern of normal conversation in such an invasive way that EJ was forced to notice it. In other words, she received *unexpected negative* feedback (Vigil & Oller 1976). Eventually she did notice it and was able to make the correction for good.

Will EJ be able to rein herself in and pay more attention to the accuracy of her talk as she spends more and more time living in her L2, or is she so solidly entrenched in her speaking habits by now that changing her speaking style would be tantamount to changing her personality? With common, memorized chunks like "*the thing is...*" perhaps it would be possible, by constant recasting each time a non-standard form was used, for a supposedly fossilized second language speaker to make permanent corrections.

5.2. The Written Grammar Exercises

Rationale

As mentioned in chapter 3, the two grammar exercises played double roles in this study. They served here as treatments designed to help EJ focus on her grammatical errors as well as diagnostic tests of EJ's awareness of her errors described in chapters 3 and 4.

Method

I took some of EJ's most common errors and made simple, fill-in-the-blanks type exercises designed to draw her attention to these errors. The exercises focused on her use of the auxiliary "to be" in the present and past continuous and her use of modals with main

verbs that included incorrect ING endings. These types of errors were the focus of the discrete-point grammar analysis in chapters 3 and 4. Was she aware of the errors she was making? Did she know the grammar rules? (Copies of these exercises can be found in the appendices.)

Findings and discussion

Not surprisingly, EJ knew and understood the rules for both these forms, and, when forced to focus on them out of a conversational context in a familiar fill-in-the-blanks grammar exercise, she was easily able to fill in all the blanks correctly and to quote the rules behind the corrections.

For example, EJ's most persistent errors in her informal speech were omission of auxiliary verbs in present and past continuous tenses,

- "...she teaching English..." (28.09.03)
- "...when I watching their play..." (11.03.06)

and adding ING to the main verb with the modal verb "can".

- "... she can dealing with Islam culture..." (28.09.03)
- "... they can't even teaching anything..." (11.03.06)

In the exercises focusing on these two forms, she was able to write each example correctly, for example,

- "Today, I'm going to work by bus."

- "I was sleeping when the telephone rang."
- "I can listen to the radio."
- "I can focus on my studying."

EJ is aware of the rules and can easily do these familiar "fill-in-the-blanks" exercises. Yet when speaking in informal situations when she is paying attention to communication and not to accuracy, she appears not to know these rules, or not to pay attention to them. The rules take a back seat to the communication of ideas. EJ's meta-linguistic knowledge does not seem to help her to use the language accurately in informal oral contexts.

What happens when a learner is forced to transfer speech into writing? Does accuracy improve? Does this task highlight for the learner some of her interlanguage differences from the target language?

5.3. Speaking into writing: EJ's own transcriptions

Rationale

At one point in our collaboration, I suggested that EJ do some of her own transcribing. (Thanks go to Devon Woods for this suggestion.) The collection process for these data was described in chapter 3. Transcribing taped conversations can be a very useful exercise. It highlights the very marked difference between spoken and written language and it forces the transcriber to notice the

minutiae of the exchange between the two interlocutors—the pauses, the interruptions, the gap-fillers and the other devices used to maintain control and cohesion of the communication. Because EJ speaks quickly and places great emphasis on communication at the expense of accuracy, I thought that the task of transcribing her own speech might alert her to some of her excesses and idiosyncrasies. It would help her to focus on the actual building blocks of the language, on what was necessary and what was extraneous. Was she aware of all these extra bits and pieces? Would she be able to articulate her discoveries about her particular way of speaking her L2?

Method

EJ took a section of one of our taped conversations and transcribed as much of it as she wanted. Next, she made corrections to her transcription. I had not asked her to do this. It was her own decision. (An example of one of her transcriptions is compared to her corrected written version in chapter 4 in the “Awareness” section.) Finally, in our next meeting (28.03.05), we talked about her experience of doing this exercise and taped her comments.

Findings and discussion

Findings for the comparison of EJ's accuracy and fluency in these self-transcriptions have been stated in chapter 4. However, this exercise was not only used to compare accuracy and fluency, but also as a treatment to alert EJ to the idiosyncrasies of her speaking style. She noticed many things she had been unaware of before. Mostly she commented on points of fluency rather than accuracy. She did not pick out inaccurate grammatical structures and comment upon them when she talked about this exercise (although she did correct grammar errors in these transcriptions later); instead, she noticed the things she does to keep the talk flowing.

She commented on the following points:

- that she repeated a lot.

Yah I, I transcript is around 3-4 pages, I mean 5 pages more with double-space. And, not much say. There is nothing much point in it. I just a again and again repeat it... (28.03.05)

- that she used certain gap-fillers a lot.

Yah, I found that I using a lot of "You know", I mean I didn't realize I use a lot but I did and especially now you said, you know I like to fill gap between .. so ya that actually give me problem when I transcript. (28.03.05)

- that she fills all gaps so that there appears to be no punctuation.

There is hardly .. period part. I can't exactly you know finish one sentence and to the other. Seems like it's on and on. Yah, so I mean it's a doesn't matter like exactly you know but sometimes you know you give a pause and it can be, you know, something like OK I'm gonna talk to the something else. But I didn't exactly pause and I keep talking and talking and so I found myself hard to where, where you know where this gonna finish? (28.03.05)

- that she includes a lot of redundancies so that she takes more time than necessary to get her meaning across.

I found that it's not only matter about correct, but I found it's a just you know doesn't make a sense, because there is a I can hardly find any sentence at the same time it's not only matter about I missed the verb, I missed the article, it's a matter about I'm doing and repeat, repeat so I just you know the talk maybe you know 5 minutes but I, I think I could even shorten to the even 1 minute, so I talk a 5 minutes but the amount of, amount of information I wanna talk it's a just maybe 1 minute. (28.03.05)

This first transcribing exercise was so successful in helping EJ to focus on her spoken idiosyncrasies and to correct them in the written version, that I asked her to do another. The second self-transcribing exercise, done during one of our meetings while I waited, yielded some interesting results, just as the first one had done. Again, she was able to correct most of her errors and clear away the extraneous chunks and gap-fillers. Again, she commented on her use of repetition. When I asked, "*What are you going to do about it?*" she suggested that she pause and speak more slowly. However, she was concerned that this would bore her interlocutor.

I don't want people to fall asleep. (10.11.05)

She also suggested that she try to use more concise vocabulary instead of trying to repeat her meaning in many different ways to make sure she was understood.

One interesting point that emerged from this exercise was that EJ was able to capture and correct an error of which I had been unaware. This error was her use of "*onon*" as in "*onon the way*" instead of "*on the way*". Because she speaks quickly, I was unaware that she was doubling this syllable to produce a new word. As we went over her transcript together, it dawned on EJ that she had invented this word. In the appendices, I have reproduced my transcript of this conversation in full because it was truly a moment of revelation, a moment of something that had been acquired, now being pulled out by the learner, revised and learned afresh. Does this revelation point to an important qualitative difference between discovering something for yourself and being taught it? EJ no longer uses "*onon the way*". She has managed to de-fossilize this small chunk of language.

These two self-transcribing exercises most certainly bore fruit in that they helped EJ to concentrate on her actual use of the language, its grammar, vocabulary, and on how she used pace, gap-fillers and repetition to convey her message and to appear fluent. She seemed to benefit a lot from these exercises, so my instinct was to have her do one every week. However, it was not to be. EJ showed some resistance to doing this. The first one she had prepared in time for our regular meeting but for the second, she was unprepared. Nor did

she seem to want to do any more. I did not push her. She was very busy with her job and her home life. The act of transcribing takes time and is tedious. On top of this, to be forced to transcribe one's own errors must have been a disheartening and threatening experience. After so many years of acquiring these habits, would she have the self-discipline to take the time and energy to pick these habits apart, correct them and relearn them?

This chapter was designed to attempt to answer the pedagogical question posed in chapter 1.

- Given the arguments in the literature that awareness seems to play a crucial role in de-fossilization, were there any pedagogical activities that would increase her awareness and enhance her interlanguage development?

To talk about a problem and to take the steps to "fix" it are very different. Many times in my field notes, I wrote that I had the impression that EJ was avoiding fixing her problems. She did not appear to want to employ cognitive strategies; rather she focused on communication of meaning via "production tricks". I would point out a specific structure such as her use of modal "can" + verb + ING. In answer to my question "*So what are you going to do about it?*" she would change the subject. She would talk about courses she was taking or planning to take, tests she was planning to write, and strategies she was using such as reading the newspaper every day.

Perhaps she did not see this as changing the subject because she was talking about strategies. Her strategies were fine, but they did not address the discrete grammatical structural problems to which I was referring. Instead, they were more holistic. They dealt with English in general rather than with particular grammatical details.

Given her past successes with English and her long years of practice of non-target forms, I hypothesize that EJ might need a push from the outside, a sort of language coach who would help her to unlearn some of the faulty forms, someone to train her and put her through her paces in the way a tennis coach would train a Wimbledon champion (Johnson 1992). I do not think she will be able to shift her attention from fluent communication of ideas to grammatical accuracy all by herself. Her focus has never been on accuracy, so it is going to take a great deal of self-discipline for her to pay enough attention to it in order to push her English further along towards target-like accuracy.

A language coach would have to be vigilant and consistent in the same way I was when I corrected EJ each time she used the formulaic "*the thing is*" incorrectly. This is exactly what she told her teacher and her husband *not* to do when she was in Cairo. Will she feel too threatened by this approach? It seems to go against her personality. In all our time together, she did not use me as a coach

in this way. Even though she said she wanted me to correct her, when I did, she dealt with my recasts as quickly as possible, treating them like unwanted intrusions interrupting the flow of ideas. She was right. They *were* unwanted interruptions. No one trying to convey a message likes to be stopped in full flow and have her grammar corrected. It is annoying. If EJ is to submit to this kind of coaching technique, she will have to set aside meaningful communication for the duration of the lessons and begin to focus on accuracy. It will be frustrating and counter-intuitive. How does she feel about it? She once said to me that she felt as if she needed to go back to basics. Would this be an appropriate time to do that? Would she be able to?

The most interesting piece of information that came out of this study of EJ's interlanguage aside from her very notable sacrifice of accuracy to fluency was the marked difference between her awareness and meta-cognitive knowledge of her L2, and her ability to use this knowledge in informal contexts. Can this highly developed awareness be translated into accurate speech or not? I hypothesize that it can, but not without tremendous focus and self-discipline.

Chapter 6

Does practice make permanent?

Answers, More Questions and Further Research

The findings from chapters four and five suggest that practice indeed makes permanent, at least in those aspects of the second language that have been practiced for many years. In this study, evidence has been added to Selinker's (1992) hypothesis that fossilization does exist and that it is impossible, or virtually impossible to eradicate. However, some researchers suggest that if the stakes are high enough and the treatment rigorous enough, it is possible to de-stabilize well-practiced errors enough so that correction is possible (Vallette, 1991; Selinker 1992; Johnson 1992). This chapter will make suggestions for further research and will also suggest ways in which language teachers can help to prevent fossilization from occurring. Further suggestions for EJ are also included.

6.1. Thanks to EJ

After 3.5 years of gathering information I must thank EJ for giving so generously of her time and energy to this project. It took a special kind of openness and courage in her to allow me to participate

in such an intimate and vital part of her life for such a long time. She shared with me in detail some of her deepest insights about what it means to struggle with a language and to integrate into a new society. When I first met her, she was a student in a state of instability, having to make vital decisions about her life. She did not make any decisions lightly. She threw herself into her quest with courage and enthusiasm, researching her options and solving her difficulties with creativity and wisdom. Now she is settled, with a home, a partner, a job, a child.

6.2. Suggestions for Further Research

More longitudinal descriptive case studies are always needed (Han 2006). Each is unique and brings its own story to the mix. Second language acquisition is not a monolithic concept; neither is fossilization. Each new case study will add new dimensions, new answers, and new questions to this complex and multi-faceted field. Studies that focus on the unique balance between accuracy and fluency in different learners would be appropriate. Between-learner comparisons of this accuracy/fluency balance and the reasons for it in each learner would help researchers to understand more about all the diverse aspects that contribute to language learning and the cessation of learning through fossilization.

Cross-sectional studies of learners' awareness would also be valuable. Comparisons across cases could be made about what learners perceive they need to do in order to improve, and what they actually do to attain their goals.

Both of these types of enquiry, longitudinal case studies and cross-sectional comparisons would help language teachers gain insight into how best to help their students focus their attention on the balance between accurate and fluent communication in their second language.

6.3. Suggestions for the language-learning classroom

As in EJ's and Wes's case, good communicators can be their own worst enemies if their goal is native-like accuracy. EJ herself recognizes this when she says that her problem is that she likes to talk. Why bother to monitor your accuracy if the conversation is going smoothly and everyone understands you?

Teachers must ask themselves what their goal is for their students. If the goal is to help the students to communicate ideas and information smoothly and easily then the communicative classroom can work wonders and EJ would be a star pupil. However, for students like EJ whose goal is becoming an elementary school

teacher here in a native English-speaking city, more careful attention to accuracy is needed.

Johnson (1992) offers some recommendations for "fluent but fossilized" students. She calls this phenomenon "intermediate-itis".

Encouraged to follow the communicative path, these students have become hapless victims of their own success at achieving the goals we set up for them." Frankenstein monsters – grotesque parodies of whatever it is the teaching method has emphasized. (p. 180)

She recommends the "tennis clinic" strategy of providing appropriate feedback at the right time. She says the learning / communication balance must be right. Communicative tasks should be carefully designed so that before the students produce the language, they have been guided through all the accurate models they need in order to succeed.

Valette (1991) with her "terminal 2" students mentioned in chapter 2, recommends, like Johnson, that accuracy be insisted upon from the most basic levels up.

Given that the self-transcription exercises were so instructive for EJ, I would recommend this type of exercise in the language classroom. Students could not only transcribe their own recorded informal conversations, but they could also tape native speakers and transcribe their speech as models of accuracy. Swain (1993) and Swain and Lapkin (1993) recommend group work that specifically focuses on negotiation of meaning and information gap activities.

Exercises such as pair dictations, “memory dictations”¹ and “dictagloss”² also focus on the accurate transcription of spoken or written text without being the standard fill-in-the-blanks, discrete-point exercises and without the cognitive load of having to communicate ideas. Therefore, the students are forced to focus on the form of the language. This can push the learners into more accurate L2 production.

6.4. Suggestions for EJ

A caveat—EJ did not initially learn her English in a communicative classroom. The communicative method cannot be blamed for her failure to attain native-speaker levels, a charge leveled at it by a number of researchers (Vallette, 1991; Johnson, 1992). She did very well in English in school in Korea within a grammar-based curriculum. She continued to work away at English in Egypt with teachers, with tapes and by practicing with native speakers. She is doing very well now in Canada in an English-speaking work environment. However, the stakes have been raised.

EJ: Yah, definitely I found that, yah I mean different thing is one thing about, when you're a student and being in an institute with an ESL teacher and they're more understanding and it's ah you know,

¹ In a memory dictation students must memorize a piece of written text placed somewhere outside the classroom, return to the classroom and transcribe the text as accurately as possible.

² A dictagloss is an exercise in which students try to copy down a passage that the teacher dictates quickly. Inevitably there will be gaps which the students negotiate in pairs or small groups in order to fill in the missing words in as grammatically accurate a way as possible.

making mistake is being nature of student, so you know you don't exactly afraid of making mistake but once you work at the real place with a Canadian and maybe they understand, oh yes, she's non-native but it doesn't exactly count. Cause it's another completely work another work

L: That's right. Sometimes it counts more than other times. Sometimes it doesn't matter and sometimes it matters a lot.

EJ: Yah. So probably I feel harder because you know my circumstances are change has changed and then you know too exactly like COMPete with native speaker and then the more like a the English I require. So I feel like oh no it gets worse and it's no good any more. (11.03.06)

Now she is competing with native speakers. She realizes that the stakes are very high. Her perceptions of how successful she has been are changing. She was good before. Now it gets worse. "*It's no good any more*". Or as EJ sometimes feels - "*hopeless.*" Another state of flux, more destabilization and negative, unexpected feedback are necessary prerequisites for improvement. In order to make a change you have to be aware that a change needs to be made.

However, EJ is aware that a change needs to be made. The analyses done in chapters 3 and 4 show that she is very aware that she is not near enough to native-speaker norms. She is aware *that* her English needs improvement, but is she aware of *what* needs improving and *how* to go about improving it?

My suggestion for further research with EJ would be to do another longitudinal study, but this time a pedagogical one. The next step would be to take that awareness *that* her English needs improving and to help her to focus on *what* aspects of it need

improvement and *how* to go about it. Now that she is deeply imbedded in the target culture, she is receiving the unexpected negative feedback so necessary for change (Vigil & Oller 1976). It would be interesting to test whether the de-stabilizing effect of that unexpected negative feedback would create enough instability that an aggressive pedagogical tennis-coach approach would work, or whether, as Selinker (1992) maintains de-fossilization is impossible.

6.5. Our first and last sessions: A conclusion

My final meeting with EJ included a conversation about her English language learning history just as the first two meetings had. I wanted to begin and end our sessions with the same topic of discussion. How had her English changed over the three and a half years? How had her perceptions changed? Below are two transcriptions of EJ talking about her travels in Europe with her sister, one from September 2003 and the other from March 2006.

September 2003. Travels in Europe with her sister.

...and so we travel together. Problem is, my sister, she has a very... she speaks very grammatically at the same time she use a very difficult vocabulary which is ah people can't understand her. I mean, my I think maybe... the strong point me is,.. I have a very spontaneously. I describe something very easy word. Something like, OK, this is a word like dictionary way, you translate just describe the what they using this. But my sister try to use the vocabulary it's exactly indicate that meaning., but I'm more like ah discontruck ah disconstruct, more like ah describe way. And so people

understood me, but they couldn't understand my sister, so I always ... my, my sister say and then I have to translate it. Yah, which mean is that. For example... for us... how can you say like this something you know you... you wanna make understand somebody but they can't understand you feel like ah really stuck or something....so most of time we didn't have problem of course really you know a lot of mistake and thing but that time intensively we have to speak all the time.

March 2006. Travels in Europe with her sister.

...it was 1997. My sister and I we travel. We travel through Jordan, Syria and Turkey. And then that time my sister and I and we had a company. Actually she is a nurse and actually she is from Canada. So, actually we just trip together whole day we kind of just spontaneously we joined together, we traveled together and then she comment my sister "you have a really really high vocabulary even we don't know. We don't use." And then my sister and I travel whenever she speak, you look at people blank. Give her blank look because they don't understand her word because often we met the people they are non-native-speaker. I mean not only Turkish. Not only Syrian, we also meet the people met the people from the European or non-native-speaker. So everybody speak, spoke like broken English so some sense and so whenever my sister said they don't understand me they don't understand her and so I have to kind of ah ... make it easier, like interpretate her. She ...

L: OK so you were like the translator.

EJ: yah so I'm a good at the use the easy word, the easy to deliver message. My sister find the exact word. Actually that's a lot of time people who teach English to Korean they said they felt that way. Cause Korean really really afraid of making MISTake. So they just make a big pause and try to find the right word,. Like everything just because we been so much like study study memorize the vocabulary, so certain only one vocabulary just you know ... express all the meaning. But maybe I don't have that big vocabulary background but you know I know what I try to say and so I can just you know talk. And but that part is that's why sometimes you say that I try to talk too much and try to fill in other words try to explain to like a long way. So, now you know I have to make a compensation you know OK it's a good to make people easier to understand. But it's a good to also you know make a shorter statement...

Both of these speech samples demonstrate in EJ's own words that her focus is on fluency rather than accuracy. Both contain many

examples of the types of errors listed in the utterance analysis in chapter 5. There is flip-flopping back and forth between present and past tenses. In the 2006 example, EJ repairs two of these. She changes "meet" to "met" and "speak" to "spoke". Both are irregular verbs. Irregulars are considered to be easier to repair. In the 2003 sample, she does not change any of the simple presents to pasts. Is this an indication of an evolving IL grammar, or is this sample too small to be able to tell? A further longitudinal study of EJ might help to answer this question.

In spite of EJ's deep knowledge and experience of language learning and in spite of her strong motivation and well-chosen strategies, the kinds of spoken errors made manifest in these transcripts remain. Practice does indeed make permanent. It takes tremendous effort to de-fossilize a well-learned structure. Imperfect practice leads to errors. Only perfect practice makes perfect. The goal of language is communication, however, in learning a second language there must be a balance between communication and accuracy. That point of balance will be different for every learner.

I will let Davies (2004) have the last word. He asks whether second language learners can succeed in becoming speakers of the target language and answers his own question with an analogy to music.

The answer to the question of whether L2 learners can evolve into speakers of the target language must...be "Yes": but the practice required, given the model of the child L1 acquirer who for five to six years spends much of his/her time learning language alone, is so great that it is not likely that many post-pubertal second language learners ever become native speakers of their target language. The analogy that occurs to me here is that of music, where it is possible to become a concert performer after a late start but the reality is that few do. The more exact analogy of learning to play the piano as a child and switching to, say, the cello later on is common and is perhaps more relevant. (Davies, 2004. p. 437.)

In my own experience, Davies has chosen an appropriate analogy. The piano is the first language, and the cello the second. Throughout the years, I have taught many adult second-instrument cellists. It is exceptionally rare that adult beginners on a musical instrument, even though they have learned a first instrument in childhood, can achieve the level of ultimate attainment that a child learner can. Music is a language too. There are many parallels between learning a language and learning a musical instrument. Another suggestion for further research would be to do a comparative study of adult learners of both languages and musical instruments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: First questionnaire

A Questionnaire about your English

General Information

- Your age: _____
- Your nationality: _____
- How long have you been in Canada? _____
- How long have you studied English? _____
- How long did you spend in Egypt? _____
- How long have you studied English in Canada? _____
- What education have you completed? Describe the courses you have done since your first degree – titles, length of course and kind of diploma/degree/certificate:

Your university degree was in what major? _____

Now list your other courses:

How good is your English?

- How do you feel about your general all-round English ability (listening, speaking, reading and writing) ? Put a circle around the number that best reflects your ability. 1 is beginner and 7 is native speaker.

Beginner 1..2..3..4..5..6..7.. Native Speaker

- How good is your listening and understanding?

1..2..3..4..5..6..7..

- How good is your speaking?

1..2..3..4..5..6..7..

- How good is your reading?

1..2..3..4..5..6..7..

- How good is your writing?

1..2..3..4..5..6..7..

- Is your English continuing to improve? Yes / No

What kinds of things do you do in order to improve your English?
Make a list.

- Read the article about learning styles. What kind of language learner are you? Most people are a mixture. Explain your learning style(s).

- What problems do you feel you have with English (if any)?

- If you have problems, what do you think you can do to fix them?

Appendix B: Final questionnaire

Language Learning Questionnaire 11.03.06 2002

When we first met in September 2002, how would you rate your English at that time? 1 = basic survival English -- 6 = native speaker-like

Listening / Understanding: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Speaking / Fluency: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Reading / Understanding text: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Writing / Being understood: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Pronunciation / Being understood: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Vocabulary / Understanding: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Overall English ability: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

2006

Now 3.5 years later, how would you rate your English?

Listening / Understanding: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Speaking / Fluency: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Reading / Understanding text: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Writing / Being understood: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Pronunciation / Being understood: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Vocabulary / Understanding: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Overall English ability: 1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6

Appendix C: Two grammar exercises

Exercise 1

Write these verbs in the present continuous.

- (GO) Today I _____ to work by bus.
- (PLAY) Next week he _____ tennis with his brother.
- (BUY) We _____ a house right now.
- (HAVE) My sister _____ a baby so (MEET) I
_____ her at the hospital.
- (MAKE) Today I _____ kim chi.
- I can't come swimming because I (COOK) _____
Dinner right now.

Put the verbs in these sentences in the past continuous.

- (TAKE) In Cairo I _____ belly dancing lessons.
- (WORK) I _____ in a museum when I decided to
go to Egypt.
- (GO) I _____ out the door when he phoned me.
- (APPLY) At that time I _____ for many
different jobs.
- (VOLUNTEER) When I lived with you, I _____
at the Museum of Civilization.
- (SLEEP) I _____ when the telephone rang.

Exercise 2

First say your answers into the tape recorder. Then transcribe your answers in writing.

Finish these beginnings of sentences in 4 different ways.

- **When I am at home I can...**

1.

2.

3.

4.

- **Next week I will...**

1.

2.

3.

4.

- **I really should...**

1.

2.

3.

4.

- **When I was a child I used to...**

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- **Next year I ought to...**

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

- **To improve my English I need to...**

- 1.

- 2.

- 3.

- 4.

Appendix D: EJ's ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING HISTORY

2000-20001: "CANADIAN BENCHMARKS" for landed immigrants.
ESL test.

listening = 8

reading = 8

speaking = 8

writing = 5

2001-2002: CAEL (December or January)
score = credit 1500

2003: TOEFL (January or February)

score = 269

writing = 4/6

2003: CAEL (Jan or Feb)

overall score = 6

writing was lowest.

2005, Jan 10th Canadian Benchmarks

2006 IELTS She was preparing for this but did not take it.

2006: CAEL

score = 1300

Appendix E: "onon the way" conversation

From EJ's own transcription. (Onon the way 10.11.05)

L: (reading) "I reserved some materials at the public library. I already have one of them ... and another one .. is one the way... "

EJ: ... on the way or on on the way? Is ah coming...

L: Is this on?

EJ: because they're in transit... When I look at the statue, I mean statues of that book, and they say "in transit". Transit meaning to get that book

L: Oh ya.

EJ: coming to me... In the ship ??? so that's mean oh ya the other book I already have, one book I have already with me but the other one is on the way to me.

L: Yep. On the way

EJ; Ya. But "on the way" but "on on the way". ? Cause here I put "on on the way".

L: What is this word?

EJ: onnnnn...

L: O-N-E (spelling it)

EJ: one, one the way ... what? On on the way.

L: You just need one (1). "The other one is on the way, on the way."

EJ: But that mean I, I've got to to relearn/ reworn? Cause I always ah heard something "onon the way".

L: another one ... another one is on the way. On the way.

EJ: OK, So I should. I should use just I should use "on the way"

L: Ya.

EJ: Why, I don't know I ... when I'm so used to was? Onon the way.

L: Are you thinking of "another way"?

EJ: What about how ... How do you say um... You know there are two way "on the way home"

L: "on the way home"

EJ: "on the way school"

L: "on the way to school"

EJ: "on the way back". ... You say "on the way"? and "on the way back"?

L: Mhm.

EJ: OK. Ya so that's why I I tried when I wrote down, something ... wrong.

L: You're hearing an extra syllable in there. Ya.

EJ: Ya, so, I know "on the way" but I don't know why, you know I'm so used to "onon the way" even when I transcribe I said "onon the way".

L: OK. That's interesting.

EJ: That's "on the way".

L: "on the way". ... "on the way home" "on the way back" "on the way" (pages 15-17)