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Speaking Spontaneously:

**An Examination of the University of Cumbria Approach to the
Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages**

Colin Michael Christie

Institute of Education, University of London

PhD

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Signed:

Colin M Christie

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ABSTRACT

Speaking Spontaneously: an Examination of the University of Cumbria Approach to the Teaching of Modern Foreign Languages

Communicative Language Teaching in the modern foreign languages (MFL) curriculum in English schools has become the norm and yet is relatively under-theorised. This thesis sets out to explore through an in-depth case study of one school, the theory and practice of a model of CLT developed by the University of Cumbria.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in English secondary schools typically involves pupils learning to communicate around set topics, for example 'holidays.' Activities such as role plays and listening exercises focus on this topic language. However, despite this communicative focus, studies have shown pupils lack confidence, creativity and spontaneity in speaking and interacting in the target language.

Modern foreign languages lessons which employ the University of Cumbria Approach (UCA) immediately strike the observer as being different. The teacher and pupils speak the target language almost exclusively, with constant interaction in the target language. Lessons feature songs, mimes, a team competition, and competitive activities and are well-paced and dynamic. More traditional lessons may feature these, but rarely together.

This study set out to identify if the UCA had a unique *combination* of features, through transcription and analysis of lesson observations and interviews with pupils and teachers. The most striking feature of the lessons was *pupils'* use of the target language: spontaneous, fluent, playful, argumentative, often not about the lesson's

focus but about apparently trivial matters. Pupils clearly had things they wanted to communicate in the here and now.

The first central conclusion of this study is that pupils were beginning to engage in spontaneous, unpredictable, real-time *conversation* in the classroom. The second main conclusion is that the teacher is key in creating the conditions for this to happen. She promotes and facilitates this conversation through *management* of both the target language and the creation of a *communicative classroom context*. Finally, it is argued that the UCA is unique in that it is a form of CLT which combines *product* (pupils learn the target language) with *process* (pupils engage in spontaneous, interactive communication). The two combine to create a rich and dynamic learning experience.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AfL	Assessment for Learning
AL	Audiolingual (method)
AM	Acquisition Metaphor (Sfard, 1998)
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
AST	Advanced Skills Teacher
AV	Audiovisual (method)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CD	Compact Disc
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DCSF	Department of Children Schools and Families
DES	Department of Education and Science
DFE	Department for Education
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GOML	Graded Objectives in Modern Languages
GT	Grammar Translation (method)
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate

IRF	Initiation Response Feedback (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975)
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
L1	Language one (native language)
L2	Language two (foreign language)
LID	Learner Initiated Dialogue (Macaro, 1997)
MFL	Modern Foreign Languages
ML	Modern Languages
NC	National Curriculum
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NCMFL	National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PIL	Pupil Interaction Language
PLTS	Personal Learning and Thinking Skills
PM	Participation Metaphor (Sfard, 1998)
PPP	Presentation Practice Production
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
ROCs	Real Operating Conditions (Johnson, 1996)
SCT	Sociocultural Theory
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLD	Second Language Development
SMC	Saint Martin's College
TBLT	Task Based Language Teaching
TIL	Teacher Interaction Language

TL	Target Language
UCA	University of Cumbria Approach
UK	United Kingdom
UoC	University of Cumbria
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978)

CHAPTER 1: PRODUCT AND PROCESS IN MFL LEARNING: THE NEED FOR BOTH

1.1 Introduction to the Study

1.1.1 Motivation for the Study

From the researcher's first contact with the University of Cumbria Approach (UCA or "the Approach"), formerly known as the St. Martin's Approach, it was immediately clear that the lessons contained a number of striking features: extensive teacher and pupil use of the target language; the use of mimes, songs and a team competition; textual support on the walls and a high level of interaction. The lesson also featured a number of "routines." These were sequences of interactions in the target language (TL) between the teacher and pupils, where the latter would ask to sit down, to be the teacher, or record the points for the team competition, for example. Indeed, the UCA has been in existence for over twenty years and has evolved organically and over time, developed by James Burch and colleagues of St. Martin's College (SMC), Lancaster, now the University of Cumbria (UoC). Much interest has been shown in the approach by the MFL community and James Burch has contributed a chapter to a book on language teaching which includes aspects of the UCA (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001). Nevertheless, no formal research has ever been undertaken on the UCA. The motivation for this study is, then, that the UCA is an innovative pedagogy worthy of examination, which has never been formally theorised and which can provide unique insights into language learning in an English secondary school context.

1.1.2 Research Questions and Overview of the Study

The UCA is an approach to the teaching of MFL in English secondary schools. A typical lesson can seem to the observer to be a well-choreographed spectacle: there is near-exclusive target language use by teacher and pupils alike, songs, mimes, frequent pairwork, arguments and disagreements among pupils and between teacher and pupils as well as a team competition. UCA lessons certainly stand out from standard MFL lessons. The UCA's in-house jargon of, for example, "routines", "linguistic scaffolding" (textual support), "teacher clones" (the pupil in the teacher role) and 'CRAPPIness' (the need for challenge and purpose in activities) adds an air of mystery to the Approach.

The most fascinating aspect of the lessons is the way in which pupils use and respond to the target language for real communication¹ in the classroom, for example discussing who is going to win the team competition, who should take over the role of the teacher and why, who is cheating or who is lying! This stands in stark contrast to more typical MFL lessons where often pupils are reluctant to speak and use the TL for real purposes (Ofsted, 2008; 2011a).

The variety of aspects to the UCA meant it was difficult to focus the research questions at first, for fear of narrowing the focus too early and overlooking a key element. This study began, therefore, with the broad aim of trying to discover if the UCA had any particular elements which were key to its operation. The questions were:

¹ Real communication is defined as interactive communication with an immediate purpose and audience as opposed to, for example, rehearsed, scripted dialogue usually around prescribed topics.

1. Is there any particular feature which is central to the Approach?
2. Is it the particular combination of elements which creates the Approach?

As none of the elements listed above seemed unique to the teaching of MFL, the hypothesis was that it was the way they combined which may be unique. Transcripts of lessons, therefore, initially focused on what the teacher did, to try and isolate the way in which these elements combined to form a unique approach.

What soon became apparent, however, was that it was the *pupils'* contributions which were so unique. It was the *spontaneous* nature of their utterances, in the target language, as well as the *informal talk* which stood out. Where else might a pupil in Year 7 spontaneously shout out “menteur” or a pupil in Year 11 tell the teacher “C’est sexiste de donner les points aux filles”?

The focus of the study thus shifted to an analysis of this spontaneous talk but also the conditions which enabled it to take place and the research questions became more focused:

1. What is the nature of pupils’ spontaneous talk?
2. How are the conditions created for this spontaneous talk to take place?

Data collection consisted of classroom observations and interviews with pupils and teachers in a case study school.

The significance of this study is that it sets out, for the first time, to examine the UCA as a whole and has focused on making sense of what has been identified as its most distinctive feature: spontaneous pupil talk in the target language (TL). Due to the lack of literature on the UCA, the study will draw on the literature on approaches to the

teaching of MFL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), in particular Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), as well as literature relating to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) to derive a meaningful theoretical understanding of the UCA.

It is argued in this study that the nature of the talk has much in common with conversation and that pupils are developing an “emerging L2 classroom conversational competence.” This is made possible by the teacher who actively manages the use of the target language and the classroom context. It is also claimed that the whole process of interaction in the target language is worthwhile, as it focuses on language use for its own sake and not just for instrumental purposes, but also it emphasises language learning as a *process* involving the promotion of fluency and spontaneity. Finally, the notions of “assisted performance” and “instructional conversation” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991) will be used to explore ways in which a balance can be struck so that the conversational elements of the lesson can be actively exploited for the learning of the foreign language.

This first chapter will examine the emphases in the teaching of a foreign language in secondary schools in England over the last fifty years in order to identify where the UCA stands in relation to previous and current methods or approaches. The second chapter will look at the theoretical underpinnings of the UCA. Chapter three will set out the study’s methodology, and chapters four and five will analyse the classroom observation data. Chapter six will be concerned with analysis of the interview data and chapter seven will consist of the conclusions.

1.1.3 Locating Myself in this Research

It is important to make clear that the researcher is experienced in and committed to the teaching approach being researched. There is a danger that over-familiarity and a commitment to the UCA could lead to a distortion of the data. However, as Coffey (1999) points out, accounts of the ethnographer as ignorant outsider or stranger can be over-simplified. The experience of and commitment to the UCA mean that the researcher is able to use his previous understanding and empathy to isolate more quickly the heart of the Approach and its essence. Indeed, as Coffey points out, this connection aids the process:

To a large extent the quality of the research experience (for all involved) and the quality of the research data is dependent upon the formation of relationships and the development of an emotional connection to the field.
(Coffey, 1999, pp. 56-57)

There was a period of pre-research which the researcher was able to undertake due to his close involvement with the UCA and frequent contact with the case study school and other schools using the UCA. This involved the taking of field notes during observed UCA lessons and writing these up in the form of activities and routines employed as well as teacher interaction language and pupil interaction language used. This also included the interviews with the originator of the UCA which took place in the pre-research phase. This process meant that the researcher was able to identify in a concrete way, and provide evidence for, the key pedagogical aspects of the UCA and use these to identify key areas for the literature review.

1.1.4 Overview of Chapter One

This chapter will firstly provide an outline of the UCA and then focus on its place among past and current methods or approaches, most notably concerning the emphases in the teaching and learning of a MFL.

It will be argued that two emphases in MFL learning can be identified, product and process, and that the latter is often neglected. The claim will be made that the UCA's promotion of spontaneous, interactive pupil talk, with the target language at the centre, is a means to allow pupils to combine product and process, and experience language in real-time use. It will also be argued that this leads to more a rounded "learner/user" (Little, 1994, p. 85), that is a learner who can both study the language as product but also use it as a participator.

1.2 The Context of the UCA

The UCA finds its principal manifestation among teachers trained on the MFL PGCE course of the University of Cumbria, with cohorts of students in Lancaster, Carlisle and London. Students are trained to teach MFL using this particular Approach, which has a set of firm principles.

The UCA is in essence the creation of James Burch, the former Head of the Modern Languages (ML) Division of St. Martin's College, now Head of Secondary PGCE at its successor, the University of Cumbria. It has emerged and developed organically from his own experiences as a teacher of EFL, and of MFL in English secondary schools and been supplemented by insights gained from his colleagues. The UCA has gained wide recognition in MFL circles as being a distinctive and innovative

Approach. The latest UoC Ofsted report praises the way student teachers use the target language in the classroom:

Modern foreign language trainees, in London and the North West, develop confidence in using the 'University of Cumbria methodology' in their language teaching; most notably, the excellent use of target language to develop pupils' linguistic competence and confidence in speaking modern foreign languages.
(Ofsted, 2011b, p. 12)

The case study school in this study has taken on the UCA in its entirety and is quoted in government documentation as an example of good practice. The school has also been featured in the Times Educational Supplement Teacher magazine.

The Approach has been largely restricted to UoC PGCE course and its students, with two notable exceptions. The 'Talk Project' (Leith, 2003) was a private initiative by a former member of the ML division of SMC. This disseminated widely a number of means for the incorporation of pupil talk in the target language, drawing on the principles of the UCA. The publication 'Something to Say' (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001) to which the UCA's originator is a contributor, explores pupils' language use. Whilst much of the content is drawn from the UCA, in particular chapters two and five, the UCA is not referred to explicitly nor theorised formally as a whole.

The UCA is not formally recognised as an approach, nor does it have a formal name, either in the literature or any of the documentation examined. UCA is, therefore, used as a convenient term for all the combined aspects of the teaching used by practitioners trained by the University of Cumbria, both on the PGCE course and informally through links with the university. The term "approach" is used because the UCA sits within the range of approaches described by Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.245)

which have “a core set of theories and beliefs about the nature of language, of language learning, and a derived set of principles for teaching a language.” In addition, it is in line with Richards and Rodgers’ principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which “is best considered an approach” (2001, p.172).

The study will examine the London-based UCA where the PGCE course leader has promoted the principles of the UCA, in close collaboration with its originator.

1.3 An Outline of the UCA and its Key Aim of Spontaneous Interaction

The UCA has some clear features, although none of these are totally unique in themselves. It places emphasis on pupil use of the target language in lessons (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001) and, indeed, lessons are conducted almost exclusively in the target language.

Here is a summary of ten key features, as derived from the limited literature (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001; Burch, 2004; PGCE Modern Languages Department, no date), and all present in the study’s data:

1. Team Competition; activities often containing an element of competition.
2. Near-Exclusive Use of the Target Language.
3. The Use of “Routines.”
4. Pupil use of the target language is promoted.
5. Pupils’ working out things for themselves.
6. Extensive use of textual support but no textbooks.
7. A ‘multi-sensory’ approach is used.
8. Frequent use of pairwork and groupwork, conducted in the TL.
9. Use of pupil volunteers.

10. A clear sequence for the presentation of new language.

The UCA differentiates between “pupil interaction language” (PIL), the language of classroom interaction, and “topic language”, the language of set topics traditionally taught in MFL classrooms, for example directions, holidays, home town and local area. A ‘typical’ UCA lesson is set out in appendix 1. It should be emphasised here that, whilst the focus of this study is on the spontaneous PIL, the topic language is taught and practised *alongside* the PIL and is based on a scheme of work which sets out grammatical progression and progression in the topic language. As such, the PIL, which is also planned into the scheme of work, supplements and supports the topic language, giving a dual track approach.

In this chapter, the focus is on the emphases in the learning of a MFL, in relation to the central aim of the UCA, which is to **promote spontaneous pupil target language in which pupils say what they want to say in a real context**. This key aim appears in the PGCE Handbook 1, addressed to PGCE students:

It is your task to make language in the classroom as vibrant, dynamic, real, authentic and relevant as possible. Your overall aim is to encourage the peoples [sic] to be as spontaneous as possible... It should be natural for the class to speak to you and you French to them.
(PGCE Modern Languages Department, no date, p. C3)

Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy (2001, p. 2) also highlight the aim of fostering “spontaneous interaction”, with pupils’ saying “not something they **had** to say but something they **wanted** to say” and “speaking spontaneously rather than repeating a well-rehearsed dialogue.” Indeed, the question of producing the language more spontaneously is linked with “the aims of modern language teaching itself” (ibid., p.111) and the issue of balancing spontaneity with accuracy is raised and is one which

will be explored through analysis of this study's data in chapter five. The originator of the UCA, in a separate, unpublished document, places interaction in the target language at the forefront of what is to be achieved:

What we want to promote and exploit is high-quality human interaction that is harnessed for linguistic gain.
(Burch, 2004, p. 36)

Further linked to this emphasis in the learning of a MFL is the entire question of whether examination success equates with "in-depth language learning"² and this issue will also be explored. The originator of the approach, in interview data, whilst speaking about his own teaching, questions whether passing the GCSE examination and being able to speak the language are, in fact, one and the same thing:

But I remember thinking at the time, actually this is not working as well and the reason is actually they can't say anything and the whole reason I went into teaching was to get people to say things they wanted to say.
(Interview 1)

The remainder of this chapter, then, will examine former and current methods and approaches to the teaching of MFL, the emphasis they exhibit and also the extent to which they promote the UCA's aim of spontaneous, real-time interaction in the target language.

1.4 Emphases in MFL Teaching: Product and Process

It is argued that there are two emphases in language learning, and that often one or the other predominates. These are an emphasis on the *product* of learning or an emphasis on the *process* of learning. This draws on the work of Sfarid (1998, p. 5) who refers to

² This places an emphasis on learners' ability to retain the language over time and use it fluently on demand for real-time communicative purposes.

two metaphors for learning: “acquisition” (“AM”) and “participation” (“PM”). She concludes that both acquisition and participation are needed. Sfarid (1998, p. 6) also calls this distinction “having” and “doing” respectively and it has been identified as central to SLA (Donato, 2000; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000; Block, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2008)³. This chapter will use the terms “product” and “process” as synonyms for Sfarid’s (ibid.) AM and PM respectively. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, they embrace other terminology which Sfarid (1998, p. 7) uses for “AM” (“property”, “commodity”) and “PM” (“doing”, “aspect of... activity”, “communicating”) and secondly the terms are used in the UCA’s claim to be different in that it emphasises process over product:

...a different approach to language learning in which **process** elements and not **product** elements reign supreme.
(Burch, 2004, p.8)

A model of language learning will be argued for in this chapter, in line with the UCA, where the product is accurate forms of the target language, and the process is participation in spontaneous, real-time classroom oral interaction in the target language.

It will be shown, however, that, outside the context of the UCA, too great a focus on product often goes hand in hand with an overly instrumental view of learning, centred too heavily upon a desire for measurable outcomes such as the citing of dialogues of topic language, often for the purposes of passing an examination. It will also be shown that these products can include ones which can sideline use of the foreign language itself, such as aspects of culture or other cross-curricular subjects.

³ It is important to note that the term “acquisition” is here used to mean the gathering and accumulation of knowledge, not to be confused with “acquisition” as used in SLA. To avoid confusion between the two meanings of acquisition, the terms AM and PM will be used to refer to Sfarid’s “acquisition” and “participation.”

At the same time, it will be argued that, as in the UCA, more learner participation is required in the language-learning process but that this focus on process should not be at the expense of the product, namely the target language. This focus on process, it is argued, is the opposite of the instrumental, outcome-based view, in that it is concerned with use of language for its own sake and to converse in real time, interactive situations⁴. It will, however, also be shown that outside the context of the UCA, too great a focus on process may marginalise the target language product through extended use of English.

The survey below will show how different methods and approaches have tended to focus overly on product or process (or AM or PM) but not combined both in the way the UCA aims to do. The focus of the grammar translation (GT) method was largely product, or AM, to demonstrate the mastery of the grammatical system, with the process of learning being largely irrelevant. The audiolingual and audiovisual methods brought process more to the fore but the focus was still on the product, the accumulation of accurate structures and phrases, to build up a repertoire of language for an examination or for pre-defined future use. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) placed the focus much more firmly on the process. The language was to be practised in context and activities such as role-plays, games and pairwork meant process and PM mattered more. It will be argued in this chapter, however, that in the CLT of the National Curriculum (NC) and the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) specifications in English secondary schools this process did not go far enough and more of a focus has been placed on product, or AM, than might have been the case. Indeed, it will be claimed that communication has remained too much

⁴ In chapter two, it will be shown that this focus on process can also result in more effective language learning.

of a product and too little of a process. This is particularly due to the focus on the achievement of high NC levels and GCSE grades⁵, the latter important as they are published in national league tables and are central to the outcomes of school inspections. In recent years, there has also been a tendency to focus on more generic learning processes which have shifted the emphasis to process, or PM, but at the expense of subject-specific knowledge, or product (AM). It will be argued that this has given subject knowledge (the target language) and specifically *language-learning* processes too little importance. This chapter will, finally, show how the UCA aims to combine product and process, or AM and PM, by a focus on the target language but also allowing pupils to experiment and play with language for spontaneous, immediate, contextualised use.

The critique given of established curricula and teaching methods in this chapter is made in the light of their potential to undermine use of the target language, in the light of the study's focus on spontaneous pupil talk in the target language and the extent to which this is promoted. It is to be emphasised, for example, that the NC itself was not necessarily flawed as a curriculum per se but it was the teachers' disposition and ability to promote spontaneous pupil talk in the target language which made the application less successful than it might have been. It is suggested that the re-publication of fuller guidance and the provision of comprehensive training for teachers in the promotion of spontaneous pupil talk (as originally promoted in the 1990 proposals (DES, 1990b)) would have made this more likely.

⁵ This study will not consider successful language learning in terms of high National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades but will consider the ability to use language more globally, considering aspects such as accuracy, fluency, complexity, spontaneity and the ability to convey meaning in real time.

1.4.1 Major Established Methods and Approaches

The teaching of MFL in English secondary schools since the 1960s has responded to a dramatic variety of changes of context. In the sphere of MFL teaching, numerous methods have come and gone but in the context of English secondary schools, three in particular dominated between the 1960s and the 1980s, before the arrival of the approach of CLT: Grammar Translation (GT), Audiolingual (AL) and Audiovisual (AV). After Anthony (1963, pp.63-64), an approach is taken to be “a set of assumptions concerning the nature of language teaching and learning” and a method “an overall plan for presenting language.”

1.4.2 Grammar Translation and the UCA

This section will show how grammar translation (GT) incorporates language learning as product, or AM, in terms of an accumulation of knowledge of the language’s grammatical system. The UCA’s emphasis on communication, particularly in an immediate context, is however notably missing from GT.

Grammar Translation (GT) held sway in the 1950s and 1960s and was firmly based in the view of language as a set of structures to be mastered, resulting in what Chomsky (1965, p. 3) called “linguistic competence”, focusing on a narrow view of competence as grammatical accuracy. The Grammar Translation method was a product of its time, suitable for an academic elite (Moys, 1996), preparing for ‘A’ level or university studies, mostly in grammar schools. The need for an intellectual understanding of the workings of the language (product) took precedence over the process of practical communicative needs and certainly over spoken interaction (spontaneous, or otherwise) as much of the teaching took place in the mother tongue, or L1.

GT's main advantage was also its main drawback, namely that it demanded a down payment and long-term investment, generally over five years, before the learner saw any pay-off. The fact that it took this time for the learner to come to terms with the underlying system of the language meant that the product was remote, which had a demotivating effect on less academic, less persistent learners. This was to present real difficulties when the study of MFLs was broadened to incorporate a majority of learners in the new comprehensive schools. Nevertheless, GT cannot be dismissed as a total failure. Learners could, over time, build up a generative capacity allowing them to create new utterances, even if little opportunity or context was provided for oral expression.

This "long-term view of language learning" (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007, p.31) is a key feature of GT which relates very much to the UCA. "Long-term" in the case of the UCA can refer to the fact that a target language repertoire for spontaneous, real-time communication takes time to build up (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p. 111). In contrast to GT, however, the UCA tries to balance this long-term investment (Sfard's AM) with a greater element of PM in the form of immediate pay-off in terms of real-time communication. Also in contrast to GT, it distributes aspects of different structures simultaneously and over time, as opposed to GT which tends to cover one structure at a time, sequentially.

1.4.3 The Audiolingual and Audiovisual Methods and the UCA

This section will show how the audiolingual approach (AL) appears to bring in the element of process, or PM, by the inclusion of practice of the spoken language. However, there was still a high degree of Sfard's (1998) AM, or product, in terms of swift and efficient mastery of accurate structures. The UCA's emphasis on

contextualised communication, particularly in an immediate context, is more present in the audiovisual approach (AV) but the great emphasis on accuracy means that the communication is much less for its own sake (PM) and much more about accumulating a repertoire of accurate structures (Sfard's (ibid.) AM).

With comprehensive re-organisation of secondary education in the late 1960s and 1970s, it was hoped that new technology such as language laboratories would be a solution to facilitate the teaching of MFL across a broader ability range. One shift in the new methods was the primacy of the spoken word over the written word and the focus on the use of the target language for communicating rather than chiefly as a dry academic exercise with academic outcomes.

Unfortunately, the high hopes for AL and AV proved unjustified. The HMI report of 1977 picked up on the continuing problem of the inaccessibility of the curriculum for pupils across the ability range:

In all but a few of the schools the learning of modern foreign languages was characterised by some or all of the following features:
.... the setting of impossible or pointless tasks for average (and in particular less able) pupils and their abandonment of modern language learning at the first opportunity; excessive use of English and an inability to produce other than inadequate or largely unusable statements in the modern language...
(HMI, 1977, pp. 7-8)

This is echoed in the continuing comments by HMI and Ofsted about pupils' inability to use the TL (Dobson, 1998; Ofsted, 2008; 2011a). Communication was addressed but via situational drills. However, aspects of "participation" and enrichment of the language-learning process such as interaction, meaning, context and the UCA's notion of pupils' saying what they want to say (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.2) is very much downplayed in these drills. Rivers (1964) criticised this downplaying of

meaning, situational context and interpersonal relationships. As such, the process and context of language use are marginalised.

Certainly, AV went some way to making up for this lack of context. It had a new “context of situation” (Johnson, 2001, p. 180). The AV method had the advantage over AL of presenting language visually and conveying meaning in this way.

The UCA embraces the fluency and oral proficiency aspect of AL/AV (Richards and Rodgers, 2001) and takes the promotion of these very seriously, through its emphasis on pupils’ speaking spontaneously. However, the UCA’s emphasis is for this fluency to allow pupils to experience language-in-use, in keeping with a focus on process, and Sfar’s (1998) PM metaphor of learning.

In summary, then, AL/AV’s product is much more the target language for communicative use but the process of communication is limited to practice of mastery for future rather than more immediate use.

1.4.4 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

This section will examine communicative language teaching (CLT) from the perspective of language learning as product or process. It will show that CLT offers the great potential to elevate the process (or PM aspect) of learning through its focus on communicating a message in context. It will argue, however, that in CLT’s interpretation in English schools, this participation and process-oriented aspect is under-developed and remains quite instrumental. Indeed, it will be argued that it has more in common with product, or Sfar’s (1998) AM, that is the accumulation of knowledge, in this case topic-based phrases for future use. As such, communication has become a commodity: a product rather than a process. It will also be argued that

the National Curriculum's emphasis on accuracy over fluency, the tendency of the GCSE examination to support rote-learning of set topic-based phrases and the accompanying school focus on achieving high GCSE grades means that the more instrumental aspect of product takes precedence over the aspect of process. It will further be claimed that original National Curriculum documentation set the scene for a more process-based approach to language learning, through language-in-use but that, as this guidance was never published, the approach did not take root.

CLT is an approach as opposed to yet another method. However, as Grenfell and Harris (1999, p.20) point out, as it emerged from situational language teaching (or AV) it "took on many aspects of a prescribed *method*" but has now evolved into a "general *approach*." CLT also emerged in the light of a changed view of the language to be learnt. Page (1996, p.100) contrasts the language of the previous examinations which existed so learners could display their knowledge of grammar, with "the French required for use in the real world... the world where French is used."

In CLT, the focus was firmly on how language was being used for a real purpose. This is what Tudor (2001, p.50) calls "language from a functional perspective" and represents a move away from language as a linguistic system.

Canale (1983) developed a theoretical framework for communicative competence, embracing four aspects, of which grammatical competence is only one: the grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. Johnson (2001, p. 49) calls this new view of competence part of the "sociolinguistic revolution" as language use is viewed in its social context, rather than purely as a system to be mastered.

Wilkins (1976, p. 11) clearly reflects the new view of language in his writing on approaches to language syllabus design when he notes that “the learner has to learn rules of communication as well as rules of grammar.” Wilkins further reflects the views of language outlined above:

The whole basis of a notional approach to language teaching derives from the conviction that what people want to do through language is more important than mastery of the language as an unapplied system. (Wilkins, 1976, p. 42).

CILT Information Sheet 12 (CILT, 1985) is perhaps the defining document in the MFL context in English schools. Communication of the message is key, not its accuracy; context is important and language is meant to be “authentic” (ibid., p.2). Page (1996, p. 100) stresses the need for authenticity of task and of material to reflect the “real world.”

A key factor in the development of CLT, then, was a desire to move away from a rigid selection of items which it was felt interfered with the natural process of language learning (Newmark, 1966) to what language could *do* in terms of functions and notions. Johnson (2001, p.180) calls this “a minor revolution in syllabus design.”

The Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML) movement developed, from 1975 and into the early 1980s. This was a grass roots response by teachers (meeting in their spare time) against the prevailing grammatical syllabuses, with their emphasis on grammatical accuracy, which failed to cater for the vast majority of learners. GOML syllabuses gave pupils shorter term objectives and broke up the traditional five year course into meaningful, communication-based tasks.

The above aspects, then, focusing on what language can do, on communication and on authenticity, together with a new view of syllabus design, may seem to suggest a new focus on process and participation and interactive, 'real' communication. However, this was itself tightly defined in terms of an even more instrumental view of language learning.

Following the entry of the UK into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, the UK's lack of capacity in MFL was brought into sharper focus. If the subject was still seen by many as academic and elitist, this was the chance for a change of emphasis in the teaching of a modern foreign language. Only a few years later, Prime Minister James Callaghan (1976) launched "The Great Debate" on education in a historic speech at Ruskin College, Oxford, in which he called for schools to prepare pupils better for the world of work and to equip them with the basic skills needed for industry. This suggests a greater focus on communication as a process but, in actual fact, rather sees communication as a final, future product.

Also at this time the Threshold Level for Modern Language Learning in Schools (van Ek, 1976) was published by the Council of Europe. Here, van Ek specifies situations in which the foreign language will be used and the language functions which the learner will fulfil. It was a major contributing factor to the selection of language items for the GOML syllabuses and it makes very precise statements about the target group:

The learners will be able to survive (linguistically speaking) in temporary contacts with the foreign language speakers in everyday situations, whether as visitors to the foreign country or with visitors to their own country, and to establish and maintain social contacts.
(van Ek, 1976, p.11)

Emphasis of the terms “skill” and “do” above “knowledge” also suggests a clear move from product to process:

The basic characteristic of the model used in our definition is that it tries to specify foreign language ability as *skill* rather than *knowledge*. It analyses what the learner will have to be able to *do* in the foreign language and determines only in the second place what *language-forms* (words, structures, etc.) the learners will have to be able to handle in order to *do* all that has been specified.
(ibid., p.5)

This is a crucial point in the survey here of language learning in terms of product and process. There is a clear indication here that the emphasis has moved from the knowledge, product and AM focus of GT through AL/AV to an emphasis on a process, that of skill development, and thus more of a PM focus, or “doing.” However, crucially, as will now be argued, this shift of emphasis is more apparent than actual. As detailed below, the particular interpretation of CLT in English secondary schools meant that more of an emphasis was placed on the learning of set, often transactional, topic phrases which could be reproduced in an examination situation, in other words communication as product. As a result, pupils lacked the language of more spontaneous classroom interaction, meaning that process and participation were reduced to the practice and accumulation of set topic phrases.

The nature of the GCSE criteria (DES, 1985) meant that it encouraged the learning of phrasebook-type phrases for remote, future contexts. Numerous are the sound bites which criticise the selection of language for the GCSE and the phrasebook-style drilling of them which they encourage. Byram (1989) criticises the GOML syllabuses as being very memory-dependent. Grenfell (1991, p.6) is not in favour of language teaching in schools where the language is “never likely to be anything other than of a fairly routinised phrasebook style” which might be “in a situation highly removed

from any personally known facts.” Grenfell and Harris (1999, p.26) conclude that “pupils are often walking phrase books” and spend most of their time “ordering meals they are not going to eat, planning journeys they are not going to make, and speaking to and hearing about people they do not know.” This is highly reminiscent of Michael Salter (1989) writing 10 years earlier when he makes the memorable statement:

For many pupils, much of what happens in the classroom is a rehearsal for what will never take place.
(Salter, 1989, p.B11)

Writing more recently, Mitchell (2000, p. 288) concludes that the “curriculum may be too narrowly focused on pragmatic communicative goals” and Klapper (2003, p. 34) expresses concern over the “promotion of communication which is a largely formulaic, threshold ability, with emphasis on transactional language with a narrow functional range, the use of idealised dialogues and the learning of set phrases.” Grenfell (1991, p. 6) talks of “a transactional wolf in a communicative sheep’s clothing,” arguing that transactional language is dressed up as communication.

1.4.5 The UCA and the focus on Communication, Skill Development, Authenticity, Self-Expression and ‘Phrasebook Learning’

This section will review the foregoing issues in CLT with respect to the UCA, namely communication, authenticity, skill, ‘phrasebook-learning’ and self-expression.

Certainly, the whole focus on spontaneous, interactive communication with an audience and purpose is a major emphasis of the UCA. This includes the GOML emphasis on making communication achievable, to the extent that learners feel able to communicate and experience what Ushioda (1996, p. 32) calls “communicative success.” Likewise, the idea of skill development is very much in keeping with the

UCA perspective of communication being a natural process. What is much less in keeping with the UCA perspective, however, is the context of this communication, in that it does not focus so much on spontaneous use and on pupils' self-expression, that is on their being able to say what they want to say. It is very clear from the van Ek (1976) document how a particularly narrow, instrumental view of language learning took hold. Aspects such as self-expression, language play and experimentation with language for its own sake (as promoted in the UCA) are not directly relevant to the proposed "temporary contacts" (ibid., p.11) in or with the foreign country and are thereby excluded.

The GCSE, then, moves along the continuum from language as a linguistic system towards language as being functional but does little to take in language as self-expression (Tudor, 2001). Instead, it favours clearly prescribed outcomes destined for specific but set, topic-based hypothetical contexts, for example in the booking of accommodation, asking directions, describing a holiday. It is argued that, given the remoteness of this future context, learners, in particular teenage learners, cannot meaningfully be taught to communicate in situations which have no immediate communicative value for them, as Pachler notes:

... this approach...tends to ignore the teenage learner's communicative needs and does not allow her to engage in meaningful and realistic interaction, both supposedly central tenets of the communicative approach.
(Pachler, 2000, p.26).

It is argued, then, that the meanings promoted by the CLT of the GCSE might masquerade as personal but are often impersonal due to the fact that a need for more immediate, more personalised self-expression is not acknowledged. In terms of authenticity, Hornsey (1992) challenges the concept and notes that nothing is

authentic about railway announcements in a school hall. Indeed, the UCA can be seen to reinterpret the term “authentic” and apply it to the context of the classroom. Speaking of their discussions around how pupils acquire another language, Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy (2001) state:

Authentic implied that the pupils really had *something to say*; not something they **had** to say but something they **wanted** to say. And leaving aside tasks such as presentations, *authentic* also implied that they would be speaking spontaneously, rather than repeating a well-rehearsed dialogue... classroom interaction is one of the most valuable sources of *authentic* communication. However hard we try, the classroom is not the railway station or the dinner table!
(Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.2)

It can be argued, therefore, that the UCA is involved in a **recontextualisation of CLT**, in that the classroom is elevated to the role of a context for communication in its own right, not simply the location for the study of language for a future, projected context. This does not mean that the more traditional topic language is ignored, however, as confirmed in interview data. The notion of the classroom as context is not new, as the following quotations attest:

Because of its psycho-social nature, we regard the classroom... as a genuine source of communicative activity.
(Legutke and Thomas, 1991, p. 27)

... there is surely no more real communicative context than the classroom itself.
(Harris, 1996, p.264)

A communicative methodology will therefore exploit the classroom as a resource with its own communicative potential... The classroom is ‘artificial’ only if we demand of it that which it cannot achieve- if, for example, we treat it as a rehearsal studio where ‘actors’ learn the lines from some pre-scripted target repertoire for a performance at some later time and place.
(Breen and Candlin, 1980, pp.98-99)

Indeed, Burch's (2004, p.10) phrase "exploiting the human potential of the classroom for linguistic gain" is very similarly worded to Breen and Candlin's statement. Wilkins (1976, p.12) disagrees, stating that the classroom is "not a situation of natural language use" and "cannot meet situational language needs." This is, however, to take a narrow view of the classroom and not to acknowledge the possibility of amplifying the classroom context for communicative purposes as in the UCA and as set out in chapter five.

The notion of pupils' communicating their own immediate wishes, desires and opinions by saying what they want to say is also not new. Grenfell (1991) argues for communication which is more personal and less prescriptive. He calls for teachers to "involve learners in a personal way, where they have a stake in what is created through language" and calls for them to give "more freedom for personal identity to come forward" (ibid., pp.7-8). Brumfit, writing over a decade earlier, also highlights this link between personal identity and language teaching:

... language teaching is not packaged *for* learners, it is made *by* them.
Language is whole people.
(Brumfit, 1979, p. 190)

Legutke and Thomas (1991) paint a picture of a general lack of real communication in secondary classes in Europe and the USA and, again, link genuine communication with personal identity:

... very little is actually communicated in the L2 classroom. The way it is structured does not seem to stimulate the wish of learners to say something, nor does it tap what they might have to say. Fenced in by syllabus demands, often represented by the total dominance of a textbook, learners do not find room to speak as themselves.
(Legutke and Thomas, 1991, pp. 8-9)

The UCA would certainly appear to aim to overcome the criticism that MFL learning does not allow for self-expression. It needs to be pointed out here that this self-expression is not to be confused with the pre-packaged set topic phrases in the first person so often learnt in the context of the GCSE examination and describing, for example, one's interests, favourite school subjects or job plans. The UCA's self-expression reflects the immediacy of the classroom context and extends to comments about other pupils and the general learning situation.

Finally, there is the issue of the large amount of language which was rote-learnt in the GOML schemes and phrasebook-style and formulaic as discussed above. Whilst these also exist in the UCA and indeed are an integral part of the second language acquisition process, the difference in the UCA is that these formulaic phrases feature in a dynamic, immediate classroom context, subject to change, addition and adaptation in response to classroom events rather than simply set phrases for a fixed future situation. This is the fundamental difference between communication as future product and communication as on-going, interactive process.

1.4.6 The National Curriculum: Prescription without the Detail

This section will consider the introduction of the National Curriculum (NC). It will argue that the NC as originally documented (DES, 1990a) promoted a teaching approach which had much in common with the UCA, with an emphasis on process and classroom language talk, as well as on the product, the acquiring of the target language in the SLA sense of the word. It appears that the spontaneous classroom talk of the UCA would have been in keeping with the original pedagogical recommendations of the NC. It is argued in this section that such classroom interaction in the target language was, however, never realistically achievable in the

NC, particularly in the absence of detailed pedagogical guidance and accompanying training. As will be seen from this study's data, achieving such interaction is complex, as also evidenced by the fact that it is still rare in classrooms, as will be shown later in this section.

Pachler, Evans and Lawes (2007, p.9) point out that the introduction of the National Curriculum marked a "watershed" as up until that point curriculum development and developments in pedagogy had been seen as a "professional responsibility" whereas now they were becoming "important objects of political interest and public policy." The National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages (NCMFL) was introduced in MFL in 1992, but it is important to note that there are two further documents which relate to the first version of the National Curriculum (DES, 1991a). This latter is the document which was issued as statutory. Secondly, there is the non-statutory guidance (DES, 1991b) and, thirdly, the draft proposals (DES, 1990b) which were never re-published. These draft proposals are precisely what contained the more detailed guidance which could have made more spontaneous classroom talk a reality. Instead, teachers lacked the tools to bring this about, as will be shown below.

The Programme of Study Part I reinforces the focus of CLT on the communicative purpose of language (DES, 1991a, p.23). In fact, 'Communicating in the target language' is the very first heading. Other Part I requirements imply and prescribe an approach and indeed Part I is headed "Learning and using the target language" (ibid.). The NC certainly increased the emphasis on process and PM through the focus on process, such as role-plays and information gap activities "as a means of getting students to use the target language" (Block, 2002, p.19). It is argued here that this PM, or process, element could have been taken much further and extended to the more

interactive, spontaneous, contingent and real-time use of the UCA which lends the learning process an enticing element of unpredictability.

The NC's areas of experience continue the notion of prescribing contexts, although these were meant to be "relevant to pupils' needs and interests" (ibid., p.27) and there is also the first indication that the classroom is validated as a context in itself. Area of experience A specifies "This should include the language of the classroom." (ibid., p.27). In the revised version of the NCMFL (DfEE, 1999) there is still the requirement that pupils use "everyday classroom events as an opportunity for spontaneous speech" (DfEE, 1999, p. 17). This links very much to the UCA's focus on the classroom as context and, more specifically, as a context for spontaneous speech.

The issue of use of the target language appears in the statutory section but the extensive consideration in the draft proposals has been much curtailed in the non-statutory guidance:

It [the National Curriculum] extends opportunities and experiences for **pupils** by promoting maximum use of the target language (DES, 1991b, p.B2)

(This has been reduced from the "use of the target language for virtually all communication" of the 1990 proposals (DES, 1990b, p.58) and appears as "optimum use" on the reverse of the National Curriculum Council video (NCC, 1993)).

Further references in the non-statutory guidance take this further:

- 1.5 The classroom provides the main context in which most pupils encounter the foreign language. It is important to create an ambience which simulates the foreign country or community.
- 1.6 Exposure to the target language also helps learners develop a sensitivity to pronunciation, intonation, structure and meaning. This supports pupils' language acquisition without

overt teaching.

1.7 Departments should agree on a policy for consolidating or extending use of the target language by teachers and pupils...

(DES, 1991b, p.C1)

The use of terms such as “encounter”, “exposure”, “develop”, “acquisition” and “simulate” and the emphasis on the classroom as the main context are important. They clearly suggest an underlying view of language learning which emphasises process in a way similar to the UCA. Teachers, however, are given scant guidance as to how these complex processes might be triggered and developed. The NCMFL seems almost irresponsible. It is prescription without accompanying pedagogical principles. The overall document is unique in that it prescribes for teachers for the first time the learning processes: there is a clear emphasis on target language use by pupils and the combining of two or more of the language skills (DES, 1991a, p.21). The activities should “enable them [pupils] to use language for real purposes as well as to practise skills” and activities should help pupils “acquire, learn and use the target language to communicate with each other, their teacher and other speakers of the language” (ibid., p.21). This process, however, is so simplified or “trivialised” (Block, 2002, p.20) that it seems impossible for teachers to be able to tap into it. Complex notions such as “acquire, learn and use” are not unpacked and reference to content is limited to such generalities as “simple information”, “feelings, likes and dislikes”, “opinion” (ibid., pp.7-8).

The guidance on developing target language use in the non-statutory guidance cited above, which was not finally published widely in any case, is equally vague. Indeed, the authors merely offer the advice that modest target language use with one class would be a welcome step (DES, 1991b, p. C1, point 1.8).

It is argued, then, that it was never a realistic expectation that this sort of spontaneous classroom talk would occur systematically, especially without the accompanying detailed training and guidance, and indeed it has not, as evidenced in a succession of official reports (Dobson, 1998; QCA, 2004; Ofsted, 2008; 2011a). This leads one writer to talk of a “missing methodology” (Norman, 1998, p. 50). A more detailed discussion of the position of the target language in MFL teaching will take place in chapter two.

The more recent move in the NC and the GCSE specifications to be less prescriptive in content might encourage teachers to move more from Sfarid’s (1998) AM to the PM metaphor. In the 2007 version of the National Curriculum, content has been summarised into four key concepts of linguistic competence, knowledge about language, creativity and intercultural understanding (QCA, 2007b, p.166). This continued freedom in content is mirrored in the GCSE (AQA, 2008) where, for a full 60% of the examination (speaking and writing), “centres and/or students may choose a context or purpose of their own.” (AQA, 2008, p. 6). One might expect that the reduced focus on context in the National Curriculum might encourage more creativity, spontaneity and flexibility of context but, it would appear that the drive for GCSE examination results in schools (Paton, 2009) mean that the GCSE specifications still act as “the real driver behind the schemes of work in schools” (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007, p. 99). Although the GCSE content has been trimmed, there is still a familiar list of topics under broad contexts: lifestyle, leisure, home and environment, work and education (AQA, 2008). This continuing prescription still hampers the development of, for example, the classroom as a context for spontaneous interaction.

This is reinforced by textbooks, as noted by Pachler, Evans and Lawes:

In many departments the curriculum is based around topic-based notions that map neatly onto the examination specifications... The topic-based approach is aided, and we would argue abetted, by another key driver, namely the hidden curriculum stipulated by the coursebook. Unfortunately, teaching by the book still prevails widely. (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007, p.99)

The pressure for good GCSE examination results has often led to these being achieved by rote learning of answers to the speaking examination. Indeed, this practice has been highlighted by a BBC undercover investigation, in the context of the scripting of GCSE oral exams, and condemned by the Office of the Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Alexander, 2009). This reinforces further an instrumental view of language learning and a view of learning as largely AM, or “acquisition” of knowledge. The UCA, whilst still heeding the GCSE specification, does not do so to the exclusion of all else and does not advocate use of a coursebook, making room for more creativity and a greater participational aspect to learning.

1.4.6 The GCSE/NC: Artificial Accuracy at the Expense of Developing Grammatical Understanding and Fluency?

This section will examine the paradoxical situation that the GCSE examination and the NC have downplayed the role of grammatical understanding but simultaneously encouraged the production of more accurate language. The reason this situation has come about, it is argued, is that the rote learning of language has been encouraged without an accompanying acquisition process and understanding of the workings of the language. This, it is contended, has not only suffocated risk-taking, creativity, and the spontaneous, unpredictable use of language but has also promoted an artificial accuracy and short-circuited the process of language learning, whereby fluency

develops as language is experimented with and mistakes occur, with backsliding (Selinker, 1972) and hypothesis formation (Swain, 1998). As such, language learning becomes more a question of accumulating a collection of correct utterances than a process of participation where language is acquired (in SLA terms) and internalised, resulting in a longer-lasting, more deeply embedded fluency which will enable pupils to deal with unpredictability and manipulate language for their own contingent use.

In CLT, there was a view that it mattered less if the form of the language was incorrect as long as the meaning was communicated. Johnson (2001, p.178) describes “a loosening of the grammatical reins in the FL classroom” and Newmark (1963, p.217) proposed that “the whole question of the utility of grammatical analysis for language teaching needs to be reopened.” Page (1994, p.122) notes how accuracy is “not always essential for accurate communication” (but does stress its importance in transmitting an image of the speaker). Brumfit, writing a few years later, argues for an emphasis on fluency when designing the syllabus, thus putting the role of accuracy into perspective:

The question is not *whether* to accept learners’ resistance to an idealised model for accuracy, but *how* to.
(Brumfit, 1979, p.188)

The CLT of the GCSE (1988 onwards) is subject to the criticism that knowledge about language, or grammar, is downplayed. The new GCSE syllabus gave the impression that grammar played a minor role because of the way it was set out, in terms of notions and functions, as opposed to the traditional grammatical structures. Mitchell (1994b, p. 93) sums this up with reference to teachers’ reactions to the first sample GCSE syllabuses, saying they “predispose[d] teachers to conceptualise early FL learning in holophrastic terms” and that grammar had been “disarticulated” (ibid.,

p. 96). Mitchell (1994a, p. 40) further highlights the issue of grammar as a problem in the communicative approach, stating that learners “can still do little more than reproduce unanalysed global phrases and have not yet internalised a creative language system (i.e. a grammar), which will allow them to produce original utterances correctly in situations of open and unpredictable target language use.” Klapper (2003, p. 34) expresses concern, among others, with CLT as translated to the average language classroom, that is with “the embracing of a meaning-based pedagogy with little conscious attention to form” and, echoing Mitchell above, “...failure to build a generative language framework that enables learners to recombine linguistic elements and thus to create new or unique utterances.” He summarises concerns regarding this aspect as follows:

... one of the greatest challenges that has faced CLT has been to find some way of linking attention to linguistic form with the communication of meaning.
(Klapper, 2003, p.34)

Whereas the original NC proposals (DES, 1990a) contained detailed (if somewhat confusing) explorations of the subject of grammar teaching, the final, statutory version (DES, 1991a, p.25) was very brief in its references. Indeed, it is tucked away in the latter half of the programme of study as the sixth item of eight (one bullet point out of 76 overall!), under the heading “developing language learning skills and awareness of language.” The 1999 version of the NCMFL Programme of Study (DfEE, 1999) offers only the sketchiest of guidance as to any teaching approach being endorsed (Mitchell, 2003). Guidance of any significance has been reduced to the vaguest of proportions, for example the following:

Pupils should be taught the grammar of the target language and how to apply it. (DfEE, 1999, p.16)

The 1999 version, then, did reinstate grammar but in such a way that does not necessarily encourage the teaching of grammar but in a way which promotes accuracy artificially as an outcome. Indeed, Mitchell (2003) explores at length how the 1999 version's pattern of progression, in particular its emphasis on formal "accuracy of performance" (2003, p. 17) from the early stages, encourages rote learning of set chunks and discourages risk-taking and manipulation of language.

It will be argued in chapter five that the UCA promotes accuracy through the use of language in context, through recasting and drawing pupils' attention to form whilst maintaining communication. It will be shown that accuracy can be promoted at the same time as fluency and communication. As seen earlier, the UCA takes a long-term view of language-learning. It is argued that the UCA, whilst developing accurate, topic language-as-product for the GCSE examination, also plays a major role in allowing language-as-process to develop, with learners engaged in developing grammatical awareness through experimentation and manipulation of language accompanied by a focus on form by the teacher, often through recasting. This will be explored further in chapters two and five. In chapter five, it will be argued that inaccuracy in the creative and real-time use of language is actually an important part of the language-learning process and a useful diagnostic tool for teachers.

1.4.8 Summary of CLT: A Need to build in more Language Use

In summary, the key issue with the CLT of the NC and the GCSE is the fact that it does not allow space for pupils to engage fully enough in process, so great is the emphasis on the accumulation of accurate topic phrases for the achievement of higher levels and grades (Grenfell, 2000b). This is at the expense of unpredictability and

originality, the experimentation with and manipulation of language, and the tolerance of inaccuracy as part of the learning process. It is this imbalance which the UCA aims to redress with its focus on spontaneous, interactive language.

Block (2002) sums up the confused state of CLT in MFL in English schools by noting that it has been neither the “weak” nor the “strong” version. As a result, it has perhaps been a misunderstanding of CLT altogether:

From what I gather, the official CLT of the NCFL is neither ‘weak’ nor ‘strong’, as it neither works from a solid knowledge of language to opportunities for use nor consistently adopts a position of learning language through its use. It is, to my mind, a partial version of CLT. (Block, 2002, p.21)

It is argued here that CLT in English secondary schools has not provided enough opportunities for real-time use of language, thus drawing back from genuine engagement with the process-oriented and participation-focused element of language learning. In Little’s (1994, p.85) terms, referred to earlier, the “user” element of “learner-user” has been underplayed. Johnson also points out that the ‘use’ element is missing. He is speaking in connection with the presentation, practice, production (PPP) model, noting that the final ‘P’ (production) is missing:

But anyone who considers abandoning the traditional needs to be clear that the failed model is probably a PP_ one rather than a PPP one.
(Johnson, 1996, p.171)

This is in line with the earlier assertion that communication has fossilised as a product and not developed as a process. All of this is in the context of the damning indictment that pupils find languages boring and difficult (Fisher, 2001).

It will be argued, in conclusion to this chapter, that a way forward for CLT is, in keeping with the UCA, to bring out more of this real-time language *use* so that learners experience more immediate “communicative success” (Ushioda, 1996, p. 32) and can see language as embedded in a real context. It will also be argued that it is important to balance this PM aspect with AM, knowledge of the language.

First, other emphases of language learning within the broad scope of CLT will be considered.

1.5 Additional Emphases in MFL Learning

This section will examine additional emphases within CLT and show that they largely focus on either process (PM) or product (AM). It will be shown how these have a more limited scope for combining both in the way the UCA can potentially do.

1.5.1 Additional Emphases which Favour Process or PM

It is argued in this section that it is, in fact, also possible to overly focus on process at the expense of product so that there is a clear and coherent framework for target language use by teacher and pupils. Such foci can be an emphasis on learning strategies and learner training (Pachler, 2000; Grenfell, 2000a).

A more generic emphasis is the focus on assessment for learning. Whilst this is a useful concept, there is the danger that the focus on this process displaces the product, namely the target language. Indeed, *less* of a focus on the target language is called for by Black, Lee and Marshall in their advocating of assessment for learning:

If, however, the rigid adherence to the monopoly of the target language is abandoned, then even modern foreign languages create many opportunities for good formative assessment... a teacher could ask

what it means for a verb to be irregular.
(Black, Lee and Marshall, 2003, p.73)

From a UCA point of view, it is possible to combine assessment for learning with pupil TL use.

A feature of the most recent National Curriculum (QCA, 2007b) is personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS): “independent enquirers, creative thinkers, team workers, self-managers, effective participators, reflective learners” (QCA, 2007a). Given the generic nature of these and the Curriculum’s encouragement to link learning across the curriculum, there is a danger that discussion of generic learning processes will too often be accomplished in English. An emphasis, then, on the more generic learning-focused process may not allow enough MFL learning time for complex language-centred processes to take place.

1.5.2 Other Views which Favour Product or AM

It has been argued earlier in this chapter that much language learning has focused overly on product and AM at the expense of process and PM and further examples will now be given.

A similar concern arises with the Key Stage 3 Framework for teaching modern foreign languages: Years 7, 8 and 9 (DfES, 2003) (the Framework). The year-on-year objectives focus artificially on product and atomise language learning into bite-size skills or items of knowledge. It seems that longer-term processes which do not fit neatly into the unit of the single lesson are not readily supported by the Framework.

The MFL lesson sits within a clear, formulaic view of what any lesson should consist of, rather than starting with a MFL-specific Approach. This is emphasised by the

phrase that a lesson should be “offering clear conclusions which enable pupils to see what they have learned and achieved” (DfES, 2003, p.67). Also, pupils should be “actively involved in the plenary and are expected to explain in precise terms what they have learned” (DfES, 2003, p.69). Within the space of one lesson, however, this is not always possible, especially in MFL learning where much longer term processes are at work (Klapper, 2003). Indeed, learning which can be proven to have taken place takes much longer than one lesson to achieve and may involve false starts and regression. Long and Robinson (1998, p.40) refer to “the generally slow, non-linear, and partial nature of much L2 learning.”

There are also non-language-specific outcomes espoused for the subject MFL. One such is that of content which might be studied in other areas of the curriculum, including cross-curricular work, or “content teaching” (Coyle, 2000, p.263). The issue with such content teaching can be that the communication of the content takes on a greater priority than the learning of the language, such that the language merely becomes a service subject, or a “vehicle through which other subjects are taught” (Lawes, 2000, p.96), making the language learning subordinate to the ‘real’ subject. In other words, product is supreme but it is not the ‘MFL product’ but a different one altogether. From a UCA point of view, this risks the content taking precedence over the language and threatening the maintenance of the target language and target language interaction by teacher and pupils alike.

A similar argument applies to the teaching of culture as a product. The 2007 National Curriculum (QCA, 2007b, p. 166) names one of only four “key concepts” as that of intercultural understanding. Whilst this is clearly worthwhile and valuable, it can

arguably detract from the focus on the product, the target language, if too much emphasis is placed upon exploring the subject in English.

1.6 Steps towards the Integration of Process and Product

From both a more product-focused and a more process-focused perspective, there are indications of ways to bring these together more. From a more product-focused stance, Coyle (2000) in her discussion of content teaching raises the issue of process, noting that content alone cannot lead to more motivating and communicative classrooms. She places great store by language becoming the medium of communication and learning in the classroom, with interaction at its heart. Coyle (ibid.) urges more research into what encourages spontaneous pupil target language use. This would seem to be an acknowledgement that content, or product, is but one aspect of effective language learning and that interactive, spontaneous communication is just as important.

Similarly, the revised Key Stage 3 Framework for Languages (DCSF, 2009), with its more product-focused, objective-led approach, does raise the possibility of a greater role for process, namely interactive, spontaneous pupil TL talk:

... creating classroom conditions that encourage and reward informed risk-taking and that allow for spontaneous, if flawed, use of target language between pupil and pupil and/or pupil and teacher.
(DCSF, 2009, p.4)

More directly, new Ofsted (2010) guidance for inspectors includes spontaneity and “saying what they want to say” as a feature of outstanding achievement:

[Pupils] develop a sense of passion and commitment to the subject and can use language creatively and spontaneously to express what they want to say, including when talking to each other informally and writing imaginatively. (Ofsted, 2010, p. 2)

A quality of outstanding teaching is also that “pupils use the language with little prompting for routine classroom communication” (ibid.).

On the other hand, more apparently process-based emphases, such as a focus on the development of learner autonomy, as advocated by Little (1991), can also give close regard to the product of the target language. In pursuit of autonomy, Little encourages the process of interactive communication but with the target language at its heart:

The most successful learners are likely to be those who are constantly interacting with and through the target language, receiving and expressing meanings that are important to them.
(Little, 1991, p.42)

The new National Curriculum (QCA, 2007b) also combines two product-based key concepts, linguistic competence and knowledge about language, with two potentially more process-based ones, intercultural understanding and creativity.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), with its three phases of pre-task, during task and post-task, also shows it is possible to combine a focus on process- the doing of the task- with product- the analysis of the language used/needed in the task. Whilst TBLT is not being advocated here for the secondary school setting, it does demonstrate that product and process can be combined. Kumaravadivelu (1994) also emphasises process in some of the macrostrategies which form his strategic framework for L2 teaching. He stresses the importance of classroom discourse as a “co-operative venture” and the need for “meaningful learner-learner, learner-teacher interaction in class” (ibid., p. 33).

1.7 Conclusion: a CLT which Combines Product and Process

This chapter has shown that MFL teaching has too often been overly focused on product, AM, with too great a desire for measurable outcomes. Even communication has been objectified into a product: communication-as-product. It has been noted that the PPP of CLT has neglected communication-as-process: meaningful production of the target language. However, it has also been shown that a focus on process which marginalises the product of the target language is also inadequate. Product, AM, and process, PM, are both important and ideally these should be harmonised. This would offer a CLT where the product and process are clearly defined and a framework for their combination is clear.

There is an increasing tendency to dismiss CLT rather than attempt to give it a new coherence. CLT is described by many writers as either being a thing of the past or past its 'best-by date' (Pachler, 2000; Beale, 2002; Block, 2002; Bax, 2003) or as no longer coherently describable as a phenomenon (Harmer, 2003; Klapper, 2003; Johnson and Johnson, 1998).

It has been argued that the product focus of this new CLT should be the learning of the target language itself and that the focus of the process aspect should be fluent, spontaneous, real-time interaction in that language. This is a demanding challenge for the teaching of MFL in secondary schools within limited curriculum time. This study will now explore how the UCA sets out to combine product and process and it will be shown how the focus on pupil production of the target language coupled with the creation of a classroom context enable product and process to come together.

The next chapter will explore the principles of the pedagogy which underlines this combination of product and process in the UCA.

CHAPTER 2: A PEDAGOGY FOR COMBINING PROCESS WITH PRODUCT

2.1 Overview of Chapter Two

Chapter one explored the two emphases of product and process in modern foreign language learning. It concluded that it was desirable to combine the two and that the UCA offers a way of achieving this.

This literature review in this study was challenging to construct because of the lack of available literature on the UCA. As a result, it was decided not to construct a traditional literature review which might have identified a gap in the literature before the research could take place. Instead, advantage was taken of the researcher's pre-research to explore given areas, based on the researcher's previous knowledge. The literature review was thus a way of exploring the theoretical foundations of the aspects of the UCA identified in the pre-research. An example is the focus on procedural knowledge and automaticity which came from the researcher's familiarity with the UCA's routines and repetition techniques.

In addition, as the research developed and the data was analysed, a dynamic relationship between the literature and the data analysis was established. This allowed an ongoing interaction back and forth, throughout the research period, between the data and the literature. An example of this is the focus on the sociocultural aspects, such as agency, which emerged as it became clear that learners were motivated to speak by the classroom context.

This chapter will set out the pedagogy of the UCA which places process, or PM, at the fore but whilst also taking account of the product, or AM. As noted in chapter one,

this product is the target language and the process is that of real-time, spontaneous and interactive communication in the classroom. Again, as stated in chapter one, literature will be drawn from the complementary fields of MFL, SLA and ELT.

The chapter will consider, from a theoretical perspective, the different aspects which underlie the UCA pedagogy. The first aspect to be studied concerns the UCA's treatment of the product of learning, the target language itself. The chapter will explore different positions on target language use and outline the UCA's position, drawing on the literature available. The chapter will then proceed to explore the UCA's pedagogy, drawing on two complementary frameworks: a cognitive perspective and a sociocultural perspective. The cognitive perspective will relate more to AM and the internalization of the product, the target language. The sociocultural perspective will relate more to PM and the process of communication and participation but through real-time use of the product. It will be shown how the UCA's emphases can bring product and process together: a process-based slant to the internalization of the product and how the TL product is crucial in the process of in-class communication.

2.2 The Context of the Target Language in the MFL Classroom

Inspection findings have highlighted problems with pupil target language use. HMI Alan Dobson's report (1998) begins and ends with this concern:

The target language is much used by teachers but more in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4, and many pupils are reluctant to use it.
(Dobson, 1998, p.1)

Much remains to be done... particularly in the use of the target language *by pupils*.
(Dobson, 1998, p. 27)

The QCA 2002/3 annual report (QCA, 2004, p.7) notes that teachers found requirement 5h of the NC, “using the target language for real purposes,” difficult to cover. The difficulty for pupils in creating new meaning orally continues to be highlighted by Ofsted:

Across all phases speaking is the least well developed of all the skills. Students’ inability to be able to say what they want to say in a new language has a negative impact on their confidence and enthusiasm.
(Ofsted, 2008, p.4)

In particular, there is evidence across time that there is little if no expectation for pupils to produce *spontaneous* target language. Mitchell (1988, p. 161), in her comprehensive study of CLT, notes in one school that “any spontaneous pupil initiative was always made in English.” Macaro (1997) in his Tarclindy project, looking in detail at target language use in the classroom calls for more spontaneous target language use but he presents a very narrow view of what “classroom language” is:

Classroom language can be defined as any discourse elements which, due to their particular reference to relationships, status, activities and rules, are normally only found in classrooms and particularly classrooms where the learners are young learners.
(Macaro, 1997, p.64)

He illustrates classroom language in terms of the very transactional elements of the classroom such as “open your books, listen etc.” (ibid., p.67) and thus sees it as “repetitive and artificial” and “unfettered by the constraints of a syllabus” (ibid., 1997, pp.66-67) and associated with the teacher’s language. He notes that there was “little evidence of learner initiated dialogues (LID) in the observation of the classes during the Tarclindy project” (ibid., p.111). Macaro (2000) appears to endorse the UCA

stance that the classroom language should be the more real, motivating and interesting language for the learner but he also notes the reluctance of learners to use it. He surmises that learners may react against it because they feel they can have no control over it.

More recently, Crichton's (2009) study into teacher target language use and its effect on pupils' communication skills draws a depressingly bleak conclusion regarding pupils' ability to produce spontaneous utterances and is apparently satisfied with the demonstration of comprehension in English:

The pupils may not use the language they hear a great deal in class without prompting, but, if the teacher actively involves them in listening, through questioning and checking for comprehension, they are drawn in to the language because they have to be able to demonstrate understanding at the very least... The teachers obliged the pupils to interact even though the pupils generally made minimum responses orally.
(Crichton, 2009, p. 32)

Examples of these minimum responses are mainly in English, involve repeating what a teacher has just said, or are very narrowly topic- or transaction-based around simple classroom objects.

It can be seen, then, that there is a low base of spontaneous pupil classroom talk. Macaro (1997), writing over ten years ago, called for more such talk and urged the teacher to be less in control of the discourse. He repeats this call in a later article:

I want to re-affirm a basic belief that learners' use of the L2 is conducive to successful learning... The over-arching pedagogical tool should, therefore, be learners' use of the target language, not teacher use of the target language.
(Macaro, 2000, p.184)

In this study, data analysis from the case study UCA classrooms will examine to what extent the UCA succeeds in generating spontaneous pupil talk so absent in the findings of inspection reports and the Mitchell (1988), Macaro (1997) and Crichton (2009) studies.

2.2.1 Recent Guidance on Target Language Use

In chapter one, it was shown how the original NC documentation paved the way for more interactive, spontaneous target language used which was never fully realised. Subsequent versions of the National Curriculum actually showed a retreat from the target language. Compare, for example the 1995 and 1999 versions:

When a spoken or written response is expected, it should be in the target language, except where a response in another language is necessary, *e.g. when interpreting*
(DfE, 1995, p.2)

Pupils are expected to use and respond to the target language, and to use English only when necessary (for example, when discussing a grammar point or when comparing English and the target language).
(DfEE, 1999, p.16)

The 1999 version, then, takes the stance that English is necessary for the discussion of grammar. The 2007 version does not clarify matters much, simply stating that pupils should have opportunities to “hear, speak, read and write in the target language regularly and frequently within the classroom and beyond” (QCA, 2007b, p. 169). The current GCSE examinations (AQA, 2008) have reverted to rubrics being in English, after a long period of target language testing.

The Framework (DfES, 2003) does not help clear up the confusion over the use of the target language. Generally, target language use by pupils and teacher alike is

encouraged, with the intention being that it is used “virtually exclusively” (ibid., p. 69). In contrast to this virtual exclusivity, however, is an example where the plenary is entirely in English and another which is “handled as much as possible in the target language” (ibid.). A summary of the stance on English does not clarify matters:

The linguistic aspects of the Framework do not represent an argument to stop using the target language in the classroom; the intended approach is above all *pragmatic*. What matters is that the teaching is effective and that pupils make progress. To this end teachers may need to *use some English judiciously for carefully specified purposes in some parts of a lesson.*
(ibid., p. 26)

The word which stands out here is “pragmatic.” No MFL-specific methodological principles are invoked but there is rather a feeling of ‘doing what works’ and ‘the end justifies the means’, in other words an expedient approach rather than one based on sound foreign language-learning principles.

The following section will examine arguments around the place of the target language in the MFL classroom and argue for near-exclusive use of the TL but with a limited, clearly defined and delineated role for English.

2.3 An Exploration of Target Language Positions

So central is the use of the target language to the UCA and thus to the understanding of this study’s classroom data, that it is important to take the time to explore different stances on target language use in the classroom. Indeed, near-exclusive use of the target language is taken for granted to such an extent in Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy (2001) that more emphasis is placed on arguing for the interactional potential of the language than its near-exclusive use, which is mentioned almost incidentally:

... it is vital that time be taken to plan for and exploit, through the medium of L2, the interaction stemming from such situations.
(Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.111)

The rationale for the use of as much TL in the classroom as possible has been argued extensively in the literature. It provides input, and input of some sort is essential for language learning to take place (Gass, 1997, p.1; Ellis, 1997, p.5). Chaudron argues for rich input (1988, p.121) and Ellis places a “**high quantity** of input directed at the learner” (1985, p.161) at the top of his list of factors which facilitate rapid development in second language acquisition. Wong-Fillmore (1985) argues that insistence on TL use and avoiding mother tongue (L1) translation encourages learners to notice the input more and noticing will be shown in section 2.4.8 to be a key factor in language learning.

A further argument for extensive TL as a medium for real communication is that it maintains the status of the target language in learners’ minds:

Many learners are likely to remain unconvinced by our attempts to make them accept the foreign language as an effective means of satisfying their communicative needs, if we abandon it ourselves as soon as such needs arise in the immediate classroom situation.
(Littlewood, 1981, p.45)

Clark points out the implicit message L1 use gives to learners:

... use English when you have something real to say. Use the foreign language when we are doing exercises, question-and-answer work, and other *unreal* (non-communicative) things.
(Clark, 1981, p.153)

If learners see the TL as solely an object of study, they may, then, be less motivated to use it for communication, or indeed, even to comprehend it. Wong-Fillmore

highlights how the use of the L1, particularly to translate the TL input lessens the impact and richness of the TL input:

When learners can count on getting the information that is being communicated to them in language they already know, they do not find it necessary to pay attention when the language they do not understand is being used... children tend to tune out... (Wong-Fillmore, 1985, p.35)

In fact, pupils' frustration with the use of the TL comes if they do not understand it, but also if it does not have status as the language of communication in the classroom.

The oft-cited reference in the National Curriculum Proposals (DES, 1990a) also underlines this:

The natural use of the target language for virtually all communication is a sure sign of a good modern language course. Learners are enabled to see that the language is not only the object of study but also an effective medium for conducting the normal business of the classroom. (DES, 1990a, p. 58)

Duff and Polio (1990, p.154) summarise the argument in stating: "as much language as possible serving as many functions as possible should be presented in the L2." Much discussion in the past has focused on teacher use of the TL (Collins, 1993; Franklin, 1990). In the UCA, the focus is very firmly on *pupil* use of the target language and this pupil focus echoes the tone of the NC non-statutory guidance (DES 1991b, p. B2) and the call for such a focus in inspection findings (Dobson, 1998). Even Atkinson (1993, p. 4) in his article attacking "exclusive (or virtually exclusive)" TL use acknowledges that "the target language *must* be the main medium of classroom interaction."

The key issue raised above is the **extent** of this TL (L2) use and, therefore, the extent of mother tongue English (L1) use. The difficulty with defining the UCA position

here is that traditionally defined positions may not be helpful. Macaro (2001) outlines three theoretical positions on TL use:

1. The Virtual Position. The classroom is like the target country. Therefore we should aim at total exclusion of the L1. There is no pedagogical value in L1 use. The L1 can be excluded from the FL classroom as long as the teacher is skilled enough.
2. The Maximal Position. There is no pedagogical value in L1 use. However, perfect teaching and learning conditions do not exist and therefore teachers have to resort to the L1.
3. The Optimal Position. There is some pedagogical value in L1 use. Some aspects of learning may actually be enhanced by use of the L1. There should therefore be a constant exploration of pedagogical principles regarding whether and in what ways L1 use is justified. (Macaro, 2001, p. 535)

There are a number of difficulties with these three positions. Their definitions are brief and although these positions may be intended as shorthand for the benefit of the student teachers involved in research with him, Macaro appears to go on to caricature them. He warns the student teachers that “the literature did seem to suggest that the virtual position was unattainable and that the maximal position led to feelings of guilt and inadequacy among teachers” (ibid., p. 535). This strongly implies that the Optimal Position is the only acceptable option, yet the only definition given of it is that quoted above.

The first difficulty is with the terminology of the three positions, which are caricatures of positions:

Virtual: This implies that the classroom context is not real but aims to simulate or imitate the target language country, what Dearing and King (2007, p. 30) call “conventional suspension of disbelief involving an unreal journey to ‘MFL Land.’” This is not, however, necessarily the case in a context where the aim is extensive TL use. It could be, as is the claim of the UCA, that the classroom context is positively

elevated and exploited, not pretending to be anything else. The first NC document, as cited in chapter one, also makes this false link between extensive TL use and simulating the TL country (DES, 1991a, p.C1, point 1.5).

Maximal: This reads not as a principled teaching and learning position at all, but rather a pessimistic psychological outlook. This is an expedient position which makes no attempt to define what less than perfect “teaching and learning conditions” might be or to take them into account. This is a position impossible to analyse separately from the Virtual Position as it is simply a more pragmatic version of it.

Optimal: The vagueness of this definition would seem to admit all sorts of practice and any amount of L1 and/or L2. It echoes the similarly vague advice in the KS3 Framework for the Teaching of MFL (DfES, 2003, p.26) quoted earlier.

The problem with this Optimal Position is that it is not a theoretical position at all but rather an expedient one. It can easily become a position which accommodates L1 use on a purely ad hoc basis, without any underlying position at all. The claim here is that an ad hoc approach to the use of English is not sustainable and this is supported with reference to Edstrom (2006). She provides a disarmingly honest analysis of her own TL use. She notes her use of L1 was 23% compared with the 5-10% she had estimated. Her subsequent analysis of this L1 use reads like retrospective justification rather than reference to theoretical principles. Whilst her arguments for L1 use are perfectly reasonable, they take as their starting point justification of L1 use rather than an exploration of how this use could be avoided. There is an example of such ad hoc theorising by a student teacher involved in Macaro’s codeswitching research. The student teacher justifies telling a pupil to put his chewing gum in the bin in the L1:

I just thought it would be more effective... you know it would have meant half an hour teaching them poubelle (waste bin).
(Macaro, 2001, p. 539)

The second difficulty with these three positions is that they may obsess with the wrong measurements. The Virtual Position is concerned with location, the Maximal and Optimal positions are concerned with measuring the quantity of TL use. Perhaps the focus should be less on location (virtual or otherwise) or quantity (maximum, minimum or otherwise) but rather on the teachers', and more importantly, **pupils' disposition towards using the TL**. If this is the focus, then, it might go some way to address Dobson's (1998), Macaro's (1997) and Ofsted's (2008; 2011a) concern over pupils' reluctance to speak the TL, a major issue in the MFL classroom. It seems that this notion of creating a positive disposition may be the best way to understand the UCA position on TL use (see chapter five).

2.3.1 Challenges to Extensive TL use

There is often a tendency to prescribe instances in which the L1 is best used rather than how L2 use can be maximised, as seen above in the NC's (DfEE, 1999) reference to grammar explanations in English. Whilst most writers agree that teacher L2 use is a priority, between them they enumerate a dizzying list of exceptions where L1 use is acceptable. Auerbach (1993, p.9) lists around twenty situations in which the "selective and targeted integration of the L1 [is] useful." These range from classroom management through language analysis to reduction of inhibitions. G. Chambers (1992) lists five broad areas, including tiredness and availability of time. Numerous writers highlight problems and issues caused or exacerbated by the exclusion of the L1:

- behaviour of pupils (Franklin, 1990; G. Chambers, 1992)
- alienation of learners and their identity (Phillipson, 1992; Auerbach, 1993)
- difficulty of discussing objectives, teaching grammar (Franklin, 1990; Cook, 2001)
- misunderstanding of meaning, lack of swift grammatical progression (Butzkamm, 2003)
- depriving learners of the “language of thought” (Cohen, 1998; Pachler, 2000) and the language of learning through interaction, i.e. the socio-cognitive role of language (Antón and DiCamilla, 1998)
- time efficiency and learners’ being denied the chance to make valuable links with their L1 (Cook, 1999; 2001)
- negative teacher-pupil rapport (Harbord, 1992, Cook, 2001) and build-up of resentment and frustration (Klapper, 1998)
- understanding of classroom instructions, inability to ask questions (G. Chambers, 1992)

The difficulty is that, taken as a whole, conducting these elements in the L1 can leave little room for consistent L2 use at all. There is a tendency to assume that concepts cannot be addressed in the target language but there is nothing to suggest that the two are mutually exclusive. It is a common trend in the literature to state the importance of a particular aspect of learning (learning strategies, humanistic reasons/rapport with the class, classroom management) and automatically to default to L1 use for it. There is little if any exploration of how any such aspect might be covered in the L2. Such an example is given in Black, Lee and Marshall (2003), already quoted in chapter one, namely that formative assessment and the target language are incompatible. There is an assumption that such a question could not be explored in the TL and no attempt is

made to suggest how to do so. Grenfell (2000b, p. 25) makes the same leap when talking of the need for personal introspection and reflection (including in group plenaries), saying they “may demand the use of English, which has become unfashionable in recent times.” There is a much-cited argument that certain types of learning are only possible in English which Pachler sums up:

The focus on TL use should switch from teaching in the TL to learning in the TL, i.e. from the exclusive/maximum use of the TL by the teacher to the optimum use of the TL by the teacher and learner *coupled with* focus and reflection on (formal aspects of) language.
(Pachler, 2000, p.30)

The implication of “coupled with” is that the “focus and reflection” has to be achieved in English. This echoes the view of Grenfell (2000b) quoted earlier. Indeed, Pachler’s (2000, p.31) ‘wish list’ does not stop here. He also requires the following from MFL teaching in English schools: “thought-provoking texts and contexts”, “intellectually challenging activities”, for pupils to “manipulate and generate (complex) language” as well as “linguistic creativity” instead of short utterances. The paradox is the presumption that learners capable of all this are not capable of reflection in the TL.

2.3.2 The Link between Teacher and Pupil TL Talk

It has been argued that it is pupil talk which should be the focus of analysis of target language positions and any proposal for an ideal target language position. Nevertheless, teacher TL talk clearly does play a significant role in the promotion and maintenance of pupil TL talk as this study’s data will show. Both Macaro (2000) and Crichton (2009) acknowledge that where more spontaneous pupil talk does take place it is only due to the fact that it has been taught by the teacher in the same way as a topic is taught and that L2 use is insisted upon (Macaro, 2000) and that pupils gained

from the teacher the vocabulary and structures they needed (Crichton, 2009). Mitchell (1988, p.164) also concludes that “active pressure” and persistence from teachers is necessary in addition to their own considerable TL use if pupils are to adopt the TL as their own language of self-expression.

2.4 A Cognitive Account of Language Learning

In the field of SLA, there are differing conceptions of how learning is identified. In the cognitive tradition, learning is viewed as a change in individual cognitive state. These changes can be measured and quantified (Pienemann, 2005). It is what Ellis (2008, p.405) characterises as a “computational model” and involves internal “mental processes that explain how L2 knowledge is represented and acquired.” In the sociocultural tradition of second language acquisition, on the other hand, the focus is more on the socially-situated process of language learning and on socially-distributed cognition rather than on the learning of individual items of language as products. As seen in chapter one, Sford (1998) refers to two views of learning as “acquisition” (AM) and “participation” (PM), linked to product and process respectively. AM is in line with the cognitive view of learning as “having.” PM is more in line with the sociocultural view of learning as “doing.”

It will be shown in this section that the UCA focuses on prioritising those cognitive aspects in language learning which enhance fluent, spontaneous, real-time, interactive communication, what Ellis (1997, p.128) calls “communicative efficiency.” It will also be shown how the UCA aims at making even these more internal and less social, cognitive aspects more overtly participative, as with for example its mimes, songs and textual displays.

In order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the MFL classroom, it is necessary to take into account both the cognitive and the sociocultural perspectives. This section will explore the perspective of the cognitive account of language learning.

2.4.1 Ellis' Theory of Instructed SLA

Ellis' (1997) theory of instructed SLA will be taken as the overall framework for examining a cognitive view of language learning due to its comprehensive nature and its relevance to the UCA. Ellis (1997) sets out two different types of knowledge involved in MFL learning (explicit and implicit) and two different forms of processing (controlled and automatic). Ellis' four types of L2 knowledge are represented thus:

	Controlled Processing:	Automatic Processing:
Type of Knowledge:	A	B
Explicit	A new explicit rule is used consciously and with deliberate effort	An old explicit rule is used consciously but with relative speed
Implicit	C	D
	A new implicit rule is used without awareness but is accessed slowly and consistently	A fully learnt implicit rule is used without awareness and without effort

(Ellis, 1997, p.112)

Ellis maintains that the “communicative efficiency” referred to above resides in the implicit/automatic quartile:

Communicative efficiency can best be achieved by relying on automated implicit knowledge (Type D).

(Ellis, 1997, p.128)

Implicit knowledge, according to Ellis is intuitive (the learner is probably unaware of its existence), but not completely unconscious. It can be abstract. There are two types of implicit knowledge in Ellis' theory: knowledge of discrete items (formulas and fixed or semi-fixed expressions) and rule-based knowledge. It is this implicit knowledge of L2 items and rules which comprises the learner's interlanguage system and "only becomes manifest in actual performance and, in this sense, is procedural" (1997, p.111). The following points about how implicit knowledge (lexical items and formulaic expressions) is learnt are crucial in respect of subsequent analysis of the UCA:

Lexical items and formulaic expressions can be learnt explicitly- by memorising items from a phrase book, for example. In many cases, however, words and formulas are learnt incidentally from exposure to input in which they occur **frequently** and are **salient**. In classrooms, where **the L2 is the medium of instruction, fixed expressions associated with the routines of classroom management** appear to be readily internalised, perhaps because they are not only frequent but also help the learners to perform **communicative functions that are important to them** when they have little 'creative' proficiency in the L2. (ibid., p.118, emphases added)

Ellis continues that it is less clear how implicit knowledge (L2 rules) is developed.

2.4.2 Language Learning through Natural Acquisition

As Block (2002) and Ellis (1997) point out, a precursor to the explicit/implicit distinction is Krashen's learning/acquisition distinction. Whilst aspects of Krashen's (1982) hypotheses have been called into question (see next section), it is still worth exploring as important background to the study of how the UCA develops what can be deemed to be the equivalent of Krashen's "acquisition", namely implicit knowledge (Block, 2002).

Krashen (1988) writes how acquisition is the most important aspect of language learning and how, according to his input hypothesis, spoken fluency will emerge on its own. He states that if learners are exposed to what he terms “comprehensible input” (a level of language slightly above the learner’s current level of understanding, defined as the learner’s current stage i plus one level, $i+1$), language emerges “by itself... in stages” (1988, p.20). Krashen calls this “acquisition”. He does not rule out “learning”, for example the teaching of grammar, altogether but sees it more in a monitoring role in written language or pre-planned oral production. His monitor hypothesis proposes that what he calls “conscious learning” (Krashen, 1982, p. 16) is available only as a monitor, such that fluency is due to what has been *acquired*. Studies such as Prabhu’s Communicational Teaching Project (1987)- and evaluated by Beretta and Davies (1985)-, and one by Terrell, Gomez and Mariscal (1980) show that classrooms where the focus is placed on meaning rather than form can effectively promote L2 acquisition. Indeed, Ellis (2008, p.825) talks of “communicative classrooms”, that is ones which “ensure that the learners have sufficient opportunities to participate in discourse directed at the exchange of information” and where learners learn “naturally.” Ellis links these classrooms to ones which provide comprehensible input and opportunities for comprehensible output. This study’s data will show how the UCA aims to create a context for natural communication and acquisition but also how this is supplemented with more formal, interventionist aspects. Thus Krashen’s work certainly relates to a major aspect of the type of classroom the UCA aims to create where pupils are, as seen in chapter one, encouraged to speak spontaneously and say what they want to say in a meaningful classroom context. In addition, emphasis is placed on the teacher’s making him/herself comprehensible and related to this is the frequent repetition of key phrases so that pupils can ‘pick them up’:

... new words should be introduced and then **reused many times** before the students are expected to use them in their responses.
(Krashen, 1988, p.80)

In the UCA, this is part of “teacher interaction language” or “TIL.” This is also simplified, so that learners can understand it and reproduce it, and Krashen makes use of the term “modified input”⁶ (1982, p. 24) to describe this talk. Ellis also sees this simplified input as effective as it helps learners notice the input by increasing the frequency of language forms (1997, p.121). The importance of frequent encounters with the same language over a period of time is seen as beneficial by other writers and is termed “variable encoding” (Yalden, 1987, p.125) and “distributed exposure” (Johnstone, 1989, p.100). Both the concepts of noticing and frequency of exposure will be explored further later in this chapter. Furthermore, Krashen (1988, p.89), like the UCA, promotes the display of the written word as it is introduced, in contrast to what he calls the “very frustrating practice” of audiolingualism, where reference to the written word was denied. More recent work supports this, noting that the showing of the written word also targets explicit knowledge and is designed to help strengthen “grapheme-phoneme conversion” (Erler, 2004, p.9). Krashen also states that learners will pick up the language, providing they have a low affective filter, namely if learners are operating in a stress-free environment.

2.4.3 Natural Acquisition as Insufficient

As noted in the previous section, Krashen’s (1982) specific use of the terms “learning” and “acquisition” and the related hypotheses outlined above have come under attack (McLaughlin, Rossman and McLeod, 1983; Gregg, 1984). The most controversial aspect of Krashen’s writings is that learning and acquisition remain

⁶ This is likened to “caretaker speech” (Krashen, 1982, p. 24) in a child’s L1 acquisition.

separate; learning cannot become acquisition. Ellis (1983) calls this the “non-interface position.”

Krashen and Terrell (1983, p. 27) link “acquisition” to the terms “implicit knowledge” and “picking up” a language. This latter term is particularly important as the phrase “picking up” the language is used by pupils in the interviews in this study (see chapter six). Although Krashen has held fast to his non-interface position, this has now been discredited (Gregg, 1984; Block, 2002).

With respect to Krashen’s virtual rejection of “learning”, Skehan (1998) also finds such a comprehension-based approach simplistic. Certainly, there is a case to be made that some communicative classrooms produce little evidence of syntactic development (Spada and Lightbown, 1989). Swain (1991) has shown that students in immersion programmes in Canada, despite fluent speech, still make grammatical mistakes. She notes that “their productive skills remain far from nativelike, particularly with respect to grammatical competence” (1991, p. 95). Long and Robinson (1998, p.21) also point to the fact that, despite fluent speech, students still make grammatical mistakes. They also point to the inefficiency of learning much of an L2 experientially. Doughty and Williams (1998a) bring together articles from a number of writers supporting the need for a middle way between formal grammar instruction (“formS-based”) and no grammar instruction (“meaning-based”), known as “focus on form.” Widdowson (1990) criticises meaning-focused, or ‘mediation’ views of language learning for assuming that natural processes are sufficient for language learning and that pedagogy has no place. Other writers question the ability of communicative classrooms to mimic natural acquisition models (Roberts, 1992; Grenfell and Harris, 1999) and the possibility for communication (“doing”) to replace knowledge (“knowing”) (Klapper,

2003). This echoes Widdowson's criticism that such a communicative classroom "confuses aims and means and assumes that teaching language *for* communication is the same as teaching language *as* communication" (1990, p. 46).

In terms of the UCA, it does indeed emphasise "acquisition", or implicit knowledge, but also promotes "learning" or explicit knowledge. As such, the UCA does not represent an immersion-based, Krashenite pedagogy, aping L1 acquisition. Nevertheless, any methodology which advocates such a high level of L2 use as the UCA is often deemed as one which relies solely on pupils' acquiring the target language rather than learning it. Macaro makes this link:

These positions would seem to imply support for Krashen's (1981) hypothesis of comprehensible input and natural order of acquisition. (Macaro, 2001, p.531)

Pachler (2000, p. 29) talks of the basis of a large amount of L2 use in "the misguided notion that FL learning is similar to mother tongue learning" and Atkinson (1993) equates 100% target language with the direct method. It is, therefore, important to stress that the UCA has more interventionist aspects which supplement the more naturalistic language learning aspects, as will be seen in the next section.

2.4.4 The UCA: Supplementing Natural Acquisition

This questioning of natural acquisition is at the heart of the discussion in chapter one about process and product and shows how so often the discussion around MFL pedagogy becomes polarised. Writers automatically link near-exclusive TL use with a hard-line Krashenite natural acquisition or immersion model (for example Grenfell and Harris, 1999) or, as shown above, caricature an environment with extensive TL use as elevating process (doing) to the total detriment of product (knowing).

What is central to the UCA, however, is that *in addition to* this communicative, naturalistic environment focusing on the development of implicit, automatised knowledge (to be explored further in the next section), there co-exist much more contrived, traditional pedagogical techniques to enhance this development. Such techniques also focus on the development of more explicit, controlled knowledge, for example through the mimes. These also help promote implicit, automatised knowledge by satisfying one of the conditions Ellis (1997, p. 118) names above, namely by making the language “salient.”

One such technique is intensive drilling and repetition, which is often multi-sensory to provide “memory hooks” (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.43). As seen in chapter one, drilling fell very much out of fashion after the AL/AV method was superseded. In fact, what may be a unique feature of the UCA is this inclusion of artificial drilling to develop controlled processing (a focus on the product) *and* this same language being used in natural, communicative use in the development of implicit, automatised knowledge (a focus on process). So contrasting do these seem that Grenfell and Harris imply they are incompatible:

Practice for practice’s sake, as in audio-lingualism, is out. What replaces these traditional pillars of language teaching is a naturalistic view of the learning process.

(Grenfell and Harris, 1999, p.21)

The claim of the originator of the UCA is that repetition activities aid fluency and retention, a prerequisite for spontaneous, interactive use. He asserts that it is a type of repetition very different from the traditional drill due to its focus on meaning,

imaginative involvement, emotion, movement, context and rhythm (Burch, 1994, p.51) and the subsequent use of that language for fluent classroom communication⁷.

Widdowson, in fact, makes the link between the more artificial repetition and the more natural communication:

Total rejection of behaviourist theory is no more reasonable than total acceptance. For when one considers the matter, it is clear that there must be some aspects of language learning which have to do with habit formation. Effective communication depends on the immediate and automatic access to linguistic forms so that the mind can unconsciously engage in the more creative business of negotiating meaning. If these forms were not internalised as habitual mental patterns independent of thought, they could not be readily accessed...

(Widdowson, 1990, p.11)

It is argued that as, in the UCA, much of this drilled language is subsequently used for real, interactive, spontaneous classroom communication, the drilling supplements, speeds up and short-circuits the development of implicit, automatised knowledge, ensuring correct pronunciation from the outset, for example. It is precisely because this language can be “readily accessed” (Widdowson, 1990, p. 11) that it is available for spontaneous, real-time use. There is widespread support for the use of repetition. Repetition is a crucial element in skill learning as highlighted by McLaughlin (1990) and Chaudron (1985). Pachler (2000, p.34) favours a systematic focus on memorisation, pronunciation and form, or “activities which do not seem to have immediate communicative value... within an overall communicative framework.”

The second element of explicit, controlled knowledge is that relating to the focus on form, or grammar. In keeping with the UCA’s emphasis on the development of

⁷ There is the related claim that attentional capacity is increased if information is presented in varying modalities (Allport, Antonis and Reynolds, 1972).

implicit knowledge, Burch advocates that implicit knowledge should always **precede** the explicit knowledge. Doughty and Williams in their summary of focus on form also seem to offer support to the view that explicit knowledge should target knowledge which is already implicit:

Most important, it should be kept in mind that the fundamental assumption of focus-on-form instruction is that **meaning and use must already be evident to the learner** at the time that attention is drawn to the linguistic apparatus needed to get the meaning across.
(Doughty and Williams, 1998a, p.4, emphasis added)

The UCA, then, does not by any means exclude explicit knowledge but it does ideally come after the development of implicit knowledge. The UCA, then, aims to develop both implicit *and* explicit knowledge as explained by Burch below:

Grammar and communication interact with each other constantly and often simultaneously...
(Burch, 2004, p.8)

This echoes the concern of Doughty and Williams (1998b) for integrating a focus on form with meaning and communication:

... the primary concern of the teacher should always be the question of how to *integrate* attention to form and meaning, either simultaneously or in some interconnected sequence of tasks and techniques that are implemented throughout the curriculum.
(Doughty and Williams, 1998b, p. 261)

This integration of grammar and communication reflects what Long (1991, pp. 45-46) calls "focus on form":

focus on *form*... overtly draws students' attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication.
(*ibid.*, 1991, pp. 45-46)

Indeed, it is the development of the pupil interaction language in lessons that provides this overriding focus on meaning and communication and the incidental appearance of different linguistic elements.

Ellis also draws attention to the advantages of grammar being explored in the target language:

If such tasks are carried out in the target language, they serve the double purpose of raising learners' consciousness about a specific grammatical item while providing opportunities for communicating in the target language- the learners will be communicating about grammar. (Ellis, 1997, p. 145)

It is also clear that the integration of communication and the subsequent more explicit development of a grammar focus in an 'organic' way is not straightforward, as pointed out by Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy (2001):

It is highly demanding for the teacher to keep track of where he or she is going with each structure. (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p. 113)

Chapter five will examine in more detail how classroom communication, in particular pupils' spontaneous meaning-focused communication, can be exploited for the development of explicit or declarative knowledge. As such, it will be useful here to give a brief overview of how errors can be classified.

Firstly, there is the issue of whether the error is psycholinguistic, that is it relates to the L2 knowledge system or sociolinguistic, namely it relates to the context of use (Taylor, 1986). Secondly, if it is identified as a psycholinguistic error, it can be distinguished in terms of its systematicity and Corder (1974) identifies three types. Pre-systematic errors occur when the learner is not aware of a particular TL rule;

systematic errors occur when the learner uses a rule but the wrong one; a post-systematic errors is when the learner knows the correct TL rule but uses it inconsistently (Corder also calls this a “mistake”). Ellis (2008) also distinguishes “transfer errors” involving transfer of elements from the L1 to the L2 and “intralingual elements” involving the overgeneralization or faulty application of rules. These can also include false hypotheses made about the language due to limited experience of it. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this study to examine the error analysis literature in any detail, it is claimed that attention to and understanding of error helps diagnose learners’ second language development. This is particularly the case as Tarone (1983, p.152) speaks of the “vernacular style” as “that style produced when the speaker pays the least amount of attention to language form” and Ellis (2008, p. 412) compares it to unplanned discourse which “can be considered primary in that it is the type found in everyday communication and spontaneous conversation.”

This is precisely the language under scrutiny in this study. In an earlier article, Tarone (1979, p.189) associates this style with speech which occurs during peer group interactions and where strong emotions are involved and with Dulay and Burt’s (1978, p. 184) “natural communication”, again the language of this study. It is also seen by Tarone (1983, p.158) to reflect “‘acquisition’, the unconscious internalization of structures...” If we accept this as being the case, it means that the conversational language produced by pupils gives a good indication of the progress in internalizing different structures and lexical items. In Mitchell’s (2003, p.21) words “unrehearsed oral data” gives “the best picture of learners’ underlying language system.” As such, this language helps the teacher to ascertain what has already been acquired and also to diagnose learners’ needs.

2.4.5 Authenticity Redefined

At this point, it is important to revisit the notion of authenticity discussed in chapter one. As seen in chapter one, the UCA redefines the notion of authentic context and task to embrace the context of the classroom. It can also be argued to challenge the notion that only the meaningful communication can be authentic. Its emphasis on competition in its activities aims at making even the more contrived drills meaningful. The UCA can be seen to embrace two types of authenticity highlighted by Breen (1985, p. 61), namely “authenticity of tasks conducive to language learning” and “authenticity of the actual social situation of the language classroom.” The former relates to the more contrived drills and the latter to the more spontaneous pupil interaction language. Indeed, Breen (1985, p. 65) states that “apparently inauthentic language-using behaviour might be authentic language-*learning* behaviour.” This sums up the link between drilling and subsequent fluent use in the UCA, both united by the element of competition (team and activities as shown in chapter six) and the need to create a reason to both practise and to use the target language. This relates also to Little’s (1994, p. 85) term of “learner/user” and Taylor’s (1994) notion of the learner as participant creating his/her own authenticity in the language classroom.

2.4.6 Language Learning as Skill Development

The notion of controlled processing, encouraging gradual movement towards automatic processing is a central feature of the information-processing model of L2 acquisition. McLaughlin (1978) suggests an information-processing and skill-acquisition perspective, using Shiffrin and Schneider’s (1977, p.127) concepts of “controlled” and “automatic processes.” He proposes that because learners are limited in the amount of information they are able to process, routinizing a skill to become

available through initial controlled processing then automatic processing means more automatic production of language. A similar distinction, one between declarative and procedural knowledge is made by Johnson (1996), drawing on Anderson's (1982) ACT model and Ellis (2008) also links this closely to the explicit/implicit distinction.

Declarative or explicit knowledge is "knowing that" and procedural knowledge is "knowing how." Johnson (1996, p.122) emphasises the importance of "Real Operating Conditions", or "ROCs", for re practising language so that it can be processed automatically. Johnson is clear that language learning is like any other skill, such as learning to fly, which needs practising under real conditions:

One learns to land in fog by landing in fog, not by landing in clear skies.
(Johnson, 1996, p.128)

The above is vital in setting the framework for the analysis of pupil talk in the UCA. Ellis' later work (2008) analyses the different and complex information processing models and still finds the notion of L2 knowledge as four intersecting continua as discussed above (Ellis, 1997) attractive but difficult to separate out and investigate empirically. He concludes (2008, p. 431) that it is preferable to view the explicit/implicit and declarative/procedural distinctions as essentially the same. As such, the term "procedural" will be used subsequently to incorporate implicit, automatised knowledge and the term "declarative" to incorporate explicit, controlled knowledge.

It can be seen that the fluent language produced in spontaneous interactions in the UCA is likely to be of the procedural type. It is language which is available for automatic processing in Johnson's (1996, p.122) "real operating conditions",

involving real-time processing. Johnson (1996, p.84) points out that declarative knowledge is slow and high on channel capacity, but has generative capacity, meaning it allows learners to generate new language. Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, is fast and light on channel capacity but “is not necessarily available to the system in generative form.” It is also high risk as it difficult to eradicate procedural information stored incorrectly. In terms of the UCA, it is important to recognise that it is procedural knowledge which lies at the heart of spontaneous interaction:

Hence, for tasks such as spontaneous conversation where immediate access to knowledge is required, procedural knowledge is important. (Johnson, 1996, p.85)

Similarly, as noted above, Ellis (1997, p.128) notes that communicative efficiency is best achieved through this procedural knowledge. This knowledge being so closely linked to fluency again underlines the notion of process. Brumfit (1981, p. 50) says that a focus on fluency is as important as a focus on accuracy as the former “emphasises the process rather than the ends of the process” and “implies that students must do many things which are not entirely predictable.” (ibid., p. 48).

It is important, then, to note that the hypothesis is that most of the fluent spontaneous pupil talk in the UCA will not be uniquely generated by the learner. It might also be expected that the language used is familiar language due to the fact that it is available for immediate access. This may also suggest that the accuracy of the language will be high if it is stored and automated correctly. It may also be that learners may make repeated, identical, or at least similar, mistakes if this procedural knowledge has been stored incorrectly.

2.4.7 The Issue of Complexity: Chunks in Language Learning

A related issue to that of fluency is that of the complexity of the spontaneous language. Two areas of literature are relevant here. The first relates to the way language is represented. Skehan (1998) proposes a dual-mode system and that language is actually very memory-based, involving repetition rather than creation. He puts forward a rule-based system and a memory-based system of formulas and exemplars. It can be seen how this links to the notion of proceduralization through repeated use and to the UCA's prioritization of drilling. According to Skehan's (1998) view, speaking is possible because learners are able to draw on their exemplar-based system to obtain quick and easy access to the linguistic means needed. Pawley and Syder (1983, p. 205) show how native-like fluency is achieved through the storage in long-term memory and use of "memorised sentence[s]" and "lexicalised sentence stem[s]." Ellis (2008, pp.431-2) makes the point that it is for this reason that learners need to "acquire a solid repertoire of formulaic chunks." This, again, is particularly relevant to spontaneous interaction in the UCA. This would suggest that repetition and the UCA's focus on the "unanalysed chunks" of classroom routines (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.114) are a crucial part of developing spontaneous talk in the UCA. Burch claims:

Routines provide the perfect climate for the growing of new concepts and the nurturing of linguistic progression.
(Burch, 2004, p. 45)

This focus on routines ties in very closely with Ellis' (1997, p. 118) claim that implicit knowledge is developed through words and formulas which "occur frequently." Myles, Mitchell and Hooper (1999) note how formulas and chunks are the *starting point* for creative construction in the language but that these chunks and formulas first

need to be successfully automatised. It will not be surprising in the UCA, then, to see formulas and chunks figure more highly in language of the younger key stage 3 learners. The automatization of these chunks and formulas is given so little focus in standard interpretations of CLT and, indeed, Mitchell (2003, p. 22) notes the problem of the “rate of forgetting” due to “inadequate opportunities to recycle and re-use new language, in meaningful activities...” Myles, Mitchell and Hooper (1999, pp. 75-76) find that, additionally, the automatization of formulaic routines enables learners to “free up controlled processes” to allow them to focus on form and creative processes. The fact that language which has been proceduralised is produced spontaneously may mean that it lacks complexity. Skehan (1992; 1996; 1998) argues that fluency, accuracy and complexity compete with one another for attentional resources. His research with Pauline Foster (Foster and Skehan, 1996; Skehan and Foster, 1997) showed that personal tasks generate more fluent and accurate but less complex language. It will be important to see if spontaneous language in this study is less complex, when it relates to the immediate and, therefore, personal classroom context of the UCA and is used in real time. Indeed, Skehan and Foster (1999) also showed a reduction in complexity under more pressured conditions, when processing demands were greater.

2.4.8 The Issue of Complexity: the Nature of Classroom Language

Further related to the issue of complexity is the very nature of classroom language itself. As noted above, Macaro (2001) observes that learners are reluctant to use it. However, he also suggests (1997, p.69) that its scope is limited and that it reaches a plateau in its complexity. He argues it can only progress vertically, not horizontally, as “the number of areas offered by classroom language are finite” (ibid.). Other

objections to classroom language raised by Macaro (1997, pp. 66-67) are the fact that it is “repetitive and artificial”, it contains a lot of verbs, that it could easily become associated with the language of management, and that it is usually not taught properly, that is teachers expect it to be acquired directly without repetition and practice. There is also the fact that topic language is “a body of language projected to the future” whereas classroom language is a “body of language dealing with the here and now.” (Macaro, 1997, p. 182). Littlewood, however, sees a focus on the here and now as a good thing:

Many learners (notably younger learners) have no clear conception of their future needs with the foreign language. They may therefore find greater stimulation in situations that are of *immediate* rather than future relevance. These may be situations which arise in the course of classroom interaction.
(Littlewood, 1981, p. 63)

Ellis (1988, p. 130) also sees the here and now as key as it makes it easier to encode and decode propositional meaning in the early stages of foreign language and second language development. Krashen (1988) also states that limiting talk to the here and now aids comprehension. Indeed, Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy (2001) note that this language is more likely to be spontaneous as it arises from real events:

... the language inherent in such situations is often the language that produces the greatest spontaneity since it is a response to an immediate and real event.
(Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.111)

The question does, however, arise, linked to Macaro’s (1997) concern above, about whether classroom language addresses more complex structures associated with the “there and then”, that is more speculative use of language in forms such as the conditional.

In terms of *both* topic and pupil interaction language being important, the UCA makes the claim that “topic language is interwoven with the language of the classroom” (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.113) Indeed Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy (2001), whilst championing the PIL in pupils’ linguistic development, also acknowledge that it is the topic language which allows learners to move beyond the classroom:

Although the topic language is ever present and provides [pupils] with the vocabulary they need to move beyond the confines of the classroom, it plays more of a supporting than a leading role; it is not the mainspring of their linguistic development.
(Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.123)

2.4.9 Output and Interaction as Drivers for Language Development

A final advantage regarding the PIL of the UCA is that communicative need can promote pupils’ language development. Ellis (2008, p. 827) concludes that meaning-focused classroom settings “may be very successful in developing fluency and effective discourse skills.” As a counter to the perceived shortcomings of Krashen’s (1982) input hypothesis, Swain (1985; 1995) developed her comprehensible output hypothesis. Swain (1985) argued that “comprehensible output” pushes learners to:

... test out hypotheses about the target language, and to move the learner from a purely semantic analysis of the language to a syntactic analysis of it.
(Swain, 1985, p. 252)

She defines this “comprehensible output” as language involved in not just getting a meaning across but getting it across “precisely, coherently and appropriately” (*ibid.*, p. 249). Learners “stretch their interlanguage to meet communicative needs” (1995, p. 132). Swain notes that such “comprehensible output” is generally missing in typical

classroom settings. Doughty and Varela (1998, p. 137-8) find “communicative pressure” combined with ‘narrowly focused, frequent recasting’ is particularly effective. Myles, Hooper and Mitchell (1998, p. 359) also talk of the usefulness of breaking down chunks which in one of her research projects was “triggered” by “the pressure of communicative needs beyond the well-practised classroom routines.” Myles, Mitchell and Hooper (1999, p.76) also states that the automatised formulas feed into the creative construction hypotheses, producing a “dynamic tension.”

It is precisely these opportunities which the UCA can offer, particularly if pupils are operating in an environment where they are expected to speak the TL and have meanings to convey which they want to convey.

Little comments that the experimental side of use is another aspect often squashed due to the pressures of content:

Teachers’ eagerness to intervene is also prompted by their worry that there is so much ground to cover. (Little, 1991, p. 45)

Indeed, such experimentation and a willingness to “try out... knowledge” is seen as central to good language-learner behaviour (Rubin, 1975, p. 43). Mitchell (2003, p. 22) also recognises the importance of creativity and risk-taking to learner development.

2.4.10 The Role of Interaction in SLA

Many studies have suggested that interaction is important for second language acquisition. Until the 1970s, conversation was seen as serving to reinforce SLA but Hatch’s (1978, p.404) analysis of conversations suggested that “language learning evolves *out of* learning how to carry on conversations.” He stated that structures

emerged out of the discourse and the child learner's *desire* to say or talk about something. The next seminal studies were by Long (1983) showing how interaction incorporating negotiation for meaning, clarification requests, confirmation of meaning and comprehension checks could be crucial in providing the comprehensible input needed for successful L2 learning. Gass, Mackey and Pica (1998) point out that much of the recent research into the role of interaction focuses on how conversational interaction promotes noticing and attention to form. Both these are essential aspects of language learning.

There is, indeed, a body of literature which supports the claim that for second language learning to take place, that is in Corder's (1967) terms, for input to become intake, the learner must *notice* the input (Schmidt and Frota, 1986; Ellis, 2008; Schmidt, 1990; 1992). The vital component is making the noticing of the input occur. In the UCA, this noticing is linked with output and it is in oral production (in both repetition drills through the mimes and more spontaneous production when pupils might ask for new language) that noticing is also promoted. Hypothesis testing, or the trying out of new language as a result of the motivation to want to say something, enables the act of "noticing the gap" between what the learner currently knows and the necessary knowledge to be able to say what he/she wants to say. Schmidt and Frota (1986) see this noticing the gap principle as adding a conscious dimension to Krashen's (1982) view that language acquisition is subconscious. Swain also speaks of learners' noticing the "gap between what they *want* to say and what they *can* say." (1995, p. 126). She speaks of learners who have the chance to "create linguistic form and meaning and in so doing, discover what they can and cannot do" (1995, p. 127)⁸.

⁸ This does, of course, include their **own** input, which is more likely to be noticed as it is the most relevant of all input. Schmidt and Frota call this the "auto-input hypothesis" which is that "the learner's

This is taken up in later writing where Swain (2000) emphasises two points: that the social activity enables learners to look for solutions and that the attempt to produce language increases noticing:

... one might hypothesize that learners seek solutions to their linguistic difficulties when the social activity they are engaged in offers them an incentive to do so, and the means to do so... it was the act of attempting to produce language which focused the learner's attention on what he or she did not know, or knew imperfectly.
(Swain, 2000, p. 100)

Noticing the gap is here claimed to feature strongly in two prominent techniques in the UCA: error correction and speculating/predicting. :

This is why we continually use strategies to make our classes "struggle to arrive at meaning, "to play detective"... "Never tell the class anything!"
(Burch, 2004, p. 40)

Both allow learners to "notice the gap." This all also ties in with the point regarding the need for frequent encounters with target language items (Krashen, 1988; Ellis, 1997; Yalden, 1987), as Doughty and Williams show how these "multiple encounters" underlie key processes in language-learning:

... language acquisition takes time; restructuring is not instantaneous... we can assume that multiple encounters are required for engaging learning processes, such as noticing, hypothesis formation and testing, comparison, and restructuring.
(Doughty and Williams, 1998b, p. 253)

Allwright (1984) sees interaction as lying at the heart of language learning and Myles, Hooper and Mitchell (1998, p.359) conclude that the pressure of communicative

own input is a very significant part of his or her own input, which affects the course of language learning" (1986, p. 316).

needs, extended opportunities for conversational interaction and ‘scaffolding’ by a more competent TL speaker move pupils on. Such opportunities go “beyond the well-practised classroom routines” (ibid.).⁹ It will be important in analysis of the study’s data to highlight examples of pupils’ noticing the gap between what they want to say and what they can say and of trying out the expression of new meanings.

2.5 A Sociocultural Account of Language Learning

A sociocultural perspective on classroom language use involves a consideration of the context, interactions and circumstances surrounding the language use, more so than the actual language used. In Ellis’ (2008, p.521) words, sociocultural research “focuses on the situational and discorsal contexts in which learner utterances are found rather than on learner language in isolation... emphasis is placed on examining the process by which new functions... emerge rather than on the products of learning.” Sociocultural theory (SCT) rejects both a behaviourist and an information-processing view of learning and takes the view of knowledge as “arising from activities in particular contexts of use” and learning as “a social, rather than an individual, process.” (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 207). This again links with the discussion of the need for more process in MFL learning and the UCA’s claim to emphasise process over product.

Sociocultural theory’s most fundamental concept is that the human mind is mediated (Lantolf, 2000), through artefacts, the most powerful tool for mediating thought being language. In SLA, the L2 is both the object of attention and the tool with which its acquisition is mediated (Ellis, 2008, p. 525). In sociocultural theory, individuals

⁹ This is not ‘routines’ in the UCA sense of the term.

develop through stages of object-, other- and self-regulation (Lantolf, 2000). Indeed as Ellis summarises:

The essence of a sociocultural theory of mind is that external mediation serves as the means by which internal mediation is achieved... Thus, a theory of the mediated mind claims that what originates as social speech becomes internalized as inner speech so that it can be used by the individual to regulate his/her own behaviour.
(Ellis, 2008, p. 525)

SCT views learning as dialogically based with verbal interaction being a primary means of mediation. Learners progress from object- and other-regulation through interacting with others (but also through private speech (Ohta, 2001)). According to Ellis (2008, p. 527), two ways of looking at the mediating role played by social interaction are, firstly, to examine the general characteristics which help learning to occur, for example with reference to scaffolding. Secondly, Ellis notes that one can look more generally at where mediation demonstrates reciprocity and contingency. This approach draws heavily on Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) which is as follows:

... the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.
(Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86)

According to Lantolf (2000, p. 17), the ZPD is best conceived of as "the collaborative construction of opportunities ... for individuals to develop their mental abilities."

Ohta (2001) has developed a definition of the ZPD¹⁰ useful for the context of classroom SLA:

For the L2 learner, the ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by individual linguistic production, and the level of potential development as determined through language produced collaboratively with a teacher or peer.
(Ohta, 2001, p.9)

This will be helpful in considering interaction in the study's data. Indeed, the particular elements related to the sociocultural perspective which have been singled out for examination here are the notions of agency (van Lier, 2008) and scaffolding (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). Conversation will also be discussed as "a natural context for verbal scaffolding" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 207) and in particular "assisted performance" and "instructional conversation" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991).

2.5.1 The Notion of Agency

Van Lier speaks of a focus on process over product in the context of his discussion of "agency":

The main principle involved is that learning depends on the activity and the initiative of the learner. More so than on any 'inputs' that are transmitted to the learner by a teacher or a textbook.
(van Lier, 2008, p.163)

This is a useful notion in the analysis of pupil target language use in this study as the UCA, as already described, encourages spontaneous target language use linked to the context of the classroom. Agency is defined by van Lier (2008, p.163) as "a contextually enacted way of being in the world", "the socioculturally mediated

¹⁰ Kinginger (2002) warns against overextending use of the term "ZPD" to apply to any, more traditional teacher-pupil interaction.

capacity to act” (Ahearn, 2001, p.112 cited in van Lier, 2008, p.163) and something learners do rather than possess.

This, again, links to the notions of process and participation. Van Lier (ibid.) also identifies initiative as a key element in agency and, as spontaneous talk is the focus of this study, it will be important to discuss how agency is reflected in pupils’ spontaneous utterances. Agency is used in this study, in line with van Lier (ibid., p.163) as an umbrella term, incorporating “issues such as volition, intentionality, initiative, intrinsic motivation and autonomy.” Motivation to participate is clearly central to the concept of agency, as van Lier (ibid., p. 170) sets out a scale of increasing agency, ranging from adjectives such as “passive” and “obedient” indicating low levels of agency, to “participatory” and “inquisitive”, with “autonomous” and “committed” showing the highest levels of agency. Pupil utterances will need to be analysed in relation to the “situational and discoursal contexts” (Ellis, 2008, p.521) to show what produces the level of agency in pupils which in turn results in spontaneous talk. This also links above to the comments by Macaro (2001) that pupils are reluctant to use the target language. The notion of agency is a useful starting point from which to explore motivation to speak in the UCA. Van Lier associates a high level of agency with spontaneous contributions from learners. This is of particular relevance to this study and in chapter five the classroom data will be examined to show the level of agency present in the pupils’ spontaneous talk. Reference will be made to van Lier’s scale of agency quoted above and also to agency as the *emotional* energy learners invest in the language produced, as set out below:

The claim here is that the notion of agency requires that the learner invest physical, mental and emotional energy in the language produced. (van Lier, ibid., p.178)

Van Lier goes on to make the further claim that this it is precisely this agency which “enhances second language development in demonstrable and durable ways” (ibid.). This is central to this study, namely that the promotion of agency by the UCA and its demonstration in pupil talk advances second language development. Van Lier sees the two as tightly linked and data analysis will examine how agency and language development go hand in hand. A tight link between what van Lier is describing and what the UCA is setting out to achieve comes in the phrase “something to say.” This phrase has already been cited in the context of the UCA’s aim. Van Lier also links it to agency, stating that “agency may be primarily the notion of speaking because ‘of having something to say’...” (ibid., p. 182). He goes on to say that it is important to investigate the “classroom circumstances that allow or encourage such expressions of agency” (ibid.). These will be highlighted in the data analysis.

Slimani (1989) concludes that learners retain more information when it is initiated, or “topicalised”, by learners than by the teacher, saying that her data showed “the learners were a more influential source than the teacher” and that they “benefit more from topics initiated by the learners” (1989, p. 227). She says that initiation by fellow classmates is also likely to result in higher intake of language. Significantly, she also notes that pupils are able to benefit from the topicalisations of other pupils even when they verbally show no interest in the exchange. She refers to studies by Allwright (1980), Ellis (1984) and Schumann and Schumann (1977) to support her claim that “though seemingly passive, some learners are silently but actively engaged in processing what is going around them” (Slimani, 1989, p. 230). Slimani points out that her study shows they may even benefit more as the topicalisers themselves may have less mental space to process the information whilst at the same time interacting.

There is a flip side to the lack of pressure on learners to participate. It means that those who want to participate do so and this can mean that certain learners dominate the interaction in the classroom. Wong-Fillmore (1985) sees this as a negative factor and the claim that more persistent students can dominate is a valid one. This is certainly the case where classroom interaction is replicating real-life and real-time conditions, with genuine communication taking place. Seliger (1983, p. 262) terms pupils who interact a lot “High Input Generators” and concludes that their higher levels of interaction mean they are able to form and test more hypotheses and receive more feedback.

2.5.2 Conversation

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) have famously noted the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) nature of the majority of classroom exchanges. It is the teacher who initiates most interactions, requiring a response (often to a closed question) from the pupil. The teacher then follows up with an evaluation of the response. In an MFL lesson, this often relates to the correctness of the form (the medium) rather than a response to the message. Dinsmore (1985) is of the view that much time in the EFL classroom is wasted in meaningless exchanges, with the teacher firmly in control. He notes that the teacher spends a great deal of time asking questions he knows the answer to and terms much of the discourse “of dubious communicative value” and “aberrant.” (1985, p. 230). Slimani (1989, p.227) similarly comments in her research on the way that “discourse initiation appears to be predominantly in the hands of the teacher.” Nunan (1987, p.141) also notes that “genuine communicative interaction” is “comparatively rare.” Legutke and Thomas describe a “typical language classroom” as follows:

... a largely ego-impooverished and teacher-centred one-way street,

in which display questions still dominate, concerns for accuracy by far out-number fluency attempts, and where communication is hard to find.

(Legutke and Thomas, 1991, p.6)

In the course of the data analysis, with a focus on both the notion of agency and the nature of the teacher talk, it emerged that there was a framework for analysis which could be a *unifying* framework for analysing the pupil and teacher talk. It would enable the talk to be analysed from *both* a cognitive and a sociocultural perspective. This unifying framework centred around the notion of “scaffolding” in its different forms and this in turn led to the notion of “instructional conversation” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.111). This helped isolate **conversation** as a framework for analysing pupil talk and pupil-teacher interaction, and the more general notion of **scaffolding** and “**assisted performance**” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.30) for analysing the teacher talk and actions. The framework of conversation will now be explored below, with that of scaffolding following in section 2.5.3.

The above issue of the potential for and value of ‘genuine communication’ in the classroom is a much debated one. Seedhouse (1996) argues that communicative orthodoxy equates genuine or natural communication with “conversation” (in the sociolinguistic sense of the term). Thornbury and Slade (2006) define “conversation” as follows:

Conversation is the informal, interactive talk between two or more people, which happens in real time, is spontaneous, has a largely interpersonal function, and in which participants share symmetrical rights. (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.25)

They also give a more detailed definition of conversation:

- that (to state the obvious) it is *spoken*, and
 - that this speaking takes place *spontaneously*, in *real time*, and
 - that it takes place in a *shared context*;
 - that it is *interactive*, hence *jointly constructed* and *reciprocal*;
 - that its function is primarily *interpersonal*;
 - that it is *informal*; and
 - since it is the critical site for the negotiation of social identities, it is *expressive* of our wishes, feelings, attitudes and judgements.
- (ibid., 2006, p. 8)

Seedhouse (1996, p. 18), however, goes on to explain that “conversation” being a “non-institutional form of discourse” cannot take place within a classroom lesson which is “an institutional setting.” He notes that all the dialogue will be related to pedagogical aims and that the very “institutional purpose” makes conversation impossible. This analysis from a conversational analysis (CA) perspective may be useful in Seedhouse’s narrow, strict sociolinguistic terms but may not be so helpful for broader purposes, as here, namely to examine the type of TL interaction that takes place between learner and teacher. Whilst Seedhouse may be correct in his narrow, sociolinguistic sense, the term conversation can and will be invoked in its broader sense, in line with Thornbury and Slade (2006) above. To replicate conversation in Seedhouse’s terms, he claims “the lesson would... have to cease to be a lesson in any understood sense of the term” (1996, p. 18). This is an interesting comment as this is precisely the impression often given in UCA lessons. One might say that observation of interactions between teacher and pupil jar to the casual observer if the teacher seems to be, in Seedhouse’s terms, “a fellow conversationist of identical status rather than... a teacher” (1996, p. 18). Whilst Seedhouse is again talking in a technical sense, many teachers are reluctant, or unable, to relinquish control (Page, 1992, p.2) such that more conversational exchanges on more equal terms can take place.

Seedhouse concludes that in sociolinguistic terms no discourse can be superior or more genuine or more natural than another. In language teaching terms, however, there are sound reasons for incorporating this type of discourse into lessons. It is to these reasons that discussion now turns.

An aim of the UCA is the encouragement of spontaneous pupil interaction language, particularly pupil-pupil language which does not pass through the teacher. Ellis (1988) claims that this helps pupils to master a range of speech acts and take different roles in conversations, which could be beneficial for second language development (SLD):

The 'co-operative' style of P-P interactions may be better suited to SLD than the 'hierarchical' style of teacher-dominated interactions in so far as it gives the learners the opportunity to perform different interactive roles and a range of speech acts.
(Ellis, 1988, p. 115)

This variety of speech acts (Ellis highlights directives, corrections, evaluations, confirmations and descriptions) in which pupils engage in the classroom is often highly limited. Analysis of the classroom data will note if the UCA encourages pupils to engage in speech acts normally proscribed in the FL classroom such as arguing a point. Van Lier states that learners could switch off if they do not perceive there to be an ebb and flow of conversation:

If, as is often the case in L2 classrooms, turn taking does *not* follow the rules of general conversation, but is controlled in some sense and follows highly predictable paths and routines, it is likely that much of the intrinsic motivation to listen is lost...
(van Lier, 1984, p. 162).

This means that conversation in the classroom can be seen to relate to listening as well as speaking skills.

In a separate article, van Lier (2001, p. 99) notes the importance of “contingency” and learners’ engaging in discourse which is unplanned or “on the spot rather than planned in advance.” Contingency is also highlighted by Thornbury and Slade (2006) as an aspect of conversation that is vital for promoting learner confidence and a feeling of success. Van Lier (1996, p. 156) also notes that if practice is crucial for language learning then IRF exchanges do not enable sufficient practice, nor (linking with other sections of this chapter) sufficient motivation or autonomy. This certainly aligns with the importance of practice for developing automaticity in the Ellis (1997) model. Van Lier argues that the learner is not able to develop independent thinking, clarity of expression and the development of conversational skills in the TL if IRFs dominate. In terms of autonomy, if this is “a capacity... for... independent action” (Little, 1991, p.4) or being “capable of taking charge of [one’s]... own learning” (Holec, 1979, p. 4), then in language learning this must involve choosing one’s own meanings to express, to some degree. These are termed by Little variously as “meanings that are important to them [learners]” and “meanings that clearly matter to them”¹¹ (Little 1991, pp.29; 31). If there is no scope to express one’s own meanings then there can be no place for autonomy in the language classroom. Indeed, Dam (1995, p. 5) stresses how developing learner autonomy means “a change in the teacher’s role” to “support learners’ initiatives.” There is a clear link made between the ability to express one’s own meaning and more effective learning (McGarry, 1995; van Lier, 1996). Stevick asserts that phrases need to have some “personal significance” (1976, p.38) to pass from short-term to long-term memory. If the learner is not able to take the learnt language and process it, internalise it, rework it and “recode” it (Sprenger, 2005, p. 61), then the learner is actually unable to use it for his or her own purposes. This

¹¹ More recently, the Dearing report (Dearing and King, 2007) has used the term “meanings that matter”.

autonomy is an aspect of van Lier's notion of agency. Van Lier gives an example of this with reference to Shakespeare's Hamlet. He talks of a pupil who can only say of Hamlet that he was "a jerk" as she has only ever been engaged in IRF-type teaching on the subject:

Perhaps we should not be surprised at such poverty of expression, if it turns out that students are not encouraged to find sources of speaking, their own voice, within themselves, and with each other, developing expressivity through contingent interaction.
(van Lier, 1996, p. 185)

Of course, the above can apply to any learning but relates closely to the need in SLA to form hypotheses for oneself. It also relates to the fact that underdeveloped automatic processing means that the information is not readily at hand when required so the learner falls back on instinct (which in SLA terms is likely to be the L1).

If we accept that input (as discussed above) is the *sine qua non* of language learning, then an additional point made by Seliger (1983) is relevant here. He proposes that the more personalised input resulting from learner-initiated interactions may be more useful in developing hypotheses than the more general group-directed input:

... language input derived from personalized or initiated language interactions may be a better source of material with which the learner can form or modify internal hypotheses about the target language.
(Seliger, 1983, p. 253)

Ellis (1988, p. 131) suggests that pupils will learn most successfully when "given ample opportunity to interact in conversations" which have certain characteristics including a need to communicate which can only come from "independent control of the propositional content." He again focuses on this need for the learner to use his

resources to work things out and express them in his own terms, relating it to the process of SLA:

Unless the learner is free to express his own meanings, there can be no need to communicate. A corollary of this requirement is that the meanings communicated by the learner are not already known by the other interlocutors... If the learner is merely asked to supply responses to fit the teacher's pre-determined template of the communicative task, there will not be the opportunity for him to use his resources in a flexible manner. This flexibility may be crucial for shaping the interlanguage system.
(Ellis, 1988, p. 129)

Finally, Swain (1985, p. 249) in her output hypothesis suggests that the production of one's own messages in the TL "may be the trigger that forces the learner to pay attention to the means of expression needed in order to successfully convey his or her intended meaning." In other words, as Ellis suggested above, it is the personal and immediate nature of the communication which focuses more attention to the interlanguage being used.

The above, then, show that conversation is an important aspect of language and it is considered a useful framework for the examination of the pupil and teacher talk in the UCA classroom. Data analysis will examine whether the talk and interactions in the UCA classroom can be deemed to be conversation, using Thornbury and Slade's (2006) definition. Data analysis will also consider how the teacher creates the conditions for conversation and the ways in which this conversation is used to improve pupils' accuracy.

2.5.3 The Notion of Scaffolding and its Different Manifestations

This section will consider the best theoretical framework for analysing how the teacher creates the conditions for the pupil spontaneous talk to take place, aside from reference to the literature on TL positions above.

In analysing the teacher talk and teacher actions, the fundamental element to take into account is the interaction between teacher and pupil. Particularly pertinent is the concept of “scaffolding”. The notion was originally coined by Wood, Bruner and Ross, who identify the following aspects of scaffolding:

1. Recruitment...
 2. Reduction in degrees of freedom...
 3. Direction maintenance...
 4. Marking critical features...
 5. Frustration control...
 6. Demonstration...
- (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976, p. 98)

This is of importance in an analysis of the UCA due to the interactive nature of the classroom, as highlighted in research data with teachers and pupils alike. This interaction is likely to lead to moments of exchange in which the notion of scaffolding provides a helpful analytical framework. Ellis defines scaffolding as follows:

Scaffolding is an inter-psychological process through which learners internalize knowledge dialogically. That is, it is the process by which one speaker (an expert or a novice) assists another speaker (a novice) to perform a skill that they are unable to perform independently.
(Ellis, 2008, p.235)

Ellis (ibid., p.235) also talks in this context of a learner’s utterance being “co-constructed” and this certainly fits with the fourth aspect of conversation identified by Thornbury and Slade (2006, p.8), namely that it is “jointly constructed.” A further ‘fit’

with conversation is that Ellis (2003, p. 182) views scaffolding as “one feature of a more general characteristic of dialogic discourse- what van Lier (1996, p. 169) has called “contingency” and this aspect of contingency is an important part of the interactive nature of conversation mentioned above.

In a further summary of scaffolding, Ellis, with reference to the Wood, Bruner and Ross’ (1976) definition above, highlights how it is able to address not only the cognitive but also the affective side of language learning:

Scaffolding, then, involves attending to both the cognitive demands of a task and the affective states of the person attempting the task. In this respect, SCT is much more encompassing than the Interactional Hypothesis, which addresses only the cognitive aspects of language learning.
(Ellis, 2003, p.181)

This will be a key point in the analysis of data, which will examine ways in which the UCA helps generate spontaneous language and affective factors are certainly prominent here.

As with the concept of the zone of proximal development, the danger is that the term “scaffolding” is so generally applied that it is in danger of losing its meaning and focus (Ellis, 2003). Ellis (ibid.) surveys a range of terms which may be more useful. These include Swain’s (2000) “collaborative dialogue” which focuses on learners’ talking together to clarify a question or problem which has arisen in a task. Also included in Ellis’ survey is Tharp and Gallimore’s “instructional conversation” (1991, p.111) which is an element of “assisted performance” (1991, p.30). This stands in contrast to the more didactic style of teacher talk described above, in particular the frequent use of IRF exchanges, a form of teaching which Tharp and Gallimore (1991, p.18) describe as “recitation.”

2.5.4 Instructional Conversation

The notion of “instructional conversation” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991) is an attractive one in the context of this study as it incorporates the concept of ‘conversation’ highlighted in the observation data and instruction, which clearly targets learning. The term seems to unite two opposing concepts and make them complementary as Tharp and Gallimore explain:

The concept itself contains a paradox: ‘Instruction’ and ‘conversation’ appear contrary, the one implying authority and planning, the other equality and responsiveness. The task of teaching is to resolve this paradox. To most truly teach, one must converse; to truly converse is to teach.

(Tharp and Gallimore, 1988, p. 111)

This consists of incorporating dialogue with the learner into teaching, so that both elements of instruction and conversation are present, including the ways in which the teacher uses these utterances for learning purposes, usually to improve pupils’ accuracy.

This interplay between communication and instruction is skilful and not easily achieved. Indeed, Tharp and Gallimore (1991, p.111) describe instructional conversation as “discourse, in which teacher and students weave together spoken and written language with previous understanding...” Indeed, the question has been posed as to whether an instructional conversation element can take place in a foreign languages classroom at all. Donato (2000) reports on Todhunter’s and Sandford’s (cited in Donato, 2000) unpublished research on instructional conversation in the foreign language classroom. He notes that communication which is conversational and instructional occurs only when the teacher departs from traditional textbook teaching and language practice, and that management talk and extension activities are

the sites where instructional conversation takes place. This is significant for the UCA which does not use textbooks and which uses the target language extensively for management talk. Donato (2000) reports that Todhunter finds these episodes of instructional conversation sporadic, disconnected and unsustainable. Donato (2000, p. 37) concludes that instructional conversations have been located by both Sandford and Todhunter “outside the planned lesson and during spontaneous detours that traditionally are not considered instructional.” This echoes Seedhouse’s (1996) claim mentioned earlier that for conversation to occur the lesson would have to cease to become a lesson. Data taken from observations and interviews with pupils will be able to shed light on the extent to which lessons may be unlike more traditional lessons.

The notion of “instructional conversation” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991) is a useful one but it is considered that the specifics of the related over-arching concept of “assisted performance” is more illuminating in terms of the data analysis as this is broader in scope but also names elements which are identifiable in the UCA.

2.5.5 Assisted Performance

Tharp and Gallimore break down “assisted performance” into the following parts:

1. Modeling: offering behaviour for imitation...;
2. Feeding back: providing information on a performance as it compares to a standard
3. Contingency managing: applying the principles of reinforcement and punishment... depending on whether or not the behavior is desired.
4. Directing: requesting specific information... specifying the correct response...;
5. Questioning: producing a mental operation that the learner cannot or would not produce alone...;
6. Explaining
7. Task structuring: chunking, segregating, sequencing, or otherwise structuring a task ...

(Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, pp. 4-5)

These elements of scaffolding, especially the first three, seem to be particularly relevant to the UCA and will be used in the analysis of the classroom interactions to highlight more precisely instances of scaffolding. “Modeling” can be seen to relate to the clear modelled routines and the drilling, or repetition, sequences of the UCA. Van Lier (1996, pp. 196-8) very helpfully illustrates exactly what the notion of “pedagogical scaffolding” might look like in the languages classroom and this can be likened to this “modeling” as described above and the routines of the UCA. He describes a routine whereby learners are gradually initiated into helping him set up the overhead projector, directing him more and more each lesson as they gain the language needed from the teacher. This is relevant as it is redolent of the routines of the UCA. Van Lier also identifies the levels of scaffolding of “macro” and “micro” (1996, p.198) and this terminology also seems helpful when referring to the UCA as scaffolding here takes many different forms, ranging from whole class to individual scaffolding.

Ohta (2001) similarly talks of routines in the context of this whole area of scaffolding and the ZPD. Ohta describes how pupils’ participation in the routines develops from “limited peripheral participation”, which is Lave and Wenger’s (1991, p. 29) term, to getting a better sense of its development through repeated participation. This latter point ties in with the drilling and routines of the UCA. Finally, she describes how pupils can turn the routines to be used for their own ends:

Finally, the learner can use the routine for his or her own purposes, becoming a creative, full participant in the cultural practice. Full participation includes the ability to customize the routine as needed. Through the process of internalizing the interactional routine, the learner develops new cognitive structures...
(Ohta, 2001, p. 6)

This is again of importance for the UCA as it is the routines here which seem to form the basis of pupils' spontaneous talk, either when they use language in its original form or in a more creative way, as suggested by Ohta (2001) above.

The second aspect of "assisted performance", namely "feeding back" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, pp. 4-5) listed above relates to the interactive error correction of the UCA and will be examined in the classroom data. The blending of instruction with conversation can be made possible if the teacher inserts an element of instruction through feedback without interrupting the process of communication. Such unobtrusive correction techniques introduce a "focus on form" (Long, 1991, p. 45) discussed above and are advocated by Doughty and Williams as they keep learners focused on meaning:

The more unobtrusive the signaling of the difficulty, the more likely the learner will remain engaged with the meaning and functions aspects of the message.
(Doughty and Williams, 1998b, p. 245)

The third element in the list "contingency managing" is akin to the frequent use of praise, rewards and points and is central to the UCA. One significant scaffolding technique of the UCA and one which also promotes agency (discussed above) is that of the team competition. The concept of competition in education tends to polarise opinions for and against. Bailey (1983) found that competitiveness, whilst causing some learners to give up, caused others to try harder. Allwright and Bailey (1991) highlight the possible contribution that competitiveness can make to language classroom anxiety. There is also the objection that reward through such devices as a team competition is based on a behaviourist view of learning. Van Lier condemns what he calls "surrogate motivation" (1996, p. 121) and points out that external

rewards can “control” rather than “enhance” an activity and, in fact, detract from learning activities.

As van Lier also makes clear, however, “external rewards, whether money, grades, or even praise, will all have the same motivation-killing effects, *if they are perceived as controlling...* that is if the outcome is perceived to be controlled by the award-giver or praiser, rather than by the student” (1996, p. 116). This is a key point which needs unpicking. Ushioda (1996) also makes this point, namely that pupils learning for the sake of points will always want greater incentives and that an intrinsically motivating activity may seem less so if the conditions of engagement are dictated by others. Crucially, however, Ushioda also focuses on this point of perception by the learner and, therefore, the way the external interventions are interpreted. She quotes Deci and Porac who refer not only to the controlling aspect of external rewards cited above but also the informational aspect:

Rewards have a *controlling aspect*- the aspect that controls or regiments behavior- and an *informational aspect*- the aspect that conveys positive or negative information about a person’s competence and self-determination.
(Deci and Porac, 1978, p. 162)

There is no doubt that the team competition of the UCA does seem to have a controlling aspect, certainly with younger classes at first. What is important is that it should take on this informational aspect and ‘kick start’ intrinsic motivation before long if it is to continue to be effective. Ushioda explains the effect of this informational aspect:

Rewards that are interpreted by the student as providing positive evaluative feedback rather than as simply controlling behaviour may consequently enhance intrinsic motivation.
(Ushioda, 1996, p. 23)

Krashen discusses the principle of rewarding positively “any sort of attempt at speaking” (1988, p. 59) under the heading of the “affective filter hypothesis.” The study will investigate the role of the team competition in the encouragement of spontaneous pupil talk.

The remaining four elements of “assisted performance” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4) will also be referenced in the classroom data and it is expected that assistance will often involve the learner working things out for himself, in line with Burch’s (2004, p. 40) claim quoted above. Task structuring (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.5) relates to helping learners refer to specific structures one at a time and also to breaking down language for drilling.

2.6 A Sociocognitive Perspective

This chapter has highlighted the two differing perspectives in SLA, the cognitive and the sociocultural, and explored the literature of both in relation to the UCA. Ohta (2001, p. 21) raises the possibility of a framework for bringing the two together to give “a more holistic view of language learning processes” in a “sociocognitive perspective.”

In this chapter, it has been noted that the UCA emphasises the more interactive elements of the cognitive perspective (interaction, output, real operating conditions of genuine communication) and the more cognitive aspects of the sociocultural (participation is precisely through use of the target language itself). Ohta (ibid.) emphasises how these come together as “cognition itself is formed through social interaction”. She portrays a picture where cognition and interaction combine and ebb and flow:

... researchers need to push beyond discrete separation of the social and the cognitive to consideration of SLA as a dynamic, sociocognitive process, in which the social and cognitive interpenetrate one another. From peripheral participation in interactional routines to creative application of those routines for individual purposes, from the social interactions of others to the whispers of private speech and back to social interaction again, language use and acquisition are dynamic and interwoven. (2001, p. 21)

This supports the argument for language learning as a constant interplay between social and cognitive, process and product (as argued in chapter one) and learning and using language (Little, 1994). This study aims to show how the UCA can combine these emphases.

2.7 Conclusion

There are, then, many aspects of the literature which relate directly to the UCA. This is not surprising as this study has a deliberately broad scope in order to capture as much of the essence of the UCA as possible. In addition, the production of spontaneous talk involves a large number of factors. The UCA clearly attaches great importance to the use of the target language in the classroom and it will be essential to ascertain which position the UCA adopts towards target language use by teacher and pupils alike. Linked to this, it will be important to study the role of scaffolding in maintaining target language use and conversation by pupils. In addition, there will be the need to analyse the pupil talk from both a cognitive and a sociocultural perspective, enabling an understanding of the actual language produced and the context in which pupils are motivated to produce it.

In terms of conversation, it will be informative to identify the aspects of conversation in the pupil talk and to consider how the conditions are created for this conversation to

take place. The role of fluency will be central and how this is achieved, with reference to an acquisition-rich classroom where controlled language is encountered frequently by pupils.

Finally, with a view to creating a sociocognitive perspective, there exists the potential for making the conversation instructional in order to maximise pupils' language use and learning, so that process and product, the social and the cognitive intertwine and pupils become genuine learners and users.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of Chapter Three

This chapter sets out how data on the University of Cumbria Approach (UCA) will be collected and analysed. The data derives from a case study school which uses the UCA. This includes lesson observations, interviews with pupils and with teachers. Additional interview data is derived from the originator of the Approach.

The case study is the modern foreign languages (MFL) department in a secondary school in a South London borough. This school has been chosen because it has embraced the UCA in its MFL department under the leadership of the head of department. The department has received much attention for its methodology, including visits from PGCE students on other courses and from serving teachers across London.

The department contains some teachers who have been formally trained in the UCA at the University of Cumbria (UoC) and some who have been trained informally by UoC tutors and some who have had no direct UoC training. There is an expectation that teachers will teach using the UCA, although this is not rigorously enforced by the head of department.

3.2 The Case Study Approach

The case study is a “flexible research design” (Robson, 2002) which can be defined as follows:

... a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence. (Robson, 2002, p.178)

The UCA, although it exists as a methodological approach developed and advocated in a PGCE course and teacher training institution, is best explored in a context where it is implemented. Without this context, one can only gain a theoretical understanding of the Approach. As Mitchell (1992) points out, the advantage of the case study is that it studies the Approach in the classroom, and with pupils and teachers, which is its natural context, not an artificially set up one:

The advantage of case studies is that they are much more detailed in-depth research about 'natural' events and so do not face the problem for experiments about how closely they would apply in everyday life; case studies are about everyday life. They are likely to produce more accurate reports than surveys or experiments.
(Mitchell, 1992, p.185-6)

The relative weakness of the case study is that it is not so easy to generalise from it. The case is often studied precisely because of its uniqueness. Nevertheless, as Robson (2002, p.177) points out, the case study "does not preclude some kind of generalizability beyond the specific setting studied." What is important is to describe the manifestations of the UCA in such a way that it can be seen how it could be implemented in a different context. This involves relating its specific manifestations in the case study context to existing theory in order to establish its distinctive features and broad principles. This will provide useful principles for other school contexts, or "analytic or theoretical generalization" (ibid.), as explained by Sim:

Here the data gained from a particular study provide theoretical insights which possess a sufficient degree of generality or universality to allow their projection to other contexts or situations.
(Sim, 1998, p.350)

It should also be possible to isolate contextual features present in the case study school which may be unique to that situation and not necessarily present elsewhere.

Brown and Dowling (1998, p.30) assert that the validity of generalization “relies on the researcher marking out the continuities and discontinuities between the setting and the empirical field...” They describe this process as “elaborated description” (ibid.). Indeed, a strength of this format could well be that it provides enough information as a basis for others to draw generalizations for their own context. Case studies “may facilitate learning by substituting for first-hand experience” (Hammersley and Gomm, 2000, p.9). They can play a part in the process of “naturalistic generalization” (Stake, 1994, p. 237) or help the ‘transfer’ of findings from one setting to another on the basis of ‘fit’ (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Certainly, statistical generalizations are a different matter and are inappropriate for this research design (Burton, 2000).

It was considered undertaking smaller, multiple case studies of individual teachers or classes or schools using the Approach. This would, however, have led to a more fragmented picture and resulted in a much less detailed and consequently impoverished analysis. Much more space would have had to be allocated to describing contextual factors, thereby lessening the focus on the description and discussion of the UCA. As Hammersley and Gomm (2000, p.2) point out, “the fewer cases investigated, the more information can be collected about each of them.”

One challenging element of the study of a whole Approach is the difficulty of delimiting the study. The very analysis of a teaching and learning approach of any sort inevitably incorporates a large number of tangential, wider aspects of learning which could risk blurring the focus of the study. The advantage of the case study is that it is not only bounded but gives a clear context for bringing together multiple viewpoints.

The case study was constructed to give as clear a picture of possible of the UCA in context. It is not a case study of the entire MFL department of the selected school as

this was not considered manageable. Furthermore, it was decided to focus on two of the most committed teacher practitioners of the UCA in order to obtain the richest observation data. From these two practitioners, French classes were selected to enable meaningful comparisons to be made between them and the language used. Two top set classes (one from key stage three and one from key stage four) and one lower set were selected to give a fair range of age and ability. To enable a depth of study of these classes and in order to gain supporting data, the two teachers and pupils from these classes were interviewed. Although the originator of the UCA is not a member of the case study school, it was felt necessary to interview him to establish the wider context of the UCA.

Drawing on the related ethnographic approach to research, it is possible to produce detailed accounts or “thick description” (Geertz, 1993) of the Approach ‘in action.’ This is particularly appropriate in the study of the UCA, about which little has been written. Indeed, the purpose of this study was originally first and foremost to understand what defines the Approach and what are its distinctive features. In short, to understand what it is, in essence. This then developed into a study of the pupil talk, and then spontaneous pupil talk in particular.

This study has taken an ethnographic approach as defined by Robson (2002):

Ethnographic study seeks to capture, interpret and explain how a group, organization or community live, experience and make sense of their lives and their world.
(Robson, 2002, p. 89)

This is suited to this study as the UCA is a distinctive approach promoted by an organization and practised within a particular setting in such a way that it represents the everyday practice of a group of teachers and pupils.

As noted by Brown and Dowling (1998, p. 43), an ethnographic approach entails “sustained interaction with participants” and “highly detailed observation.” This is evidenced in this study through detailed interviews, participant and non-participant observation of lessons.

Other designs were considered. A fixed, comparative design (Robson 2002, p.159) was tempting. This, however, posed numerous problems. Firstly, it would have been necessary to focus the study on specific independent variables. This would have unduly narrowed the scope of the study and not achieved the objective of gaining a better understanding of the nature of the UCA as a whole. This would also have restricted the opportunity of the study’s development into a particularly distinctive area, such as has been the case with the focus on spontaneous pupil talk. A comparative study could still be the subject of future research. Secondly, there was the difficulty of identifying suitable comparison groups which would have threatened the internal validity of the study. This difficulty was increased by the fact that the groups would have been in different schools, with totally different contexts.

This comparison can best be achieved through detailed description. Brumfit and Mitchell (1990) argue for the need for more descriptive work as they form a good basis for the discussion of innovation. They argue that interventionist and experimental procedures can focus overly on “examining the trivial and simple, and ignoring the complex but much more important real world in which teachers and learners have to operate.” (ibid., pp.12-13). No research can truly capture the real world in which teachers, and the UCA, operate. This is Labov’s (1969) observer’s paradox: the mere presence of an observer changes the nature of what is observed.

Nevertheless, there is more chance of capturing the complexities of the real life situation than where a controlled experiment is conducted.

The flexible nature of the design is also useful. As Robson (2002, p.167) points out with reference to flexible design research, “the sampling strategy can and should evolve with other aspects of the design.” As set out below, the data collection has expanded with an added focus on pupils’ views. The flexibility of the design allowed the researcher to observe an extra class (in addition to the focus classes). It also permitted the use of field notes and participant observation which was not originally envisaged. Furthermore, a reduction in the number of classroom observations and an increase in the number of pupil interviews were made possible through the case study design. This gives more weight to the important viewpoint of the pupil.

As already mentioned, the case study allows the use of “multiple sources of evidence” (Robson 2002, p.178). Indeed, one of the strengths of the case study is that it enables a better understanding of other people’s viewpoints. This is a particularly important aspect to gather other viewpoints when the researcher is so deeply involved with the UCA. These different perspectives allow new issues to emerge, which may not have been considered by the researcher. Whilst most of the data will be qualitative, quantitative data is not excluded. Ragin (1992) suggests that the divide between qualitative and quantitative research techniques is not as great as is often made out. The latter can come into play in the analysis of observations, for example the analysis of interactions, as discussed below.

It is important at this point to reiterate the researcher’s position as someone experienced in and committed to the teaching approach being researched. As the researcher is so closely involved with the UCA and its manifestations, it was decided

that it would enhance the research to draw on previous observations and knowledge. This ties in with an epistemological assumption that knowledge is not only something which is objective and tangible but which can be also be personally experienced and unique and entails an involvement with its subjects (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 6). This means that the researcher's prior professional understanding and experience of the UCA in action is also a valid source of knowledge. It also means that his commitment to the Approach need not be interpreted negatively since the unique personal insights brought by the researcher are considered to enhance the understanding of the data.

This represents a broadly "postpositivist", "realist" epistemology (Swann and Pratt, 2003, p.7, p.52) but where the subjectivity of observation does not mean that truth is "relative." Swann and Pratt summarise this as follows:

... a realist epistemology which recognizes that our knowledge of the world is a human construct- an interpretation, conjecture, theory- though it accepts that there is a world which exists 'out there', independent of our knowledge of it.
(Swann and Pratt, 2003, p.52)

3.3 Case Study of School in South London Borough

The case study school is situated in a south London borough. It is an 11 - 19 Foundation co-educational comprehensive school and Language College.¹² It has a strong reputation in the locality and has been judged as "outstandingly effective" by Ofsted overall. The 2010 inspection unofficially described all MFL lessons seen as "outstanding", although reports are now written in whole school terms. The school is a very large one, with approximately 1750 pupils on roll. It is an over-subscribed school that draws its students from a wide range of primary schools within the local

¹² This is one of a series of specialisms for which schools apply to the Department for Education (DfE).

area. It takes students from the full range of ability but the majority of them are attaining average standards when they join the school. Eligibility for free school meals is much lower than average. There is an average proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need. Around one in five students has a minority ethnic heritage, although no one group predominates. Seventy-eight per cent of pupils gain five or more GCSEs, A*-C. This figure is sixty-five per cent when mathematics and English are included. This compares favourably with the national averages of sixty-five and forty-seven per cent respectively. The figures for languages are sixty-five per cent of entries gaining GCSE, A*-C.

3.4 Data Collection

The following table shows a timeline of the whole research, in particular of the data collection:

January 06-	Pre-Research: Observations Literature Review beginnings
September 06	Pre-Research: First Interview with Originator
July 07	VIDEO Y7 top Y10 top
October 07	VIDEO Y8 top Y11 top Second Interview with Originator
November 07	AUDIO Y11 lower French Y8 top group interviews Y11 top group interviews
January 08	Third Interview with Originator
February 08	VIDEO Y8 top Y11 top AUDIO Y11 lower French Y8 top group interviews Y11 top group interviews Y9 mixed group interviews Y11 lower interviews
May 08	Upgrade Interview Y9 mixed group interviews
June 08	Interviews with teachers in observed classes
June 08- August 11	Data storage and transcription Data coding and analysis Writing up

Table 3.1: Timeline of research

The first round of data collection consisted of a) interviews with the originator of the UCA and b) a video recording of two focus classes. The classes chosen were French classes, as this is the language taught by the lead practitioner of the UCA in the school, the head of department.

At this point, it is important to note that the researcher already had strong links with the school. The researcher is a teacher trainer and these links have come about due to the school's being a placement school for PGCE students. The department has what is called "guru school"¹³ status on the PGCE course. This meant that the researcher was often present as a Higher Education (HE) partner and a known figure to staff and pupils and therefore less threatening. This meant that an element of habituation had already taken place (Brown and Dowling, 1998; Robson, 2002), reducing observer effects. It should be stressed that in no way did the researcher have an assessment role in the school.

3.4.1 Interviews with the Originator of the UCA

The format of the semi-structured interview (Robson, 2002, p.270), with probing questions (Robson, 2002, p.276) as appropriate, was chosen for interviews with the originator of the UCA as this would allow enough flexibility for the respondent to explore issues which were important to him/her, without too much influence from the interviewer. This was particularly important due to the close working relationship so as not to influence answers by the way the questions were worded. The first objective of the interviews was to establish a biography and chronology of the UCA. The

¹³ So-called "guru schools" are schools which are considered to be examples of good practice of the UCA, to which PGCE students are taken to observe teaching.

second was to establish the key aspects of the UCA in the interviewee's eyes. It was felt both of these objectives would be achieved as impartially as possible by allowing the interviewee to talk freely and offer a narrative.

It was crucially important for the researcher to interview the originator of the UCA as early as possible in the study to avoid influencing the views of the respondent. The initial interview highlighted the need for two further interviews, due to the amount of ground to be covered and the informative but full nature of the respondent's answers. Polkinghorne (2005) argues that one-shot interviews rarely produce full and rich descriptions. He recommends a sequence of three interviews in order to produce sufficient breadth and depth.

Following the collection of this data, the focus of the study changed. Interviews were refocused as it was considered that the pupil perspective on their learning would add a vital element to the research data and help make better sense of the UCA. As a result, the pupil interview element was expanded and the lesson observation element reduced, in order to provide a balance between the two and to make data collection procedures manageable. Pupil group interviews in English, concentrating on eliciting opinions about lessons, were set up.

3.4.2 Video-recorded Lesson Observations

As a case study of the whole department was unrealistic, it was decided to focus particularly on two teachers (and one class from each) who exemplify the UCA: the head of department (an English native speaker) and a teacher entering her second year of teaching and her second year at the school (a French native speaker). Both have had different introductions to the UCA.

The head of department, and teacher of the Year 10/11 class completed a PGCE at a university in the north of England and has been teaching since September 1992 and been head of department since 1996. She has worked at the case study school for her whole career and is an Advanced Skills Teacher (AST).¹⁴ This teacher leads the developments in methodology in the department. She was not trained at the UoC but adapted her practice to incorporate the methodology after working with beginner teachers from St. Martin's College in 1997 and through observations by and feedback from the originator of the UCA and the course leader in London. She changed her practice dramatically after seeing the language that her class was able to produce when taught by a student teacher. This led her to stop using textbooks and take on the UCA that year.

The teacher of the Year 7/8 class was trained at St. Martin's College and did her second placement at the school. She proved to be an excellent student on the PGCE course and is in her first/second year of teaching at the time of the observations. Her teaching is held in high regard by the school and she has received outstanding NQT observation reports.

Both classes were 'top sets' studying French, which helps with comparisons between levels of language at key stages 3 and 4¹⁵. It was felt useful to observe one key stage three and one key stage four class. The Y7/8 class is a top set out of five, pupils, however, being setted according to their English and maths results. The Y10/11 class is a self-selecting top set as it consists of the dual linguists option group.

¹⁴ To be awarded this status, teachers have to demonstrate their excellent practice to an assessor who examines a range of evidence.

¹⁵ Key Stage Three is Years 7-9 (pupils aged 11-14) and Key Stage Four is Years 10-11 (pupils aged 14-16).

The Year (Y) 7/8 class, taught by the less experienced teacher, consisted of 31 pupils, 12 boys and 19 girls. The Y10/11 class, taught by the head of department, consisted of 13 pupils, 5 boys and 8 girls. All the Y10/11 pupils were dual linguists, taking German or Spanish. The boys also took Italian and one of the girls took Japanese. One boy took four languages (Italian, Japanese, German and French) and another boy achieved an A in Italian in one year.

Data collection involved non-participant observation with video and audio recordings, collected at these periodic intervals:

July 2007	Y7	Y10
October 2007	Y8	Y11
February 2008	Y8	Y11

The video recording of the class enables a close study of the interactions between teacher and pupils and between pupils. The advantages of video recording were that rich video data is available for what Edwards and Westgate (1987, p. 61) refer to as “retrospective analysis.” This permits analysis in much greater depth, at leisure, than would be possible from field notes or audio recordings. The video adds a greater sense of context than audio recordings alone. The disadvantage, however, was that the researcher’s focus was on the operation of the camera and, as such, significant interactions often passed unnoticed in real time. Whilst it can be argued that these interactions are still available for subsequent viewing in video form, it is also true that the true essence of an ephemeral interaction is lost forever if not experienced in the moment.

To make the video recording as unobtrusive as possible, the camera was placed at the back or side of the classroom. The pupils did not appear inhibited by the presence of the researcher. Smith (1981) notes that researcher effect need not be too great where

the situation being observed is sufficiently engrossing and demanding of the participant's attention that he or she at least temporarily forgets the observer's presence. This certainly seems to be the case for the large part of the lessons. Nevertheless, occasional references to the researcher and the equipment do suggest a researcher effect. Indeed, there is a likelihood that pupils' utterances were affected by the presence of the researcher and equipment. As Edwards and Westgate (1987, p. 77) note, research subjects "may well talk more, or talk less, or just talk differently." The same applies to the researcher effect on the teacher. However, the teacher of the Year 10/11 class is used to addressing the researcher during routine observations, so this may well suggest that she had adopted her usual stance and did not view the observed lessons as out of the ordinary.

There is no denying, however, that the presence of the camera and tape recorders will have altered the nature of the lesson and the interactions in it. As Robson states:

It is never logically possible to be completely sure that your presence has not in some way changed what you are seeking to observe...
(Robson, 2002, p. 328)

This is despite the fact that the pupils are used to being observed and that the researcher has frequently been present in the MFL department prior to this study. The teachers know the researcher well and are used to his presence in lessons. This means that the recording did not represent a particularly unusual event which helped avoid too much of a distortion of the proceedings compared to unobserved lessons. Nevertheless, a significant issue is that the teachers may have felt the need to 'deliver' a better lesson than usual due to the fact they were being observed by a colleague perceived to have certain expectations of the lesson due to the very fact that a given methodology was being studied. There is the added element that the researcher may

have been seen in the role of expert concerning the methodology being observed, particularly in the case of the Year 7/8 teacher as the researcher was one of her tutors during her PGCE year. Both teachers were frequently reminded, however, that the study constituted an observation and not an evaluation of the lessons. This went some way to reducing the pressure to produce an exceptional lesson, although it seems likely that a certain amount of anxiety was still present. This would be a factor in any more formal observation situation, however, if the teacher was concerned to create a good impression. The researcher also tried to use techniques of “minimal interaction” suggested by Robson (2002, p.328).

The camera angle did not allow all pupils and the teacher to be captured in one shot, meaning that the camera had to be moved at times to capture all interactions. This represents a limitation of video recording. A consideration of the disadvantages and advantages of video recording concluded that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

3.5 Further Data Collection

The number of classes was kept to two in the first instance in order to achieve the “depth rather than breadth of coverage” (Robson, 2002, p.190) of an ethnographic study. As the first round of data collection was concluded, the data collection schedule was amended to include non-participant observation of a further class and interviews with pupils in English to ascertain their views on their language learning using the UCA. The video recording of the two focus classes also continued as detailed above.

The decision to include extra audio recordings as supplementary data came as the focus of the study shifted from an analysis of teacher actions to an analysis of pupil talk in particular. The data would be valuable in highlighting differences in language

content. This shift relates to the theoretical sampling of grounded theory (see below) where “the persons... studied are chosen to help the researcher formulate theory” and “additional information can be obtained to help in generating conceptual categories” (Robson, 2002, p.193).

3.5.1 Lesson Observations: Audio-recorded observation of a further French class at KS4 (Y11)

It was decided to undertake video recording of another class taught by the head of department as this would allow for a stable comparison across the ability range without having to try to factor in the complicating factor of teacher style. The class chosen was a lower set Year 11 class, consisting of a significant majority of boys. The group is a set four out of five, with 6 girls and 13 boys.

A difficulty arose when, in the Year 11 group, a number of boys, led by one in particular, threatened to refuse permission to be video recorded. It was decided with the class teacher that it would be appropriate for the researcher to gain the confidence of the class by attending lessons so that the class became used to the researcher’s presence. During this process of habituation (Brown and Dowling, 1998; Robson, 2002), the researcher observed two lessons at the side of the class, taking notes, and attended two further lessons as a participant observer, sitting with pupils and working with one pupil in particular during pairwork activities. Due to the lively nature of the class, it was felt best to become more involved and support one pupil to, paradoxically, become less intrusive. This is in accordance with Robson’s (2002) suggestion:

It is worth noting that in some circumstances an essentially non-interacting observer may be of more continuing interest and disturbance than one who gives a friendly smile or nod from time to

time... we have found it profitable sometimes to take the role of 'teaching assistant', thus providing a natural entrée to interaction with the child about events in the classroom, while not precluding periods of busy, non-interacting, systematic observation.”
(Robson, 2002, p.328)

The observer was able to combine periods of participation and non-participation, much in the way described here. This gained the confidence of the class and it was decided that data from two observations with audio recordings would be useful for the study. This would avoid the issue of creating anxiety among pupils but also, given the experience of videoing described above, would provide a different perspective to the observations. Notes could be taken simultaneously and thus interactions considered as the class progressed. Three tape recorders were placed at different points around the room to capture the interactions as clearly as possible. The first time this was carried out with the Year 11 group, the tape recorders and microphones on desks created an initial interest by two or three pupils. For the second recording, microphones were placed away from the desks in order to avoid any potential disruption.

3.5.2 Analysis of Lesson Observation Data

The study originally aimed to ascertain what was distinctive about the UCA. The focus was kept deliberately open in order that an open-minded view as to the nature of the UCA could be maintained and so that the view of it would not be restricted too early. This is akin to the process in “grounded theory” and “the notion that it is feasible to discover concepts and come up with hypotheses from the field, which can be used to generate theory” (Robson, 2002, p.191). Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is drawn on in this thesis. This is defined in the seminal work of Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp.2-3) as the “discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” and “the process of research for generating theory.”

Grounded Theory is drawn on in this research, most significantly in that theory has emerged from the data rather than being pre-existing and has developed from study of and reflection upon “data systematically gathered and analysed” (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 273). The fact that theory has emerged is demonstrated by the way in which the focus of the study shifted in response to the data. A deliberately open focus had been maintained until this point. As such, in keeping with grounded theory, no existing theory is being tested. The iterative nature of grounded theory, its closeness to the data and the tolerance of openness to data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, pp. 598-9) are also demonstrated by the dynamic interaction between literature review and data, mentioned in chapter two. Indeed targeted pre-reading can prematurely close off what one sees in data (ibid.). Where this study deviates from Glaser and Strauss’ conception of grounded theory is that theoretical sampling did not take place. Although additional data was added early on (pupil interviews), this was more in keeping with the flexibility of a case study design than an adherence to the conception of grounded theory. Similarly, sample size was more or less fixed and did *not* expand in response to the data in line with grounded theory. Furthermore, data analysis did not determine further collection of data, such that the emerging theory did not determine the data collection process.

Initial data analysis highlighted that a distinctive and fascinating feature of the observation data was the *pupils’* use of the target language. This then developed into a focus on pupils’ spontaneous interaction in the target language and how the UCA teacher promotes this. As discussed in chapter two, data will be analysed from a cognitive and sociocultural perspective. This is broadly what van Lier (1988, p.90) describes as the categories of “*what is said*” and “*what is done.*”

It was decided to focus the analysis on the whole class talk as this provided ample material for analysis and meant meaningful and more coherent conclusions could be drawn across the three classes. Pairwork constitutes an entirely different grouping and dynamic and would be better analysed in a follow-up study, using more specialist equipment and focusing more on the dynamics and context of group work or pairwork, with reference to more specific literature and studies of groupwork and one-to-one talk (see Ellis, 2008, p.237).

3.5.3 Analysis of Lesson Observation Data from a Cognitive Perspective

Lessons were firstly transcribed. Initially, transcriptions were focused on highlighting main aspects of the lesson such as classroom activities and key teacher actions. The aim was not to transcribe word for word but to pick out key activities and teacher actions. It was during the transcription process of the first lessons that it quickly became apparent that the distinctive element of the lesson observation data was the spontaneous use of the target language by pupils and the way that this was interspersed through the lesson. Indeed, it became clear that the spontaneous talk off the pedagogical focus was the most fascinating aspect of the lesson. It then became imperative that transcriptions were much more detailed and included all pupil and teacher language. Examples of transcriptions are provided in appendices 4 and 5, with transcript conventions given in appendix 3.

Each turn was then coded. A turn is defined as follows:

A stretch of talk, by one person, before and after which there is silence on the part of that person.
(Harris, 1951, p.14)

In line with van Lier (1988), it is acknowledged that this is a limiting definition as the borderlines of a turn are often blurred, with overlapping and false starts and restarts, for example. For the purposes of this research, however, Harris' definition offers clarity and manageability.

The data analysis process was as follows. The lesson transcripts were analysed line by line using the process of coding. This was the process whereby multiple category labels were applied to each pupil or teacher turn in the data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p.559). The categories emerged "in response to the data" and most pieces of text had more than one code ascribed to them (ibid.). Descriptive codes developed into analytic codes and these analytical coding categories have a mixed origin. Some emerged purely during the course of the data analysis and others came from the UCA framework or other literature. The origin of these codes will be considered in turn as they are presented below. The analytic codes were finally grouped and developed into more theoretical and broader concepts, such as those of target language and context management.

Firstly, the codes of accuracy, complexity and fluency emerged from the data as part of the analysis from a cognitive point of view but were informed by the identification of these competing aspects in Skehan and Foster (1999). For pupil turns, then, the language was coded for fluency (automaticity), complexity and accuracy, using the following definitions. Fluency is traditionally seen in the following terms:

... the capacity to use language in real time, to emphasise meanings, possibly drawing on more lexicalized items.
(Skehan and Foster, 1999, p.96)

Fluency also includes an element of the automatization of grammatical structures (Johnson and Johnson, 1998). The focus for fluency in the analysis of pupils' utterances, however, was automaticity, that is the speed at which they could produce the utterance at the appropriate moment in real time, without any undue hesitation which would otherwise make their utterance irrelevant because it came too late or interrupted the flow. This is what Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988, p. 474) describe as "automaticity" as a component of fluency, involving:

... the speaker's ability to respond without needing an inordinate amount of time to formulate an utterance and the ability to understand and produce sentences without undue groping, hesitations, or pauses.
(Gatbonton and Segalowitz, 1988, p. 474)

Accuracy is defined as "the ability to avoid error in performance" (Skehan and Foster, 1999, p.96) and complexity as follows:

... the capacity to use more advanced language, with the possibility that such language may not be controlled so effectively. This may also involve a greater willingness to take risks...
(Skehan and Foster, 1999, p.96)

A three-part scale was used, again for the purpose of clarity. The purpose of the scale is not to provide a detailed analysis of each turn in each category but rather to provide an overview of the data as a lead-in to further qualitative analysis. It is for this reason that the descriptors for each scale point are broad, in order to allow a general trend to be identified, without being clouded by too much detail at this stage. The detailed analysis will be undertaken in qualitative terms, with the quantitative data acting as an indicator of a trend in the data. The three point scales for fluency, complexity and accuracy are defined as follows:

Fluency (Automaticity):

A three-part scale is appropriate here as it allows a relatively straightforward judgement of automaticity to be made which is sufficiently detailed to contribute to an overall analysis of pupils' language use. The measurement of pauses in terms of seconds or length of run was considered too precise given that the measure of fluency is but one category in the overall analysis. In addition, the "rough and tumble of verbal interaction" (van Lier, 1988, p.100) means that there may be reasons for hesitation related to the taking in of other peoples' utterances and interruptions as well as word repetitions, false starts and unfinished utterances. These features collectively are known as "dysfluency" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.12).

Also, the nature of the cut and thrust of the real-time interactions is such that turns will often be short as other pupils or the teacher 'pitch in.' In this respect, fluency may seem less than it might be due to the nature of the interactions in the classroom.

The turns are coded in terms of automaticity as described above. If an utterance is not processed automatically, it is "controlled" in terms of Ellis' model of instructed SLA (1997), thus turns are coded as follows for fluency:

- Controlled (1): repeated after the teacher and/or read from the board.
- Semi-controlled (2): some hesitation or pausing or use of support or request for vocabulary. Some inappropriate/inaccurate use.
- Automatic (3): fluent use without obvious hesitation/support/need for vocabulary; appropriate, accurate use of known vocabulary and structures.

Accuracy:

Turns are coded as follows for accuracy:

- Inaccurate (1): significant inaccuracies.
- Semi-accurate (2): one inaccurate form or omission; communication not affected.
- Accurate (3): may contain a minor inaccuracy or omission, especially in a more complex or extended turn.

Complexity:

The complexity of the language is coded, taking GCSE criteria as a benchmark, for example the use of subordination, a mixture and/or variety of tenses. Turns are coded as follows for complexity:

- Non-complex (1): does not meet the criteria for (2).
- Semi-complex (2): turn shows subordination or co-ordination (use of a subordinating or co-ordinating conjunction, often because/and/or); and/or uses more than one tense; and/or the turn is more extended than the average turn for the class.
- Complex (3): utterance is more ambitious, for example uses 'if' or a conditional tense. Utterance is significantly more extended than the average utterance in the class.

Generation/origin of the language:

The utterances were also coded as to how the language was generated, that is the extent to which it was self-generated by the learner. This relates to the extent to which the main part of the turn is a prefabricated chunk. The codes concerning how the language was generated also emerged from the data but were additionally based on the researcher's knowledge of the UCA framework, namely that some of the pupil language is the pre-taught language of routines. This was also informed by the literature on chunks in chapter two (Pawley and Syder, 1983; Skehan, 1998; Myles, Mitchell and Hooper, 1999).

The following codes were used:

- Teacher-generated (1): the language is used in direct response to the teacher or activity, either of which has directly supplied the language.
- Classroom-generated (2): the language may be or have been in frequent use in the classroom. This relies on the researcher's knowledge of such routine language, checked with the class teacher as necessary. This category is largely that of the "prefabricated chunks."
- Learner-generated (3): as far as can be established, the language is largely learner-generated, although it may incorporate some classroom-generated language, often adapted. Such language may be more inaccurate or less automatic due to its original nature.

Teacher talk was also coded by turn. Each turn was allocated any combination of thirty-five codes. Language coded as controlled teacher language was language which was deemed to follow a familiar structure, either because it arose in that form two or more times in a lesson, or because it was a form already familiar to pupils from previous lessons. This latter fact was established either as a result of knowledge on the part of the researcher from the observation of lessons in the past and/or by checking with the teacher concerned. Only one code out of thirty-five (code 1.4) focuses on the actual language used by the teacher, as the greater focus will be on the techniques employed by the teacher and these will be examined in the section on the sociocultural perspective. The language used by the teacher will, however, also be discussed qualitatively to highlight how it has an impact on pupil target language use.

3.5.4 Analysis of Lesson Observation Data from a Sociocultural Perspective

Conversational analysis (CA) was considered as a means of analysing the data and to "characterize the organisation of interaction" (Seedhouse, 2004, p.13). It was

considered that such “micro-analyses” (Ellis, 2008, p.779) would not reflect the overall picture of interactions in the classroom and that CA does not easily take account of interactions involving learners and teacher who are not interacting as co-members (Rampton, Roberts, Leung and Harris, 2002).

Pupil turns were coded according to whether the turn was initiated by the learner or was a response. The need for codings concerning initiation soon became clear from the data and were inspired by van Lier’s work on the quantification of participation in the second-language classroom (van Lier, 1988). Here he considers notions of turn-taking and self-selection, including that of initiative.

An initiation is taken as being any turn where the learner was not asked a question by the teacher or another learner or where a response is not expected as part of an activity. It is spoken “voluntary (i.e. actor-originated) participation in the goings on” (van Lier, 1988, p.107). In an activity where a response is implied but not directly asked for (for example pupils have to call out the next word in a text which is being gradually revealed), a pupil turn is counted as a response not an initiation. Similarly, where a pupil initiates a turn and a teacher asks for clarification or repetition, this second turn is also counted as a response. Where an answer has been provided and a pupil proffers a further comment, this is counted as an initiation. Turns were further coded for the extent to which they introduced a new angle or subject to what has gone before. The introduction of a new angle by a pupil breaks the predictable cycle of the lesson and illustrates a personal perspective (van Lier, 2008). Finally, turns were coded as to whether they were deemed to be ‘on’ or ‘off’ the pedagogical focus. In terms of the UCA, it is sometimes difficult to define pedagogical focus precisely. This is because what may be off the pedagogical focus in some lessons is on it in the UCA.

Where, for example, the team competition was the central focus of attention by the teacher, any related turns were deemed to be on the pedagogical focus. Where a pupil brought up a reference to the team competition in the midst of another activity, this is counted as being off the pedagogical focus. The following coding system was used to code pupil turns. In accordance with van Lier's (2008) notion of agency, the turns coded 8 show the highest degree of agency and those coded 1 the least:

8 Pupil Initiation	New subject or angle	Off the pedagogical focus
7 Pupil initiation	New subject or angle	On pedagogical focus
6 Pupil initiation	On subject	Off pedagogical focus
5 Pupil initiation	On subject	On pedagogical focus
4 Pupil response	New subject or angle	Off pedagogical focus
3 Pupil response	New subject or angle	On pedagogical focus
2 Pupil response	On subject	Off pedagogical focus
1 Pupil response	On subject	On pedagogical focus

This coding schedule proved useful in highlighting the pupil initiations but less helpful in identifying the topic, context and motivation for the talk. As a result, the coding schedule was made more detailed so that pupil talk was also coded for the subject of the talk as follows:

TCN	Team Competition
APU	Another Pupil
EN	Use of English
LL	Linguistic Lifebelt
TCL	Teacher Clone
PC	Pedagogical Content
V	Volunteering for answer
ATT	Attracting Attention
ACT	Activity/language off direct pedagogical focus/ activity suggestion
CM	Classroom Management Incident
SE	Self/Own Plans
AT	Another Teacher
R	The Research
T	The Teacher
LE	The Lesson
CNA	Competitive Aspect of Activity

The codes for the subjects of pupil talk came from a combination of knowledge of the UCA routines which encourage certain subjects and a response to the data. These codes also relate to van Lier's (2008) theoretical concept of agency explored in the literature in chapter two and help identify more precisely the context and conditions which encourage this agency.

Teacher turns were also coded. The teacher codings came from the data but were informed by the researcher's understanding of aspects of the UCA, such as a focus on promoting pupil target language talk, the role of competition and techniques such as providing the written text ('linguistic scaffolding' in UCA terms). The following codes were used:

- 1. TL Management**
 - 1.1 TL Talkback
 - 1.2 TL only reference/action
 - 1.3 TL classroom management
 - 1.4 Controlled TIL
 - 1.5 Linguistic lifebelt acknowledged/answered
 - 1.6 T. use of EN/elicits EN from P(s)
 - 1.7 T. initiates PIL
- 2. Scaffolding: Rewards**
 - 2.1 Praise for correct TL answer
 - 2.2 Praise for TL complexity (explicit or implicit)
 - 2.3 Praise for spontaneous TL behaviour
 - 2.4 Reward via promise of an activity
 - 2.5 Praise for TL use (general)
- 3. Scaffolding: Competition and Challenge**
 - 3.1 Team competition reference/points given
 - 3.2 Competition in an activity (explicit or implicit)
 - 3.3 Encouragement to speculate/work out
 - 3.4 Direct questioning
 - 3.5 Encouragement to self-correct
 - 3.6 Teacher clone responsibility encouraged
 - 3.7 Addressing a pupil who has not previously volunteered
- 4. Scaffolding: Modelling and Support**
 - 4.1 Mimes
 - 4.2 Written support/semi-support present
 - 4.3 Song
 - 4.41 Drilling
 - 4.42 Demonstration

- 4.5 Alternatives given/part answer
- 4.61 Provides answer
- 4.62 Explains
- 4.63 Corrects directly
- 4.64 Instructions given
- 4.7 Pupil/peer support/correction/answer
- 4.8 Listens with interest/interacts with pupil off immediate pedagogical focus
- 4.9 Completes answer
- 4.10 Peer completes
- 4.11 Provides clue, pointer
- 4.12 “Encourages on” via echo or endorsement

= 35 categories

The categories were grouped around the areas of the target language position, and scaffolding identified in the literature. Scaffolding is divided into three groups, all of which encourage but also push learners to move forward: rewards; competition and challenge; and modelling and support. These three broad areas relate to the different aspects of “assisted performance” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4) referred to in the literature in chapter two. Group two, ‘rewards’, relates to contingency management; group three, ‘competition and challenge’ relates to directing, questioning, explaining and task structuring, and agency (van Lier, 2008); and group four, ‘modelling and support’ relates to modeling and feeding back. This coding allowed a focus on what the teacher did to create an environment which encourages agency and spontaneous interaction.

Examples of coded transcripts are provided in appendices 4 and 5.

3.6 Interviews

3.6.1 Pupil Interviews

In order to gain pupils’ views on their language-learning process, questionnaires were considered. These were, however, rejected, as it was felt interviews would provide

fuller, more considered answers (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Interviews also give the opportunity for the researcher to use a probe “to gain further information, clarification, or... to access underlying causes or reasons for a particular response.” (Brown and Dowling, 1998, p.62). This is particularly useful when trying to understand pupils’ views of the complex processes of language learning. A limitation of a group interview is that it is not especially suited to the eliciting of personal matters (Watts and Ebbutt, 1987). This was not an issue as the interviewer was not asking questions of a particularly personal nature.

It was decided to interview pupils from the two focus classes using semi-structured group interviews, which were to be sound-recorded. The group interview has two advantages, namely that children can challenge and extend each other’s ideas and it can also bring together people with varied opinions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The semi-structured group interview format allowed for pupils to talk relatively undirected and for rich data to be collected. Two sessions were planned, of thirty minutes each, in order to cover a wide range of topics.

Consideration was given to how the interview process could be as neutral as possible, avoiding a questioning procedure which might lead pupils to give answers they perceive to be the desired ones. The fact that pupils are being interviewed by a person in authority means that they may feel pressure to give an answer which they perceive the researcher wants to hear. Pupils are possibly also likely to feel there is a correct answer expected or want to give an answer which portrays them in a good light (prestige bias). Steps were taken to minimise the amount of bias as much as possible (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). As one of the strengths of this format is discussion about broad topics, these topic areas were introduced in as neutral a way as

possible. Topics were flagged by means of cards which were shown to the group (Robson, 2002, p.278). This constituted a minimum of interference from the researcher, although prompting and probing techniques were employed as appropriate. This was aimed to avoid misunderstandings about what was being asked. Topics chosen related very closely to the classroom experience for pupils so that they could relate directly to them, for example “team competition.” A full list is given in appendix 7. These topics actually represented initial categories for coding purposes in that they were “experience near concepts” out of which “experience distant concepts” (Geertz, 1993) could emerge during data analysis. The interviewer tried to avoid any tendency to seek answers which supported preconceived notions by responding minimally, but in an interested and encouraging fashion, to answers given.

Dörnyei (2007, p.145) also highlights potential drawbacks with the group format. Firstly, it is important to avoid a group consensus, or “groupthink.” This was done by, as Dörnyei (2007) suggests, emphasising that there is no right or wrong answer. Probe questions were also used as appropriate to encourage the group to think critically and for themselves. Furthermore, it was important not to allow one person to dominate the discussion. This was addressed by asking pupils to put their hand up when they had something to say, drawing in pupils who looked like they had something to say and stopping contributions which risked dominating discussion.

Following the successful observations of the Year 11 lower set lesson, the interviews were extended to this group and to a further Year 9 group.

Opportunity sampling (Brown and Dowling, 1998) was used. Pupils were invited to attend at a given time. Identical prompts were given to the focus groups from both

classes. On average, four pupils attended from the Y11 class, twelve from the Y8 group and ten from the Y9 group.

In discussion with the teacher of the Year 11 group, it was considered unlikely that pupils would attend a group interview after school. Consequently, permission was sought to interview pupils in groups of two or three during Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons. Pupils were selected using a stratified random sampling method, according to predicted GCSE grades and to ensure a mixture of boys and girls. A total of fourteen pupils from the Y11 lower set were interviewed. Each interview lasted up to fifteen minutes, during which pupils were shown a selection of the same prompt cards used in the group interviews. In both the group and paired interviews, a relaxed but professional and courteous atmosphere was maintained (Tuckman, 1972).

3.6.2 Interviews with Teachers of Observed Classes from the Case Study School and University of Cumbria staff

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the two teachers of the focus classes. This was to enable them to articulate what they are aiming to achieve in their lessons. These data are useful to compare with what is actually observed in the classroom and what pupils think is happening in the classroom. In addition, this can be compared with the perceptions of the originator of the Approach. This offered a variety of perspectives, from both observations and interviews which can be compared such that triangulation takes place. Brown and Dowling (1998) define triangulation as follows:

A common approach is to employ two or more approaches to the same problem. This is called methodological triangulation... In the context of educational research, we might employ a combination

of, for example, interviews and direct observation in attempting to gain access to teachers' classroom practices.
(Brown and Dowling, 1998, pp. 8-9)

Brown and Dowling (1998, p.8) emphasise, however, that this cannot overcome the epistemological paradox, which is that "the act of making your experience explicit of necessity entails its transformation."

Questions asked in the semi-structured interviews related to general principles underlying planning and teaching, distinctive characteristics of their lessons, and advantages and disadvantages to the way they taught, plus a general question about the purpose of MFL lessons.

3.6.3 Analysis of Interview Data

Analysis of the interview data involved fully transcribing the interviews. This was undertaken by the researcher so that he could be immersed in the data and be open to nuances in it (Brown and Dowling, 1998). As noted by Brown and Dowling (1998), the group interview nature of the data made transcription a lengthy process but one which produced a rich data set.

This data was analysed using thematic coding, the codes arising from the data. Examples of codes identified are: acquisition, participation, repetition, memorisation, target language, formal study/grammar, writing, conversation, interaction, content, fun. These were refined to relate to the broader concepts identified in the study and the literature. These showed a progression from the "experience near concepts" of the pupils (for example "picking up" French) to more "experience far concepts" (for example "acquisition"). Pupils' contributions within these categories were analysed further to probe more deeply into them. An example is an analysis of how pupils

expand upon what factors help them “pick up” their French. Coding categories which emerge from the interview data were compared with those emerging from the observation data to examine to what extent they corresponded.

A similar process was used to analyse the interviews with the Approach’s originator and case study school teachers. Examples of pupil interview data analysis can be found in appendix 7.

3.7 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

The validity and reliability of this research has been addressed as follows. Validity, or “a measure of the extent to which you are measuring what you think you are measuring” (Brown and Dowling, 1998, p. 26) has been addressed by careful audio and video recording and transcription. This is in response to a possible threat to providing a valid description through inaccurate or incomplete data (Robson, 2002, p. 171). Other measures to maximise validity are the fact that the data are context-bound and descriptive and that the researcher is part of the researched world (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 180). Codings arising from the data and from pre-research address the problem of validity of interpretation and of imposing an invalid framework onto the data. A mixed-method approach provides triangulation, through the use of observation and interviews, and means that validity is increased.

The question of reliability, “a measure of the consistency of a coding process” (Brown and Dowling, 1998, p. 26) has been addressed as far as possible by the use of clear coding categories, referred back to systematically, to ensure consistency of application and to make the analysis as objective as possible.

An ongoing process of critical reflexivity has taken place to identify areas of potential research bias. This is clearly linked to the positionality of the researcher as experienced in and committed to the teaching approach being researched. Ways of confronting a potential for bias have included the avoidance of leading questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, p. 205) and avoidance of showing any type of approval or disapproval of answers, framing issues or questions neutrally and giving voice in the study's text to opinions which question or challenge the Approach under study. In addition, findings have been subjected to colleagues and wider audiences for critical peer feedback at all stages, including conferences at the institution of enrolment and national groups and conferences of colleagues involved in initial teacher education in modern foreign languages. This feedback, including that obtained in the supervision and upgrade processes, has informed the study and been incorporated into its design.

The trustworthiness of this research is provided by a careful production of transcripts and systematic, dated logging of the data analysis process and dated notes on reflection on the analysis and writing processes.

3.8 Ethical Issues

The study has been carried out in accordance with BERA guidelines (BERA, 2004) and ethical approval has been gained from the HEI institution with which the researcher is registered.

Informed consent (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000) was obtained at school level and at participant level. Permission was obtained, orally and in writing, from the Deputy Headteacher with oversight for MFL at the case study school to interview pupils. The context of this work is that the researcher has close contact with the

school and the MFL department already in the course of his work. Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance is a requirement of that post.

Letters were sent to pupils and parents at the case study school requesting permission to participate (informed voluntary consent) in the interview part of the study (see appendix 2). In order to avoid mental stress (Robson, 2002, p.69), it was emphasised that the research was not a school test and should not be a source of anxiety. Sweets were offered as tokens of appreciation and in accordance with treatment of participants with consideration and respect (*ibid.*). For video recording of pupils in lessons, a letter was sent home to parents requesting permission (see appendix 2). The video will not be shown but only used privately for the purposes of data analysis.

Pupils were given a document to read before the interviews commenced, confirming their voluntary participation and explaining the use to which the data will be put, including the fact it will be kept anonymous (see appendix 2). It was also explained that participants could withdraw and an opportunity for questions to be asked was given (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

Anonymity was provided by use of codes such as P1 (pupil 1) and data stored securely. Steps have been taken to mask the identity of the case study school (Brown and Dowling, 1998, p.65).

This research presented a dilemma and caused a struggle concerning the identification of the originator of the research, given that reference is made in the course of the study to published and unpublished works of his and he is well-known in the MFL field for his development of the UCA and is synonymous with it. This related to the issues of anonymity and confidentiality. As such, it was decided, with his permission,

to include his name specifically in the literature review section. Another option considered was to not mention the University of Cumbria by name but it was felt that this would make the study appear too abstract and that such a level of anonymity was not necessary.

The study also presented the challenge to the researcher of researching within the broad context of his own institution. This included the need to take a critically analytical stance towards a teaching approach which is advocated by colleagues in the institution. There was also the issue of power relations, the originator of the approach being in a management position. However, good relations between researcher and interviewee and the establishment of a relaxed, informal atmosphere helped to minimise this issue.

Benefits of this research were explained to participants. These will hopefully include a better understanding of the teaching methodology used in the school and this could be of benefit to staff and pupils as they progress through the school and to future pupils. Adults participating in the study are known to the researcher and they understand the nature of the research, due to frequent contact in a work context. Results will be disseminated via a short summary of findings which will be made available at the end of the research.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS: COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

4.1 Overview of Chapter Four

This chapter will analyse the actual *spontaneous* language initiated by pupils and the utterances of the teacher. This will be done from a cognitive perspective, treating the language in isolation from the context in which it is produced. The focus will be chiefly on the properties of the language used and not so much the content or context of its production, which will be examined in chapter five.

Firstly, it will be argued in this chapter and the next that features of the pupil discourse of the study reflect those of **conversation** and that this, in turn, points to an emerging L2 conversational competence among some pupils. Secondly, it will be argued in the next two chapters that the teacher **creates the conditions** for this conversation to take place, by means of two types of management. These are management of the use of the target language in the classroom, “**target language management**”, and management of the classroom context, “**context management.**” Both these terms are coined by and are unique to this study.

4.1.1 An Overview of Conversation in Chapters Four and Five

As already stated in chapter two, the defining characteristics of conversation are as follows. It is:

1. Spoken;
 2. Spontaneous, in real time;
 3. In a shared context;
 4. Interactive, hence jointly constructed and reciprocal;
 5. Interpersonal;
 6. Informal;
 7. Expressive of wishes, feelings, attitudes and judgements.
- (adapted from Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 8)

From this list, points 2 and 6 will be considered in this chapter and points 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7 in chapter five. The following, then, will be considered in this chapter and it will be shown how they are reflected in the pupil talk:

Point 2: conversation as spontaneous, in real time.

Point 6: conversation as informal.

Point 2 will be considered in two separate sections. The fact that conversation takes place spontaneously will be considered with respect to spontaneous initiations in the data, in section 4.2. The fact that conversation takes place in real time will be considered with reference to fluency and the use of “chunks” of language and formulaic language (as discussed in chapter two) in section 4.3. Point 6, the informal nature of conversation, will be considered in section 4.4, which will make reference to the complexity and accuracy of language.

As well as demonstrating aspects of conversation, it will be shown that an identification of learners’ inaccuracies, in terms of their grammaticality and their acceptability, is a useful diagnostic tool for the teacher, as discussed in chapter two. This diagnostic activity, it is argued, helps the teacher to assess learners’ developmental stage and not just their ability to produce artificially accurate language (as discussed in chapter one). This can then be useful for a teacher in adapting her future teaching and feedback. The point will also be argued that pupils’ inaccuracies demonstrate their risk-taking and trying out of hypotheses (Swain, 1985), stretching of their interlanguage (Swain, 1995) and their noticing (Swain 1995; Schmidt and Frota, 1986), all evidence of strategies which can further their second language

development. Reference will also be made to the teacher's feeding back and correction strategies and these will be explored more in chapter five.

4.1.2 An Overview of “Target Language Management” and “Context Management” in Chapters Four and Five

As well as exploring how conversation is evident in the pupil talk, chapters four and five will also show how the teacher creates the conditions for this conversation to take place. It will be proposed that the teacher engages in two types of management as below:

Box 1: Target Language Management

- 1. Scaffolding in terms of Language:**
 - A. Teacher's own planned target language use (Teacher Interaction Language: TIL) and planning for pupil target language use through taught routines and drilling
 - B. Prompting the pupil; offering alternative responses or visual support
 - C. Use of the “linguistic lifebelt” device
- 2. Scaffolding in terms of Affect**
 - A. “Assiduity” in reminders about TL use, praise and reward of TL use and sanctioning use of English
 - B. As the pupil is speaking, using encouragement, through echoing, and praise
 - C. Use of the “linguistic lifebelt”
 - D. “Teacher Target Language Talkback”

Box 2: Context Management

1. Creation of a “Communicative Classroom Context”
2. Creation of “Communicative Space”

“Target language management” involves scaffolding by the teacher which can be divided into two types: scaffolding of the language and scaffolding of the affective factors. In other words, scaffolding so that the learner has support in producing the language and support in developing learners' agency or capacity to act or desire to talk (van Lier, 2008).

This chapter will consider, in section 4.5, aspect 1A above of “target language management”, namely the teacher’s role in the production of the language used by pupils through her own planned target language use, termed “teacher interaction language” (TIL) and planning for pupil target language use through taught routines and drilling. Part of the analysis of this scaffolding aspect will be an examination of pupils’ language and the extent to which it mirrors the teacher’s language. Section 4.6 will then look at how pupils’ language is able to move beyond the reproduction of set phrases as identified by Myles, Mitchell and Hooper (1999) and discussed in chapter two. This happens in stages as will be shown. It will also be argued that pupils do not need a lot of language in order to be able to make new meanings spontaneously.

The conclusion will consider ways in which pupils’ fluency and accuracy can be improved in the conversational interactions in the UCA. The whole important aspect of combining an instructional element with the conversational one will then be drawn together at the end of chapter five.

4.2 Conversation is Spontaneous

This section will show that a significant number of pupil turns are in fact initiated by pupils themselves. This supports the claim that conversation is taking place in these classrooms as pupils as well as teachers have the expectation to initiate. The average of pupil turns per lesson and the average number of initiations is shown below:

	Year 7/8 class average per lesson	Year 10/11 top set average per lesson	Year 11 lower set average per lesson
Pupil turns	483	569	424
Pupil turns which are initiations	58	217	40
% of initiation turns to total turns	12%	38%	9.5%

Table 4.1: Average number of pupil turns and initiation turns per lesson

It can be seen, then, that even in the Year 7/8 lessons, twelve per cent of the pupil turns are spontaneously produced by pupils, using the target language. This means that speaking rights are more equally distributed than might be expected in the classroom situations typically described in chapter two (Macaro, 1997; Mitchell, 1988; Ofsted, 2008; Crichton, 2009) and this makes conversation a possibility in this setting. The number of pupil initiations in the year 10/11 top set is markedly higher than in the other two. This is likely to reflect the increased confidence and ability of the pupils. It is also due to the particularly high number of initiations from two male pupils, P3 and P11, as will be discussed in chapter five. In terms of comparison with the year 7/8 top set, it is also a given that the year 10/11 group has had much more time to acquire the language and to develop their confidence in speaking spontaneously. Teacher factors will also contribute to the number of spontaneous initiations and the year 7/8 teacher certainly imposes a tighter structure on the lesson, as evidenced by the large number of activities and incitements to pupils to move on quickly, allowing less space for spontaneity. This is perhaps appropriate to the younger age of the pupils and the larger group size.

4.3 Fluency: Conversation Taking Place in Real Time

To show that pupils are engaged in conversation and developing an emerging L2 classroom communicative competence, it is necessary to show pupils' using language in real time. This will involve having a means of noting a degree of fluency in the utterances of pupils.

There are many examples in the data of fluent *spontaneous* turns where a pupil (or pupils) responds in the target language swiftly and smoothly, in a real-time fast-

moving interactive situation. Examples of such fluent and, at the same time, accurate spontaneous turns include those below. Where there are multiple occurrences of a phrase, this is only cited once:

Year 7:

“Et moi!”, “Merci”, “Tais-toi!”, “Changez les points!”, “Comment dit-on en français...?”, “Egalité”, “Am Stram Gram”

Year 8 lesson 1:

“Ce n’est pas juste!”, “C’est juste!”, “Ce n’est pas correct!”, “Oui, mais moi!”, “Menteuse!”, “Tricheuse!”, “Est-ce que je peux avoir dix points?”, “Oh, je suis désolé”, “Oh là là!”, “Change(z) le prof!”, “Un crédit pour la classe!”

Year 8 lesson 2:

“Comment dit-on en français...?”, “Stop! Il y a une erreur”, “Ce n’est pas correct”, “P est stupide”, “Changez les points!”, “Un tick pour la classe”, “Un tick pour P”, “Je ne suis pas d’accord”, “A mon avis, P est nul”, “En anglais?”, “C’est clair”, “C’est la vie”, “C’est correct”, “Il triche”, “Est-ce que je peux parler en anglais?”, “Encore!”, “Merci”, “Merci beaucoup”, “Tricheuse”, “J’ai gagné”, “Tu as perdu”, “Moins vite!”

It can be seen that there is an increasing repertoire of automatised phrases from the Year 7 lesson to the second Year 8 lesson. It is not surprising that these are mostly set phrases, ones heard and used often.

Year 11 lower set lesson 1:

“Où est...?”, “Comment dit-on... en anglais?”, “Comment dit-on en français...?”, “Est-ce que je peux faire le prof?”, “Une coche/bonbon/sticker pour moi!”, “(Et) moi!”, “Loupé”

Year 11 lower set lesson 2:

“Où est...?”, “Un solo pour...”, “Je ne suis pas d’accord”, “Est-ce que je peux faire le prof?”, “Non, idiot!”, “Une croix!”, “P est stupide”, “Changez le prof!”, “Ça ne marche pas.”

Clearly, the largest number of fluent phrases is in the Year 10/11 top set lessons.

These are listed as a whole, not per lesson:

Y10/11 top set lessons:

“Comment dit-on...?”, “Il/elle est (vraiment) stupide/fatigué/moche”, “Il faut enlever cinq points”, “Un point/une coche/Cinq points pour moi/(toute)la classe”, “Encore!”, “Elle parle en anglais”, “Am Stram Gram”, “Choisis...!”, “J’ai une idée”, “Debout!”, “Après (quoi?)!”, “Avant”, “Parce que c’est le passé”, “Tais-toi”, “J’ai/tu as/il/elle/P/on a dit (ça)!””, “C’est faux/anglais/japonais”, “Qu’est-ce qu’elle a dit (cette fois)?”, “Je suis désolée”, “Moins cinq points pour...”, “(Mais) pourquoi?”, “J’ai dit”, “Est-ce que je peux avoir...?”, “C’est juste/correct/un...”, “Ce n’est pas (un travail)/(ça)”, “Ce n’est pas nécessaire”, “Il a parlé en anglais”, “Oh, mon dieu!””, (Y10 to here), “Est-ce que je peux faire ça/les points/changer...?”, “Plus infinitif”, “Ça, c’est bien/une erreur/mon accent/moi”, “Ou”, “Oh là là!”, “J’ai fait une grande phrase”, “Je (ne) suis (pas)/tu es/il est malade”, “Laisse P décider”, “Est-ce que tu veux faire ça?”, “Parce que je suis...”, “Est-ce que c’est vrai?”, “Je m’en fiche”, “Elle

triche”, (Year 11 lesson 1 to here), “A tes souhaits”, “P peut être le prof”, “Je/elle/tu (ne) triche(s) (pas)”, “Je m’en fiche!”, “J’ai gagné”, “Je ne suis pas d’accord”, “Il y a un...”, “C’est vrai que...”, “(Parce que) je voudrais...”, “P doit avoir...”, “Qu’est-ce que tu fais?”, “J’ai expliqué”, “Je ne vois pas”, “Est-ce que tu peux...?”, “C’était moi/P”, “Le monde finit!”

The above examples show that pupils have a repertoire of phrases which they can use in a fluent, automatic, *accurate* way in a swift, timely manner, responding to events and/or comments in real time. This shows an ease with language which means pupils are able to respond and interact in a way consistent with the demands of conversation. It is perhaps not surprising that the examples given are largely restricted to set phrases. (However, it is imperative to note that this section is only dealing with the most fluent, accurate and speedily produced utterances and that more creative ones are often less fluent, due to attentional resources being diverted to constructing new utterances (McLaughlin, 1990; Skehan, 1992; 1996; Johnson, 1996)). Fluency is reduced when accuracy or automatization of grammatical structures is considered an aspect of fluency (Johnson and Johnson, 1998) as the more creative utterances include more inaccurate elements. It is also notable that there is a much greater range of these utterances in the Year 10/11 top set and this is undoubtedly due to the increased contact with the language this class has had over the Year 7/8 class and the increased confidence and ability over the Year 11 lower set. These findings also link in with the research surveyed in chapter two that a great deal of language is retrieved in ‘chunk’ form, even in one’s L1, in the form of prefabricated and memorised items (Ellis, 2008; Pawley and Syder, 1983; Skehan, 1998). The nature of these utterances is also such that they need to be produced swiftly as they are often retorts, objections or observations relating to incidental, ephemeral, fast-moving events. Such swift retorts

and observations display what Ellis (1997, p.131) calls “communicative efficiency.” So often, such set phrases are produced by pupils as topic language, prompted by the teacher (Alexander, 2009). What is so distinctive here is that they are being produced spontaneously by pupils in response to real-time classroom events. It is this which makes these phrases a constituent part of conversation rather than of rehearsed dialogue involving topic language.

Evidence of fluent and timely language production will also be seen in chapter five (texts 5i and 5ii), when pupils one and three persist in using the target language at times of stress for them due to the fact they have created a classroom management incident.

4.3.1 Reasons for a Reduction in Fluency

Spontaneous turns show automaticity in that initiations are made swiftly in real time but there are also times when there is less fluency in the whole turn due to the inaccuracy of the utterance or due to the fact that a new construction or meaning is being formed. These will be considered here as this will help suggest how fluency can be improved. It will also reinforce the point made in chapter two (Yalden, 1987; Johnstone, 1989) that fluency takes time to develop.

The following are instances where and reasons why fluency is reduced. It is argued here and in the section concerning accuracy that this conversational, real-time language is useful for improving learning as it is in these interactions that the teacher can diagnose learners’ stage of development. This is a way of integrating the conversational elements with the instructional elements of the UCA so that the

conversation of the UCA has a clear language-learning purpose in terms of improving fluency.

By identifying the underlying reason behind a pupil's drop in fluency the teacher can recognise and encourage use of certain strategies and take steps to address gaps as and if necessary. The underlying reasons are as follows, with examples:

1. Lack of linguistic resources:

In this example, the teacher fills in the gap (line 2) and possibly simplifies what the pupil was going to say as the teacher merely provides another teacher's name:

1 P9 Tu, tu (.) tu t'adores le
2 T M. (T).
3 P9 Oui¹⁶

In the next example, another pupil fills the gap:

1 T Pourquoi?
2 P6 Parce qu'elle, il parlé, er
3 P3 Beaucoup d'anglais¹⁷

In some cases, the lack of resources is perceived as being so great by the pupil and fluency breaks down to such an extent that the pupil resorts to English:

1 P11 J'ai une idée, la raison est absolument rubbish, ce n'est plus

This is ironic as the pupil could easily have used "nul," which a female pupil then provides when asked by the teacher. Of course, pupils also use the 'linguistic lifebelt' ("Comment dit-on... en français?") when in need of vocabulary. This suggests it was

¹⁶ Year 10 top set lesson

¹⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

not in fact a lack of linguistic resources here but pressure from real-time processing. From a teaching point of view, the teacher can prompt where she feels the missing word(s) are known or teach them where necessary.

2. A set phrase which is not at the point of being automatized:

P Je peux parler an, er, anglais?¹⁸

This is hesitation but the pupil can still produce the utterance correctly. The teacher here might identify a need for more repetition activities to help automatization.

3. Where creative construction is taking place and the pupil is focusing on making new meanings.

The additional attentional resources required to construct a new phrase mean that fluency is compromised (McLaughlin, 1990; Skehan, 1992; 1996; Johnson, 1996). In the example below, pupil 11 has asked the teacher for the vocabulary item “promettre” and is engaged in incorporating this into a question for the teacher:

P11 Est-ce que tu peux promettre, promettre ne triche (.) ne tricher pas?¹⁹

Similarly from the same pupil later in the lesson, but with a longer turn:

P11 Parce que tous les classes s'adorent, er (.) les bonbons devraient être pour tous les classes, ce n'est pas important qui gagne²⁰

In the same lesson, another pupil creates a question of her own and hesitation is evident:

¹⁸ Year 8 top set, lesson 1

¹⁹ Year 10 top set lesson

²⁰ Year 10 top set lesson

P9 Quel est le, er, dernière leçon avec M. (T)?²¹

The example below shows repetition of a word whilst the pupil formulates the end of the phrase he has created:

P2 Je ne suis pas d'accord parce que P15 faire le prof pour, pour deuxième leçon²²

In language learning terms, it may well be that this lack of fluency is a positive aspect as pupils attempt to manipulate language.

4. Fluency can also drop if a pupil is monitoring his/her own output for accuracy.

The monitoring of one's own input will also require additional attentional resources and it may also involve a correction which will come across as hesitation as here:

P9 P11 est un garçon, il est (.) il triche²³

Indeed, pupil 9 is here also showing he has acquired the correct form, at least temporarily, as it was recast for him just before this by the teacher.

Another example of self-correction, below, is interesting because the pupil is arguing an urgent point as to why a pupil in the opposite team should not be awarded a point, because he did not say a phrase in its entirety. Despite this urgency, he still corrects himself:

P3 P6 ne parlé(?) pas en français. Il parlé, il a dit 'mmmmmmmm stabilité!'²⁴

²¹ Year 10 top set lesson

²² Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

²³ Year 10 top set lesson

²⁴ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

Again, this is a strategy which can be encouraged by the teacher rather than discouraged, and shows pupils' recognising the importance of both fluent *and* accurate use in real time.

5. On a rare occasion, lack of fluency is due to an inability to pronounce correctly

This example also shows an instance of monitoring and self-correction (line 1). The teacher corrects:

Text 4i: More handsome

1 P11 Je suis plus belle, er, be
2 T Tu es quoi?
3 P11 Plus be
4 T Plus?
5 P11 Be
6 T Plus beau?
7 P11 Oui, beau²⁵

Again, this may signal a need for more repetition or a simple recast, as here, may suffice. This extract also shows negotiation for meaning (Long, 1991) as pupil 11 responds to a clarification request in line 4 and a confirmation of meaning in line 6, as well as noticing in line 7 when he also negotiates for meaning by confirming the meaning.

6. A reduction in fluency may also be attributed to a pupil's thinking about the nature of the language under study.

In the example here, it could be that pupil three hesitates because he is remembering what the teacher had said, so that he can quote it back to her:

P3 Mais tu as dit ça primordial est, er, un synonyme pour important²⁶

²⁵ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

Although not directly related to language form, this sort of interaction is also to be encouraged as it helps the pupil to reflect on the learning *in the TL* and engage fully in it.

7. Of course, lack of fluency can be deliberate and related to the context of use.

In this example, pupils are pretending to be psychic in response to a guessing activity set up by the teacher and pupil 1 is building up the tension as he guesses:

P1 L' image G
P11 Oui
P1 Uuhhhh, va avec [(...) ((holds head for psychic inspiration))]
P11 [Quatre
P1 Oui, quatre²⁷

In the following example, where a pupil is deriding a picture drawn by the teacher to represent the word “respect”, it is difficult to know if pupil 3 repeats “ça” while thinking about how to express what he wants to say next or whether he is repeating “ça” for effect:

P3 Est-ce que c'était toi qui penses que ça, ça, c'est le respect?²⁸

The above examples, then, demonstrate that whilst fluency is a desirable goal, a lack of fluency can also be a positive part of the language-learning process or a normal part of conversation. The conclusion to chapter five will consider ways of improving fluency in the conversational language further.

Overall, this section has also shown that the most fluent and accurate utterances from pupils consist of lexicalised items. This confirms Skehan's (1996, p.54) assertion of the coexistence of a rule-based, analytic system and a formulaic, exemplar-based

²⁶ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

²⁷ Year 10 top set lesson

²⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

system, and his claim (*ibid.*, p.61) that the latter is favoured as an attention-saving device when producing language in real time (see also Biber *et al.*, 1999, p.7). It is important to highlight here that PIL use in the UCA might overemphasise development of this exemplar-based system over the rule-based one. However, there is also evidence of pupils' going beyond the exemplars, as will be discussed in section 4.6.2.

4.4 Conversation as Informal

The other feature of conversation which will be considered in this chapter is that conversation is informal. It contrasts with formal speech and has an "informal (or casual) style" (Thornbury and Slade 2006, p.20). The constraints of real-time production mean that conversational speech is often syntactically simple, lacking well-formed sentences, main and subordinate clauses (Thornbury and Slade, 2006; McCarthy, 1998, pp. 79-80). McCarthy (*ibid.*) also notes that the pressure of online planning means that spoken language is often ungrammatical, with utterances often left incomplete. There is also ellipsis (the deliberate omission of items) and the present tense is the most common tense in casual conversation and outnumbers past tense forms by about four to one.

4.4.1 Complexity in Conversation

The relative lack of complexity of pupils' spontaneous utterances is evident in the study's data. Of the three levels of complexity set out in chapter three ('1' being least complex and '3' most complex), it is significant that the overwhelming majority of spontaneous turns are coded at the most basic level of complexity (one). Very few are at level two and a tiny minority, if any, at level three. The most complex, level three

turns are *exclusively* produced by the Year 10/11 top set, as shown in the bottom row of the table below.

Complexity level	Y10/Y11 top set lessons	Y7/Y8 top set lessons	Y11 lower set lessons
1	88.3%	97.7%	93.8%
2	10%	2.3%	6.2%
3	1.7%	0%	0%

Table 4.2: Percentage of complexity of pupils' spontaneous turns

This lack of complexity, then, is consistent with the view that conversational language is more informal. This is particularly the case where there is fast-moving banter between pupils around issues of competition and rivalry. This is perhaps a drawback of the communicative classroom context created by the UCA. It favours short, pithy exchanges much more than extended sequences of talk. In the terms used by Thornbury and Slade (2006, pp. 144-5), it favours “highly interactive multi-party talk” or “chat segments” over “longer, more structured and more monologic segments” or “chunk” segments. The data certainly confirms that pupils have less chance to produce longer, more complex spontaneous turns. Despite the relative lack of more complex utterances, this does not mean that they are excluded altogether. It would be easy to dismiss a focus on developing conversational competence in secondary school MFL lessons by contesting that conversation does not allow pupils to develop the skill of producing more complex utterances. As can be seen here, this need not be the case. Spontaneous, conversational turns do display the following features of some more complex language:

1. A turn with “parce que” and a comparative:

P7 Est-ce que je peux avoir dix points parce que je suis plus intelligente que P8?²⁹

2. Two turns which combine two tenses:

a. P8 Stop! Il y a une erreur. (..) P15, P15 parlé en Allemagne³⁰

b. P28 Tu as perdu! C'est la vie! (.) Tu as perdu!³¹

3. A turn which involves a subordinate clause, with “pour” used in the sense of “in order to”:

P5 Je peux être volontaire ((unint)) pour faire les points?³²

It should be noted that all of these are set phrases. The first and third ones come from the volunteering routine. Nevertheless, it is still the case that pupils are able to employ these slightly more complex phrases spontaneously, even if incorrectly as in example 2a.

In the Year 11 lower set data, the following more complex phrases are found:

1. A phrase taken straight from the topic language of the lesson, using a time indicator:

PB Je fume de temps en temps³³

2. Two phrases which begin with a set phrase and justify the opinion with “parce que”, even if it is with inaccuracies:

²⁹ Year 8 top set, lesson 1

³⁰ Year 8 top set, lesson 2

³¹ Year 8 top set, lesson 2

³² Year 8 top set, lesson 2

³³ Year 11 lower set, lesson 1

- a. P2 Je ne suis pas d'accord parce que P15 faire le prof pour, pour deuxième leçon
- b. PB Un bonbon pour moi parce que j'ai ((unint)), er fantastique³⁴

3. The final example shows re-use, and possibly intake (Corder, 1967), of a phrase for which pupil six had previously asked the teacher:

P6 Il est pire que moi³⁵

It is unsurprising that it is in the Year 10/11 top set lessons where the most complex phrases occur. In the first example below (already discussed above), the teacher uses grammatical metalanguage and provides a verb in response to pupil eleven's "linguistic lifebelt" request for the French for "each other" and the pupil is able to add a conditional tense and the set phrase "ce n'est pas important":

- T Oui, s'aime, non, s'adore? (.) S'adore. Réflexif. C'est un verbe réfléchi, souvent que ((unint))
- P11 Parce que tous les classes s'adorent, er (.) les bonbons devraient être pour tous les classes, ce n'est pas important qui gagne³⁶

The way pupil 11 hesitates here and produces an extended phrase gives a real sense of the production of "pushed output" and the stretching of interlanguage (Swain, 1985) and the fact that he wants to get his message across about the rewards urgently also shows the context of producing this language under "communicative pressure" (Doughty and Williams, 1998b).

³⁴ Both Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

³⁵ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

³⁶ Year 10 top set lesson

Further examples are as follows:

1. Two phrases which use a direct object pronoun. Pupil three uses it incorrectly but as seen earlier, uses a different indirect pronoun correctly.

P3 Un point pour P11 parce qu'il avoir deux coches et je il déteste
...
P11 Elle te déteste le plus³⁷

Pupil 11 uses the pronoun “te” correctly along with a superlative, but this is because he has asked the teacher how to say this phrase.

2. Two phrases which combine a relative clause with a combination of tenses:

- a. P3 C'est P11 qui a dit ça
- b. P3 Est-ce que c'était toi qui penses que ça, ça, c'est le respect?
- c. P11 Madame, je sais qu'est-ce que s'est passé avec la table.³⁸

The final example, 2c, shows the difficulty of the form “ce qui/ce que”. In the absence of the availability of this form, pupil 11 uses the much more familiar question form.

Four of the more complex spontaneous phrases are tied into either the topic language under study or artificially created language, using a subordinate clause introduced by “si” or “meme si”:

- 1a. P2 No, c'est hôtesse de l'air, (.) si j'étais, je pourrais rencontrer³⁹

Here pupil three humorously justifies his use of the feminine form “institutrice” by stressing the condition “si”:

³⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

³⁸ All Year 11 top set, lesson 2

³⁹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

- 1b.
 T Mais aussi institutrice, c'est pour les femmes
 P3 Oui. (.) SI j'étais institutrice⁴⁰

Here pupil 11 again humorously takes issue with the mechanical nature of the drill by challenging the assumption that *having* to travel might be a disadvantage.

- 1c.
 T C'est un inconvénient. Je devrais voyager tout le temps. Si c'était je pourrais voyager tout le temps, [c'est un avantage, [[mais je devrais
 P11 adore voyager⁴¹ [Non. [[Si la personne

Here pupil 11 produces some random complex language :

2.
 a. P11 Même si j'adore son chien, il me frappe beaucoup.
 b. P11 J'ai dit même si j'adore sa chien, elle m'a frappé comme ça et toi as dit excellent⁴²

Pupil 11 also produces the following with “pourrait”:

3.
 P11 P3 ne pourrait pas être français parce que il est, il est plus stupide.

Sentences 1a-c relate to the topic language under study and turns 2a and b are an attempt by pupil 11 to ‘speak more’ (after the teacher has observed he is being quieter than usual) using artificial, decontextualised topic-type language. The verb in turn 3 is likely to have come from the topic language. This does underline the fact that the more planned, decontextualised language of topics is often more complex and coherent than the more ‘cut and thrust’, responsive conversational language of immediate interaction. This is not, however, to suggest that the latter language does

⁴⁰ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁴¹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁴² Year 11 top set, lesson 2

not have an important part to play, but rather that there is a place for *both*. Turn three is the ideal where the complex topic language seems to have permeated through to a pupil's spontaneous language. What is important, with a view to imbuing the pupils' conversational language with an instructional element, is the teacher's modelling of examples of how this more careful style can be incorporated into pupils' more informal conversation, or vernacular style (Tarone, 1983). This is an issue which will be taken up in the concluding chapter, concerning the correct balance between conversational language and topic language, as well as how making the pupils more explicitly aware of their conversation might increase levels of complexity in the conversational language.

4.4.2 Modality and Reporting in Conversation

A final point in this section on the informal nature of conversation concerns the fact that certain structural features occur more frequently in casual conversation. These are modality and reporting, both of which occur, particularly in the Year 10/11 top set lessons.

Modality occurs as it is strongly associated with the expression of interpersonal meaning and occurrences are given below:

	Y7/8 (3 lessons)	Y10/11 top (3 lessons)	Y11 lower (2 lessons)
Est-ce que je peux + avoir/faire/parler/other	7	17	7

Table 4.3: Modality in pupil terms with verb "pouvoir"

Reporting of speech is also common in conversation and occurrences are given below:

	Y7/8 (3 lessons)	Y10/11 top (3 lessons)	Y11 lower (2 lessons)
C'est + pupil name	3	1	0
C'était + pupil name	0	7	0
P/il/elle/on a dit (ça)	0	27	0
J'ai dit (ça)	0	11	0
Tu as dit	0	5	1

Table 4.4: Reporting of speech in pupil turns

4.5 Accuracy in Conversation

Accuracy also suffers in fast-moving talk when the speaker does not have the channel capacity (Johnson, 1996) to monitor his output using a rule-based system (Krashen, 1982; Skehan, 1996). This section will show how the spontaneous language of conversation can be used to diagnose areas of difficulty facing pupils.

One difficulty is, however, that it is usually impossible to state whether this inaccuracy is due to the lack of acquisition of the forms or the real-time nature of the talk, in other words if it is a psycholinguistic or sociolinguistic error, as seen in chapter two. Even where an incorrect form and the same correct form are used in close proximity, it is still not possible to say whether this is as a result of real-time pressure or if a form has not been correctly acquired. An example is given below from a Year 11 lower set lesson:

P est mal prof.... P a mal prof⁴³

⁴³ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

Although the overall construction is wrong (“mauvais” should be used instead of “mal” and “P, c’est un...”), the correct “est” becomes the incorrect “a.” What is clear from section 4.3 above is that the most routinised, formulaic utterances will be more accurate (unless they have been acquired in an incorrect form- see 4.5.1 below). This again gives support to the idea that pupils can gain this type of ability to converse through extensive exposure to the L2:

Acquired output typically takes the form of fixed phrases, formulaic chunks and routines... from exposure to authentic L2 input.
(Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.219)

Correspondingly, it is to be expected that self-generated utterances will be less accurate, as will utterances still in the process of being acquired or automatised. Accuracy can be seen to be reduced in the circumstances which, in many respects, mirror those which affect fluency.

The examples to follow show how inaccurate language, like less fluent language, should not always be taken as proof of a lack of learning but as a way of seeing a pupil’s stage of development. It can serve as evidence of the interaction, creativity and risk taking which Mitchell (2003) promotes and can stand in contrast to what she sees as the overemphasis on accuracy of the National Curriculum, as flagged in chapter one.

It will be seen in chapter five that coupled with corrective feedback this inaccuracy can enhance learning (Doughty and Varela, 1998, p. 137). The instances of inaccuracy themselves can be divided into three categories, as follow. Firstly, a language chunk is not sufficiently automatised and may need more exposure (Ellis, 1997; Johnson, 1996). Secondly, incorrect transfer of language by a pupil when creating new

meanings (Myles, Hooper and Mitchell, 1998; Myles, Mitchell and Hooper, 1999). This may involve transfer of a chunk used in one person of the verb to another person(s) or the incorrect transfer of a chunk to another context. Thirdly, risk-taking and creativity from pupils in trying out totally new language (Mitchell, 2003; Swain, 1985; Doughty and Williams, 1998b; Slimani, 1989). This may reveal a lack of grammatical understanding or knowledge, a gap in such knowledge, or a confusion between forms learnt.

These categories will now be considered in turn:

4.5.1 A Language Chunk is not Sufficiently Automatised

As seen in chapter two, this next set of errors shows post-systematic errors, where a rule is being applied inconsistently as it is not sufficiently automatised, as here with ‘triché’:

1 PB Il a triche
2 P8 Non!
3 T P8 a triché?
4 P28 Ce n'est pas correct!⁴⁴

As with fluency, inaccuracy can occur if a pupil is unable to pronounce a word correctly and this also suggests it is not automatised:

PF Menteur⁴⁵

An example of where a chunk may not have been totally automatised correctly is in the short phrase below:

⁴⁴ Year 8 top set, lesson 2

⁴⁵ Year 7 top set lesson

P3 Triche! J'ai dit ça⁴⁶

It may be that this pupil has failed to fully differentiate between the noun and the verb and is using the verb without the “il” as the equivalent of “cheat!” in English.

A more advanced example concerns the use of the direct object pronoun:

- 1 P3 Je déteste toi
2 T C'est pas...
3 P3 Je te déteste
4 T Excellent. Fantastique. Je te déteste. Deux points pour P
...
5 P3 Elle te déteste beaucoup
6 T Je ne le déteste pas. [Alors
7 P3 [Tu détestes moi⁴⁷

In the first extract, the pupil shows that the form has not been automatised for real-time use (line 1) but that it is known when prompted (line 3). This effectively shows the difference between being able to produce a form for ‘display’ purposes to the teacher and producing it in real-time communicative use. It would also seem that L1 interference is occurring here, with the pronoun being placed after the verb, as in English. Later on, in line 5 above, noticing (Schmidt and Frota, 1986) has taken place and the form is produced correctly, and even adapted.

Automatization of the language is particularly important when a pupil may be under pressure and attentional resources are diminished, as may be the case here. In the example below, pupil three is defending himself in a classroom management incident and he misuses the chunk “elle est” which he has used correctly in the previous turn:

P3 Elle triche beaucoup. Elle n'y a pas polie, elle fait (gestures one finger) à moi.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁴⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

The extract below shows pupil three protesting at pupil nine's being given a tick:

- 1 P3 Non, P9 avoir une coche
2 T P9..
3 P3 Et cinq points
4 T Oui, c'est bon
5 P3 Et elle dit huit!⁴⁹

He uses the infinitive of “avoir” (line 1) and leaves out the auxiliary (“a”) in forming the perfect tense (line 5). This could be because he is under pressure and directing his attentional resources into the protesting, especially as “on a dit” is used correctly. Pupil 3 uses the form correctly elsewhere.⁵⁰ However, this arguing is seen as good for second language development (Ellis, 1988). It is also interesting that in line 2, the teacher tries to feed back unobtrusively but that this is not picked up on by pupil 3.

One danger of such automatised or proceduralised language (as discussed in chapter two) is that it can be automatised or proceduralised in the wrong form and this is then very hard to change (Johnson, 1996). This is known as “fossilization” (Selinker, 1972). There are occasions in the data where a pupil uses a formulaic phrase, which has clearly been learnt as part of a UCA routine, but these have been acquired in an incorrect form so it is subsequently likely that the pupils concerned will need a lot of correction to override this and for the correct form to be learnt. A clear example of this is where pupil 3 repeatedly uses “Oh mon deu” instead of “Oh mon dieu” in the Year 11 top set.

The following examples show where Year 10/11 top set pupils have acquired the perfect tense but omit the auxiliary verb “avoir” on each occasion:

⁴⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁴⁹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁵⁰ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

P6 Elle parlé anglais⁵¹

P10 Madame. P3 parlé en anglais. Il a dit ??

P3 Pardon. Je ne parlé. Je ne parlé pas en anglais⁵²

Often in language teaching there are “inadequate opportunities to recycle and re-use new language, in meaningful activities” (Mitchell, 2003, p.22). One advantage of the UCA is that pupils *do* get these opportunities. The teacher can use such instances as listed here diagnostically to focus on the particular areas which need further drilling and also on the forms which may have been incorrectly proceduralised.

4.5.2 Incorrect Transfer of Language when Creating New Meanings

This following set of errors are pre-systematic errors, as seen in chapter two, and more precisely transfer (from L1) or intralingual (from L2) errors. A pupil may attempt to transfer a chunk used in one person of the verb to another person/s. This has been seen above with the verb “tricher” where pupils unsuccessfully conjugate the verb in the third person plural, for example:

P Les crabes tricher aux points⁵³

P18 P4 tricher!⁵⁴

In this example, pupil four tries to transfer “je peux” to “la classe” and leaves out the verb “pouvoir” altogether:

1 P4 Est-ce que la classe avoir

2 T Peut

3 P4 Peut

4 T Avoir

⁵¹ Year 10 top set lesson

⁵² Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁵³ Year 8 top set, lesson 1

⁵⁴ Year 8 top set, lesson 2

- 5 P4 Avoir
- 6 T Oui
- 7 P4 Un tick⁵⁵

Here, the teacher is able to correct whilst also maintaining the communicative force of the utterance. Another example with “pouvoir” occurs in line 1 below:

Text 4ii: Big Fish

- 1 P9 Est-ce que moi et P7 peut chanter notre chanson?
- 2 P12 [Oui! Oui!
- 3 P7 [Non! Non!
- 4 P9 [[Trois chansons!
- 5 T [[Est-ce que moi et P8, est-ce qu'on peut ou est-ce que nous pouvons
- 6 chanter...une chanson française?
- 7 P12 Oui
- 8 P9 Grand poisson⁵⁶

A further example of this is:

- P3 Mais, mais est-ce que moi et P11 avoir une autre demi-coche?
- T Est-ce que toi et P11 ((mimes))
- P3 Peuvent avoir une autre demi-coche, demi-coche⁵⁷

Here the teacher cues the verb “pouvoir” with a mime, which shows excellent scaffolding in line with **aspect 1B of “target language management”**, prompting the pupil to produce the TL. Pupil three does not, however, produce the correct form. The correct form is a difficult one to find, as it requires understanding that the form needed is that of “we”, so may be noted for future work by the teacher which will require a degree of flexibility and planning on the teacher’s part.

A related instance, also already seen, is where pupils try to construct a present continuous tense, using the verb “être”, by analogy with English, for example:

⁵⁵ Year 8 top set, lesson 1

⁵⁶ Year 10 top set lesson

⁵⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

- T Ne montre pas la première lettre
P3 Non, je ne suis pas⁵⁸

Pupil three is trying to say “I’m not (showing it)” and translating directly from the English. This is clearly a transfer error and a rich area for future exploration by the teacher.

In the example below, pupil 12 is having difficulty with the plural forms “peuvent” and “elles sont”. It is highly likely that these forms have never been acquired, possibly due to the lack of exposure to them.

- P9 Est-ce que les filles avoir dix points
T Les filles p, peuvent
P9 Peuvent avoir dix points parce que les filles, c’est très (.) intéressantes et très différentes et très originelles et très belles
P12 Oui (claps, with P7)⁵⁹

The pupil firstly omits the verb “pouvoir” and then resorts to the more general “c’est” for “elles sont”. She does show, however, that she has correctly acquired the feminine form of adjectives, which has no doubt been carefully corrected over time. Her repetition of the teacher’s “peuvent” shows noticing (Schmidt and Frota, 1986).

An example of a pupil trying to conjugate a verb which has so often been heard and used in the infinitive is as follows:

- P1 Est-ce que je peux avoir une coche parce que je m’asseois, er, next to⁶⁰

Here pupil one tries to form the verb using the infinitive. This shows an ability to make a reasonable attempt at experimenting with language.

⁵⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁵⁹ Year 10 top set lesson

⁶⁰ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

A pupil may try out new language by reapplying language from a set chunk to another utterance (a systematic, intralingual error). An example below is “correct” from the chunk “ce n’est pas correct” being inappropriately reapplied to a *person’s* being right:

P3 Oh, mon dieu. Mais cinq points pour P11 parce qu’il est correct et tu ne dis pas cela correct⁶¹

As seen earlier, in a year 8 lesson, two pupils overgeneralise the phrase “c’est” and use it to apply to a person, using it to stand for “est” or “tu es/vous êtes” and “je suis” respectively.

Below is an example of a pupil perhaps using a chunk but only remembering half of it or testing a hypothesis (Swain, 1985) by trying out a new phrase:

Text 4iii: Stupid!

1 P21 P16 est stupide
2 P8 P est stupide
3 T OK!
4 P16 Un petit stupide
5 T Un petit peu
6 P16 Un petit peu stupide⁶²

The recasting by the teacher (line 5), communicative pressure (Doughty and Varela, 1998) and subsequent noticing as well as the personal significance of the utterance (Stevick, 1976) mean there is a good chance the phrase will be acquired.

In the extract below, pupil three tries to transfer the vocabulary item “temps” meaning ‘time’ in the general sense to ‘time’ in the sense of instances (actually “fois” in French):

⁶¹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁶² Year 8 top set, lesson 2

P3 P11, P11 a dit ça beaucoup de temps. Il dit 'violet, violet, violet, violet'⁶³

The teacher rewards this but does not correct it. In the next example, it is as if pupil three is stringing three separate chunks to form a question meaning something like “what’s that?!”:

P Qu'est-ce que ça parce que?
T C'est une voiture et (writes on board) c'est une ceinture de sécurité⁶⁴

The teacher understands the gist of the question and answers it, without correcting. This resembles a similar utterance later:

P3 Qu'est-ce que ça madame?⁶⁵

Whilst it is clear that the teacher will at times correct a pupil or help a pupil to self-correct, it is perhaps also important for the teacher to log examples such as the ones shown here as they occur and so as not to impede the communicative flow. She can then periodically focus explicitly on the knowledge pupils need to be able to successfully transfer language. As shown in chapter two (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p. 113) this is a demanding thing for the teacher to do. This is at the heart of the potential in the UCA to combine learning with conversation and will be explored in the final section of chapter five.

4.5.3 Risk-taking and Creativity in Trying out Totally New Language

In the absence of a set chunk, accuracy suffers as pupils focus on conveying their own meaning, however the teacher clearly rewards (line 5) this risk-taking here:

⁶³ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁶⁴ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁶⁵ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

Text 4iv: Intelligent

- 1 T [La classe! Oui. Merci, P. Cinq points pour toi
2 P16 [Deux ticks pour P. Mademoiselle T! Mademoiselle T! Deux ticks pour
3 [[P8 intelligent
4 P [[Oui! Oui!
5 T Parce qu'il est très intelligent. OK. Excellent. Deux ticks pour P8
6 P8 Merci, P16!⁶⁶

Again, this shows what Doughty and Varela (1998) see as crucial for second language development, namely communicative pressure combined with unobtrusive recasting. As seen below, the teacher (in line 8) is clearly impressed with P2's creative utterance in lines 6- 7, where he stretches his interlanguage to meet communicative needs (Swain, 1985).

Text 4v: I don't agree!

- 1 P15 Est-ce que je peux faire le prof
2 T Pourquoi?
3 P15 Parce que je suis fantastique
4 P14 Je ne suis pas d'accord
5 T Fantastique. Erm, erm. Tu peux faire le prof après
6 P2 Je ne suis pas d'accord parce que P15 faire le prof pour, pour deuxième
7 leçon
8 T Fantastique! Incroyable! Excellent. Tu veux faire le prof au lieu de P?
9 P, échangez! ((unint))⁶⁷

In the next example, the chunked part ("Est-ce que tu peux" + infinitive) is correct but the second part is incorrect. Nevertheless, pupil 11 corrects himself, possibly by instinct, to provide an infinitive so that the inaccuracy is lessened.

P11 Est-ce que tu peux promettre, promettre ne triche (.) ne tricher pas?

The following example is from the same pupil and the same lesson :

⁶⁶ Year 8 top set, lesson 2

⁶⁷ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

P11 Parce que je save que P va tricher, je ne sais pas⁶⁸

As noted before, this is interesting in that the form “sais” has not been transferred from the chunk to make it available for use in a different context. Instead, pupil 11 appears to have formed “save” from the infinitive “savoir.”⁶⁹

This category includes instances where pupils may lack the linguistic resources. In the following example, pupil one does not have “il y a” at his disposal:

P1 Non, ce n'est pas juste parce que, er (.) plus de les filles
T Il y a plus de filles⁷⁰

Pupil one again produces pushed output (Swain, 1985) as he tests a hypothesis under communicative pressure and the teacher recasts.

At the same time as accuracy, fluency also suffers as the pupil seems to hesitate as he becomes aware that he does not have the necessary structure. This does not, however, prevent him from continuing and conveying his meaning.

One strategy, conscious or not, is to use a present tense in the place of the more difficult perfect tense:

P3 Il ne lève la main
T Si, il a levé la main...⁷¹

Again, the teacher recasts (partially) whilst maintaining the communicative flow.

A strategy used when a pupil does not have the linguistic resources is to revert to

English:

⁶⁸ Both Year 10 top set lesson

⁶⁹ Other examples: P11 Madame! Est-ce que j'ai temps P6 chanter notre, nos chanson? (Year 10)

P11 Je parle qu'on donne les objectifs très vite avec P1 et avec P6 si c'est nécessaire (Year 10 top)

⁷⁰ Year 10 top set lesson

⁷¹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

- P11 Mais je veux se ré recorder⁷²
- P11 C'est Madame (T), elle était un cover teacher⁷³
- P3 Ah, madame, ce n'est pas calibrating
T Calibré. C'est bon.⁷⁴

This again shows a desire to keep communication going and in the first example an English word has been given a French form in the hope it might be correct, which demonstrates calculated risk-taking and a willingness to try out hypotheses, an important aspect of language learning, as shown in chapter two. In the case of the third example above, the teacher recasts immediately and pupil 3 does not respond. However, 23 lines later in the transcript, pupil 3 is able to reuse this item, showing it has been acquired:

- P3 Tu as dit que ça, ce n'est pas calibré

This is a clear demonstration of the process whereby pupils 'pick up' and transfer to the pupil interaction language (PIL) language used in the teacher interaction language (TIL). The pupil has also noticed the gap between what he knew and what he wanted to say (Swain, 1995).

The extract below also shows a pupil testing hypotheses by grappling for how to express the idea of "we worked together". He first tries "deux" in line one, then "avec" in line 6:

- 1 P3 Oh, on a dit ça parce qu'on travaillé deux. Une coche pour moi et P4
2 parce qu'[on a dit ça
3 T [P4 a dit ça, P4 a dit ça
4 P3 [[Mais on a travaillé
5 P6 [[J'ai dit ça aussi

⁷² Year 10 top set lesson

⁷³ Year 10 top set lesson

⁷⁴ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

- 6 P11 [Il y a un autre, il y a un autre
7 P3 [On a travaillé avec, on a travaillé avec⁷⁵

It is interesting to note that pupil three gets the perfect tense formation wrong in line one, but then right on four subsequent occasions, perhaps because he has reminded himself of the pattern after saying “on a dit ça.” Once again, this shows the advantage of frequent use in real operating conditions, seen in chapter two.

The following example shows a pupil trying to construct a phrase well beyond his linguistic ability. It is wildly inaccurate, but, perhaps as a strategy, the pupil simply produces an infinitive, attempting to point out that two pupils are fighting:

P14 Se les battre⁷⁶

Here pupil three is trying to translate literally from the English:

P3 I did it and you were confusing me
T Oh, P3
P3 Tu es moi conf, oh
T Tu m'as confus
P3 Tu m'as confus⁷⁷

He makes it fit French word order by adding the direct object pronoun before the verb, albeit in the wrong form. Once more, the teacher feeds back to allow the pupil to notice the gap.

When a pupil takes a risk to create new meaning this may show a lack of grammatical understanding or knowledge, a gap in such knowledge, or a confusion between forms learnt. This can be helpful to the teacher who can subsequently look to teach or clarify

⁷⁵ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁷⁶ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

⁷⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

specific points. An example has been seen above, where pupils use the exclamatory or interrogative form “quoi” in place of the relative “ce que”. This appears on two occasions in the data:

P11 C'est quoi elle veut⁷⁸

P3 Ça, c'est quoi elle fait⁷⁹

Pupil 11 above is again stretching his interlanguage and, as seen in the next chapter, the teacher recasts to help him notice the gap. Another possible gap is the function of the reflexive verb as seen in the following example, where the teacher also recasts:

T Quelqu'un d'autre. Fantastique. Deux points pour P11. Erm

P3 Un ou une personne qui se n'est pas différente

T Qui n'est pas différente⁸⁰

The following extract shows pupil 11 grappling with the perfect tense, in the “on” form. Interestingly, the teacher makes the pupil work out the word order, by referring to explicit knowledge, that is grammatical terms. This shows how explicit, or declarative, knowledge is not neglected in the UCA and can be put to service in helping pupils to correct their conversational utterances.

Text 4vi: Finished!

- 1 T P12,P11, P7 et P8, tu n'as pas fini encore?
- 2 P11 On n'a fini pas
- 3 T P11, le ne pas va autour de l'auxiliaire
- 4 P12 Comment dit-on en [anglais?]
- 5 P3 [Je ne suis pas d'accord]
- 6 T Le pp, c'est on ne auxiliaire pas pp
- 7 P11 On n'avait fini pas. Say that again!
- 8T Le pp, c'est à la fin.
- 9 P11 OK. On ne

⁷⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁷⁹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

⁸⁰ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

- 10 T On n'a
- 11 P11 Fini
- 12 T Non
- 13 P11 Pas
- 14 T ((nods)). PP
- 15 P11 Fini⁸¹

It seems unlikely that pupil 11 has not already acquired this rule and it is clear that he is able to form the more complex pluperfect tense correctly, in line 7. This makes it puzzling as to why he cannot produce the simpler perfect tense form. It is possible that pupils are becoming confused with the imperfect tense which may have been introduced recently. The reference to explicit knowledge here seems of limited use, with the more direct interventions in lines 10 and 12 being more effective. This shows that, whilst often useful, explicit rules may not always be the solution to move pupils on in their learning. Nevertheless, it is a good example of focus on form in a communicative context (Long, 1991; Doughty and Varela, 1998) rather than in isolation.

A further example of possible confusion between the tenses is seen here where pupil three uses the imperfect rather than the present form of the verb “avoir”:

P3 Il avait une petite tête

P3 J'essaie beaucoup mais je n'avais pas cinq croix⁸²

In the extract below, the pupil uses the verb “parler” instead of “dire”. This is an understandable confusion as the two meanings are so related. The pupil also uses the imperfect form “parlais” when the form “tu n’as pas dit” would be more appropriate:

P3 Madame quoi, pourquoi tu ne parlais pas essentiel ou?⁸³

⁸¹ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁸² Year 11 top set, lesson 2

It is also possible that pupil three has misformed “tu as parlé”, omitting the “as.”

Another difficulty, for pupil 11, is use of the word “près”. He tests a hypothesis but produces a transfer error where the pupil assumes it can be used as ‘nearly,’ as ‘près’ on its own means ‘near’:

P11 Oui. C’est près que⁸⁴

This is possibly meant in the sense of “presque”. He also wants to say “I am close” and does not lose the preposition “de”, presumably because he has always heard it attached:

P11 Je suis près de⁸⁵

It is also interesting that pupil 11, who is able to create his own complex phrases, seems not to have acquired the form “avoir” with age:

P11 Madame, la grand-mère de P12 est quatre-vingt-sept ans.
T La grand-mère de P12 a quatre-vingt-sept ans?⁸⁶

On a similar topic, pupil three shows strategic competence (Canale, 1983) through an ability to paraphrase. Thornbury and Slade (2006, p. 188) see this sort of strategic competence as one aspect of “conversational competence.” Pupil 3 is lacking an item of vocabulary, namely the number ‘97’, which is quite complex in French. Instead he “gets round” this lack of vocabulary:

P3 Elle avait, oh, erm, cent moins trois (laughs)⁸⁷

⁸³ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁸⁴ Year 10 top set lesson

⁸⁵ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁸⁶ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁸⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

This is skilful as he conveys his meaning well. The pupil is able to employ a communication strategy to make up for a lack of vocabulary.

Question forms beginning with “quel” may be a problem for pupils three and 11, for example:

P11 Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce que le problème avec mes grands-mères?

P3 Qu'est-ce qu'un synonyme pour convivialité?

P3 Quoi devoirs?!⁸⁸

The following example from the Year 11 lower set shows, as seen above, a pupil using the minimum amount of language to communicate his meaning, which he does successfully:

P6 Une croix chanson!

T Une croix pour la chanson ((extended laugh))⁸⁹

The teacher recasts and responds to the communicative force of the utterance by laughing. This utterance again shows an aspect of the interactive communicative classroom is that pupils focus exclusively on conveying meaning, using the shortest possible utterance. The counter-argument to this is, of course, that experimentation in the target language is taking place.

A similar conclusion can be drawn here that, whilst encouraging creativity, it is also a great opportunity for the teacher to use pupils' creative constructions as an indication of areas to cover and teach more explicitly. An example might be the form “ce que”

⁸⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

⁸⁹ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

(“that which” or “what”) which pupils have shown they need. As mentioned before, this is demanding but may be very worthwhile for learners.

This section has argued, then, that inaccurate utterances can be a demonstration of pupils’ experimentation with language and allowing this experimentation is an important part of the language-learning process. If pupils are attempting to say things meaningful to them, then this is likely to be a fruitful area for an exploration of TL rules as it will be more meaningful to the learners.

4.6 Teacher’s own Planned Target Language Use: Taught Routines and Drilling

This section will continue the chapter’s focus on the actual language spontaneously produced by pupils but will also consider its source. This will be in sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2. Section 4.6.3 will then consider the teacher’s use of language more specifically, including instances of drilling and this will illustrate **aspect 1A of the teacher’s “target language management”**, namely the teacher’s own planned target language use (named “teacher interaction language” (TIL)) and planning for pupil target language use through taught routines and drilling.

It will firstly be shown that pupils can use a small amount of language for effective, real-time communication. Set chunks can be turned to their own use and injected with personal meaning and emotion. Secondly, it will be seen that even small additions to or manipulations of such phrases can further change and personalise meaning, making such personal and successful language use accessible to all learners. Thirdly, it will be seen how learners can use chunks and formulaic set phrases as a basis for creating their own meanings. Indeed, the importance of chunks for creative construction has been considered in chapter two (Myles, Hooper and Mitchell, 1996; Myles, Mitchell

and Hooper, 1999) and Mitchell (2003, p.22) identifies how learners can move from chunks to more varied use of them. In more detail, the term “utterance launcher” (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.12) will be used to show how pupils can use a chunk to start a sentence they might otherwise not be confident to start. As such, it will be suggested that they overcome what will be called “communicative inertia.” The term “island of reliability” (Dechert, 1983, p. 183) will also be used to show the process of how pupils can use well-known chunks as security when they are struggling to express themselves in new ways.

4.6.1 The Source of Pupils’ Language

The most basic source of spontaneous pupil language is where this is directly and immediately taken from the teacher’s language. This is made possible in the UCA as a result of the teacher’s extensive and near-exclusive use of the target language. Often, however, there are signs that, as the language is initiated by a pupil, it is not simply language neutrally mirrored back to the teacher, but is invested with the pupil’s own meaning and emotion. An example from a year 7 lesson where this does happen shows pupils picking up on what the teacher has been saying and echoing it:

T C'était super. OK. On met cinq points pour Les Crabes, s'il te plaît. Excellent.
Cinq points pour P8, cinq points pour Les Crabes. On va demander à P14
Ps Cinq! Cinq!⁹⁰

In a year 10 lesson, perhaps because of the older and more confident nature of the pupils, a repeating of the teacher’s words with a tone of mild outrage is turned into a challenge to her fairness for deducting a large number of points for the speaking of English:

⁹⁰ Year 8 top set lesson 1

T Oh! Moins 5 points pour P1, il a parlé en anglais
Ps (laugh)
P6 Cinq points?⁹¹

Similarly, a pupil echoes the teacher's phrase in order to seek clarification about when he can leave the lesson to fetch the words of his song from another classroom. He then seeks further clarification, using simply the word "pourquoi?":

T ((unint)) chanson. Oui, pendant les synonymes ?? Un point pour, er,
P1 Pendant les synonymes?
T Oui, maintenant
P1 Pourquoi?
T Maintenant parce que comme ça, er, je n'ai pas besoin de faire les synonymes avec vous. Oui, vas-y, oui, la réponse, c'était oui. OK⁹²

What is clear here is that a very small amount of language can be invested with personal meaning. In terms of conversational competence, pupils are interacting simply by reflecting back the teacher's words. This shows how central the "target language lifestyle" is to the development of conversational competence as pupils are used to experiencing the target language as the natural means of communication.

This basic source of language (category '1'), relying heavily on the teacher's immediate last output is not, however, the main source of the language spontaneously used by pupils. The main source is pupil interaction language (PIL) in the form of prefabricated chunks previously taught via routines. As already discussed in chapter two, this teaching of PIL is distinctive in the UCA. The table below shows how it is this middle category ('2') of language which predominates. It is also encouraging to see pupils are prepared to construct their own meanings (category '3'), perhaps expanding on the prefabricated chunks of category '2'.

⁹¹ Year 10 top set lesson

⁹² Year 10 top set lesson

	Year 7/8 class total 3 lessons	Year 10/11 top set total 3 lessons	Year 11 lower set total 2 lessons
1: reliance on immediate teacher language	0.01%	0.03%	16%
2: use of taught pupil interaction language	88%	64.5%	64.2%
3: creative construction	10.9%	32.2%	20%

Table 4.5: Sources of pupils' spontaneous turns (percentages)

It should not be surprising that the prefabricated chunks of category '2' predominate as these will have been systematically taught and drilled. As discussed in sections 4.3 and 4.4, it is these prefabricated chunks which make fluent and accurate real-time conversation possible, so they should not be dismissed. Their key significance is that they can provide the *basis* for more creative, self-generated language but only if this stage is first passed through (Myles, Mitchell and Hooper, 1999); it is noticeable that Year 10/11 are able to produce more of these self-generated utterances than Year 7/8 pupils.

Examples of these prefabricated chunks were given above in section 4.3. Further examples (one from each class in the study) of pupils' use of prefabricated chunks taken from frequently occurring and taught PIL are given below to show how, in each case, pupils have turned the set phrases to their own use. In the first example below, pupil 22 uses a set formula to give a pithy retort to pupil 27's own use of a set formula

P27 Ce n'est pas juste!
T Ce n'est pas juste?
P22 Tais-toi, P27!⁹³

⁹³ Year 8 top set lesson 1

In the next example, pupil 14 uses the set phrase “je ne suis pas d'accord” to similar effect:

P15 Est-ce que je peux faire le prof?
T Pourquoi?
P15 Parce que je suis fantastique
P14 Je ne suis pas d'accord⁹⁴

This adds humour and an appraisal of another pupil. In the next example, the teacher is practising with pupils the conditional tense and sets out the imaginary scenario of her playing football for Real Madrid:

T Oui, on va faire un autre jeu. Alors, footballeur, footballeuse. Si j'étais footballeur ou si j'étais footballeuse, moi, je pourrais jouer pour Real Madrid. C'est un avantage ou un inconvénient?
P3 Un inconvénient
T Oui, ça depend
P11 C'est faux!⁹⁵

Again, the pupil uses a simple set phrase to inject humour and comment. The following shows the set class formula of “tu as perdu” and “j'ai perdu” embellished by pupil 28 with further set phrases, “c'est la vie” and “oui, c'est correct” to give the comments extra punch:

P28 Tu as perdu! C'est la vie! (.) Tu as perdu!
P29 J'ai perdu
P28 Oui, c'est correct⁹⁶

These embellishments make her comments more biting and humorous! This also shows a pupil using the language-learning strategy of using language that is already

⁹⁴ Year 11 lower set lesson 2

⁹⁵ Year 11 top set lesson 1

⁹⁶ Year 8 top set lesson 2

known to communicate rather than always having to start from scratch and possibly failing to get one's message across due to lack of available language.

This section shows, then, how timely use of chunks or minor changes and additions to them can still enable learners to use language in a timely, personal and appropriate way.

4.6.2 Creative Construction: Pupil Language moving beyond Chunks and Formulae

The most exciting aspect of pupil talk is when pupils are able to create their own meanings by manipulating language more fully and taking risks (Mitchell, 2003; Rubin, 1975). It is clear in the data that a major source of this language is the pupil interaction language previously taught. Pupils are able to take this language as a basis for creating their own.

The most basic example of manipulation of language is shown below where a Year 11 lower set pupil strings two nouns together:

“Une croix chanson”⁹⁷

This conveys the message that the teacher's song is so bad that it deserves a cross on the classroom management chart. Despite the inaccuracy, the spontaneous use of language here offers a learning opportunity as the teacher then recasts the utterance, as seen above.

The following Year 7/8 examples show pupils beginning to manipulate language for their own purposes, moving away from the set phrases:

⁹⁷ Year 11 lower set lesson 2

1. “Tu es chante terrible”⁹⁸

2. “Non, il est triche”⁹⁹

3. 1P Il a triche

2P Non!

3T P a triché?

4P Ce n'est pas correct!¹⁰⁰

Whilst all three examples are inaccurate, they demonstrate an important quality of a good language learner which is risk-taking (Rubin, 1975). It also shows pupils trying out language and testing hypotheses (Swain, 1995) which is a crucial element in language learning. In the third example, this is shown to be a learning opportunity as the teacher recasts whilst maintaining communication.

In the following examples, pupils use the structures “c’est” and “ce n’est pas” to form sentences of their own. These are two highly transferable structures which have featured prominently in UCA routines, for example the comprehension check and correction routines, which is highly structured, giving alternatives: “C’est clair ou ce n’est pas clair?”; “C’est correct ou ce n’est pas correct?”. Both these feature in the Year 7/8 data. Also, in the analysis of teacher talk (as shown in the table of frequent teacher interaction language, or TIL in appendices 11-13) “c’est” is the most frequently occurring lexical item in the teacher talk for the Year 10/11 classes in the study and fourth most frequent for the Year 7/8 class. It is not surprising, then, that pupils draw on this structure in making their own phrases. This is an example of a

⁹⁸ Year 7 top set lesson

⁹⁹ Year 10 top set lesson

¹⁰⁰ Year 8 top set lesson 2

“lexical phrase” (Nattinger and DeCarrico, 1992) and functions as a hook on which pupils can hang their own meaning:

1. “C’est japonais”¹⁰¹
2. “Ce n’est pas une leçon de danse”¹⁰²
3. “Ça, c’est une erreur!”¹⁰³

The following examples show pupils using the third person form “est” to talk about other pupils or the teacher. Again this features in the UCA evaluation routine and pupils are then able to take that on spontaneously:

1. “P16 est stupide”¹⁰⁴
2. “P est mal prof... P a mal prof”¹⁰⁵
3. “A mon avis, P8 est nul”¹⁰⁶
4. “Mademoiselle, c’est très intelligent”¹⁰⁷

In the final Year 8 example (number 4), the pupil has overgeneralised “c’est” to apply to a person but nevertheless the meaning is clear and the teacher recasts. In the other Year 8 example (number 3) above, it is interesting how the pupil gives his opinion of

¹⁰¹ Year 11 top set lesson 1

¹⁰² Year 10 top set lesson

¹⁰³ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

¹⁰⁴ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

¹⁰⁵ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

¹⁰⁶ Year 8 top set, lesson 2

¹⁰⁷ Year 8 top set, lesson 1

another pupil and adds “à mon avis”. Again this shows how pupils are able to appropriate language and construct new meaning. “A mon avis” features frequently in UCA evaluation routines (see the tables in appendices 11-13) and its use is encouraged by pupils when giving answers to topic questions (this is seen in the Year 7/8 data). It is also reinforced by the teacher, being used 23 times in the Year 7/8 lessons. Again, it is shown here that this pupil is able to transfer this lexical item spontaneously to give his opinion of another pupil, due to the frequency of its occurrence in the input previously (Ellis, 1997, p.118).

The lexical item “premièrement” here is also likely to have been transferred from the objectives routine:

P3 P6 a dit ça premièrement. Une coche pour P6, une coche pour P6¹⁰⁸

P2 Mais j’ai, je suis toujours, j’ai, est-ce que je peux faire le prof premièrement?¹⁰⁹

The next examples show spontaneous use of the lexical item “parce que”. Again, this is encouraged in requesting routines where pupils have to justify why they should be a volunteer, in response to the teacher’s question “pourquoi?” In the examples below, pupils instinctively justify their points using “parce que” without prompting. This shows that this justification (an aspect of more complex language use) is becoming instinctive in spontaneous use. It is a further reflection of pupils’ adopting something used frequently in the TIL, as the teacher asks “pourquoi?” on a frequent basis (see appendices 11-13):

¹⁰⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

¹⁰⁹ Year 10 top set lesson

1. “Oh mon dieu. Mais cinq points pour P parce qu’il est correct et tu ne dis pas c’est le correct”¹¹⁰

2. “Non, ce n’est pas juste parce que, er, plus de les filles”¹¹¹

3. “Parce que je save que P va tricher, je ne sais pas”¹¹²

4. “Je ne suis pas d’accord parce que P15 faire le prof pour, pour deuxième leçon.”¹¹³

In examples two and four, the pupil combines “parce que” with other set formulae, namely “ce n’est pas juste” and “je ne suis pas d’accord.” Both these are part of the taught PIL (featured in the team competition and requesting routines respectively) which pupils have appropriated for their own, new utterances here. Similarly, in the following examples, pupils use the quotative “j’ai dit” and combine it with other language:

1. P3 Non, j’ai dit sympa. (.) C’est mon accent!”¹¹⁴

2. P11 Mais j’ai dit ‘demain’ oui et P12 a dit ‘aujourd’hui’ (.) quand tu as dit ‘hier’¹¹⁵

In the first example, pupil three combines two set lexical items (“j’ai dit” and “c’est”) to make a persuasive argument- and in a humorous way! In the second example, pupil eleven is able to use the quotatives “j’ai dit”, “tu as dit” and “P.. a dit” as anchor

¹¹⁰ Year 10 top set lesson

¹¹¹ Year 10 top set lesson

¹¹² Year 10 top set lesson

¹¹³ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

¹¹⁴ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

¹¹⁵ Year 10 top set lesson

phrases to allow him to use a subordinate clause with “quand.” In the following example seen before, “parce que” launches a subordinate clause:

- T Oui, s'aime, non, s'adore? (.) S'adore. Reflexif. C'est un verbe réfléchi, souvent que ((unint))
- P11 Parce que tous les classes s'adorent, er (.) les bonbons devraient être pour tous les classes, ce n'est pas important qui gagne¹¹⁶

It is argued here that this re-assembly of chunks is an important intermediate stage between the stage discussed earlier, the verbatim production of set phrases and a later stage, which is the production of totally new phrases, although even these will often contain elements appropriated from the set phrases. These set phrases serve as “utterance launchers” (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.12) and function at both a cognitive and affective level. In speaking spontaneously, pupils have to overcome a feeling which is called here “communicative inertia.” Like the effort required to overcome physical inertia, pupils need to make an initial effort to speak, which is facilitated if pupils are confident they have the language at their disposal. These set phrases give pupils the confidence to get started and to make the effort to talk as opposed to the easier option, which is to simply keep silent. A further example of an “utterance launcher” (ibid.) is given below where the pupil ‘gets underway’ with the very familiar “Est-ce que tu peux...” before adding a self-constructed element:

- P11 Est-ce que tu peux promettre, promettre ne triche (.) ne tricher pas?¹¹⁷

Also, by asking for the item “promettre”, pupil 11 has noticed the gap between what he can say and what he wants to say (Swain, 1995) and has shown the strategic competence to fill this gap.

¹¹⁶ Year 10 top set lesson

¹¹⁷ Year 10 top set lesson

A lexical phrase can also work the other way round, that a set phrase allows a pupil to keep the talk going once he or she has started a phrase. An example of this, seen before in a different section, is the following from pupil one in the Year 10 top set:

P1 Mais j'ai, je suis toujours, j'ai, est-ce que je peux faire le prof premièrement?¹¹⁸

It would seem that this pupil felt he was not able to get his message across quickly enough, namely that he never gets to do the points first. He is able to find refuge in a set phrase to get his point across: instead of arguing that he never gets to do the points first, he simply asks directly if he can do them first. He is using the set phrase as what Dechert (1983, p. 183) calls an "island of reliability." This enables the pupil to 'settle' here when other resources fail him. Again, this is a crucial aspect of conversational competence if the conversational flow is to be maintained. This is also what occurs above with pupil eleven using "j'ai dit", "tu as dit" and "P12 a dit" as "islands of reliability" (ibid.).

As seen with the example of "calibré" being taken up by pupil 3, there is another example of language being 'picked up', this time by pupil 11. The structure "si j'étais... je pourrais" is being practised in the topic language in this lesson and pupil 11 produces the spontaneous utterance as below:

P11 P3 ne pourrait pas être français parce que il est, il est plus stupide. Je pense beaucoup¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Year 10 top set lesson

¹¹⁹ Year 11 top set lesson 1

It is possible that pupil 11 has used “pourrait” due to its presence in the topic language. If this is the case, it is an ideal situation to be aiming for in the UCA, where topic language is integrated into the pupil’s own interaction language.

4.6.3 Teacher Talk: Planned Use of the Target Language

It has been shown above that a large amount of the spontaneous pupil talk mirrors the teacher talk. This talk, used to interact with the class, distinct from the topic language and called “teacher interaction language” (TIL), is a crucial part of the **teacher’s “Target Language Management” (aspect 1A)** in the UCA. It contains planned, consistent phrases, either repeated within the course of the lesson(s) or used extensively in previous lessons. Examples can be found in appendices 11-13. As seen above in the source of pupils’ language, much of the pupil interaction language (PIL) stems from the teacher interaction language (TIL) used in routines or other interactional talk. Clear examples of how language pupils request is subsequently taken up by them are the use of “calibré” and “le monde finit” in the Year 11 lesson 1 and Year 10 lessons respectively. As this language does not reflect natural, everyday use, it is often referred to as “simplified input” (Ellis, 1997).

The near-exclusive target language use potentially addresses Ellis’ (1997, p. 118) requirement for the development of implicit knowledge of lexical items and formulaic expressions, which is the “exposure to input in which words and formulas occur frequently and are salient.” It also appears to meet the requirement for “real operating conditions” (1997, p.125) as the target language is used for real communicative purposes, in line with the “target language lifestyle”, to be elaborated in chapter five. The UCA meets the requirements for frequent and salient words and formula and goes

well beyond the context of classroom management routines for these. It also offers, as will be shown in chapter five, functions important to the learner.

It was seen above how a pupil reuses a structure present in the topic language. It is also important for the teacher to model (see chapter 5, section 5.8 for a discussion of this process) the topic language language being used for interaction for pupils. An example of where the teacher similarly incorporates topic language into her interaction with pupils centres around the structure “même si” which is a targeted structure for teaching and incorporation in coursework (as seen in the Year 11 lower lesson 1 on smoking). The example occurs during a discussion about grandmothers but the teacher wants to move on with the lesson:

T OK. On va continuer, même si c'est très intéressant, vos grands-mères¹²⁰

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that some of the pupil classroom talk displays features of conversation. The significant number of pupil spontaneous initiations shows that pupils are able to use language spontaneously and in real time, consistent with the nature of conversation, featuring spontaneity (the significant number of pupil initiations), fluency and automaticity (the talk takes place in real time), and a relative lack of complexity in the spontaneous utterances (reflecting the informal nature of conversation).

The chapter has demonstrated that short, set chunks are often used accurately but that accuracy diminishes when pupils manipulate language for their own purposes. It has

¹²⁰ Year 11 top set lesson 2

also been shown that inaccuracy is part of the language-learning process (Mitchell, 2003) and can be a positive aspect of language learning, useful in diagnosing pupils' progress, something which is not possible if pupils are always forced to produce artificially accurate utterances on demand, as seen in chapter one. Indeed, it has been suggested that inaccuracy should not only be tolerated but embraced and exploited as an intrinsic part of risk-taking and creativity (Mitchell, 2003; Swain, 1985; Doughty and Williams, 1998b; Slimani, 1989) as well as a diagnostic tool for teachers to help target specific areas of language useful for learners. It is also a vital part of learning if the important and developmental processes of hypothesis testing, pushing output (Swain, 1985), noticing (Schmidt and Frota, 1986; Swain, 1995), and operating under communicative pressure (Doughty and Varela, 1998) are to take place.

Similarly, it has been shown that fluency takes time to develop as pupils automatise language, and manipulate it for their own purposes in the creation of new meanings. The argument that both a lack of fluency and accuracy are often positive, developmental and diagnostic aspects of language learning underlines the theme present in chapter one that learning is best viewed as a process and not just in terms of a product. As Coffield (2005) urges, it is only by engaging with the complexity of learning that solutions can even begin to emerge:

Instead of always hankering after simplicity, perhaps the time has come for us all to celebrate, enjoy and study the inherent complexities of teaching and learning, which are best seen as two sides of the same coin.
(Coffield, 2005, pp. 7-8).

Such a view of learning as complex and involving processes over time, requiring a long-term view (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007) involves teachers 'holding their

nerve' that learning will fall into place even if outcomes are not immediately perceptible.

This chapter has also shown the importance of chunks and formulaic utterances in enabling the necessary levels fluency to come about. Pupils are also able to use these chunks as they stand, to elaborate on and extend them slightly or, ultimately, as an exciting basis for making their own meanings and manipulating language more extensively. Pupils' language can be traced back to the teacher's precise words, and/or to the classroom pupil interaction language. Even largely creative utterances display an element of pupil interaction language or teacher interaction language. It has been argued that even a small amount of manipulation of chunks, or expansion of or addition to a chunk can invest language with new, personalised meanings and emotions.

Furthermore, two important characteristics of the teacher interaction language, or TIL, are its planned and consistent nature and the way that language is drilled (examples feature in chapter five) so that the teacher's language (TIL) can be re-used by the pupils (as PIL), **aspect 1A of "target language management."**

At the end of chapter five, a section will be devoted to highlighting how, taking inspiration from the notion of "instructional conversation", learners' spontaneous conversation can be used to develop learning further.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS: SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

5.1 Overview of Chapter Five

The previous chapter provided an analysis of the actual spontaneous language used by pupils in the classroom data, from a cognitive perspective, that is in terms of its linguistic characteristics, for example its frequency and complexity. This involved examining the language more in isolation, as if each utterance existed in a vacuum, in other words it concerned itself with the cognitive view of processes seen as “mental and largely hidden from view” (Ellis, 2008, p.33).

This chapter, in contrast, will examine the pupil and teacher language of the classroom observation data from a sociocultural perspective, that is in its context, and analyse what provoked the pupil to produce the utterance in the first place. This is, therefore, examining the language not from a cognitive point of view, looking at the language form itself and at the processes involved to produce this language but giving emphasis to the social context in which the language is produced and what motivated that language use. At the same time, it will analyse the features of discourse produced, for example in terms of how it is constructed and to what its subject matter relates.

It will be argued that the features of the pupil discourse of the study are those of conversation and that this, in turn, points to an emerging L2 conversational competence among pupils. This competence is related to and draws on the definition of “communicative competence” (Canale, 1983) and is “that subset of linguistic and strategic competences that are implicated in conversation...” (Thornbury and Slade 2006, p.188). The word “classroom” is added to “conversational competence” to give what will be termed “**L2 classroom conversational competence**” because it will be

shown that this conversational competence is at this stage very situated and does not obviously extend to a general conversational competence.

Picking up from chapter four, the remaining features of conversation (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.8) which will be considered here, in turn and with reference to the study's data, are as follows:

1. The obvious point that conversation is spoken (see section 5.2 below)
2. The notion of a shared context, with referential questions (see section 5.3 below)
3. The interactive nature of the talk (see section 5.4 below)
4. The interpersonal nature of the talk and its frequently process-oriented nature (see section 5.5 below)
5. Conversation as expressive of identity (see section 5.6 below)

The chapter will show how these features are present in the classroom and pupil talk. For each feature, there will also be an examination of how the teacher facilitates it. The term “**target language lifestyle**” will be used in this study, and is unique to this research, to describe the target language position adopted by the UCA, to emphasise pupils' positive disposition towards use of the target language. The term “**linguistic lifebelt**” will also be used to describe the device by which pupils can use English to ask how to say a given word or phrase in the target language. It will be proposed, as seen in chapter four, that the teacher scaffolds the learning, or assists performance by engaging in two types of management: what has been called by this study “**target language management**” and “**context management.**” One aspect of “target language management,” focusing on teacher use of the TL will be called “**teacher target language talkback.**” Another term, “**assiduity**”, will be used in this research

to highlight how the teacher consistently and unrelentingly rewards pupil use of the TL.

“Target language management” will be discussed in section 5.2.3 below. “Context management” as a term will be introduced in section 5.3 and expanded in subsequent sections. It will be argued that the first part of this “context management” is what this research will call the creation of a “**communicative classroom context**” which creates agency (van Lier, 2008), or the desire for pupils to speak spontaneously (termed a “**communicative urge**”). The second part of “context management” is what will be called in this research the “**communicative space**” created by the teacher in which conversation can take place.

5.2 “Conversation is Spoken”: Maintaining the Target Language

Thornbury and Scott (2006) state that it is an obvious point that conversation is spoken. What is not so obvious, however, is that teenage pupils in a MFL classroom of English-speaking pupils in compulsory education will maintain talk in the target language rather than switching to English. What are also not obvious are the measures taken and techniques used by the teacher to create the conditions which encourage pupils to remain in the target language. This next section (5.2.1) will show that pupils, with some exceptions, use the target language as the main vehicle for communication. In other words, the study shows a strong target language culture among pupils. The term “**target language lifestyle**” will be used, uniquely to this study, to describe this. It will be argued that pupils have adopted use of the target language in their French lessons in the same way that a group or community might adopt a specific lifestyle, holding to it as a matter of course. This argument will be strengthened by examination of the pupil interview data in chapter six.

Section 5.2.2 will examine the circumstances under which pupils use English. This will show that English is not banned in the UCA but is usually used for specific purposes. Firstly, it is used by pupils asking how to say something in the target language. This request for the French equivalent of an English phrase will be called the “linguistic lifebelt” device. Secondly, it will be shown that English is an integral part of activities which involve transfer of meaning. Thirdly, there will be examples of pupils’ using English spontaneously and outside the parameters of the UCA, mainly in the Year 11 lower set. The circumstances under which this occurs, such as for thinking aloud, will be examined.

The subsequent section (5.2.3) will suggest that it is no accident that this strong target language culture exists in the classroom. The point will be made that the teacher takes a number of measures and uses techniques to create and maintain this culture in the classroom. These measures and techniques will be termed in this study “**target language management.**” It will be argued that, just as the teacher has to use classroom management to maintain a productive working environment, so the teacher can use “target language management” techniques to ensure the target language is used and continues to be used by pupils. “Target language management” will be divided into two main aspects of “scaffolding”, drawing on the literature highlighted in chapter two. These two aspects mirror the two perspectives present in the data analysis (cognitive and sociocultural): scaffolding for target language content and scaffolding for affect (Ellis, 2003), in other words the role of feelings and emotions. In terms of scaffolding for target language content, three elements will be identified, namely planned target language use by the teacher and the planned use of pupil target language (already discussed in chapter four); prompting the pupil by offering alternative responses or visual support; use of the “linguistic lifebelt”, whereby pupils

can use English to ask for a target language phrase. In terms of scaffolding for affect, the following will be identified: careful use of reminders, rewards and sanctions with respect to target language use (for which the term “assiduity” will be used); using encouragement, through echoing, and praise as the pupil is speaking; the “teacher TL talkback” device, whereby the teacher replies in the target language even if she is addressed in English. The use of the “linguistic lifebelt” also features here. The first of these elements (1A, planned teacher and pupil target language use) has been examined in chapter four and the remaining ones will be examined in Section 5.2.3 below.

5.2.1 The “Target Language Lifestyle” Among Pupils

This section will show that there is a strong target language culture, or what will be termed, uniquely to this study, a “target language lifestyle” among pupils, using the following definition of “lifestyle”:

... someone’s way of living, the things that a person or particular group of people usually do.
(Cambridge, 2008)

This is taken to mean here that pupils naturally use the target language for classroom communication, without recourse to English. This is shown below by the low percentage of spontaneous English turns out of total number of spontaneous turns in the three classes of the study:

Year 7/8	5%
Year 10/11 top set	6%
Year 11 lower set	20%

Table 5.1: Percentage of pupil spontaneous turns in English out of total number of spontaneous pupil turns

“Target language lifestyle position” is the term used by this study alone to describe the position taken by the UCA on TL use, in contrast to terms such as “virtual”, “maximal” and “optimal” (Macaro, 2001, p. 535) discussed in chapter two. The data will show that the UCA position focuses more on developing the *pupils’* disposition to use the TL than the amount of teacher TL use.

The figures in table 5.1 above show that the use of English is very low but much greater in the Year 11 lower group. (Not included in this count is any planned use of English, that is use of English which forms part of a planned exercise or where pupils ask the teacher for the French equivalent of an English word or phrase). It can be seen here that there is consequently a very high percentage of target language use among pupils, suggesting a strong target language culture. The higher percentage of English use and thus lower percentage of TL use in the Year 11 lower group is explicable by two or three pupils using English in this class and it will be shown in section 5.2.2 that this English is often used in a specific way, most notably for thinking aloud.

Evidence for the “target language lifestyle” is also seen in the high number of self-initiated pupil utterances. It would be easier for pupils to produce remarks in English or to avoid speaking altogether but pupils are not inhibited from using the target language spontaneously, as already seen in chapter four.

Evidence for the “target language lifestyle” of the Year 11 top set is best seen when pupils are under stress due to a classroom management incident but still use the target language to get their point across. Text 5i below shows Pupil 1 sticking to French in lines 4 and 7 in order to explain why he was distracted. He continues to use French in

line 11 in order to ask for a French phrase, although Pupil 6 cannot help blurt out some English:

Text 5i: “She said that!”

- 1 T Stop! P1, tourne-toi, tourne-toi, tourne-toi vite, sinon...
2 T Excellent, parler en anglais. Continue! On ne va pas parler en anglais.
3 Stop, stop, stop, stop, stop! P1!, P12! Qu'est-ce que tu fais, P1?
4 P1 [Elle a dit “I don't give a shit”
5 Ps [(gasp) Non !
6 T [P1! Sshh! P1!
7 P1 Elle a dit ça, elle a dit ça!
8 T ((nods to point marker)) Un point pour “elle a dit”. P1, P1! Et le journal.
9 P6 Thingy, recorder.
10 T P1, sshh! P1, tu vas sortir ton journal après.
11 P1 Comment dit-on ‘play back the tape’?¹²¹

It is also noteworthy how the exhortation not to speak English is included in the objectives here (line 2), another aspect of ‘keeping the “TL lifestyle” going.’

Similarly below, Pupil 3 reacts in French, switches to English but then reverts swiftly to French to lodge a protest against the behaviour of a fellow pupil. He only reverts to English out of frustration at having been given a cross for poor behaviour, unjustly in his eyes:

Text 5ii: “She’s impolite!”

- 1 P3 Oh, mon deu. You see. (.) Tu vois ça? Tu vois ça? Elle est mal polie.
2 Trois coches pour P4. (..) Oh mon deu. Triche, triche! (.) Je m'en fiche,
3 elle triche. Elle beaucoup triche
4 T P3! ((makes swapping gesture)) Elle triche beaucoup
5 P3 Elle triche beaucoup. Elle n'y a pas polie, elle fait ((gestures one finger))
6 à moi
7 T P3! ((gives P3 a cross))
8 P3 Ah non. Mon deu.
9 P6 Une croix
10 P3 Ça, c'est quoi elle fait. (.) Look, look at the video!¹²²

¹²¹ Year 11 top set lesson 2

¹²² Year 11 top set lesson 2

Also here, the teacher uses a gesture to correct (line 4) and this will be taken up again later, in section 5.8.

These extracts show pupils persisting in speaking the target language despite being under pressure to get their message across urgently to defend their actions. They show a high level of agency, at the top of van Lier's (2008, p. 171) scale, "commitment", and a real investment of emotional energy (ibid., p. 178). This, along with the statistics above that show such a small percentage of unsolicited English turns, supports the claim of a "target language lifestyle" in the classes of the study.

5.2.2 Pupil Use of English

The study shows that pupils are able to use English in UCA lessons and that this use of English sits comfortably with the near-exclusive target language use of the classroom and the "target language lifestyle." The use of English does not 'fight against' the use of the target language by pupils. The reason for this is that it is 'planned in' so that its use is systematised and acts as what will be called an "**auxiliary tool**", whereas the target language is the "**primary tool**" for communication. Firstly, this is through use of what will be called in this study the "**linguistic lifebelt device**"¹²³ and is **aspect 1C of "target language management"** by the teacher. Pupils can use the formula "Comment dit-on... en français?" to ask for a word or phrase in the target language. This formula thus maintains the "target language lifestyle" of the classroom whilst at the same time avoiding the alienation and loss of identity of pupils suggested in the literature on the target language reviewed in chapter two (Phillipson, 1992; Auerbach, 1993) . In many exchanges, the

¹²³ The term "linguistic lifebelt" is adapted from the textbook "Spirale 1" (Jenkins and Jones, 1992). There the term referred to a French-English glossary.

“linguistic lifebelt” device is key to keeping the flow of language going, as will be seen in the next section.

Secondly, pupils use English in the course of established activities which involve transfer of meaning. Examples of this are Year 8 lesson 1, where a pupil takes the register and asks each pupil in turn to give the target language equivalent for a phrase she gives in English, and comprehension checks in Year 11 lower set lesson 1.

These two specific uses of English demonstrate that English can be used within an approach which favours near-exclusive target language use. English is used as an “auxiliary tool” in a defined, planned way, and for transfer of meaning and comparisons with the L1, something which is not neglected as the literature reviewed in chapter two suggests it often is (Cook, 1999; 2001). English is not, however, used as the “primary tool” for communication by the teacher, and only rarely by the pupils. There are, nevertheless, points when pupils do use English outside these very planned circumstances and it is important to acknowledge these. This can be, as seen in texts 5i and 5ii above, when pupils ‘blurt out’ English in frustration or in moments of stress or excitement. This tends to be limited to a few words. One important exception, however, is the Year 11 lower set. One or two male pupils persist in using English but even they seem to have accepted that English is not the language of communication in the classroom. The use of English appears to be limited for the most part to a running commentary on the lesson, in what appears to be a sort of “private speech.” (Vygotsky, 1987, p.71; Ohta, 2001, p.18). These pupils translate spontaneously and comment on the process of the lesson (for example the teacher’s drawings) and on the pedagogical content of the lesson. Examples of direct translation of the teacher talk include classroom management talk (“Once you’ve done it, it’s funny. Five times you

do it, it's not funny"), task instructions ("What's missing?") and topic language ("I have never smoked", "Smoking costs a lot of money"). As seen in chapter four, pupils may also use English when lacking the necessary vocabulary and do not wish to ask for it as this will interrupt the flow of speech. This shows that the "target language lifestyle position" need not suppress important L1 use and thought processes as claimed (Cohen, 1998; Pachler, 2000).

Whilst this use of English sits outside the normal planned circumstances in which English is prescribed in the UCA, it does nevertheless show that the UCA is flexible enough to accommodate this unsystematic use of English by pupils but still maintain the "target language lifestyle" of the classroom. This is due in no small part to the actions of the teacher, as will be analysed in the next section. Here, however, one can see in the next text how a pupil is not drawn into the English of the other two pupils but answers their English musings by means of two carefully chosen words in the target language. Pupil 14 in line 8 uses two words from a song being sung to resolve an argument that has been going on in the class in English. The song is designed to help pupils learn useful phrases to say about their work experience and one line of the song is "J'ai travaillé avec un plombier... Il fallait y aller en bus et en train." The argument concerns the plumber's van:

Text 5iii: "The Plumber's Van"

- 1 PB Why would a plumber take a bus or a train?
- 2 PB Yeah!
- 3 PB He would have a van
- 4 PB Yeah!
- 5 PB He might not!
- 6 T C'est pour ton stage! Année dix. Voilà. Ton stage année dix. A
- 7 l'examen oral, il faut parler de ton stage
- 8 P14 Avec plombier, [avec
- 9 T [Oui. Excellent.

10 P (claps)¹²⁴

This section, then, is demonstrating a limited and planned but nonetheless important role played by English as an auxiliary tool in the classroom. It has also shown that this use of English does not undermine the carefully nurtured “target language lifestyle,” even in a class where one or two pupils use English more extensively, in a way not encouraged by the UCA. This is contrary to the finding by Macaro (2000) discussed in chapter two, that use of English by pupils could lead to pupils’ seizing the initiative and the rest of the lesson being conducted in English.

When pupils do speak English in the Year 11 lower set, the teacher does not often move to sanction this, however she does not accept English as the language of communication in the classroom. She “talks back” in the TL (as in text 5iv below):

Text 5iv: “Cigarettes”

T Je fume

Ps Je fume

T Trente cigarettes par jour

Ps Trente cigarettes par jour

P That's a lot of money

T C'est cher. Ah oui, j'ai pas mis ça sur les, les raisons. OK.¹²⁵

This strategy will be termed in this research “**teacher target language talkback**” in the UCA and is **aspect 2D of “target language management.”** This means that the target language is ‘kept going’ and ensures that pupils never seize the initiative with English to the extent that the lesson is forced to be conducted in English at any point. This technique of “teacher talkback” is one element in a series of actions and techniques which together are labelled “target language management,” summarised in the next section. What is skilful in this technique is that the teacher simultaneously

¹²⁴ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

¹²⁵ Year 11 lower set, lesson 1

acknowledges the pupils' contribution and "converts" it to her TL purpose. This is an aspect of "modeling" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, pp. 4-5) and cleverly avoids the trap of alienating pupils and their identity whilst at the same time keeping the target language going.

Where a pupil uses English in *off-task* behaviour in this group, this is treated in line with normal classroom management procedures. The teacher treats it as in any other non-MFL lesson and asks, in the TL, for concentration or quiet or issues a reminder, using the pupil's name. On other occasions, the strategy of ignoring the use of English can be likened to "tactical ignoring" (Rogers, 2007, p. 139) in classroom management where the undesired behaviour is ignored so as not to endorse it but also to move the lesson on more smoothly. The teacher may also be aware of the fact that at times in the Year 11 lower set, the commentaries can be quite amusing, adding a feeling of collaborative endeavour to the lesson. One example is when pupils give a commentary on the teacher's self-written song¹²⁶. Comments move gradually from "There's more?" and "Oh my god!" to "That's quite good!" and "I'll give you that!" At one point, a line of the song (about opinions of work experience) is "C'était dur, c'était nul, c'était très fatigant" and pupil six comments "Like this song." As a result, the teacher is careful not to exclude these elements which have a positive influence on the affect of pupils. In essence, then, the teacher (the same teacher who teaches both the Year 10/11 top set) has adapted her target language management to suit the class, exactly as one might adapt one's classroom management strategies.

In summary, then, it is argued that the foundation for conversation is evident in pupils' willingness to use the target language, spontaneously and even in moments

¹²⁶ Year 11 lower set, lesson 2

when they are under pressure. This strong target language culture is summed up as a “target language lifestyle” where pupils, for the most part, accept the target language as the means of communication in the classroom. At the same time, English is not banned but used in planned ways. It will be shown in the next section that the “target language lifestyle” is facilitated by the “target language management” of the teacher, which has several elements to it, including maintaining motivation to use the target language and ensuring pupils have access to the language they need.

5.2.3 “Target Language Management”

It has been established that it cannot be assumed or taken for granted that the target language will be spoken by pupils in the MFL classroom. The fact that it is spoken is down to the actions of the teacher in establishing, in the UCA, what has been termed by this study a “target language lifestyle” where pupils accept use of the target language as the normal means of communication.

It will be shown further in the course of this chapter that the UCA teacher uses a number of strategies and techniques to establish and maintain this “target language lifestyle” and the umbrella term for these in this study of “target language management” will be used here, then flagged up in the course of this chapter and summarised at the end of it. “**Target language management**” by the teacher is akin to classroom management in that the teacher sets the expectations and constantly monitors them, issuing reminders and sanctions. In other words, management of the target language environment is something in which the teacher engages actively, just as with classroom management. The notion of “target language management” and the use of it is a crucial one. It gives the lie to the idea that extensive target language use by the teacher is a monolithic, invariable action or set of actions which can be argued

in favour of or against. In literature on the use of the TL in the MFL classroom this is, however, often the case. The various authors do not specify precisely, if at all, the characteristics of the teacher TL use which is under scrutiny but instead treat it as one phenomenon.

The following, then, are the two main elements of “target language management” which show the two different aspects of “scaffolding”- scaffolding in terms of language and scaffolding in terms of affect. For scaffolding in terms of language, the shaded aspect (1A) was considered in chapter four: the teacher’s own planned target language use (her teacher interaction language, or TIL) and planning for pupil target language use through taught routines and drilling. Shaded aspect 2D (Teacher target language talkback) has also already been considered in this chapter, and the remaining features will be considered in the sections indicated:

Target Language Management

1. Scaffolding in terms of language		<u>Where discussed</u>	Related concepts from sociocultural literature
1A	Teacher’s own planned target language use and planning for pupil target language use through taught routines and drilling	Chapter four	Modeling
1B	Prompting the pupil by offering alternative responses or visual support (“linguistic scaffolding” in the UCA)	5.4	Modeling Feeding back Task structuring
1C	Use of the “linguistic lifebelt” device	5.4; 5.5	Agency; Directing, Questioning

2. Scaffolding in terms of affect

2A	“Assiduity” in reminders about TL use, praise and reward of TL use and sanctioning use of English	5.4	Contingency managing
2B	As the pupil is speaking, using encouragement, through echoing, and praise	5.4	Contingency managing
2C	Use of the “linguistic lifebelt”	5.4; 5.5	Agency; Directing, Questioning
2D	“Teacher Target Language Talkback”	5.2.2	Modeling

“Context management” will also be considered as follows:

Context Management

		<u>Where discussed</u>	<u>Related concepts</u>
1	Creation of a “Communicative Classroom Context”	5.3	Agency
2	Creation of “Communicative Space”	5.4	Agency

As this chapter is organised in terms of the features of conversation, aspects of target language and context management will be interwoven and flagged up as they appear and will be drawn together at the end of the chapter.

5.3 Conversation in a Shared Context: “The Communicative Classroom Context”

Given that it has been stated that conversation requires a shared context, this section will show that pupils have a shared context as a reference point for conversation, a shared context which the UCA creates. It will also be claimed that this context is strong enough to stimulate the desire for pupils to speak spontaneously in the target language. This desire will be termed a “communicative urge.” This “context management” has two aspects to it:

1. The creation of a shared context in which the conversation can take place and to which it can refer. This context which has been described in this study as the

“communicative classroom context” of the UCA and will be discussed in this section below.

2. The creation of what this study will call **“communicative space”** which allows conversation to emerge. This notion will be introduced in section 5.4 below in the section on conversation as interactive, expanded in subsequent sections and summarised in the final section of the chapter.

It may appear to be a statement of the obvious that pupils have a shared context as most school pupils may by definition be said to share the context of a classroom, the teacher and other pupils. What is unique about the UCA, however, is that it enhances and strengthens this context, such that it provides pupils with the agency (van Lier, 2008) to talk, or the stimulus for conversation. The UCA sets up specific classroom sub-contexts to which pupils can make reference and about which they can engage in conversation. It will be argued here that the UCA creates a shared context for conversation which will be called by this study a **“communicative classroom context”** and which stimulates conversation and sets up the conditions for it to take place. This “communicative classroom context” consists primarily of the following sub-contexts which, the classroom data shows, are the most popular subjects of spontaneous turns among pupils overall:

1. Another pupil
2. The team competition
3. The pedagogical content
4. The competitive aspect of an activity/ the pupil in the role of the teacher, or “teacher clone technique” (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.144)/
talk about oneself

These are shown for each group in table 5.2 below:

Rank order of subjects of spontaneous turns per group:	Year 7/8	Year10/11 top set	Year 11 lower set
1	Another Pupil	Another Pupil	Another Pupil
2	Team Competition	Team Competition	Pedagogical Content
3	Pedagogical Content	Pedagogical Content	Teacher Clone
4	Competitive aspect of an activity	Self	Team Competition ¹²⁷

Table 5.2: Rank order of subjects of spontaneous pupil turns per group observed

The category of “another pupil” has the highest count in all three class groups. It should not be surprising that this is the most frequent subject of pupils’ initiations, for two reasons. Firstly, the UCA lays claim to “exploiting the human potential of the classroom” (Burch, 2004, p.10). For pupils, there can be no more immediate human potential than fellow pupils. It should not, however, be assumed that pupils talk about other pupils in a vacuum. As such, the category “another pupil” also includes the subjects which feature in second, third and fourth places, so that “another pupil” is a ‘supercode’ covering a number of sub-contexts.

The subjects in second and fourth place (the team competition, the competitive aspect of activities and the “teacher clone”) reflect clearly established routines or principles of the UCA. The team competition is set up by the teacher’s dividing the class into teams. In the Year 7/8 and Y11 top set data, the teams are “Les Crabes/Les Fantastiques” and “Dakar/Les Etoiles”, with the Year 10 top set lesson a team competition between the boys and the girls. Pupils are awarded points to their team

¹²⁷ This is probably in fourth place as the team competition has less prominence in these lessons

for participation and for correct answers. An additional layer to this team competition is the awarding of ticks and crosses, which is part of the behaviour management strategy of the case study school. Pupils are awarded ticks for participation and answers alongside the points of the team competition. Pupils receive a sticker if they accrue seven ticks in a lesson and stickers can be collected and exchanged for tangible rewards, such as an iPod.

It is clear from the data that the team competition is applied, as evidenced by the frequent reference to point-giving by the teacher. In the Year 7/8 lessons, specific reference to points is the third most frequent teacher reference, in the Year 10/11 top set lessons the second most frequent and in the Year 11 lower set lessons the fifth most frequent specific reference.¹²⁸ Related to the team competition is the way activities are set up to have a competitive element, which itself serves as a context. This context provides pupils with the opportunity to comment in the target language on who is winning, losing, cheating and so on. Examples of activities which provoked spontaneous language include a game of noughts and crosses in the Year 11 top group and a game of battleships in the Year 11 lower group.

The technique whereby a pupil performs some of the teacher's functions is known as the "teacher clone technique" (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p. 144). The pupil-as-teacher again provides a context for spontaneous utterances from pupils, asking to be the teacher, to change the teacher and commenting on the performance of a pupil as the teacher, often negatively!

The subject which occurs in spontaneous utterances in third place is that of the pedagogical content but the focus here for spontaneous talk is often not the

¹²⁸ See tables in appendices 11-13.

pedagogical content itself but a comment on the *process* around the learning of that content, such as the teacher's images or the activity involved. Specific examples will be given in section 5.5 below on the interpersonal nature of conversation.¹²⁹

The “communicative classroom context” creates the agency (van Lier, 2008) for pupils to speak. In turn, this agency is encouraged, or scaffolded, by aspects which “assist performance” such as the role of competition and use of praise (“contingency managing” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4)). This scaffolding operates at what van Lier (1996, p. 198) calls a “macro” level in that it is a backdrop for the whole class, but also at a “micro” level when engaging with individual contributions.

In conclusion, this section has argued that the UCA creates a “communicative classroom context” which provides the context for the spontaneous utterances from pupils. This consists primarily of the team competition and teacher clone routines and the competitive nature of activities in the UCA, all of which incorporate opportunities for talk about another pupil. The way these routines provide a context for spontaneous interaction about another pupil/other pupils means that this type of interaction becomes normalised so that pupils are *also* stimulated to talk spontaneously about the pedagogical process. This is made possible because it is allowed by the teacher. She creates the “**communicative space**” in which the talk can take place (see section 5.4). As such, the pedagogical focus becomes part of the “communicative classroom context”. This context provides the *trigger* for pupils to make spontaneous utterances, which will be termed a “**communicative urge**.” It is suggested that there has to be a reason for pupils to want to speak spontaneously and, as seen in chapter two, this means pupils’ saying what is important to them (Stevick, 1976), a key element of

¹²⁹ “Pedagogical content” features in third place in the Year 7/8 and Year 10/11 top set lessons.

autonomy (Little, 1991, p.29). Partly, this reason stems from the reward of spontaneous utterances by the teacher, as shown in section 5.4 below.

TL use also happens, however, because the “communicative classroom context” is strong enough to produce a “communicative urge” in pupils. It is strong enough precisely because the context relates to immediate, personal concerns, such as fellow pupils or to the learning process. This context seems strong and immediate enough to create the desire to communicate spontaneously.

The data shows a significant number of turns which are pupil initiations which are neither on the current pedagogical focus nor on the current subject being treated in the class discourse (coded “8: off the pedagogical focus, new subject”). In other words, this category in the data takes the class discourse away from the pedagogical focus and adds a new angle to the discourse and occurrences are shown below:

Year 7/8 top set (3 lessons)	Year 10/11 top set (3 lessons)	Year 11 lower set (2 lessons)
77	340	39

Table 5.3: Total number of turns which are pupil initiations turns off the pedagogical focus and on a new subject

In each class, the category of “off the pedagogical focus, new subject” has the highest number of occurrences of the four codes used for pupil initiations, by a wide margin. Examples include discussions of other pupils’ performance as a teacher clone, and of other pupils’ cheating, comments about other pupils’ speaking in English, comments about the need to change the points scorer, the noting of mistakes, and discussions around points, as in the text in appendix 6. It is this setting of the agenda, or “topicalisation” (Slimani, 1989), by the pupil which makes the utterance worthwhile

in the pupil's eyes. This shows significant examples of the highest level of agency brought about by the UCA. Van Lier (2008, p. 174) calls this "initiative-taking" within sociocultural theory and talks of the "learner departing from a set script or ritual and introducing something new." This further reflects the idea of adapting a routine for one's own purposes (Ohta, 2001), also seen in chapter four.

5.4 The Interactive Nature of Conversation

This section will demonstrate that pupils are engaged in conversation because their talk is interactive. The following are features which, taken together, identify the talk as interactive conversation (Thornbury and Slade, 2006):

1. It is reciprocally co-constructed and there are collaborative completions;
2. There are overlaps and interruptions;
3. There is back-channelling;
4. There is contingent interaction;
5. There is engaged listenership.

Examples of these will be given in turn.

1. Conversation is interactive as it is reciprocally co-constructed and there are collaborative completions

The following extract shows collaboration. In line three, the teacher takes on and expands P9's comment. Then both the adjectives used by the teacher in line three are picked up by pupils P4 and P7 in lines four and five respectively:

- 1 T Cinq points [pour P12.
2 P9 [Intelligent
3 T Oui, intelligente mais psychique aussi

- 4 P4 Les filles c'est in[[telligent
 5 P7 [[Oui, psychique
 6 T Deux points pour P4¹³⁰

In the next extract, a pupil is engaged in constructing meaning with another pupil, using the “**linguistic lifebelt**” device:

- 1 P9 ((to P12)) Comment dit-on ‘when’ en français?
 2 P9 Quel est le, er (..) le dernière leçon avec M. (T)?
 3 T La dernière leçon avec M. (T)? Cinq points pour la question, c’était génial¹³¹

Pupil nine turns to pupil twelve to request an item of language but seems able to construct the sentence before receiving an answer. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that pupil nine looks to another pupil for support and this resembles Swain’s (2000) “collaborative dialogue.” Further examples are in texts 5vi and 5vii.

The next piece of dialogue culminates in both the teacher *and* pupil eleven uttering the same words in line nine:

- 1 P11 Donnez-moi la coche pour P7 s’il vous plaît
 2 P3 Est-ce que je peux avoir la coche de P4?
 3 T Non
 4 P11 C’est quoi elle veut
 5 [C’est ce qu’elle.. C’est (with mime)
 6 P3 [Non. (.) Elle te déteste
 7 T P11! C’est ce qu’elle voudrait
 8 P11 C’est ce qu’elle voudrait [[si elle était là
 9 T [[Si elle était là
 10 T Excellent. Ça, ça vaut une coche¹³²

This underlines the collaborative and interactive element of the conversation in the lesson. Line two also shows how pupil three picks up on the request of pupil eleven,

¹³⁰ Year 10 top set lesson

¹³¹ Year 10 top set lesson

¹³² Year 11 top set, lesson 1

making a similar request himself as if to 'get in on the act' and showing a high level of agency.

A more pedagogically-focused collaborative completion is where the teacher offers a pupil a question framed in such a way as to offer a choice of phrases for the answer. This works particularly well with the impersonal "c'est" which can be used in the question and the answer in French where the question form can be a statement uttered with rising intonation, as for example: "C'est clair ou ce n'est pas clair?" (Year 8). This allows a pupil to use one of these alternatives as their answer. This choice of language is a good example of "modeling" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4) in the UCA and is aspect **1B of "target language management"** where the teacher scaffolds the language use for pupils.

2. Conversation is interactive as there are overlaps and interruptions;

The transcribing of the lessons, particularly the top set Year 10/11 ones, was a lengthy process due to the frequent number of overlaps and interruptions, making it difficult to identify speakers. Very often, pupils contribute spontaneously to the ongoing dialogue without their turn to speak having been signalled. Examples are in texts 4ii: Big Fish above (Year 10 lesson), 5vii: He's ill (Year 11 top set lesson 1), 5xii: "It's sexist!" (Year 10 lesson) and 5xiii: Grandmothers (Year 11 top set lesson 2). Pupils are not afraid to interrupt the lesson with spontaneous utterances and to interrupt the teacher with protestations, requests or observations, for example about another pupil or to point out that something is unfair or incorrect.

3. Conversation is interactive as there is back-channelling:

It is argued here that the classroom context makes for a very specific form of back-channelling. Back-channelling serves as feedback to the speaker showing understanding and confirming that the conversation is on course (Thornbury and Slade, 2006). In the UCA classroom, praise is used very frequently and fulfils this purpose. It not only keeps the conversation on course but it keeps the target language alive and ‘in the air.’ It has been claimed that “target language management” is required to keep the target language going and here it is claimed that **reward and back-channelling in the form of praise** is one of the techniques of “**target language management**” (2A and 2B). A simple example is given below:

P8 Dix points pour les gangsters
T Fantastique, P8¹³³

Indeed, the two teachers in the study use the words “fantastique” and “excellent” more frequently than any other. The awarding of points is also back-channelling in the form of praise and serves to reinforce the notion that the conversation is on track because it is in the target language, as in this next extract, already seen above:

Text 5i: “She said that!”

4 P1 [Elle a dit “I don’t give a shit”
...
7 P1 Elle a dit ça, elle a dit ça!
8 T ((nods to point marker)) Un point pour “elle a dit”. P1, P1! Et le journal.
9 P6 Thingy, recorder.
10 T P1, sshh! P1, tu vas sortir ton journal après¹³⁴

¹³³ Year 7 top set lesson

¹³⁴ Year 10 top set lesson

Here it is significant that the teacher prioritises the awarding of points above dealing with the swearing. She rewards the target language *before* asking for the pupil's diary in which to write a comment/sanction. This is an example of what this study will call the “**teacher's assiduity**” in rewarding target language use (and, often initiated by pupils, sanctioning the use of English) which is **aspect 2A of “target language management.”** The awarding of points may not always directly encourage target language use, especially in Year 10/11, but it does continue to give out a strong signal that the target language is key. It is also clear that pupils are involved in monitoring TL use (pointing out if English is spoken), as in text 5ii (continuation) lines 8 and 11 in section 5.8.

Back-channelling is a form of “contingency managing” and “feeding back” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4) and is used by the Year 7/8 teacher as a means of encouraging pupils to keep talking and using the target language, with such phrases as “continue” and “on continue.” This keeps the target language ‘in the air’ and fills any void, as if maintaining a defensive shield against any English slipping through. In the next extract, the simple word “oui” serves this function as the teacher keeps encouraging pupil twelve on:

Text 5v: The Register

- 1 P12 A mon avis
- 2 T Oui
- 3 P12 A mon avis l'appel va durer
- 4 T Oui
- 5 P12 Er, cinq minutes
- 6 T Cinq minutes, oui
- 7 P12 Un seconde
- 8 T cinq minutes et?¹³⁵

¹³⁵ Year 8 top set lesson 1

It is interesting how the language of pupil twelve builds line by line. In line eight, the teacher uses a more direct technique, correcting by directly providing the missing and required language, “et”, an example of “directing” in Tharp and Gallimore’s (1991) “assisted performance.” The significant percentage of teacher turns which feature praise or reward for target language use is shown below:

Year 7/8 top set	Year 10/11 top set	Year 11 lower set
20%	21%	36%

Table 5.4: Percentage of teacher turns which feature praise or reward for pupil TL use

As discussed earlier, the teacher adapts her target language management to the class. Clearly this is the case here as it is evident that the teacher uses significantly more praise to motivate the Year 11 lower set. Between two different teachers and different year groups (7/8 and 10/11 top sets), it is interesting that the amount of praise is consistent, again suggesting this may be a salient feature of the UCA.

4. Conversation is interactive as there is contingent interaction;

The contingent, or incidental, nature of some of the classroom talk is made possible by the teacher’s creation of “**communicative space**”, **aspect 1 of “context management.”** The extract below shows how speakers respond and react to the previous speaker in lines 2-4, 6-8, 10-15, 16, 18-20.

Text 5vi: The half-tick

- 1 P2 Une demi-coche
- 2 T Une demi-coche pour toute la classe
- 3 P3 Ah non. Tais-toi, P2
- 4 T C'est génial. P2 va avoir une grande coche parce que elle a eu l'idée,
- 5 [l'idée de la demi-coche

- 6 P3 [Mais, mais est-ce que moi et P11 avoir une autre demi-coche?
7 P1 [[Est-ce que je peux (avoir) (.) parce que je m'asseois next to
8 T Est-ce que toi et P11 ((mimes))
9 P3 Peuvent avoir une autre demi-coche, demi-coche
10 T ((to P1)) Comment dit-on, comment?
11 P1 Comment dit-on 'next to' ?
12 P2 A côté de
13 P1 A côté de P2
14 T Ça, c'est une [bonne raison
15 P11 [Et je suis a côté de P12!
16 T Tu es assis à côté de P12
17 P12 [[Une demi-coche, c'est stupide
18 P11 [[Je suis près de
19 T Pourquoi?
20 P6 Parce que c'est une demi-coche
21 T [P6, oui, c'est ok
22 P3 [Une demi-coche, ce n'est pas utile, croix, coche
23 P12 ((screeches)) Et pour moi!
24 Ps ((laugh))
25 T J'ai donné. OK. Pas de demi-coche. Je pense que c'est pas mal comme
26 idée. Alors, ce qui¹³⁶

Overall, there is a progression in content via adjacency pairs and overlapping. There is also collaboration between pupils 1 and 2 in lines 11-13 as pupil 2 provides the missing language, an example of “collaborative dialogue” (Swain, 2000). This is level five out of six in van Lier’s (2008, p. 170) scale of agency (“autonomous”). The teacher begins by responding to the idea of the ‘half tick’ as a great idea in line four, then finally is persuaded not to award one despite still thinking it is not a bad idea in line 25. This extract again shows a high level of agency as pupil 2 in line 1 suggests a whole new framework for classroom rewards. In terms of scaffolding via “assisted performance”, the teacher does precisely what Tharp and Gallimore (1991, p. 135) advocate as she gives “finely tuned attention to the utterances of students.” In line 8, she is feeding back to pupil 3 and providing language via a mime, **aspect 1B of “target language management.”** Then immediately, in line 10, she shows she has

¹³⁶ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

listened to pupil 1 *and* feeds back by structuring the task and encouraging him to ask for the language he needs, which pupil 2 then provides (line 12).

A necessary corollary to this pupil “topicalisation” is for the teacher to accept and allow such turns which are off the pedagogical focus. Total turns off the pedagogical focus are Year 7/8: 90, Year 10/11 top set: 480 and Year 11 lower set: 53 turns (51%, 71% and 65% of pupil initiations respectively). An important finding in the analysis of the teacher language is that, in all lessons, she responds to these turns which are off of her focus. A significant number of teacher turns (Year 7/8: 9%; Year 10/11 top set: 20%; Year 11 lower set: 6%) involve responding to pupil initiations which are off the pedagogical focus. This shows that the teacher gives oxygen to this sort of interaction in the classroom. Her responses mean that such initiations are not one-sided so do not die out through lack of the oxygen of a response. This sustaining of interaction off of the immediate pedagogical focus can be deemed as the teacher allocating “communicative space” in the lesson. This is space where the teacher allows pupil “topicalisation” and deviation from her immediate pedagogical purpose.

In allowing this “communicative space”, the teacher does not simply allow the initiation, without repressing it, but gives it free rein by pursuing it where there is a line to pursue. This interaction shows the teacher has the quality of being “communicative” herself in that she allocates “communicative space” to a continuation of the pupil’s initiation. She is, in Littlewood’s words, a “co-communicator” (1981, p.47). Todhunter (cited in Donato, 2000) also shows that it is precisely in this “communicative space” where the teacher allows, or even sustains, talk off the immediate pedagogical focus, that conversation can emerge.

5. Conversation is interactive as there is engaged listenership.

Conversational interaction is only made possible if participants actively follow the thread of the conversation, a phenomenon known as “engaged listenership” (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 132). This means listeners can respond to each other, an essential feature of conversation which also involves comprehension of what has gone before. The examples in text 5vi above where the teacher interacts with two learners almost simultaneously and pupil 2 responds to pupil one’s request for language also show engaged listenership. The example below of engaged listenership also shows collaborative completion in lines 3-6:

Text 5vii: He’s ill!

1 P1 P8!
2 P3 Non!
3 P6 Parce que il
4 T [N'a pas
5 P3 [Il est malade
6 P1 Participé
7 T [Participé. Fantastique. Cinq points pour P6 et P1
8 P3 [Il est malade, il est malade madame
9 T Um
10 P11 P8 a mal à la tête, il est malade. Laisse P8 [décider.
12 P1 [On s'en fout
13 P11 P8, est-ce que tu veux faire ça?
14 P8 Non
15 P11 Non? OK
16 T OK, P11, vas-y¹³⁷

Three participants intuitively pick up on the sense of what is being communicated and collaboratively construct the meaning together (“autonomous” in van Lier’s (2008) agency scale). In the exchange which follows, pupil eleven picks up on the discussion, again exhibiting engaged listenership. Pupil 3 elsewhere uses engaged listenership in his quest to gain a tick!:

¹³⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

P3 Oui, oui, oui, oui, oui, oui. Tout la classe a dit 'oui!'¹³⁸

5.5 Conversation as Interpersonal and Process-oriented

Part of the interpersonal nature of conversation means that “the right to initiate, ask questions, to direct the flow of talk” is “equally distributed” (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 19). In the study, there were a significant number of initiations, or “initiating moves” (ibid.) in all the classes, as seen in table 4.1 in chapter four. This demonstrates the relatively democratic nature of the classroom. As van Lier (1996) points out, the notion of equally distributed rights does not mean that the participants are of equal status but that the talk and the interaction is more symmetrical. In the following extract, pupil eleven is not afraid to pick up the teacher for her (temporarily and unusually!) ineffective classroom management:

1P11 Tu as dit dix fois 'P9, Stop!'

...

2P11 J'ai dit tu as ((unint)) dit dix fois 'Stoppez, P9!'¹³⁹

This shows a level of debate which takes the level of agency to the highest on van Lier's (ibid.) scale (“committed”).

The next extract again shows the democratic nature of the classroom. It is all the more striking as this is in a year 8 class and the teacher responds to the pupils' instructions:

Text 5viii: Cheat!

1 P18 P4 tricher!

2 T Non, er, P24, c'est le policier? C'est le policier. Alors ça va. Je choisis.

3 [Non, baissez les mains! Baissez les mains!

4 P28 [P4 va tricher

5 T OK. L'action. Quelle est l'action? Vite, vite, vite! L'action! OK.

¹³⁸ Year 11 top set lesson 2

¹³⁹ Year 10 top set lesson

- 6 P8 Stop! Il y a une erreur!
 7 T Regardez l'action! [Regardez l'action! Regardez l'action de P!
 8 P24 [Stop! Il y a une erreur!
 9 T Oui. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?
 10 P28 P4 a triché
 11 T P4 a triché?
 12 Ps Oui!
 13 T P4 n'as pas ((outside)) P4, tu as triché?
 14 Ps Oui¹⁴⁰

In line 13, the teacher physically goes outside, at the instigation of pupils, to check if the pupil outside is cheating (by looking to see which signal the class is choosing for the game of 'chef d'orchestre'). The next extract, seen above, again shows a pupil taking the initiative in terms of altering the course of the lesson:

- 1 P3 Il est malade, il est malade madame
 2 T Um
 3 P11 P8 a mal à la tête, il est malade. Laisse P8 [décider.
 4 P1 [On s'en fout
 5 P11 P8, est-ce que tu veux faire ça?
 6 P8 Non
 7 P11 Non? OK
 8 T OK, P11, vas-y¹⁴¹

Pupil eleven seizes the initiative in line three and takes over the direction of turns. This activity is set up so that each pupil in the team takes a go but pupil eleven exempts pupil eight on the grounds of illness (lines 1 and 3). He even asks pupil eight to decide for himself whether he is able to take the go (line 5). The teacher accepts pupil eleven's substitution for pupil eight (line 8). This shows a high level of agency by the pupil, changing the course of the lesson. The teacher, in turn, allows him the "communicative space" for this to be possible.

¹⁴⁰ Year 8 top set, lesson 2

¹⁴¹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

The following extract again shows the democratic nature of the classroom as the teacher takes note of a pupil's request to firstly leave the class outside in the cold (line 15) and then that the class is 'bunking' (line 23):

Text Six: Leave them out in the cold!

- 1 P8 Comment dit-on en français Can we play the game where someone goes out ??
 2 T Est-ce qu'on peut jouer, oui oui oui, au chef d'orchestre
 3 P8 Est-ce qu'on peut jouer au chef d'orchestre?
 ...
 4 T Super participation et après on va jouer et on attend la classe. On attend la classe, non?
 5 classe, non?
 6 P8 Non
 7 T Non. Tu ne veux pas qu'on attende la classe?
 8 P8 Comment dit-on en français leave them outside?
 9 T On va les laisser
 10 P8 On va les laisser
 11 T Dehors
 12 P Dehors
 13 T Oh, non! Ce n'est pas
 14 P8 Dans la (.) dans le froid
 15 T Dans le froid? Fantastique, P8. Dans le froid. Ce n'est pas juste pour la classe. Je ne suis pas d'accord
 ...
 16 P12 La classe, la classe
 17 T On va écouter P12, oui?
 18 P12 La classe sèche les cours
 19 T La classe?
 20 P12 La classe sèche les cours
 21 T La classe est? Je ne t' entends pas. Plus fort, s'il te plaît
 22 P12 Comment dit-on The class is bunking
 23 T Ah oui, la classe sèche les cours, sèche les cours. Excellent, P, la classe sèche les cours....¹⁴²
 24

It is noteworthy that this whole sequence is made possible by pupil eight's use of the "linguistic lifebelt" device, aspects 1C and 2C of "target language management," in line one. This device is itself democratic as it allows the pupil to 'enter the arena' of the conversation by asking for the language required. Use of the "linguistic lifebelt" at all automatically places the initiation at van Lier's (ibid., p.170) level four,

¹⁴² Year 8, lesson 2

“inquisitive”, out of six for agency. This extract is reminiscent of text 5vi: “The half tick” earlier. In both cases, the teacher shows engaged listenership and interacts with the pupils’ ideas.

5.5.1 Distribution of the Interaction

An issue regarding the more democratic nature of the classroom and the ability of pupils to initiate utterances is the danger that some pupils can dominate the interaction. This is indeed borne out by the data. In the Year 7/8 lessons for example, pupil eight produces 14% of the spontaneous turns and pupil 28 16%. In the Year 11 lower set lessons, four pupils between them produce 52% of the spontaneous turns. Most marked is the Year 10/11 top set where pupil three produces 34% of the turns and pupil eleven 25%. What makes this even more striking is that pupil three’s 34% is still achieved even though he was absent for one of the three lessons (the Year 10 lesson)! During this Year 10 lesson, it is noticeable that turns were much more evenly distributed amongst other pupils once his dominance was absent. Also significant is the fact that all the pupils singled out here (except P28, Year 7/8) are boys. This suggests that, as with all naturally occurring conversation, there is always the risk of one or more participants dominating and this is only beneficial for the classroom if other pupils notice the input.

5.5.2 Conversation and Learning as Process

A further aspect of conversation under consideration in this section is that its interpersonal nature makes it more concerned with process than with transactional concerns. This is borne out in the way pupils often engage with the *process* of learning rather than the intended *product* of learning and this relates very much to the

discussion in chapter one. In the extract which follows, the male pupils have cottoned onto the teacher's hand-drawn pictures rather than what they are intended to convey. She is presenting the topic of the important points about the family and has used a drawing of a cake to represent 'sharing' and a table missing a leg to represent 'stability.' Pupils have interpreted the cake as a pâté:

Text 5x: Pâté and Table legs

- 1 P3 Ce qui est important, c'est le pâté
 2 P11 Madame!
 3 T Ce qui est important, c'est le partage, ce n'est ni le pâté ni [le gâteau,
 4 c'est l'idée du partage
 5 P11 [Madame!
 6 P11 A mon table stable il y a un (laughs) il y a un pâté partage
 7 T Il y a un pâté partagé? ((gives tick))
 8P11 Oui

 9 P11 Madame, je sais qu'est-ce que s'est passé avec la table
 10 T Qu'est-ce que, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé avec la table ?
 10 P11 Une personne a essayé à partager la table et elle a, comment, elle a
 11 pris une leg, [comment dit-on?
 12 T [Une jambe
 13 P11 Oui, jambe à la table et maintenant c'est pas, c'est pas stable.
 14 T Quoi?
 15 P11 C'est une table instable
 16 T Oui, c'est une excellente idée
 17 P11 Someone tried to share the table with someone else and took a leg
 18 T Ah!
 19 P11 J'ai expliqué!¹⁴³

As can be seen, this illustrates the feature of conversation where there is little attempt to engage in any type of transaction by the pupils but to discuss the process in explaining why the table has a leg missing! In so doing, pupils are engaging in **language play**, for example in line six and in the rhyming of "table stable" and "table instable" (lines 6 and 15). Sullivan (2000, p.128) sees language play as a "mediator of classroom language-learning." Again, this shows pupils engaging with process, not

¹⁴³ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

seeing learning in purely instrumental, product-driven terms but enjoying the journey, in the target language. The “target language lifestyle” is also evident in pupil eleven’s spontaneous defence of his use of English (line 19).

The teacher tries to get the lesson ‘back on track’ as early as line five. However, in a later extract (text 5xiv, line 53 in appendix 6), even *she* is seen referring to “tables stables” in amongst the other topic vocabulary, thus blurring the distinction between topic language and conversation. This is a distinction which is already somewhat blurred in the UCA as the “pupil interaction language” or “PIL” of the UCA is taught. Pupil interaction language can begin as taught set phrases but then becomes a pupil’s own (Ohta, 2001). Topic language, however, is often much more abstract language in that it refers to the “there and then” and can be seen as language which pupils are *required* to say. In the extract below, pupil 11 is less interested in practising the topic language, the conditional tense in formulaic phrases about jobs, and more interested in picking up on the travel perks of cabin crew. Pupil 11 picks up on the topic language “je ne devrais pas payer mon billet d’avion” and asks “Est-ce que c’est vrai? Est-ce que les hôtesse de l’air...?”. When the teacher replies, pupil 11 immediately requests clarification:

Text 5xi: Air hostesses

- 1 T ... Je crois que c'est vrai, les hôtesse, oui, ils ne paient pas parce
2 qu'ils voyagent
3 P11 Non, mais quand, quand ils ne travaillent pas
4 T Ah, oui. (.) Je crois qu'ils, ils, au moins, ils ont une bonne réduction
5 P11 OK
6 T OK, contre votre partenaire
7 P11 Deux per cent
8 T Comment?
9 P11 Deux per cent
10 T Deux pour cent. Non, c'est beaucoup plus que ça, je crois. Cinquante
11 pour cent. Peut être plus, je ne sais pas. Ce n'est pas très grave. Um, ok.

12 (.) Contre votre partenaire. P8, tu joues avec P11¹⁴⁴

Also in the above exercise, the teacher tries to get pupils to make logical sentences such as “Si j’étais hôtesse de l’air, je devrais vivre loin de ma famille” and pupils have to say whether it is an “avantage” or an “inconvenient”. Pupil 11 simply comments “C’est très triste”. Elsewhere, Pupil 3 points out that having long holidays might *not* be an advantage:

P3 Mais si il voudrait travailler c’est un
T Oui, Fantastique. Excellent
P3 Une coche pour moi¹⁴⁵

As already seen, when the teacher gives an example “Si j’étais... je pourrais” sentence which involves her playing for Real Madrid, pupil 11 retorts “C’est faux.” All these examples show a level of agency which van Lier (2008, p. 170) places at four out of six on his scale, “inquisitive” and at the same time subverting the transactional, mechanical nature of the practice along with a desire to interrogate the content more cerebrally by analysing the process, demonstrating wit and personality.

When pupils are asked to discuss why the family is important, pupil eleven comes up with a seemingly deliberately trivial response:

P11 Ma mère est très belle. La famille est important parce que ma mère est très belle¹⁴⁶

The same pupil produces some meaningless topic language when told by the teacher that he is not speaking much in the lesson:

P11 Même si j'adore son chien, il me frappe (.) beaucoup.

¹⁴⁴ Year 11, lesson 1

¹⁴⁵ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

¹⁴⁶ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

T (laughs). Ça va mieux¹⁴⁷

The teacher praises this and pupil eleven even reminds her of this at a later point

P11 J'ai dit même si j'adore sa chien, elle m'a frappé comme ça et toi as dit excellent

P12 Quoi?¹⁴⁸

It is language used for its own sake to show off structures and it is interesting that the same teacher who is often very communicative in her exchanges praises a piece of meaningless target language, presumably because it is at least some language and that it is complex and accurate. From the pupil's point of view, it is likely to be using language in an interpersonal way and playing with language (Sullivan, 2000).

5.6 Conversation as Expressive of Identity

Finally in this demonstration of the aspects of conversation in UCA lessons, there is the notion that conversation is expressive of identity. As such it features the language of appraisal (for example likes and dislikes) and is evaluative (Thornbury and Slade, 2006). This includes an exploration of differences between individuals (ibid.). Part of this is the use of quotatives, that is the reporting of what others have said (ibid.). Conversation also features expressions of social solidarity, as well as humour, jokes, teasing and gossip (ibid.).

In the following extract, pupil eight spontaneously asks to do the points and instinctively gives a reason, namely that she is more intelligent than pupil seven. This stems from the UCA's requesting routine where pupils have to give justifications. It lends itself to conversation involving teasing and appraising of other pupils:

¹⁴⁷ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

¹⁴⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

P8 Est-ce que je peux avoir dix points parce que je suis plus intelligente que P7?¹⁴⁹

Again, likes and dislikes are apparent in the following exchange:

1 P3 ((to P11)) Je déteste toi
2 T ((looks at P3 and holds up pen))
3 P3 Je te déteste
4 T Excellent. Fantastique. Je te déteste. Deux points pour P3¹⁵⁰

This shows the highest level of agency on van Lier's (ibid.) scale in that it shows emotional energy and debate among learners. Pupil three notes the teacher's response to the incorrect form and self-corrects. In the next short extract, the focus is most definitely on the exploration of differences, as pupil three has been discussing with pupil eleven the teacher's view of each of them:

P3 Elle te déteste beaucoup
T Je ne le déteste pas. [Alors
P3 [Tu détestes moi¹⁵¹

The brief example below shows typically teenage humour, referring to a male friend (pupil 11) as "elle" ("she"):

P3 Et P6, il est moche, mais P11, elle est moche¹⁵²

There now follow a series of extracts involving pupil eleven from the Year 10/11 top set.

Immediately below is an example of an appraisal of another pupil, as he comments on her use of English:

¹⁴⁹ Year 8 top set lesson 1

¹⁵⁰ Year 11 top set lesson 1

¹⁵¹ Year 11 top set lesson 1

¹⁵² Year 11 top set lesson 1

P11 Qu'est-ce qu'elle a dit cette fois?¹⁵³

In this longer text, there is again the exploration of difference but also teasing and humour as the discussion focuses on whether or not it is sexist to award points to the girls' team:

Text 5xii: "It's sexist!"

- 1 P9peuvent avoir dix points parce que les filles, c'est très (.)
2 intéressantes et très différentes et très originelles et très belles?
...
3 P11 Tu ne peux pas donner les points pour être les filles, c'est sexiste
4 PFs [Non!
5 T [Je n'ai pas donné des points parce qu'elle est une, elle est fille,
6 P1 [[Mais
7 T [[j'ai donné des points parce qu'elle a fait une longue phrase en
8 [français
9 P1 [mais ce n'est pas nécessaire pour les leçons
10 P12 Oui!
11 P9 ((unint))oui parce que
10 P11 Je veux donner beaucoup de points parce que la phrase était
11 T Ce n'est pas sexiste de dire que les filles sont intelligentes,
12 différentes et belles
13 P11 Tous les filles? [C'est sexiste
14 T [Toutes les filles dans la classe
15 P11 Tous les filles [[dans le monde?
16 P12 [[C'est très important pour les filles
17 T Elle n'a pas dit les filles dans le monde. Dix points pour P11 pour le
18 P11 OK, dix points
19 T OK. Alors, on continue. Un garçon, P6, P1 ou P11, on va voir si
20 vous êtes aussi psychiques que les filles¹⁵⁴

This focus on debate again shows the highest level of agency and, once more, the teacher gives the "communicative space" for this to take place.

This next text in the sequence also shows humour. Pupil eleven notes that pupil twelve's grandmother should have a tick for being 87 years old (lines 1 and 5) and then that he should have two ticks for having two grandmothers (lines 41/2)! There is

¹⁵³ Year 10 top set

¹⁵⁴ Year 10 top set

an interlude between the two where pupil three talks about his grandmother and asks for a tick.

Text 5xiii: Grandmothers

- 1 P11 Madame, la grand-mère de P12 est, er (.) quatre-vingt-sept ans.
2 T La grand-mère de P12 a quatre-vingt-sept ans?
3 P11 C'est incroyable, non?
4 T Oui, c'est très impressionnant
5 P11 Elle doit avoir une coche
6 Ps ((laugh))
7 T Pour sa grand-mère
8 P3 La grand-mère de P12
9 T ((gives tick)) Ça, c'est pour la grand-mère de P12
10 P3 ((claps)) Pourquoi? Je [voudrais une coche
11 PB [Est-ce que je (peux) avoir une coche?
12 T Quel âge a ta grand-mère?
13 P3 Je n'avais pas un grand-mère
14 T Attends, ça, attention! Avais, c'est le passé
15 P3 Oh, oui, je
16 T Non. Parce que tu avais un grand-mère à un moment. ((writes on board)). Je.
17 Ça, c'est le présent. Je n'ai, je n'ai pas ou j'ai. I have or I haven't
18 P3 Je n'ai pas un grand-mère [mais elle comment dit-on 'was' ?
19 T [Excellent. C'est dommage, c'est triste
20 P12 C'est triste
21 P3 Comment dit-on 'was' ?
22 T Elle était
23 P3 Elle était
24 T Ah, elle avait
25 P3 Elle avait, oh, (.) erm, cent moins trois (laughs)
26 T Cent ans moins trois! Oui, c'est difficile [les nombres.
27 P3 [Je ne, je ne
28 T Comment dit-on cent ans, cent, cent moins trois en français, pour une
29 coche ?
30 P12 Quatre-vingt-dix (.) [sept
31 P11 [Sept!
32 T [P12
33 P11 [J'ai dit sept!
34 P3 Oh, je voudrais une coche, madame
35 P11 Oui, P3 doit avoir une coche
36 P3 Oui!
37 T OK. Alors, elle [avait quatre-vingt-dix-sept ans quand elle est ((mimes))
38 P3 [Elle avait quatre-vingt-dix-sept ans quand elle est mort
39 T [[Excellent. Féminin. (mimes) Morte
40 P11 [[Madame, j'ai deux grands-mères.
41 P11 Madame, j'ai deux grands-mères. [J'ai deux grands-mères. Je dois avoir
42 deux cochés¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Year 11 top set lesson 2

This (and the full extract in appendix 6) shows many of the features of conversation which have been discussed thus far: a shared context (the team competition with its reference to ticks), engaged listenership (for example lines 4 and 20), overlaps and collaborative completions (lines 30 and 31), interruptions (line 40), the language of appraisal and difference (line 3, 45, 47), back-channelling (clapping, line 10, 36), initiations (lines 1, 3, 10, 33, 47 and others) as well as humour (line 41).

In terms of agency, both pupils 3 and 11 engage in debate, again trying to subvert the established system of rewards in the classroom. Again, the contingency management of the team competition provides the context for these initiations, which then become opportunities for learning. Indeed, van Lier (2008) identifies “initiative-taking” as an opportunity for teaching and this extract is a good example. In line 14, the teacher feeds back by picking up on the pupil three’s mistake and uses grammatical metalanguage to launch her explaining sequence which uses *both* mimes (visual support) *and* textual support (“linguistic scaffolding” in UCA terms) and shows **aspect 1B of “target language management.”** Pupil 3 then again asks for language in line 18 and the teacher directs by giving the answer.

The teacher scaffolds (line 19); she *both* praises P3’s correction *and* responds communicatively. This skilfully combines contingency managing and instructional conversation (section 5.8) and integrates focus on form and meaning (Doughty and Williams, 1998b; Doughty and Varela, 1998).

In line 25, pupil 3 shows great initiative and strategic competence by paraphrasing in order to communicate a number he does not know. The teacher then takes this and scaffolds by structuring a task (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.5) for other learners to fill the gap. In line 37, the teacher engages in questioning to push pupil 3 to a more

extended utterance and does this via a mime to support the learner at the same time. In the full extract in appendix 6, in line 56, the teacher engages in “modeling” (ibid., p.4) by using a key structure from the topic language (“même si”) in her classroom conversation with pupils, thus encouraging them to use this.

A final aspect of conversation as expressive of identity is the inclusion of gossip, defined as follows:

... talk which involves pejorative judgement of an absent other. It is talk that has a confidential air about it- and where the person being gossiped about is known to at least one of the participants.
(Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.171)

Text 5ix: “Leave them out in the cold!” above reflects this aspect of gossip as does the following text. Here, pupil one and the teacher are discussing an absent pupil. Pupil one is talking about pupil three who is on a trip to a theme park and is joking that he is dead as he has fallen off one of the rides, named ‘Colossus’:

Text 5xiv Colossus

- 1 T Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six, sept, huit. P3 est absent?
2 P1 P3 mort
3 T P3 est mort?
4 P Oui
5 P Non!
6 P1 Il est mort
7 T J’espère qu’il n’est pas mort
8 P1 Comment dit-on “He fell off Colossus”?
9 T Comment dit-on quoi?
10 P1 He fell off Colossus
11T Il est tombé
12P1 Il est tombé
13T Colossus, c’est
14P1 Oui, dans Colossus
15T Du, il est tombé du Colossus. Ce n’est pas gentil
16P1 Il est stupide
17T Il est intelligent...¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Year 10 top set lesson

5.7 Pupils' Emerging L2 Classroom Conversational Competence and Teacher Target Language and Context Management

These sections will summarise findings and argue that analysis of the data in this chapter shows elements of conversation in the pupil talk and points to an emerging L2 conversational competence. They will summarise the two areas of management by the teacher which allow this to come about: target language management and context management and will also show that the conversation embeds instructional elements through scaffolding, often in an unobtrusive way.

5.7.1 Pupils' Emerging L2 Classroom Conversational Competence

The analysis of spontaneous pupil talk in this chapter and the features of conversation identified suggest that some pupils are developing ways of communicating which are akin to conversation. There is talk taking place in a shared context, it is interactive and contingent with overlaps, interruptions and back-channelling, it is interpersonal and expressive of identity and features spontaneous initiations by pupils. It is argued here that pupils are developing an **“emerging L2 classroom conversational competence.”** Conversational competence is defined as “that subset of linguistic and strategic competences that are implicated in conversation” (Thornbury and Slade 2006, p.188). These are the competences which allow pupils to demonstrate the sort of language use described and illustrated above and described in chapter four. This includes fluent, spontaneous, interactive and responsive use of language in real time and a shared context, and the ability to express likes and dislikes and their identity. Firstly, it is important to qualify this competence as an *emerging* competence as there are aspects of conversation which are limited due to the fact that the development of conversation is never explicitly addressed in lessons but is rather a by-product of the

classroom's "target language lifestyle" and its highly communicative nature. A more explicit focus on the development of conversation would undoubtedly hone this competence more closely. Secondly, the conversational competence is qualified as a "classroom conversational competence" as the context is very firmly classroom-based. The data suggests a certain facility in conversing about classroom events and relations but it is less clear how immediately transferable this is for some pupils to a broader conversational context. This issue will be picked up in the interview data (chapter six).

5.7.2 Target Language Management and Context Management

Below is a summary of the aspects which contribute to the management of the target language and serve to keep it alive in the classroom.

Box 1: Target Language Management

1. Scaffolding in terms of Language:

- A. Teacher's own planned target language use (teacher interaction language, TIL) and planning for pupil target language use through taught routines and drilling
- B. Prompting the pupil; offering alternative responses or visual support ("linguistic scaffolding")
- C. Use of the "linguistic lifebelt" device

2. Scaffolding in terms of Affect

- A. "Assiduity" in reminders about TL use, praise and reward of TL use and sanctioning use of English
- B. As the pupil is speaking, using encouragement, through echoing, and praise
- C. Use of the "linguistic lifebelt"
- D. "Teacher Target Language Talkback"

"Target language management" plans for and encourages pupils to keep talking once talk is in progress. "Context management" sets the context for the talk and provides a trigger for spontaneous talk. As seen above, this consists of the following:

Box 2: Context Management

- 1. Creation of a "Communicative Classroom Context"
- 2. Creation of "Communicative Space"

As shown in section 5.3 above, the UCA creates a “communicative classroom context” through the establishment of largely competitive and challenging activities and routines which implicate pupils and invite comment about other pupils. These activities and routines trigger a “communicative urge” and interaction which remain even when the routines are not in operation. Pupils can set the agenda within this clearly delineated context. This setting of the agenda is what Slimani (1989) calls “topicalisation” as seen in chapter two. A necessary corollary to this pupil “topicalisation” is for the teacher to accept and allow such turns which are off the pedagogical focus. It should be emphasised that the idea of accepting *whatever* pupils say in the target language must be limited by the teacher if it is deemed offensive or otherwise unacceptable. It is up to the teacher to know the pupils and judge from context what is and is not acceptable in the individual classroom.

The teacher facilitates conversation, then, through a combination of target language and context management.

5.8 Conversation and Learning via “Assisted Performance”

This section is important as it will recap how the UCA can take the spontaneous language of learners, with its high levels of agency and personal investment, and use this language to enhance learning. It is precisely this pupil-generated language which may provide the best focus for learning as it is so highly invested with personal meaning by learners and likely to be valued by them (Slimani, 1989; Swain, 1995). Indeed, van Lier also sees initiative-taking as a valuable chance for learning to take place:

... initiative-taking is a pedagogical moment, a teaching opportunity and a learning promise.
(van Lier, 2008, p. 174)

Having examined the case that conversation is taking place to varying degrees in the classrooms of the study, this section, then, will explore opportunities for maximizing learning in this conversation and reference made to aspects of “assisted performance” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4), as discussed in chapter two.

Firstly, an important foundation to the production of conversation in lessons is drilling in the UCA and this is an aspect of “modeling” (ibid.). Conversation is associated with a more natural style of discourse and is linked to a more natural acquisition of language than a formal study of the language. It is perhaps, then, surprising to see this co-existing with formal drilling, a more traditional and artificial mode of teaching. However, this surprising element also demonstrates how the UCA is able to combine instruction and conversation, with, on the one hand, formal drilling and, on the other, more informal conversation.

Indeed, in the Year 7/8 data a large 29% of pupil turns were direct drilling, dropping in the Year 10/11 top set to 8% and rising again in the Year 11 lower set to 16%. This shows that the amount of drilling is commensurate with the perceived ability and confidence of the pupils. It is not surprising that most drilling is with the younger pupils who are still at an early stage of acquiring and developing chunks for fluent and then wider use.

The UCA uses a variety of drilling activities which incorporate an element of challenge and competition. These include the singing of songs (all lessons observed), rapping (Year 10 lesson), the teacher’s saying and pupils’ saying and/or miming phrases (all lessons observed), repeating while the speed and volume are varied (Year 7 lesson), games such as ‘chef d’orchestre’ (Year 7/8 lessons), coloured sentences (Year 8 lesson 2, Year 11 lesson 1), stepping stones (Year 11 top set lesson 1),

noughts and crosses (Year 7 lesson), standing up game (Year 7 lesson), connect 4 (Year 11 lesson 2), quizmaster (Year 11 top set lesson 2) mastermind, Kim's game, find the sweets (all Year 11 lower set lesson 1), battleships, memorization game (both Year 11 lower lesson 2); repeating quickly five times (Year 10 lesson), ping pong (Year 10 lesson), predicting which hidden picture goes with which phrase (Year 10 lesson).

This variety of competitive activities at all age levels promotes, in most cases, repetition to encourage fluency (Widdowson, 1990; McLaughlin, 1990; Chaudron, 1985). This shows that "modeling" (ibid.) is central in the UCA and that it is made palatable by the element of competition. In addition, this competitive context often encourages agency and forms part of the "communicative classroom context." As such, these activities, although they are drills, have been invested with their own authenticity as seen in chapter two (Taylor, 1994). The competition gives them purpose and creates a context for pupil spontaneous talk, as shown in many places in the classroom data, for example the talk around pupils' being psychic in the Year 10 lesson.

What is also interesting about drilling in the UCA is that the teacher can intuitively insert extra drilling sessions as the need for more pupil interaction language arises. Examples are repetition of "montrez plus" in the presentation of new language about the environment (Year 10 lesson) and repetition of the colours for the 'coloured sentences' activity (Year 8 lesson 2).

The second aspect of "assisted performance" is interactive error correction and what Tharp and Gallimore (1991, p. 4) call "feeding back." It is an opportunity for pupils to compare their performance to the expected standard and to self-correct. This is the

process of “noticing the gap” (Swain, 1995) between what they want to say and what they can say, a key process highlighted in chapter two. Frequently in the data, the teacher is able to maintain communication (the “conversation” aspect) but at the same time encouraging self-correction from the pupil (the “instructional” aspect). Again, this also addresses the need to integrate focus on form and meaning (Doughty and Williams, 1998b), raised in chapter two. In the example below, the teacher maintains communication (line 13) but uses mimes previously linked in lessons to the structures “est” and “je suis” (line 2 and 9) to encourage self-correction, which is successfully effected (lines 3 and 10):

- 1 P22 Mademoiselle, c'est très intelligent
 2 T Mademoiselle? [(((mimes 'est'))
 3 P22 [[Est très intelligent
 4 T Très intelligente. Fantastique. [[C'est super travail ((unint)) [points
 5 P16 [Oui, mais
 6 P16 moi! [Oui, mais moi!
 7 T [Oui, écoutez P16
 8 P16 Oui, mais moi, c'est fantastique
 9 T Mais moi? [(((mimes 'je suis'))
 10 P16 [Je suis fantastique et
 11 T Oui
 12 P16 Pour Madame T
 13 T Je suis fantastique pour Madame T. C'est vrai, c'est correct. Pour
 14 moi, tu es fantastique...¹⁵⁷

This shows how the teacher scaffolds the learning through mimes but in an unobtrusive way so that it is communicative focus on form (Doughty and Varela, 1998). There is a similar example in text 5ii above. Pupil three says “Elle beaucoup triche”. The teacher uses a very clear and visual correction strategy by making a swapping gesture with her hands. This then prompts the pupil to self correct and he reorders the sentence correctly. Lightbown (1998, p.193) argues for this explicit correction but which is unobtrusive enough not to stop the flow of the interaction and

¹⁵⁷ Year 8 top set, lesson 1

the communication. In the Year 10 top set lesson, the teacher uses mimes to cue “Est-ce que je peux” in response to a “linguistic lifebelt” request from pupil 1. An important part of feeding back is knowing what pupils should know already, and keeping this in mind so that it can be reactivated by the teacher and not simply supplied each time.

The following continuation of text 5ii shows a further example of the teacher’s recasting:

Text 5ii: “She’s impolite!” (Continuation)

- 1 P3 Elle triche beaucoup et elle n'y a pas polie, elle fait ((gestures one
2 finger)) à moi.
3 T P3! ((gives P a cross))
4 P3 Ah non. Mon deu.
5 P6 Une croix
6 P3 Ça, c'est quoi elle fait. (.) Look, look at the video!
7 T Er, P3? P3, calme-toi, [P3. P3!
8 P10 [Parlé en anglais!
9 T P3! Elle n'est pas polie ((writes on board))
10 P3 Elle n'est pas polie
11 T Il a parlé en anglais. Moins cinq points. OK. Silence! Shh! Silence,
12 silence! Erm, je ne pourrais pas avoir de longues vacances. C'est un
14 avantage ou un inconvénient?
15 P11 Incon[vénient
16 P2 [Comment dit-on 'to sulk'?
17 T Fait la tête. Il fait la tête (writes on board).
18 P2 Il fait la tête¹⁵⁸

The teacher recasts pupil three’s line 1 utterance in line 9 and pupil three repeats the phrase in line 10. This is notable because this is a moment of stress (a classroom management incident) for teacher and pupil alike. The teacher has to ask pupil three to calm down and pupil three goes into a sulk. Nevertheless, the teacher still takes the time to correct and provide visual support (line 9), and the pupil repeats it (line 10). This suggests an ethos of recasting and responding to recasts in the classroom.

¹⁵⁸ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

Examples have been given in previous sections of how the teacher usually recasts, often keeping the communication going at the same time, so that learning opportunities are created out of the inaccuracies pupils produce. An example of an unobtrusive recast (line 3) to a pupil's trying out some new language is seen below:

- 1T ... si vous faites une erreur, il faut retourner au, um (.)
2P3 La première
3T Au pierre précédent, oui
4P3 Deux points pour moi
5T Deux points pour P3...¹⁵⁹

The following recast is an interesting one as the teacher skilfully recasts whilst maintaining the flow of communication yet the pupil does not pick up on it:

- P11 Tous les filles? C'est sexiste
T Toutes les filles dans la classe
P11 Tous les filles dans le monde?¹⁶⁰

This is possibly due to the fact that pupil 11 is so focused on conveying his meaning (for example in finding the word "le monde") that he does not notice the recast.

Another example of feeding back is noting that a proportion of the class might not understand a TL phrase and responding by checking comprehension, as happens, for example, in the Year 8 lesson 1 with the phrase "c'est trop long ou c'est trop court."

This interplay between communication and instruction is skilful and not easily achieved (Doughty and Varela, 1998). Indeed, Tharp and Gallimore describe instructional conversation as "discourse, in which teacher and students weave together spoken... language with previous understanding..." (1988, p.111). As they also point

¹⁵⁹ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

¹⁶⁰ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

out, instruction and conversation seem contrary, instruction implying “authority and planning” and conversation “equality and responsiveness” (1991, p.5). This also relates to the notion in the UCA of its being for the teacher “highly demanding to keep track of where he or she is going with each structure!” (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.113). This is a key point for the more widespread application of the UCA in secondary schools which will be considered in the concluding chapter.

The third element of “assisted performance”, “contingency managing” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p. 4) has already been discussed and shown to not only keep the target language going but to be a source of language in itself, as the competitive and reward-based ethos of the classroom provides the context for talk around this (as seen in the discussion of the “communicative classroom context”).

The aspect of “directing” occurs at those times when the teacher recasts directly or gives alternatives, such as “C’est clair ou ce n’est pas clair?” In the next extract, the teacher simply recasts without prompting the pupil, but again maintains the conversational flow:

T Pourquoi tu veux faire le prof?
Ps Non, il est triche
T Il triche. P11, pourquoi tu veux faire le prof?¹⁶¹

The aspect of “questioning” (ibid., p. 5) in the UCA is often addressed by the *pupils’* asking questions, particularly in the use of the “linguistic lifebelt.” In this extract, the teacher encourages the asking of questions through praise and the award of points:

1P2 Pourquoi devrais, ce n'est pas pourrais?
2T Pourquoi c'est devrais et ce n'est pas pourrais, excellent. Erm, quelle est
3 la différence, un point pour toi, deux points pour toi, une très bonne
4 question.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Year 10 top set lesson

This has an instructional element because the teacher knows that the asking of such questions will enhance learning.

In terms of “explaining” (ibid., p. 5), the teacher does use grammatical metalanguage to help pupils, as seen with the example of pupil’s 11 trying to say “je n’ai pas fini.” There are also examples of using this language to praise a pupil’s contribution, as below:

T Et il a utilisé une phrase subordonnée. Dix points pour P11¹⁶³

The following example shows an ideal situation where the explanation is provided by the *pupil* in the TL. Here the pupil is adding what can be termed a “conversationally instructional” element to his own answer to a topic language task by referring to metalanguage:

P11 Si j’étais prof
T Oui
P11 Pas d’article!¹⁶⁴

Again, this has been ‘picked up’ from the teacher interaction language. The conversational element is that pupil eleven is doing this as a joke and in real time. Another interface between conversation and instruction is where a pupil uses the “linguistic lifebelt” device to ask for new language in order to communicate. This becomes even more instructional if and when the teacher writes up the required language and/or drills it with the individual pupil or the whole class.

¹⁶² Year 11 top set, lesson 1

¹⁶³ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

¹⁶⁴ Year 11 top set, lesson 1

The final element of “task structuring” (ibid.) comes when, for example, a teacher takes a pupil’s “linguistic lifebelt” request and breaks it down into manageable chunks. This happens when pupil 2 asks “can I go and get it now?” the teacher prompts the already known “est-ce que je peux?” with mimes and then provides the rest and also when pupil three’s number ‘97’ query becomes a whole class question.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that, taken as a whole, the pupil talk in observed lessons displays the following features of conversation: reference to a shared context, interaction, interpersonal and process-oriented references, initiations made by pupils reflecting a more democratic environment, humour and gossip. The focus on conversation shows the emphasis on process as well as product, demonstrating the importance of both (Sfard, 1998). The presence of conversation shows that this is possible in the classroom context, despite Seedhouse’s (1996) claim that this is not possible in an institutional setting.

It has also been demonstrated that the existence of such conversation is by no means coincidence. It comes about by the teacher’s facilitating of this conversation by a combination of “target language management” and “context management” techniques. In the “target language management”, the teacher keeps the target language going in the classroom (through a combination of the techniques shown in Box 1 above). The “target language management” demonstrates scaffolding of language and affect. Aspects of “assisted performance” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991) such as rewards and the team competition recruit pupils to the task, maintain their direction, and control frustration (Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976) and support them with language.

A consequence of this “target language management” is the creation of a “target language lifestyle.” This is a situation where the vast majority of pupils are disposed to use the target language to express themselves, even where English might be an easier and more instinctive option. It has been shown that English is not ‘banned’ but used for learning purposes. Whilst heavily discouraged for spontaneous communication, English is allowed where it is a form of “private speech.”

In the “context management”, the teacher creates the context to stimulate pupil talk (the “communicative urge”). Indeed, the creation of a strong classroom context creates the conditions for pupils to demonstrate what van Lier (2008) calls “agency” among pupils, namely the desire to communicate, demonstrated through the initiation of language. As such, pupils engage in “topicalisation” (Slimani, 1989).

This context is created by establishing a series of sub-contexts (such as the team competition and other UCA routines) which together make up the “communicative classroom context” and allowing pupils the opportunity to say what they want to say, or giving them “communicative space.” Indeed, the routines of the UCA also serve as a form of scaffolding (van Lier, 1996; Ohta, 2001), allowing pupils to become more and more confident in their language use and move from “limited peripheral participation” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29) to more confident language users. This development is seen in the way that language use becomes more spontaneous and more frequently so from the Year 7 to the Year 11 top sets. It has been argued that the fact that some pupils are able to engage in conversation in the classroom shows that they have an emerging L2 classroom conversational competence.

In the final section, various aspects of “assisted performance” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4) showed that the conversation of learners offers rich learning opportunities

for developing linguistic competence through interactive, often unobtrusive, recasting and correction.

CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS: INTERVIEWS

6.1 Overview of Chapter Six

This chapter will firstly analyse pupils' views of their language learning to examine how this relates to the results from the analysis of the classroom observations. Secondly, a briefer analysis will be undertaken of the views of the originator of the UCA, and the views of the two teachers involved in the classroom observations.

The chapter will consider pupils' views on the use of the target language in the classroom, both the positive aspects and the challenges this presents. It will also look at the learning process as one of acquiring or 'picking up' the language from input and will show how some pupils themselves characterise aspects of the talk in their classroom as "conversation." Linked to this, views of the differences between topic and pupil interaction language will also be explored. Finally, pupils' views around the UCA features of scaffolding (memorization, repetition and competition) will also be examined.

These themes will also be picked up in an examination of the UCA originator's take on the themes of the target language, the process of language acquisition, and scaffolding in terms of repetition, interaction and conversation. Analysis of the teachers' interviews will focus on their views on the pupils' agency (van Lier, 2008), namely being allowed to say what they want to say, fluency and acquisition, and interaction and scaffolding in terms of competition.

In the course of the analysis, terms used in previous chapters will be referenced, for example the "target language lifestyle" (the classroom ethos of all communication taking place in the target language) and the "linguistic lifebelt" (the technique

whereby pupils use the phrase “Comment dit-on.... en français?” to ask for a phrase in French).

6.2 Pupils’ Views: Target Language Use and Acquisition

This section will consider different issues around the fact that French is the language of communication in the classroom. Firstly, there is the point that pupils find it natural to speak French and have it around them. This gives support to the notion of the “target language lifestyle” and the point will be expanded in section 6.4, “Acquisition.” Secondly, there is the issue that pupils, particularly in the Year 7/8 group, feel there is sometimes a lack of comprehension if English is not used as a check. Thirdly, this is linked to the fact that sometimes pupils feel unable to ask questions or express themselves, despite the fact that procedures are in place in the classroom to allow them to do so.

6.2.1 Positive Aspects of Speaking and Hearing French

There is a strong feeling among pupils interviewed that it is natural to speak and hear French in lessons and this ties in closely with “picking up” the language, which is taken up in the next section. Firstly, then, one pupil, for example, expresses the view that hearing and speaking the target language (TL) enables them to “get comfortable” with it:

... it’s really good to have us always speaking French
‘cause it gets us more comfortable with the language.¹⁶⁵

A Year 8 pupil also comments how one gets used to hearing everything in the TL. There is also support for the notion of the “target language lifestyle.” A Year 8 pupil

¹⁶⁵ Year 11 top set

notes that there should not be too much English as it is a French lesson and the following Year 11 pupil agrees and links the hearing and speaking of French with increased confidence in, and retention of the language:

Well personally I don't really like mind it 'cause it's, it's a French lesson so you like, it's meant to like speaking in French, so it doesn't really bother me, so I find it's all right

Yeah it helps 'cause it gets it into our minds like, we remember it. Yeah, it boosts your confidence like, its being in French.¹⁶⁶

A boy from the Year 11 lower set even says that it's good to get away from hearing English all the time! Another pupil from the lower Year 11 set also notes how the fact that French is required to 'get things done' in the classroom is a strong incentive to speak French, in line with the "target language lifestyle":

'Cause then you learn the words 'cause if you ask 'oh, can I do the points?' in English, she won't let you do it, so you've got to kind of learn how to say it in French, so that makes you kind of wanna learn how to say it

Linked to this is a positive view of French lessons in general and that lessons are fun and enjoyable, with reference made to the interaction and songs in particular. In the context of fun, there is also the feeling of being with a group of friends and laughing as a group. This adds weight to the notion of a group ethos.

In relation to pupils' confidence in French, it is hard to get an overall picture as some pupils may be reluctant to appear to show off and others are more or less self-critical. However, there is an overwhelming response from pupils that they are at least "ok" or "not too bad" in French and often "good" or "confident." There is no feeling that they

¹⁶⁶ Year 11 lower set

cannot progress in the subject, even from the lower set. Indeed, the fact that the subject is accessible is linked to the enjoyment of it by one pupil in the Year 11 lower set who comments that “it’s fun. I can cope with it.”

6.2.2 Target Language Comprehension Issues

Year 7/8 pupils mention that they sometimes do not understand what is being said to them and what they are repeating. In one instance this is because the teacher introduces language and gets pupils repeating it but only then communicates the meaning. In the interviews, pupils have illustrated their lack of understanding through comments such as “what did she say?”, “what does that mean?” and even the emotive “what the hell is she on about?” In relation to the observation data, it was noted that the Year 7/8 teacher used a high quantity of controlled teacher language as well as mimes and images to support meaning. However, it would seem that even here there is a risk that pupils do not understand, and experience some frustration over this (Klapper, 1998), even with a top set. This need not, though, be a justification for reducing TL use but rather a reason for giving more consideration to comprehension checks and the conveying of meaning.

There is a further risk that pupils let the lesson and the language ‘wash over’ them if they don’t understand. The following pupil describes this as “switching off” but is able to identify a strategy for overcoming the feeling of being overwhelmed:

Like you could say it’s a negative but um you can just switch off, I mean if you’re constantly being talked to in French, and there’s French everywhere, then sometimes you can just sit there and be like overload. Yeah, you just like get confused but I think if you, if you concentrate and you pick out the words you know, and you think about the words you know, then you’ll be fine¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Year 11 top set

6.2.3 Target Language Expression Issues

A related issue to not always understanding the target language is that of not being able to express oneself, even via the “linguistic lifebelt” device. The reasons seem to fall into two categories. In the Year 7/8 lessons, pupils feel that they can ask but there is sometimes not the time. This may be due to the fact that the lesson is so fast-moving that they don’t feel able to interrupt this flow. There is also the fact that it appears the teacher is reluctant to allow pupils to speak English, even when they ask to do so. The pupils below explain how *they* might think it is important to clarify something in English but the teacher may not:

Yeah, and then you have to say ‘est-ce que je peux être volontaire?’,
I mean you have to say er ‘est-ce que je peux parler en anglais?’

Which takes time

Yeah, for one second and bla la bla and she says ‘is it important?’
and then you’re thinking ‘well, it is for me but maybe it’s not for you’¹⁶⁸

A further restriction which emerges in the interviews is that when pupils use the “linguistic lifebelt” device, sometimes there is a rule that they are only allowed to ask for one or two unknown words. A Year 9 pupil explains how she has become much quieter since that rule was introduced. Another factor is that a pupil says he sometimes does not get a reply as the teacher thinks he is just using English to get his point across, not actually wishing to know the French. He protests: “Yeah, I actually wanted to know what it was in French.”¹⁶⁹ This is echoed by the Year 9 pupil who

¹⁶⁸ Year 8 top set

¹⁶⁹ Year 9 mixed ability group

explains that when she could ask for an unlimited number of words, she was able to say a lot more in French.

This shows the complexity of ‘keeping the target language going’ in the classroom. From the teacher’s point of view, she wants to limit English to useful learning opportunities which do not ‘break the spell’ of the “target language lifestyle.” From the pupils’ point of view, however, there is a risk that their English lifeline gets suppressed and that they can become frustrated. It is a challenge for the UCA to achieve and maintain the right balance.

This is clearly an important point centring on the need for teacher sensitivity to learners’ understanding and need for self-expression or to ask a question. This relates closely to the notions of “communicative space” and “teacher assiduity” in rewarding, raised in chapters four and five. Regarding the former, “communicative space”, the teacher needs to ensure learners have the space to ask if they do not understand and that the teacher creates the time for comprehension checks. This clearly happens in the classroom observation data as pupils do ask for clarification and the teacher checks understanding, but it may not always happen systematically. There is a risk that the well-paced, interactive and spontaneous UCA lessons can mean that the teacher and pupils alike get drawn into a “performance mode” of operating and swept along with the interaction without pausing to check all pupils are included.

As for the “teacher assiduity” in rewarding, there are examples in the classroom observation data of the teacher’s rewarding spontaneous questioning from pupils when they do not understand. This also needs to be systematic.

A final point raised in chapters four and five is the key role played by the planning and control of the teacher language so that it has been pre-taught, and is consistent and comprehensible. There is no doubt the temptation (not evident in the observed lessons) for a teacher to use random target language, not comprehensible to learners. This is likely to be a particular temptation and trap for native speakers.

6.2.4 Pupils' Views: Acquisition

The analysis in this section will show that pupils view language learning more as a natural process than a course of study and this points to the highlighting of the role of process over product in the UCA as well as the prioritization of procedural over declarative knowledge, as seen in chapters one and two respectively.

Closely related to the use of the target language is the *way* in which pupils feel they are learning the language. It emerged from the interview data that pupils frequently used language connected with the acquisition process to describe their own learning. Different forms of the verb “to pick up” occur sixteen times in the pupil interviews and there is a strong suggestion that pupils are, indeed, picking up language implicitly, in other words focusing on the development of procedural knowledge. This is also often coupled with the word “naturally”: “you naturally do pick it up”¹⁷⁰, “you will just naturally get it.”¹⁷¹ This idea of ‘picking it up naturally’ suggests pupils’ acquiring the language through frequent and sustained exposure (Ellis, 1997). Pupils suggest that speaking just happens, which echoes Krashen’s (1988, p.20) claim that speaking “emerges” and equates with the notion of automaticity explored in chapter two:

¹⁷⁰ Year 11 lower set

¹⁷¹ Year 11 top set

Yeah, it sometimes just comes out¹⁷²

Indeed, pupils suggest that simply hearing and speaking in itself equates with acquisition:

you sort of adapt to it like... like in Year 7 I didn't really know anything, now I sort of know a lot more just through speaking French¹⁷³

This is a very important claim as it demonstrates, as far as is possible, the actual *process* of acquisition of the language and the development of competence in the target language. Indeed, there is also support given to the claims in chapters two and four that pupils' are involved in a genuinely developmental process, building up chunks and having more of these to draw on over time. One Year 11 lower set pupil highlights this:

As you learn more stuff, it gets easier to remember and things like that, cause it all fits together...

Talking about a German lesson where more English is spoken, one Year 9 pupil says: "If she'd just spoke German, we would have picked it up quicker."¹⁷⁴ This shows a pupil making a comparison between her French and German lessons and expressing the view that her French lessons enable her to pick up the language more quickly.

Mixed in with this natural process of acquiring the language is the suggestion that some strategies are employed but naturally, in an unanalysed way. These strategies include noting key words in a phrase¹⁷⁵ and the idea of everything fitting together.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Year 8 top set

¹⁷³ Year 11 lower set

¹⁷⁴ Year 9 mixed ability group

¹⁷⁵ Year 11 lower set

¹⁷⁶ Year 11 lower set

This also applies to grammar and the extract below shows very much an implicit rather than explicit understanding of grammar:

Grammar in French... I don't really think about it much, I suppose I just sort of try to put the words into the correct order¹⁷⁷

Again, this would confirm an emphasis on the development of procedural rather than declarative knowledge (Johnson, 1996) in the UCA. As such, the grammar rules are most likely to be internalised as procedural knowledge, or what Ellis (1997) also calls implicit, automatically processed rule-based knowledge. This is, however, partly refuted by the lesson observation data as this same pupil is seen in lessons using metalanguage in the target language to talk about tenses, verb paradigms and pronunciation. As noted by Ellis (1997), however, it is probably that he draws on the more proceduralised grammatical knowledge when communicating in real time.

6.3 Pupils' Views: Conversation and Conversation/Instruction

6.3.1 Pupils' Views: Conversation

This section will focus on pupils' views of the language of lessons. First and foremost, it is significant that pupils themselves identify two types of language in the classroom. They themselves use the very term "conversation," which has been isolated in the classroom observation data in chapters four and five, without any prompting or any suggestion from the interviewer that there are different types of language at play:

With the conversational French, that's good for, right, er, when you go to France and speak to French-speaking people of your own age and then the like the other, the formal French is what we need to

¹⁷⁷ Year 11 top set

pass our GCSE so obviously they're both important but for different reasons¹⁷⁸

This also reflects Tarone's (1983) distinction discussed in chapter two between a careful and a vernacular style. Further references show that pupils recognise some of the characteristics of conversation which were drawn out in chapter four. These will be listed one by one. The first characteristic to come out of the interviews is the **informal** nature of conversation (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 8), with aspects of 'chat':

Yeah, I think we get that good balance in a way that you've got the um you've got the informal chat and you then learn about topics¹⁷⁹

The second characteristic is that of **interaction** (ibid.) which also emerges, in conjunction with the suggestion of informality in contrast to a more formal French:

... so I think rather than you sitting down and learning from a text book or learning from copying off a CD, you've got like, erm, you've got your one end of French which is quite formal and you can write it down and it will be good for like employers to see and stuff like that, and then you've got conversational which builds you more interaction with people or who you're gonna speak with¹⁸⁰

The words "interact"/ "interaction"/ "interactivity" occur thirteen times in the interview data. Indeed, the extract above equates conversation with interactivity. A number of pupils state that French lessons are fun due to their interactive nature and more fun than other, less interactive lessons.

¹⁷⁸ Year 11 top set

¹⁷⁹ Year 11 top set

¹⁸⁰ Year 11 top set

From a sociocultural perspective, the following pupil sees the very interaction which conversation develops as something it is helpful to learn as it also improves confidence:

... right you're having more interaction with the teacher, you learn how to interact with people in a different language and it just helps you build your confidence¹⁸¹

There is also a link here with acquisitional processes described earlier. If acquisition is the development of procedural knowledge, then it is the development of a *skill* (Johnson, 1996) by doing it, as highlighted in chapter two. It was, indeed, shown above how pupils feel they are getting better at the language simply by speaking it. Here a pupil equates learning with doing in a more general sense, in line with experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), and again highlights the collaborative, “lifestyle” ethos of the learning:

I think it's better than like other classes because you learn things by like doing them and like doing it with the class rather than just like writing it down...¹⁸²

As with many aspects of the UCA lessons, there is a warning that there can be too much of one aspect, for example interaction, as one Year 11 top set pupil points out. Another pupil comments that pupils need a break from one of the male pupils and also that “if everyone was like P5, it would just be a really bad headache!”¹⁸³ There is a caveat aired by pupils that sometimes there can be “too much interactivity” and that you “need to wind down sometimes.”¹⁸⁴ Like any interaction, in conversation or otherwise, it seems that this can be overdone and is something which needs

¹⁸¹ Year 11 top set

¹⁸² Year 11 top set

¹⁸³ Year 11 top set

¹⁸⁴ Year 11 top set

consideration not only from a pupil but also a teacher perspective. Indeed, as in the comments earlier around comprehension of the TL, it can be that the oral, interactive nature of UCA lessons means there is less time for reflection and stock-taking. A more recent development in the UCA, though not in the case study school, is the introduction of a flipchart at the front of the class to note new vocabulary as it occurs and pupil use of vocabulary books to note this, along with glossaries as a reference guide for pupils, which contain the topic and pupil interaction language. This supports comprehension and reflection.

The third characteristic of conversation which comes up in the interviews is that of **spontaneous initiation** (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 8) of language, including Slimani's (1989) "topicalisation", or **agency** (van Lier, 2008) in setting the agenda in the conversation. There is also **contingency** (van Lier, 1996) or **contingent interaction**, in other words responding to and building on what has gone before. The following three extracts from the same pupil show this contingency, as classroom talk develops in response to what has gone immediately before and/or what comes to mind in the moment:

1.
I'll ask completely random questions and then we'll go off subjects, we'll go off onto those subjects and learn new French speaking about that, which is good
2.
I'll start talking about being a robot pirate farmer who's half Russian ((unint)) a tail and then we'll start talking about that which is great fun
3.
We'll spontaneously think of something and I'll ask, I'll ask about that, then someone will say something about that and then we'll continue from there for a few minutes and then go back onto the subject¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ All Year 11 top set

What is noteworthy here is that this pupil sees this going off topic as instructional (extract one) and this relates to the concept of “instructional conversation” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991) examined in the previous chapter and in chapter two. There is also the element of fun which is linked to conversation and contingency (extract two). Implicit here is also the fact that the teacher creates the “communicative space” (see chapter five) for this to take place. There is a contrast drawn here between the topic-related “subject(s)” of extracts one and three, and the new subjects raised by pupils. This links with Todhunter’s (cited in Donato, 2000) finding that conversation often happens away from the subject of the lesson. Pupils talk about “conversational French” on the one hand and the language needed for the GCSE on the other, one pupil even suggesting that “they should change the GCSEs to conversational French.”¹⁸⁶

A fourth characteristic of conversation is that of **humour** (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p. 22). It is interesting that pupil three below corrects pupil eleven, when he talks of jokes, using the term ‘conversation’, suggesting a strong link between the two:

P11 I may listen to P3’s and P5’s jokes
P3 Conversation, not jokes¹⁸⁷

6.3.2 Pupils’ Views: Conversation and Instruction

This section will examine further the link between conversation and learning. The extract below further reinforces the idea that conversation equates with learning:

If everyone was really quiet, we wouldn’t be able to have the class

¹⁸⁶ Year 11 top set

¹⁸⁷ Year 11 top set

discussions where... sometimes we do go off trail but we learn new things which aren't necessarily ((unint)) but they're good for that conversational French which is always really, really good¹⁸⁸

This is backed up by a Year 9 pupil:

I do learn from like having a conversation, like, from an earlier point, um, it's more open and more of a class discussion...¹⁸⁹

This next extract links learning and the idea that this learning comes from the contingent nature of conversation mentioned above and, as such, is serendipitous:

When we have like class discussions and stuff, like without using textbooks, I think it's better 'cause we learn so many more things than is actually set for the lesson like today we were talking about... I don't, I can't remember what it was but it was something like completely unrelated but like we learnt new things other than what we were meant to do.... ah, ah, as well as what we were meant to do¹⁹⁰

It is noteworthy that this pupil differentiates between what was meant and not meant to be learnt, as if the latter is somehow illicit. This view of conversation and instruction merging is also supported by teacher A later in this chapter. This may not only happen externally but internally as well because, to use the language of sociocultural theory, pupils *appropriate* the language of the topic and conversational work:

R: So, would you say you've got them in separate places in your head, the conversational and the topic or do they, do they ever meet or..?

No, I think they, they stay together quite a lot

¹⁸⁸ Year 11 top set

¹⁸⁹ Year 9 mixed ability group

¹⁹⁰ Year 9 mixed ability

I think, I think now that we're doing our speaking topics in French,
we try to mesh them together

Mesh!

(laughter)

I, I just have one big hole in my head where I...(laughter) ...where
I dump all the information I learn¹⁹¹

Linked with the idea that conversation can result in learning is also the idea that this learning is enhanced by the interesting and personal nature of conversation:

I think with our classroom discussions, most of the people in our French class enjoy ((unint)) so they are interested in the language and learn it more... they concentrate more¹⁹²

It is interesting that the vast majority of the insights into conversation come from the small Year 11 top set group of interviewees. This is possibly due to the fact that they have the maturity and experience to be most analytical about their learning but also have the ability to exploit this type of language most fully and see its benefit. This once more underlines the need for a “long-term” view of language learning (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007).

The Year 9 group of interviewees highlight two possible constraints in the promotion of conversation in the classroom context. In line with the suggestion made in chapter four regarding pupils' conversational competence, one Year 9 pupil suggests that this may be limited to the classroom:

¹⁹¹ Year 11 top set

¹⁹² Year 9 mixed ability group

... that's just classroom conversation, it's not really outside conversation¹⁹³

A further constraint is that conversation may work best in smaller groups. Certainly the Year 9 group fits this description:

Um, I quite like being in a smaller class 'cause that way...
um, as P5 said, we get through, you know, yeah, more
into conversations...¹⁹⁴

6.4 Pupils' Views: Language Content

Language content is an important area, for two reasons. Firstly, most of the content of the spontaneous utterances concerns the classroom context of the UCA and it is interesting to see what pupils think of this as a context. Secondly, chapter four outlined the type of content with which conversation is concerned, such as interpersonal concerns and evaluations, and it is interesting to see if pupils identify with such topics.

6.4.1 Pupils' Views: "Topic Language"

As noted in chapter one, traditionally "topic language" deals with subjects that are not immediate but which may be useful in a projected future. This first section will analyse pupils' opinions of this type of language. Views are mixed but there is a feeling that some of this is not useful to them. The extract below refers to the topic of the family under study in the Year 11 top set:

If you live in France, say you're 30 years old and living in France, you don't really need to tell people that your family makes you feel comfortable¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Year 9 mixed ability group

¹⁹⁴ Year 9 mixed ability group

It is interesting here that this pupil is imagining himself in the projected future of much of the topic language but, even then, cannot see a use for it. Similarly below, pupils question the usefulness of the topics of daily routine:

We're learning about routines now in German and we're not gonna be telling people 'I wake up in the morning, I brush my teeth...' ¹⁹⁶

Indeed, in one Year 11 lower set lesson, a pupil comments on the uselessness of the topic language in one of the songs, saying "Why would you want to say 'I go to the beach'?" ¹⁹⁷

6.4.2 Pupils' Views: "Pupil Interaction Language"

In this section, it will be seen that, although some pupils enjoy the use of the pupil interaction language of the UCA, there is also a strong feeling that pupils would like to learn to say other things which they deem useful. This is defined as what will be useful in France.

Firstly, there is support for the pupil interaction language as providing phrases which can be used and transferred more generally:

And also, it's so much more useful saying something like, um, an example that happened today is we were saying 'Yes, I did that earlier' or 'I did that yesterday' ¹⁹⁸

One Year 11 top set pupil says that the language they ask for is "completely off the topic." He makes clear that this is language which he is able to learn. The extract

¹⁹⁵ Year 11 top set

¹⁹⁶ Year 11 top set

¹⁹⁷ Year 11 lower set, lesson

¹⁹⁸ Year 11 top set

below sees this randomly occurring, serendipitous language (as described above in section 6.4.1) as being as valid as the more planned topic language:

I'm pretty sure we do learn stuff, whatever we ask for, I try and remember, sometimes I do forget, er in a few minutes and then if it's really interesting I just have to ask for it again but it's just something random to add to your vocabulary or something. It's normally as good as we'd learn on the board and it's somehow vaguely related because we start the work on the board and then somehow in that lesson we ask that question. Am I making sense?¹⁹⁹

There is an added affective factor of being able to ask to say what you want to say as it is fun and motivating (Swain, 2000) as seen in the extract below. Here it is also noteworthy that this contradicts what some younger pupils said about sometimes not having time to nominate their own topics:

There's so much stuff we need to do but there's also time and all that for us to ask those random questions like we've said before and for the teacher to explain them and then have a laugh and all that and then still end up doing what we need to do in the lesson

But that is the first thing that you learn in a different language, how to amuse other people, you don't go 'how do you count to ten?', you say 'how do you say "beep" in that language?' or something like that²⁰⁰

Again, there is a sense of what is required to be covered in a lesson and a feeling that this may differ in some way from language learnt more incidentally. Related to this, some pupils also take the view that being able to say things which are normally proscribed in the classroom actually helps their motivation:

Er, what's also nice is teachers take like everything as a joke so you can just say if they make a mistake 'you're stupid.' In maths if

¹⁹⁹ Year 11 top set

²⁰⁰ Year 11 top set

you said that, you'd just be told off...it's nice that you can just have a joke with the teacher²⁰¹

I have to say I've learnt best insulting people...

And anything kind of, anything that'll make you laugh or anything that makes you feel happy is best to learn, I, I can compare P3 to so many smells now

With the erm like when people say really silly things, although it's not really necessary, it's sort of fun so it keeps us entertained, stops us from sort of switching off, so I think it is necessary to be able to just say something unnecessary...²⁰²

There is a clear sense of teenagers talking here and it is argued here that this teenage humour and banter is something not always recognised and catered for in the prescribed topic language of MFL lessons.

There is, however, also a strong feeling that the pupil interaction language does not always, in fact, provide pupils with the language they need, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, some younger pupils see it as too classroom-based:

What I think we need to learn more about instead of like classroom talk like 'can I take off my jumper?', um, 'can I do the points?' and that, I think we need to do more stuff like, stuff that we could actually use in everyday life

...we should um spend more time learning things that would be practical if you went to France and stuff instead of just worrying about the classroom and picking people to do points and stuff

Well, I'm confident about stuff in the classroom but if I went to France I would be out of my depth really²⁰³

²⁰¹ Year 8 top set

²⁰² All Year 11 top set

²⁰³ Both Year 9 mixed ability group

A conclusion to draw here is that the content of the learning may need mediating to pupils in key stage three more explicitly so that they can see how a focus on classroom language can develop language which can transfer to other contexts. Secondly, there is a feeling that some of the classroom interaction is wasting time and hence reducing learning time:

‘Cause we spend so long doing, um, ‘am stram gram’ and ‘une boule en or’, like to see who’s gonna do the points and everything, that usually takes up 20 minutes of the lesson...

And then when one team cheats, another person goes up and cheats back, so then the other team says you cheat again so then they go up and cheat so you just get a chain of cheating

... when we do ‘am stram gram’... like half the lesson’s gone and we were learning less²⁰⁴

These comments again show the need to make explicit to pupils the purpose of these routines in language-learning terms, but also the need to change them regularly enough so that they promote new language and prevent pupils from becoming bored with the routines. The following exchanges from the Year 9 group are fascinating because, in them, a conflict in the group is played out. This is between a pupil who prefers a more study-focused, more linear approach and a pupil who values the classroom conversation. One pupil is talking about a request in a recent lesson concerning how to say “Can we throw shoes at pupil X?” The first two extracts below show a pupil’s objecting to the fact that such requests distract too much from the topic focus of the lesson whilst the third shows a pupil defending this:

Um, I feel that sometimes when you, I feel there should be kind of a limit, um, ‘cause I find that it gets too much, it’s too distracting from the

²⁰⁴ Year 8 top set

lesson, by going off the subject, it's just like 'can we get on with the rest of the lesson?'

Um, yeah, and I think that the time is, could be used for what the lesson is actually planned for 'cause (teacher's name) finds that she's, we've kind of gone on and then she's got all these slides left that we haven't quite learnt

Um, I, I don't really think that's a problem 'cause I still think we've got like a lot done in the lessons... Um, I think it's good to learn like other things 'cause if we do the same topic for like the whole lesson, it can get boring and when I'm bored I tend to drift off and not really pay attention, so if you get like a little bit sidetracked in the middle, then like talk about something else, then, I think that's better in a way²⁰⁵

Again, a tension is highlighted between planned topic language and more incidental pupil interaction language. It is a challenge for the UCA to balance these and to show pupils explicitly how this incidental conversation contributes to their language learning.

6.5 Pupils' Views: Participation and Scaffolding (Repetition and Memorization)

6.5.1 Participation

Pupils do raise the issue of some pupils participating more than others, especially in the team competition where some pupils are relied upon to answer everything. However, a Year 11 top set pupil points out that loud and quiet pupils counterbalance each other. A key issue here is the extent to which pupils learn even if they are not actively participating in the interactions. Slimani's (1989) research suggested pupils noticed their peers' contributions. Pupils' views here are mixed. A Year 11 top set pupil claims to take in much less when he does not participate, and another one that it

²⁰⁵ Year 9 mixed ability group

is by using words or phrases many times in a lesson that something is learnt. On the other hand, there is the feeling that pupils do learn from others. A Year 11 top set pupil says “we all manage to learn from each other” and a Year 8 pupil observes how even the teacher can be surprised when a quiet pupil gets an answer right:

... when, um like someone, um, they don't like talk much in the lesson and they hear everyone else and then miss, miss picks on them and she doesn't think they know it but, um, but when they say it right then she's a bit surprised because they know it but they just don't wanna participate²⁰⁶

Two Year 11 lower set pupils also claim to be learning, even when not paying attention (or even sleeping!):

Yeah but when I, when I like sleep, I sort of close my eyes and hear everything, 'cause I actually look, I actually know most of the stuff when I wake up... so it works

No, yeah. I still learn even when I'm not, not paying attention. I dunno how I do it but I think it's quite good²⁰⁷

Whilst little of the above is conclusive, it may show that direct participation is not always necessary for learning, unless one has been used to participating a lot and then one might notice a difference when one does not join in so much.

6.5.2 Pupils' Views: Repetition and Memorization

It has been highlighted in previous chapters how the UCA is based very much around the development of acquired, proceduralised knowledge through distributed and frequent exposure but also planned, taught language. Scaffolding, in the form of the different aspects of “assisted performance” (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, pp. 4-5) such

²⁰⁶ Year 8 top set

²⁰⁷ Year 11 lower set

as repetition and drilling, plays a key role in this in the UCA. Pupils' views confirm that this frequent exposure and repetition does help them to remember the language. Pupils talk about repetition because it is good to "get it into your memory", to "drum everything into our heads", that it "sticks in your mind" and "keeps in your head." Songs are singled out as aiding memorization as are the mimes, or "hand movements" as one pupil calls them. (However, one pupil is adamant that the mimes and songs have never helped him). One Year 11 lower set pupil talks of how the mimes and "catchy" songs can help him remember something in an examination situation.

There is, however, an overwhelming feeling from all the groups interviewed that repetition can quickly become tedious and boring when it is overdone. One Year 8 pupil even talks of being "bored to death." Pupils are very clear that the same applies to routines and games which are repeated too often without changes. This confirms Prabhu's (1990) claim that it is the mechanization of teaching which can be so counterproductive and there is an optimum frequency for activities before they become ineffective. One Year 11 top set pupil shows their impatience:

... sometimes you sit there and go, like well I've got it now, let's, like, let's move on and adapt to it rather than just going over and over and over it

Another suggests a rule for a maximum number of repetitions:

There should be like a two or three times rule. After three times it just gets unnecessary

Other factors which help pupils retain language seem to be a fun element. One Year 11 lower set pupil says that when a *pupil* comes up with a mime "it just makes you laugh, you always remember it... that helps." Another Year 11 lower set pupil talks about jokes:

I think like the main thing how we learn's probably like making jokes out of it 'cause you make jokes out of it and use French in it, too, and then that's one way of getting like French into us

Finally, there is also mention of another form of scaffolding, or "modeling" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p. 4), namely textual support, or what the UCA calls "linguistic scaffolding", which pupils find helpful "cause it's there every day," although one pupil makes the point that having phrases available may mean "you might not push yourself to remember it." Two pupils also would like to write more things down during lessons to help them remember better.

Overall, this section confirms that the UCA targets repetition and frequent exposure as a way of helping pupils learn and acquire language and that there is scope for personalization (jokes, pupils' own mimes) even at this repetition stage.

6.6 Pupils' Views: Competition

As a way to promote learning, the team competition (the "contingency managing" aspect of "assisted performance" (Tharp and Gallimore, 1991, p.4)) is generally seen as positive. One Year 9 pupil says that it "really motivates people to participate," especially quiet ones and a Year 8 pupil says "it makes people work harder." A Year 11 lower set pupil describes it as motivating and a "good technique" to remember things and another talks of sweets and stickers saying it "gets you involved."

Issues which are more negative concern the need for consistency in the allocation of points and the importance of having a reward or prize at the end, which is often overlooked. The Year 8 interview group was particularly concerned about the arguing over points, saying it "gets out of hand" and that "...you don't learn, you just sit there, saying 'well, we've got more points, you took away points.'" Indeed, there is also a

feeling that time is being wasted here in the Year 7/8 group, as seen earlier. What is significant here is that none of the pupils explicitly cite the team competition as a key context and source of language, which it clearly is in the lesson observation data. Instead, they see it purely in its raw state as a competition. It is almost as if it provokes language without the pupils' noticing this function. Again, this is an aspect which could be more explicitly explained to pupils in terms of their language learning.

6.7 The Views of the Originator of the UCA

A series of three interviews with the originator of the UCA highlighted a number of themes which have occurred in the pupil interviews and, indeed, in the study in general. These are: the target language, acquisition, repetition, interaction and conversation and the notion of pupils saying what they want to say. These will be examined in turn.

6.7.1 The Target Language

The originator talks of the revolutionary idea which struck him in his own PGCE training of getting pupils to "actually speak in a foreign language in the classroom." In fact, he notes that a class he taught successfully and which gained superb examination results was, in fact, in deficit because "they couldn't speak a word... but in school terms I am being judged as a highly effective teacher." This shows the emphasis the originator places on being able to speak the language naturally for real communicative purposes and he even says he wants them to "be able to think in the language", surely the most natural type of language use. In terms of the aim of learning a language, the originator emphasises that whilst he would like pupils to appreciate cultural

implications, “first and foremost it is speaking in that language and accepting something in other people’s terms” which is important.

Coupled with this is the complementary aspect of keeping English to a minimum. The originator tells how he found task-based learning bad for the promotion of target language use:

I always found that wishy washy because the kids would go off task, there would be horrendous amounts of English spoken and if my children were going to work on tasks, I wanted to scaffold it so they could work on it in the foreign language because this was after all a foreign language lesson.

A task-based learning model was identified in chapter one as having something in common with the UCA but, as seen here, it needs adapting because of the age and motivation of the learners involved. It is also clear that it will be difficult to motivate pupils to stay in the TL if the language they require is not readily to hand. It is also evident here that maintaining pupil use of the TL is a priority for the originator of the UCA. Related to this point, the originator goes on to explain how lessons are “pupil-centred, teacher-dominated” and illustrates this by explaining as follows:

So the teacher is very much in control and I would say is orchestrating events and how the orchestra plays is controlled to a certain extent by the teacher but you know you have got your virtuosos in there and you can let them, give them full rein and you can harmonize here and there and you can change the pace and the tune and the rhythm and all those sorts of things.

This is very much the impression given in the classes of the study, where the teacher uses target language management and context management techniques to ensure English is kept to a minimum as pupils do not have a chance to slip into English. The originator talks about the teacher managing the whole environment:

...it's you as a teacher almost orchestrating the, the, the attention, the environment, the, the interaction...

Indeed, "management" of the interaction is mentioned explicitly:

... none of this happens without incredible interaction, er, management by the teacher.

This not only relates to the management aspects highlighted in chapters four and five but also the whole concept of a "target language lifestyle," as the originator talks of a "language-learning community", "make believe" and "illusion" to get the pupils to communicate.

6.7.2 Acquisition

As seen in previous chapters, there is a very great sense of pupils' acquiring the language so they can use it fluently and this is reflected in the pupils' talk about "picking up" the language. This is also echoed in the originator's comments. He says of his own teaching that he noticed that "these kids... were picking up the language" and he realises that "if we give this a formal push, they're going to pick up more" and refers to his "using the language consistently", a feature of teacher target language seen in chapter four. Also part of this is the focus on the teacher's language being the source of much of the language pupils use, as seen in chapter four. The originator notices of the pupils' language "that's come from me" and that they were copying his language use. Later in the interviews, he refers to this teacher language more theoretically as "some pretty darn fine input" and "chunks." In a video sequence shown to the interviewer, he identifies how a girl is using "pre-learnt language chunks" and "language from the everyday classroom discourse." The originator talks

about pupils' use of chunks and the importance of them for manipulating the language:

If you have got a chunk you can start to manipulate it, if you don't have the chunk you can't do anything really. And I would rather kids were able to say things with language and feel reasonably confident rather than get bogged down in grammar and not be able to say something.

This again is consistent with the literature in chapter two (Myles, Mitchell and Hooper, 1999; Thornbury and Slade, 2006) and the findings in chapter five, that pupils use chunks as a starting point for making their own meanings. A subsequent comment about grammar does not necessarily mean that grammar is neglected in the UCA but would be consistent with the point that proceduralised knowledge is prioritised over declarative knowledge. In fact, the originator emphasises the importance of grammar but "within the context all the time of using it as a communicative instrument."

The originator also describes the aim of pupils' "feeling comfortable with the language, taking that risk, having that fluency" and the need to repeat language "so it becomes proceduralised." This again underlines the whole notion of fluency which has been seen in the classroom data, as well as spontaneity, linked with risk-taking. This is also seen as it is language in use rather than its study which is the more important. The originator talks of language as being "not only a school subject, it is a living, breathing organism with something dynamic."

An important issue in the UCA is if pupils learn through other pupils' contributions, not just their own. The originator, indeed, speaks of the importance of "... training your kids to listen to each other and the teacher so that they are actually deriving input

all the time from what's going on around them.” He also makes the point that these acquisitional processes take time when he talks about the need for patience, and this reflects talk of a “long-term view” (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007) and the comment of teacher A that particular benefit of the approach is seen at A level.

6.7.3 Repetition

It has been noted in chapter five that authentic language use sits side by side with drilling and repetition in the UCA. The originator confirms this emphasis by telling how he learnt the usefulness of such drilling from another teacher who was “really brilliant at the repetition and the rote learning” and the lessons contrasted with his “ideas about the exchange of meaning” and were more like a “linguistic battering ram.” He comments that this emphasis on rote learning was unfashionable at the time.

6.7.4 “Something to Say”, Interaction and Conversation

Another very important aspect of the UCA which comes through strongly in these interviews is the importance of agency (van Lier, 2008), or pupils’ being able to say what they want to say. The originator explains how from the outset in his teaching he was prompted “to explore more what they wanted to say” and says the whole reason he went into teaching was “to get people to say things they wanted to say.” He notes how the pupils took the lead: “the children sort of guided me by what they wanted to say and what they could say.” This is consistent with allowing the pupils to speak spontaneously, as evidenced in the classroom data. In fact, the originator even says “what was key for me... was getting them to take the initiative.” The inspiration for the notion of the classroom as context came from the impenetrable nature of some of the audiovisual contexts and also account for the absence of a textbook:

I have never ever used a textbook. It wasn't part of my psyche. The reason was that when I started teaching the audiovisual phase was very much in and these are these meaningless film strips... So I felt that we needed something which was tuned to what the children could understand in the context of the classroom in their lives.

The originator brings together the actual retention of language and the content of the language highlighted in the study in the following comment:

But it was good and I will tell you why it was useful. They had this stuff, they were successful, they could remember language which was particular to them and to their class.

Linked to this are the themes of initiation and conversation, which have been identified in the study's data and which are specifically mentioned in the interview. The originator comments how the children like to interact and links this interaction with language use: "So it was a case of getting them to interact in and with the language..."

Conversation is also mentioned more explicitly as the originator says how he incorporated conversations into lessons where "we would talk about real things." He says this use of conversations has fallen by the wayside for him and his trainees but, as the data shows, the features of these conversations are still very much evident in the classrooms of the data, if not set up as specific activities.

Another aspect of the interaction is a strong belief that pupils should be successful, with use of words such as "confident," "secure" and a feeling that they can succeed and that their contribution is valid. This again emphasises the importance of the affective side of learning for the originator of the UCA who quotes Sylvester (1994, p. 60): "emotion... drives attention, which in turn drives learning and memory."

6.7.5 DIY

Finally, the interviews show someone creating an approach to language teaching based a little on trial and error and experimentation and instinct. This is perhaps what makes the UCA so idiosyncratic and also challenging to replicate for individual teachers. The originator mentions not using lesson plans but keeping things in his head and making the instinctive explicit. Certainly, the UCA reflects the hallmarks of someone able to react instinctively in an unplanned way, whilst still maintaining a clear direction, something challenging for teachers who might find this less natural.

6.8 Teachers' Views

Interviews with the two teachers of the study's classes brought up the following themes: allowing the pupils the chance to say what they want to say; fluency and acquisition; interaction and competition.

6.8.1 Agency: Allowing the pupils the Chance to Say what they want to Say

Both the Year 7/8 ("A") and the Year 10/11 teacher ("B") are clear about the importance of allowing pupils the opportunity to say what they want to say when they want to say it. This relates to several concepts already referred to in chapters four and five: communicative space, spontaneous pupil talk and the idea of a communicative classroom context. B even notes that the language she planned for the lesson and the language of the lesson are sometimes "completely different" and that there might be "lots of new language that I haven't planned for." She says that this does not matter. This underlines the fact that pupils' spontaneous language is valued and, indeed, she says that new language in the lesson comes "from their spontaneous language." The importance of giving pupils what has been referred to as "communicative space" is

shown further when B states how one should not dismiss what pupils are trying to say and that “everything is valid if it’s, if they’re trying to say it, almost everything...” A also echoes this theme, saying she tries to listen to pupils individually in order to detect what pupils want to say. This also reflects the concept of the teacher as “co-communicator” (Littlewood, 1981). Teacher A interestingly talks of the tension in herself between wanting to get through topic language and the need for pupils to be able ask for the language they want. She says it is better if they can ask for things to say as they learn more, even if these things are “not automatically linked to the topic that we’re learning.”

6.8.2 Fluency and Acquisition

Teacher B makes frequent reference to pupils’ becoming fluent in the language. She puts this down to “constantly revisiting and building on what they’ve done” and this idea of reinforcement and frequent encounters with language was discussed in chapter two (Yalden, 1987; Johnstone, 1989) and is evident in chapter four in the discussion on chunks and the recycling of these (Mitchell, 2003). Teacher B seems to equate going off the topic in response to pupils, as described above, with fluency as she says that teachers’ not finishing their lesson plans helps ensure pupils “get fluent quickly.” Both teachers use phrasing which echoes the acquisition process, also seen in the pupils’ and the originator’s words. Firstly, B equates the frequent hearing of the language with internalizing it. B says “the more they hear the language, the more they will internalise it, the more it will make sense to them...” Indeed, B claims that with teachers in the department who regularly teach in English fifty per cent of the time, their pupils do not become fluent and internalise the language in the same way. She twice talks of the language becoming “second-nature” to pupils which resembles the

originator's and the pupils' description of pupils' "feeling comfortable" with the language.

Teacher A talks of pupils' learning "unconsciously" and notes how the process takes time, echoing Pachler, Evans and Lawes' (2007) point of a "long-term view of language learning" and the originator's that one needs patience. She says:

... they need time, they need to practise and they don't need to be and the more you rush them or you push them, the less they are going to learn ... they're not gonna learn more if you give them everything, if you give them too many things to them in a same lesson obviously...

This also links to Klapper's (2003) criticism discussed in chapter two, of learning which is supposed to take place in the space of a single lesson unit.

6.8.3 Interaction and Competition

Both teachers single out the notion of interaction, which has also come out in the analysis of pupil talk. Teacher B names interaction as one of the key features of the UCA, and teacher A talks of the need to get pupils to interact in the target language, saying she would like to see the UCA's emphasis on interaction extended to other subject areas. Teacher A sums up two aspects of the pupil conversation analysed in chapters four and five by saying "we try to focus, again, on the fact that they can interact spontaneously..."

Teacher B focuses on the theme of competition which has been identified as part of the communicative classroom context. She talks of "the idea of competition all the time, as much as you can..., " especially in pairwork.

6.8.4 Potential Issues with the UCA

Whilst teacher B emphasises that she loves the methodology, she does point out that there is the occasional child who does not like it and that some teachers do not enjoy the competitive element. She also points out that the planning required is an intellectual challenge and requires time to do and that not all teachers will necessarily be open to this. Teacher B also thinks more writing would be a useful thing, and that it is quite hard to integrate the topic and pupil interaction language. These aspects relate to a tension which the UCA is faced with, balancing the interactive, conversational elements of the approach with a more study-based approach which some learners- and indeed teachers- expect and demand from school lessons.

6.8.5 Other Themes

Teacher B comments how the real difference in pupils' performance can be seen at 'A' level, not only in the results where the school outperforms local schools, but also in the way the pupils can talk French. This would again underline the notion of the "long-term view" of language learning (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007).

In terms of the purpose of language learning surveyed in chapter one, teacher A is very clear in isolating confidence and the ability to communicate as two distinct aspects for learners to gain:

I think the way we teach enables them to become very
confident communicators

She reiterates this later, along with "a love of language and culture" but the emphasis on confident communication does encapsulate the notions of fluency and spontaneity

as signs of confidence and the classroom as a real context for meaningful communication.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter supports a number of findings from the classroom observation data as well as raising further points not so evident in that data.

Firstly, there is the whole notion of the originator and teachers wanting pupils to be comfortable with the foreign language and see it as a natural means of communication. This natural use of language is supported by a desire for fluency in the language. This is certainly supported by pupils who see the learning and production of language as a natural process where they pick the language up and produce it without conscious effort. A caveat here is that sometimes there is a lack of comprehension by learners and the teacher needs to be sure that the full range of strategies is employed to ensure and check comprehension.

Secondly, there is the theme of the topic language versus the pupil interaction language and the idea, expressed by teachers and pupils, that going off topic and away from language planned for the lesson also results in learning and enables learners to say what is meaningful for them. Indeed, more advanced learners identify this as conversation in the target language. The caveat in this case is that pupils must be sure to have the space to communicate what they want to express (including important clarification requests) and that the pacy, interactive nature of lessons does not obscure such individual requests. Also, there may need to be a more frequent mediation of the learning process so that it is clear to all pupils, especially in key stage three, that the pupil interaction language and 'conversation' are an integral part of

their language learning. This is particularly crucial in the early stages when the pupil interaction language is more formulaic and pupils have not yet had so much opportunity, or have so many linguistic resources, to express themselves more freely and creatively and thus experience the benefits of their developing competence. There is, however, also a need to ensure a balance between more spontaneous and more planned language in a lesson or, at least, find a way of noting for some pupils (and indeed some external observers such as inspectors) how progression has been achieved. This is also necessary to demonstrate a more familiar study-based side to an approach that some pupils may find disconcerting, as identified by teacher B.

Thirdly, the interviews with pupils show that many of the features of the UCA have a positive influence. Repetition and “linguistic scaffolding” aid retention, for example, and routines and pupil interaction language add motivation and humour, and competition can be motivating. However, these features have a ‘flip side’ which needs to be heeded: repetition and routines can spill over into tedium and routines can become too routinised and need varying regularly. Competition needs to be managed so that it is fair and meaningful and the arguments around the team competition points need to be mediated more explicitly to some learners as language-learning opportunities.

Fourthly, there is the disposition of the teacher to put in the planning time and to allow pupils the space to communicate their own meanings.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Overview of Chapter Seven

This chapter sets out the conclusions of the study. The scope of the study has been wide and this means that the study is able to make recommendations for language learning as a whole in secondary classrooms.

Firstly, the study has shown that the promotion of spontaneous talk in the MFL classroom is a worthwhile aim and that the concomitant development of fluency and confidence is important. Secondly, this study has concluded that spontaneous talk, and indeed conversation, is possible and present in the MFL classroom and that this is against the trend in schools, where pupils are often reluctant to speak the target language (Ofsted, 2008; 2011a). Much of this talk is not directly related to the topic language under study and this is also against the trend in lessons for the teacher to be seen to fulfil pre-set, often rigid learning outcomes. It has been shown that the UCA develops an emerging L2 classroom conversational competence among pupils, to varying degrees. Thirdly, this conclusion will examine the advantages of an interactive, process-based approach which promotes spontaneous conversation. In terms of language learning, the UCA encourages a variety of cognitive processes highlighted in the literature such as noticing, an integrated focus on form and meaning and a development of communicative efficiency. It ensures in-depth learning through proceduralization of language and encourages learners to use chunks of language to manipulate language, be creative and take risks, using language for its own sake and not just for purely instrumental reasons. This free, spontaneous use of language often results in inaccuracies which are rich material for teachers in diagnosing and meeting learners' developmental grammatical and lexical needs. At the same time as the

promotion of spontaneous language, the UCA continues to address more conventional, topic-based language built around a scheme of work with planned grammatical progression. This enables a dual track approach.

It will be shown that the UCA also pays attention to the key area of affect, or pupils' motivation to speak, so that they are disposed to use the target language and view it positively. A further section (7.4) will summarise exactly how the UCA develops spontaneous talk and conversation, through "target language management" with its emphasis on supporting learners' use of the language, and "context management" where competition is a key feature in encouraging pupils to talk. It will also be emphasised how the UCA acknowledges and validates teenage humour and banter and channels this into talk in the TL. This section will also highlight a paradox of the UCA, namely that spontaneity is *planned* and *managed* and that spontaneous talk co-exists with behaviourist repetition activities and with the teacher clearly orchestrating the spontaneity. It will be shown that interaction, competition and communicative purpose are what unite these seemingly opposing elements and which lend coherence to the UCA.

This conclusion also sets out some challenges for the UCA: the development of more complex interactive talk, the need to ensure pupils understand and express themselves in the TL to their satisfaction, and the need to show more explicit progression for some pupils. There is also the question as to what extent teachers may feel inclined to teach so interactively. There is also the challenge for the UCA to continue to integrate a study focus into the conversational interaction.

Finally, it will be advocated that the principles and techniques identified here can be adapted to other classrooms to make language learning more interactive and

meaningful, whilst also having a positive effect on pupils' second language development.

7.2 The Aims of Language Learning

It has been shown in chapter one that language learning in schools is often heavily focused on a final product, namely the ability to produce artificially accurate language and pass a GCSE examination with the highest grade possible, due in part to the pressure on schools to score well in league tables (Grenfell, 2000b). This means that the *process* of learning the language whereby spontaneous, interactive talk is developed is often seen as largely irrelevant, the main focus being on the most efficient way for learners to have the topic language necessary to perform well in the examination. It has also been shown that, in addition to this, the product, the target language, is downplayed altogether if too much of an emphasis is placed on generic learning processes. The ideal, it has been contended, is a combination of process with product (Sfard, 1998).

The UCA sets itself apart from mainstream CLT in its declared aim of developing spontaneous, fluent, real-time talk in learners. This emphasises process. At the same time, however, product is not neglected. This is shown in its prioritising of pupil TL talk through the ethos of the "target language lifestyle" and in the importance given to promoting accurate language through teaching key transferable, grammatical structures. This is both through the pupil interaction language (PIL) and the topic language. The focus of the UCA on developing real-time spoken language as well as topic language means that it develops *both* the careful style of examination language *and* the vernacular style (Tarone, 1983) or unplanned discourse (Ellis, 2008) of spontaneous conversation. This has the advantage of presenting language learning as

more of a living tool for communication as opposed to a dry object of study. This makes language learning inclusive, accessible and achievable for all, as demonstrated in pupil interviews. This is an important factor when languages have been described as boring and difficult (Fisher, 2001).

This claim to inclusivity, however, can only be fully realised if the UCA takes into account the reservations expressed by some pupils in this study. It is, for example, important, for pupils who find the UCA less suited to their way of learning, that the Approach is adapted for their benefit such as through the provision of reference materials and making progression more explicit.

Even though not all pupils are producing spontaneous language, all pupils are potentially able to benefit from the output. Furthermore, whilst the study has focused on pupils' *spontaneous* use of language in order to highlight how this relatively rare phenomenon comes about and how, it should not be overlooked that the more orthodox *topic* language is still very much present in the lessons observed which exhibits more orthodox content and patterns of progression, as detailed below:

Year 7/8 lesson topics: My local area; Weekend free-time activities; Describing countries (capital cities and climate)

Year 10/11 top set topics: Environmental problems; Future career (conditional tense); Important aspects of family life

Year 11 lower set topics: Smoking; Work experience and future career

This topic language means that more explicit and more orthodox progression is still in place for all pupils.

Ensuring, in addition, that the UCA combines a study-focused dimension with the communicative use is important and will be discussed in section 7.6.

7.3 Advantages of Prioritising Process in Language Learning

The research questions posed at the beginning of this study were as follows:

1. What is the nature of pupils' spontaneous talk?
2. How are the conditions created for this spontaneous talk to take place?

In terms of research question one, this section, 7.3, will examine the nature of pupils' spontaneous talk and its positive aspects whilst section 7.5 will bring together the challenges for developing and exploiting this talk further. In terms of research question two, section 7.4 will summarise findings concerning how the conditions are created for the spontaneous talk to take place.

In terms of question one, an exciting finding of the study, set out in chapters four and five, is that, in the UCA classrooms observed, many pupils are indeed producing spontaneous talk in the TL which is fluent and which demonstrates aspects of conversation. This is against the trend in MFL classrooms, as shown in chapter one (Ofsted, 2008; 2011a). Although in the GCSE specifications 'A' grade pupils are expected to "initiate and develop conversations" (AQA, 2008, p.59), these are in practice heavily pre-prepared, rehearsed conversations for examination purposes. The conversation identified in the UCA lessons demonstrates spontaneity and real-time use where pupils are able to react to situations as they develop. With respect to research question two, the development of spontaneous talk and conversation is only possible, it has been shown, because the classroom and the teaching are set up to promote and nurture it, as will be reviewed in section 7.4. This section will show that

viewing language learning as a developing, interactive process has a number of advantages.

Firstly, in-depth learning can take place whereby learners are able to retain language and reproduce it in real-time, interactive situations. Secondly, learners are given the space and tools to manipulate and be creative with language, and are able to learn from these processes. Thirdly, the teacher can use the resulting inaccuracies to diagnose learner's developmental difficulties and to focus on the relevant grammatical structures and lexis.

7.3.1 The Advantages for Language Learning of the Focus on an Interactive Process

Firstly, then, this study has sought to show that the UCA produces in-depth language learning as learning a language is a process which takes place over time and which requires constant reinforcement and use in meaningful contexts. This is the process of language acquisition. In chapter four and in relation to research question one, it was shown that pupils could produce language spontaneously and fluently as language has been automatised and proceduralised over time in real operating conditions (Johnson, 1996). As such they are developing communicative efficiency (Ellis, 1997). As a result of this interactive communication some pupils are engaging in conversation, as illustrated in both chapters four and five, showing interaction and responsiveness. As such, some are developing an emerging L2 classroom conversational competence. This gives pupils the confidence to use language in real-time, interactive situations. This emerging L2 classroom conversational competence is in evidence to varying degrees. In the Year 7/8 classes, it is in its early stages with pupils using more set phrases and being less spontaneous. In the Year 10/11 top set, the degree of

spontaneity and contribution varies greatly among learners but with some showing high levels of creativity, spontaneity and interaction.

Secondly in relation to research question one concerning the nature of pupils' spontaneous talk, it has been shown in chapter four that pupils are able to use and manipulate language for their own purposes. This is largely due to the fact that the emphasis on proceduralization of language across contexts in the UCA has provided pupils with a repertoire of ready-made chunks, available for spontaneous use (Skehan, 1998; Pawley and Syder, 1983). Chapter four (sections 3 and 6) showed that some of these chunks are used in the ready-made forms which give learners the confidence to produce them but it has also been shown that even small amounts of ready-made language can be invested with new, personal and humorous meaning, in the very nature of conversation. The chunks of language serve, then, as the tools for conversation. Furthermore, there is evidence of more creativity and manipulation of language as the chunks serve as the springboard for more creative use (Myles, Mitchell and Hooper, 1999; Thornbury and Slade, 2006). Such risk-taking is advocated in the literature (Pachler, 2000; Mitchell, 2003) and, indeed is rewarded in the UCA, as seen through aspect 2A of the UCA's "target language management" in chapter five.

Thirdly, it has been ascertained in chapter two that interactive speaking in lessons encourages pupils to produce pushed output which helps them notice the input and engage in syntactic not just semantic processing (Swain, 1985; 1991; 1995). Furthermore, the topicalisation (Slimani, 1989) by pupils in nominating their own subjects for conversation enhances the noticing process, so essential for language learning (Schmidt and Frota, 1986). In chapter two, it was shown that pupils speaking

in the vernacular style (Tarone, 1983) and involved in unplanned discourse (Ellis, 2008) produce language which shows their actual state of second language development (as opposed to language which is prepared and often reflects an artificial level of accuracy as argued in chapter one). As such, this language is rich for a focus on improving grammatical accuracy and helps the teacher to diagnose learners' ongoing and developing need for new structures and lexis, as well as the reinforcement of learnt ones. Thus, this conversational language offers precisely the conditions for a communicative focus on form (Doughty and Varela, 1998), to integrate attention to form and meaning, as argued for in the literature (Long, 1991; Doughty and Williams, 1998a). Furthermore, this treatment is likely to be noticed all the more as the language being analysed is language the learner has chosen (or topicalised) and is more likely to pay attention to getting it right (Slimani, 1989). The treatment of inaccuracies in the pupils' spontaneous language supports the more formal treatment in the topic language, such as the activity practising the conditional tense in subordinate clauses (Year 11 top set lesson 1).

A further point is that raised in chapter one that certain curricula and methods may have served to undermine the use of the target language. This study shows the potential for target language use in interactions central to other curricula and methods. Thus some aspects of teaching and learning and of the curriculum not immediately apparent in the classroom data may well also be enhanced as a result of this study. Examples are in the area of Assessment for Learning and intercultural understanding referred to in chapter one where it was questioned whether these might limit target language use. It is reasonable to conclude from this study that these areas can be successfully treated in the target language by transferring some of the principles of the UCA highlighted in this study. For example, if the teacher carefully selects, plans and

teaches the necessary language, drills it and scaffolds it and also prompts meaningful interaction around the topic, it is likely that the conditions will exist for a successful treatment in the target language. This would challenge the claim made, for example, in the context of formative assessment by Jones and Wiliam (2008, p.4) that the “judicious use of English provides an opportunity for students to beome more active learners” and that this helps them get the most from formative assessment. This study has shown learners being active and analytical in their use of the target language and suggests that this could equally well be transferred to the context of assessment for learning.

7.3.2 The Advantages (in terms of a Motivation to Speak the TL) of the Focus on an Interactive Process

This study has shown the importance of a *context* for spontaneous talk, which provides pupils with the agency (van Lier, 2008), or incentive, to speak. In terms of this study, it creates what has been called a “communicative urge” which overcomes a “communicative inertia,” or reluctance to speak the TL. The important aspect of the affective factor in language learning is often overlooked. As shown in chapters four and five, learners have the experience of being able to understand the target language in use and to interact with each other using it, thus demonstrating language in dynamic use rather than as ossified items to be reproduced on demand. The natural use of the TL for communication by pupils (as demonstrated by the “target language lifestyle” in chapter five) shows how they can feel “comfortable with the language” and be “confident communicators,” as claimed in the interviews in chapter six. A more product-oriented stance can ignore the learner’s disposition and confidence in the speaking of the language. Given the strong classroom context, learners are able to

express their personalities, their likes and dislikes and show their humour in a real context, something they enjoy, as illustrated in the pupil interviews.

For native speakers of English who can so often easily rely on others to speak their own language, these are important traits to develop as they encourage learners to actually try to speak the foreign language as a tool for communication in later life, not simply to view it as an object of study and a subject left at the exit door of the examination room. Further research would be welcome here but there is the hypothesis that if pupils are willing to speak spontaneously in the classroom, there is the likelihood that they will be more willing to speak the TL in real-life settings.

For teachers, there are also advantages, such as the cognitive challenge of interacting and responding in the target language as well as the enjoyment of listening to and conversing with pupils. As shown in chapter six, this requires a UCA teacher to be an interactive teacher, taking on the role of “co-communicator” (Littlewood, 1981).

It is, of course, not claimed that there are only advantages to the UCA’s focus on process in this way. The potential challenges will be addressed in section 7.5. The next section will provide a summary of how the UCA creates the conditions for spontaneous talk and conversation to take place.

7.4 A Summary of How the UCA Develops Conversation in the Classroom

With respect to research question two concerning how the conditions created for spontaneous talk to take place, this study has shown that a complex range of techniques is required to keep the target language alive in the classroom (and create the “target language lifestyle” position) and to create a meaningful context for spontaneous TL use. These have been termed “target language management” and

“context management” respectively. A strong element of target language management is the way target language use is supported or “scaffolded” orally and visually for learners and a strong element of context management is the benign competitive environment which promotes pupil talk.

7.4.1 The Two Paradoxes of the UCA: Planned and Managed Spontaneity

The notions of “planned spontaneity” and “managed spontaneity” seem to juxtapose two conflicting elements. They are, indeed, paradoxes of the UCA. Firstly, with “planned spontaneity,” a degree of autonomous language use is promoted through establishing the conditions for spontaneous pupil talk and for pupils to say what they want to say. At the same time, however, the whole lesson is tightly choreographed through the routines and periods of behaviourist repetition activities and closely prescribed activities. Pedagogical contrivance (Widdowson, 1990) sits alongside a distinctly more open freedom to interact with the teacher and express oneself more independently. It has been shown that the former is a prerequisite for the latter in that it not only provides the learner with the language required but also with the confidence to speak spontaneously in the first place. It is precisely because the teacher has planned and taught this language that the learner can use it. What unites the more study-focused repetition and the more communication-focused conversation is the element of interaction and agency. This applies to other more study-focused aspects of the UCA, where pupils are given a reason to participate, through speculation and competition, even when undertaking drilling activities. This interaction and purpose thus serve to unite the planned, drill-focus and freer, spontaneous elements of the UCA. In other words, it is possible to claim that both the drilling-type activities and the spontaneous conversation each have their own authenticity in the classroom as

they are both purposeful in their own right, with the learner experiencing a different type of authenticity in each case (Taylor, 1994), the former more learning-oriented and the latter more use-oriented (Breen, 1985).

The second paradox of “managed spontaneity” is summed up by the UCA’s originator in the phrase “teacher dominated, pupil-centred.” Whilst the teacher is at the heart of the interaction, managing it, orchestrating it and directing it, it is pupils who are able to take the initiative through spontaneous talk. Again, just as behaviourist repetition activities are a prerequisite for later spontaneous talk, so teacher management of target language use and context is a prerequisite for independent use of language. It is this tight management which prevents English taking hold as the language of communication in the classroom (as described by Macaro (2000)). Whilst much of the time in the UCA, the target language seems in a secure position, it has been shown how it is the target language and context management techniques used by the teacher that keep this balance in place.

7.4.2 Target Language Management in the MFL Classroom

Any approach which is based on near-exclusive use of the target language is often associated with a Krashenite (1982, 1988) approach to language learning whereby the learner is expected to learn the language through comprehensible input alone. This is not what the UCA advocates as it also integrates a focus on drilling and the learning of grammatical concepts and metalanguage in its teaching of both the PIL and the topic language. A focus on near-exclusive use of the target language is also associated with the amount of teacher talk (as shown in chapter two), often with pupils passively acquiring via the teacher’s input. The radical step change in the UCA is that this target language use extends to pupils and that such use can also be spontaneous. This is a

rare phenomenon in the MFL classroom as set out in chapter one. The UCA shows that it is possible for all communication to be conducted in the target language, including for areas often shunned by teachers, such as classroom management, grammatical concepts and explanations, and the setting of objectives. It also demonstrates that it is possible to sustain pupil talk in the target language in a consistent way but that this does not happen by chance but requires careful planning and managing. The term “target language management” has been used to summarise the techniques used to sustain pupil target language use. These techniques can be divided into two categories: scaffolding the language and scaffolding pupils’ affect or desire to continue using the TL. In terms of scaffolding the language, the techniques consist of planned and consistent teacher target language use; planning and teaching (via drilling) of the pupil interaction language; scaffolding pupils’ efforts via textual and visual support and offering possible examples of language; allowing pupils to ask for target language phrases in English (the “linguistic lifebelt” device). In terms of scaffolding pupils’ affect, the techniques involve consistent reward of pupil target language use, and encouraging on with praise; use of the “linguistic lifebelt” device, and finally talking back in English if pupils try to conduct routine communication in English.

None of this means, however, that English is banned. It is often assumed that near-exclusive target language use means that English is banned in the MFL classroom. In the UCA it is not. However, English is used as an auxiliary vehicle for communication whilst the target language remains the main tool for communication. English is used to check meaning and for activities involving transfer of meaning and, of course, pupils can use English to ask how to say what they want to say in the target language.

The acceptance of the target language by most pupils as the means of classroom communication is a major achievement of the UCA and is a key element in respect to research question two, the creation of the conditions for the spontaneous talk to take place. This has been termed by this study as developing a “target language lifestyle” in the classroom, where the target language is accepted as the natural means of communication and pupils are willing to speak it spontaneously. This ethos is created by the teacher using the target language management techniques summarised above. A major element of this target language management is the notion of supporting, encouraging and rewarding the learner in his/her production of the target language. As such, the aspects of praise, reward, competition and encouragement (through, for example back-channelling) are crucial in the UCA’s development of spontaneous pupil talk as shown in the frequent occurrences of references to this in the classroom data (chapter five).

7.4.3 The Importance of Context in Promoting Pupil Talk

Whilst target language management is important in ‘keeping the target language alive’ in the MFL classroom and ensuring pupils use the TL as the automatic means of communication, it is also vital to create the agency (van Lier, 2008), or incentive, for pupils to talk spontaneously. Speaking spontaneously requires a reason to want to speak, especially for teenagers in a public forum in the target language. This has been called in this study a need to create a “communicative urge.” It has been shown, in respect of research question two, that the teacher can create a context which stimulates spontaneous talk and that the “communicative classroom context” identified in chapter five is such a context, and a very powerful one. Pupils are keen to talk and banter in a competitive, jocular way based on peer and teacher-pupil rivalry

with the UCA's team competition, competitive activities and routines providing the backdrop and context for this talk. Just as the speaking of the target language by pupils cannot be taken for granted, nor can it be taken for granted that pupils will feel the need to speak spontaneously if there is no reason to do so. In the same way that creating the conditions for pupils to be able to speak the target language requires careful management, so does the classroom context. The context needs to be one which captures pupils' interest, emotions and creates a desire to communicate. The findings of this study suggest that the immediate context of a benignly competitive classroom environment, other pupils and a teacher willing to be 'gently ribbed' by pupils for her resources (her songs, her pictures) creates a playful, communicative space which appeals particularly to teenage learners' sense of humour and sense of rivalry. It is, in fact, a radical aspect of the UCA in setting up this disposition among pupils to speak the language that the context and subject matter of the talk gives a strong flavour of teenage-related subject matter. This involves ribbing, teasing and competition, particularly among the boys. Examples in chapters four and five are: suggesting fellow pupils are left outside in the cold; mocking the teacher's songs and pictures; a desperation to beat the other team in a psychic guess-the-picture contest; mocking a fellow pupil's competence as a teacher; accusing others of cheating. The UCA allows pupils the autonomy to express their personalities and humour, something often proscribed in lessons. It is a bold step for the UCA to validate this type of conversational chat by engaging with it in the classroom in the target language. If learner autonomy is defined, as in section 2.5.2 as "a capacity... for... independent action" (Little, 1991, p.4), then there is a potential tension between a heavy rewards system and learner autonomy. There is the danger that the rewards system can restrict autonomy in that pupils do not develop the capacity for

independent action as they are dependent on the rewards system as “surrogate motivation” (van Lier, 1996, p. 121) as discussed in section 2.5.5. Although pupils who spoke most spontaneously did not explicitly refer to the rewards as the sole motivation for doing so, further research would be useful to establish the effect on autonomy of the systematic rewarding of spontaneous pupil language.

Again, this is not the stance of an approach focused on the most efficient route from A to B (A being a first encounter with the subject and B being a good GCSE pass). The language of conversational chat does not map directly onto the GCSE outcomes. As such, the UCA looks at the bigger, longer-term picture of language learning, beyond the GCSE. It can be tentatively concluded that the UCA is engaged in a recontextualisation of CLT and that it extends it to the classroom, which is not just a location for communication but a real context in its own right.

Closely linked to this finding is the fact that the teacher allows this spontaneous talk to take place through the creation of “communicative space,” when the talk is mostly related to subjects not linked to the topic language under study (as shown in chapter five). This is also against the trend to adhere to lesson plans carefully and sometimes in minute detail to ensure rigid, pre-determined objectives are met. Instead, the teacher is open to off-topic talk, confident that any pupil-initiated talk in the TL will also contribute to their learning. Indeed, the teacher interacts with this off-topic talk and at times even initiates it. This demonstrates a view of language learning which values learning for its own sake and does not see it in narrow instrumental terms. It is this which encourages language play by pupils (as seen in chapter five) and which takes a long-term view of language learning (Pachler, Evans and Lawes, 2007).

7.5 Challenges for the UCA

There are potential challenges to the process of language learning as described in the UCA. Indeed, it would be surprising if there were not. These challenges concern the development of more complex interactive talk, the need to ensure pupils understand and express themselves in the TL to their satisfaction, and the need to show progression in learning in the PIL more explicitly for some pupils. There is also the question as to what extent the UCA is appropriate for all teachers, given the central role of the teacher as interactive co-communicator. Finally, there is the challenge for the UCA to continue to integrate a study focus into the conversational interaction so that learning is advanced through this conversation as well as the topic language.

Firstly and in relation to the nature of the spontaneous talk (research question one), the UCA, whilst encouraging spontaneous and fluent talk in the conversation of the classroom, may not develop the use of complex utterances so fully as conversational language is often informal and predicated on the need to convey meaning as succinctly as possible. Accuracy can also be sacrificed at times if the focus is purely on the efficient communication of a message. This does not mean that more contrived and pedagogically motivated interventions cannot be used to increase the complexity and accuracy of the conversational utterances, but the key here is not to so transform the conversation that by doing so it ceases to be conversation and reverts to being more of a language practice activity. This will be discussed in section 7.6 below. A further potential drawback is the fact that the conversational competence pupils develop is a classroom-based one. This may be a necessary limitation as conversation is so context dependent. At the same time, however, there is no reason why this

competence cannot be transferred to other contexts if, as shown in the study's classroom observation data, much of the language features transferable structures.

Secondly, and in relation to conditions created to promote the spontaneous talk (research question two), there is the need for the teacher to ensure that learners always understand and express themselves in the target language as they need to, particularly at key stage three. This does not require new techniques for the UCA but simply consistent application of those already in place: planned consistent teacher target language use; creating "communicative space" for pupils to be able to ask for clarification, for example through the "linguistic lifebelt"; rewarding of such questions to encourage them; use of 'linguistic scaffolding' and glossaries as reference materials; presentation of language where meaning is always conveyed (for example via pupils' use of 'Comment dit-on... en français?'); comprehension and concept checks. Linked to the importance of pupils' being able to express themselves is the point that some pupils, especially boys, can dominate the interaction. It is almost inevitable in a conversation-oriented environment that some will take the floor more than others. This need not be a problem in itself as the most interactive pupils provide input for the others, and indeed one Year 11 pupil explicitly made reference to this point in the interviews. The Year 10/11 top set was a relatively small group and it stands to reason that conversation is more attainable and easier to manage in such a group. The challenge for the teacher is to manage the conversation and ensure conversation rights are as distributed as possible and draw in the rest of the class. This can also come about by providing a study-based slant to the conversational interaction, and seize for the whole class the learning opportunities which arise out of it. This will be explored more in section 7.6 below.

Thirdly, there is the issue of progression in the PIL. One addition which may be useful is occasional lessons or parts of lessons in English where the transferability of the structures of the pupil interaction language is made more explicit so that learners have a greater sense of progression. Linked to this is the concern that some pupils have that some of the routines are time-wasting and not productive in learning terms. A mediation of how the structures are useful would also help here, as well as ensuring the routines develop and progress in terms of language and do not fossilise. As will be explored further in section 7.6 below, there is also the possibility of adding a more study-focused element whereby pupils formally note new vocabulary and structures in a vocabulary book as they come up so that the ephemeral nature of the conversation is overcome and it is captured more systematically. Closely related to this is the explicit reference to grammar. Whilst aspects of this were noted in the lessons observed, it is clearly easy, in an interactive environment with language being produced spontaneously, to miss opportunities to bring this language together at a point where structures can be analysed explicitly and patterns highlighted. Whilst this synthesis may happen with the topic language, it also needs to happen with the PIL as this is language which pupils are most confident with and use most often.

The question of content is also related to progression and it was pointed out in chapter one that an emphasis on cultural or cross-curricular content can detract from a focus on the target language. It has been shown here that it is the classroom context which promotes and sustains the spontaneous interaction and it is possible that if this immediate and easily understood context was downplayed and replaced by other content that interaction levels would drop. Further research would be welcome here to investigate if and how other contexts can promote similar levels of spontaneous interaction.

A final issue which has not been a focus of this study but which needs consideration nonetheless is the disposition of the teacher to engage in such interactive teaching and systematic, interactive use of the target language. Medgyes (1986, p.107) has pointed out that standard CLT can already be seen to require a “Wizard-of-Oz-like superperson- yet of flesh and blood.” The UCA clearly makes demands by nature of its very interactivity and target language requirements. The UCA, as with conversation itself, demands a teacher who listens to pupils, reacts to them, changes course, thinks on the spot, identifies and almost simultaneously draws out the learning from the conversation, manages target language use and context and performs all the other functions of a teacher at the same time. In addition, preparation will be more lengthy as no textbooks are used and the language in lessons responds to and builds on what has gone before. Whilst the routines and activities of the UCA provide a good framework around which to plan and construct lessons, and interaction becomes more second nature over time, the UCA still demands a level of response from the teacher beyond what may normally be required. Indeed, it should also be pointed out that interactive target language use is not incompatible with other curricula and methods, provided, just as with the UCA, the teacher has the disposition, knowledge and confidence to implement it.

7.6 Spontaneous Talk and Learning

This section will consider how the UCA can achieve what this study considers to be the most desirable of conditions in the MFL classroom: paying consideration to the language-learning process (promoting enjoyment, spontaneity, fluency, confidence in using the target language to communicate in real time) and to the product of accurate, complex language use at an appropriate level for examination purposes. This section

will identify ways in which the UCA does and can further pull out learning opportunities from the conversational interaction.

Firstly, the UCA encourages pupils to ask for new language, which is mostly written up on the board for pupils to be able to reuse it. If this happens systematically, there will be benefits both in terms of affect and in terms of language learning. Pupils who are of a mind to look out for how they are making progress in lessons may be able to see this more clearly and be more motivated accordingly. Also, pupils will capture the rather ephemeral nature of the conversational talk for future reference and use. Use of vocabulary books to note new words and phrases as well as the writing up and drilling of new words by the teacher will ensure there is an interactive-study element mixed in with the interactive-communicative element. It will also be up to the teacher to reintegrate, as far as possible, this language systematically into future lessons. It will also be very fruitful for the teacher to encourage the more formal topic language to be integrated into the pupils' spontaneous talk, such as happens in the Year 10/11 top set when pupil 11 uses the structure "pourrais" plus the infinitive in his spontaneous talk, which he has picked up from the topic language. It is clear that such a manner of working is highly organic, unpredictable and responsive and may not be in accordance within some teachers' desires or within their capabilities.

Secondly, teachers can use corrective recasting to add an interactive-study element to the interactive conversation. This also enables a communicative focus on form -rather than focus on formS- (Long, 1991; Doughty and Williams, 1998a; Doughty and Varela, 1998) where meaning and form are considered together and not in isolation. It is up to the teacher to co-ordinate this process and will involve a skilful to-ing and fro-ing between what can more clearly become two distinct modes of operating:

interactive-communicative mode and **interactive-study mode**, blending the two so that neither counteracts the other. As seen in the observation data, it is possible to keep the communication going whilst attending to form but this involves a skilful switch back and forth between modes by the teacher. An example is seen in text 5vi: The half tick where the teacher is discussing the concept of the half tick but also correcting one pupil with mimes and providing language to another. As noted in the literature (Doughty and Williams, 1998b), the more unobtrusive this is, the better. Also, the more interactive it is in that the pupil works out the problem and thus notices his/her auto-input, the better. This improves accuracy and also helps with syntactic and not just semantic processing (Swain, 1985).

Thirdly, grammar is addressed implicitly in the UCA and also drawn out explicitly. It is advocated here that this explicit treatment relate to the pupil interaction language as well as the topic language. This is because the PIL is the language which pupils know best and is therefore best suited for explicit treatment as it is most familiar to them as discussed in chapter two (Doughty and Williams, 1998a).

Fourthly, there is the issue of making more explicit the progression in learning in the PIL, particularly important for some pupils. This may best be done in occasional separate lessons in English. It can also be done by occasionally drawing together the structures and patterns which have occurred in the PIL. This would also address the issue of a more systematic treatment of explicit grammar, and a greater development of declarative knowledge. Once more, however, this demands a teacher who is willing and able to record and keep track of this language which may be occurring in an organic way at times.

Finally, there is the question of the development of skills in conversation itself. Pupils could be given explicit guidance in developing conversational skills through lexical items which would assist their conversation, such as delayers, ways of back-channelling and signalling a turn and holding the floor. This would help their fluency and confidence and also their ability to conduct conversations in the target language.

The key, then, to imbuing conversation with a more formal learning element is to interrogate the conversation for learning opportunities whilst not stifling the communication. The interrogation of the conversation also involves a certain vigilance from the teacher. This ties in with the “assiduity” of the teacher in rewarding pupils and the notion that maintaining the target language is akin to classroom management. Rogers (2011, p. 117), indeed, uses the term “relaxed vigilance” in relation to classroom management. As such, there is the whole notion of the learning being planned but also serendipitous and interactive.

7.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite the efforts described to reduce the limiting factors in the study, there will always be limitations to any study. The dilemma with such a case study was which elements of the case to include. Whilst, as noted earlier, a case study is largely self-limiting, this case study involved a choice of teachers and classes to observe. Although the teachers were chosen for their expertise in the UCA and the classes were chosen to give a cross-section in age range and ability level, it is inevitable that the observations will address only a cross section of practice in the case study school. This will mean that it cannot be wholly representative of practice even within that school. In addition, the observations themselves will not necessarily be representative of the teacher’s practice, given that the mere fact of being observed may encourage a

teacher to teach in a more interactive and dynamic way. The teacher may also try to include in the lesson what she feels the researcher expects, especially given the close involvement of the researcher with the case study school. Pupils may also feel that the presence of an observer warrants more, or fewer, contributions. Interviews, whilst providing rich data, can only represent the views of the pupils' interviewed and may not be representative of a whole group or other, similar groups.

The question of the generalizability from a case study is always an issue, given the very precise context of the data. The range of principles highlighted in this study mean, however, that certain aspects can be transferred by teachers to differing degrees, such that it is not necessary to replicate all the elements of the case study lessons.

The focus on spontaneous talk in this study may also mean that there is not a full picture of all pupil talk, which may be slightly limiting. It is felt, however, that the concentration on spontaneous talk does usefully place the spotlight on a phenomenon which is rarely witnessed and described in MFL classrooms.

7.8 Final Critical Reflection

This study has emphasised to the researcher the powerful potential of data to surprise and inform. It has also confirmed the importance of keeping an open mind in the approach to research. Both these facts are seen in the way that pupils' spontaneous classroom talk in the target language became the focus of the study rather than the format of the entire lesson being the focus. It was an open-minded approach to the data which made this possible. This did, however, mean that the study lacked a precise focus for an extended period, which had its frustrations, and this meant a more

organic, developmental approach to the literature review and data analysis was required.

The power of the pupils' contributions has also been clear and the level of insight they provide into their learning has been enlightening. The researcher is pleased that pupils' viewpoints were included in the research at any early enough stage as this had not been envisaged originally. Certainly any future research would not plan for such an omission.

The researcher's interest was initially captured by the cognitive processes of language learning, such as the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge and the means by which language is automatised. In the course of the study and the upgrading process in particular, it became clear that the sociocultural aspect, including affective as well as cognitive factors, was equally important. In future research, this will be an aspect the researcher would build in from the start.

A further recognition which has come about during the study has been the way that theory and practice interact and inform each other. In my report to teachers involved in this project, it will be potentially powerful to offer a way of articulating their practice with reference to theory in order to enhance further the reflexivity about practice and to establish a common language between research and practice. In the light of the government's desire to see closer links between Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and schools (DfE, 2011), this could represent a good model for collaboration.

The contribution to new knowledge of this thesis is that it is the first research on the University of Cumbria Approach. It challenges the focus on language as product and

highlights the importance of communicative process in the MFL classroom. It also examines language learning from both a cognitive and sociocultural perspective in an attempt to bring a more holistic understanding of language learning.

The study shows that spontaneous pupil talk, akin to conversation, in the target language is possible and worthwhile and sets out ways to promote this, via what this study has called the target language lifestyle and target language and context management. The study takes this spontaneous talk further by seeing it as a rich source for helping learners improve their linguistic competence by a communicative focus on form. The debate on the target language has also been advanced by a focus on *how* to get pupils using the target language. Finally, the role of affective factors has been highlighted as has the importance of the classroom as a social environment for the learning of MFL.

The study has also acknowledged the challenges for the University of Cumbria Approach. These are to make progression more explicit at times and to encourage the development of complex and accurate pupil interaction language through a communicative focus on form. Pupils also need to be given sufficient space to express themselves and ask questions in what can be a fast-moving lesson, especially at key stage three. Finally, there is the issue of the teacher's disposition to use the target language and teach in an interactive way which needs to be fostered.

7.9 Concluding Remarks

The results of this study have shown the possibility of a new approach to language learning in which the process of the learning is as important as the final product. This new approach can take a sociocognitive view of language learning where the social

context and interactive use of language are as important as its accuracy and fluency and complexity. That process involves encouraging interactive and spontaneous pupil talk, akin to conversation, and engaging with that conversation interactively as a valuable learning opportunity. This enables pupils to develop a L2 conversational competence and improve their communicative competence overall as they manipulate language to varying degrees to make their own meaning. This can happen *alongside* the topic language. Underlying this encouragement of spontaneous talk from pupils is in-depth language learning which stresses the importance of developing retention and fluency in real time through automatised, proceduralised language, using the context of the classroom as a stimulus and motivation for pupils to talk, including about topics they initiate and wish to talk about. This is also aimed at developing a positive, enjoyable learning experience for pupils so that they develop confidence and enjoyment from real language use and will be encouraged to use the TL in future real-life settings. Inherent in this view is a commitment from the teacher to take the role of co-communicator and use a variety of techniques to actively manage and promote the use of the target language and to provide and manage the classroom context to stimulate that talk.

It is proposed that the principles and techniques highlighted in this study can be adapted to other classrooms so that the learning of MFL in secondary schools becomes more interactive, more inclusive and more rounded so that learners enjoy using the target language for real purposes but that this real-time use also advances their language learning.

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Appendix 1: A ‘Typical’ UCA Lesson

1. Team Competition; Activities often containing an element of competition

Pupils are divided into two or more teams and awarded points for each contribution in the target language (TL).

Activities will also often contain an element of competition, for example they are carried out against the clock, they are set up to beat/test the teacher, beat/test your partner, pupils have to memorise a list of structures, or they participate in team quizzes/games.

2. Near-Exclusive Use of the Target Language

The teacher uses the TL exclusively. Pupils are not generally permitted to speak English but encouraged to speak spontaneously to each other and the teacher in the TL. However, English is not totally banned.

3. The Use of Routines

These are particularly important to the UCA. These routines can take up a substantial part of the lesson, giving the impression to an outside observer that the ‘lesson proper’ is slow to get started, if it ever gets started at all! Examples of initial routines are:

Seating Routine/ Requesting Permission Routine: pupils ask permission to sit down/ ask to note the points on the board, ask to give out books, ask for points. Pupils use structures such as ‘Est-ce que je peux...?’ Pupils will usually be required to justify their request, using ‘pourquoi?/parce que..’

Register Routine: the register is timed and pupils predict how long it will take/guess how long it did take OR pupils are asked/answer questions in the TL as their name is called. Pupils use phrases such as ‘A mon avis l’appel va durer/a duré...’

Objectives Routine: pupils are shown the objectives bit by bit (using a ‘slow reveal’ technique). They predict the next word/phrase and are given points for each guess.

Evaluation Routine: Pupils evaluate the performance of another team (for example in the singing of a song) using different criteria, for example ‘participation’, ‘prononciation’, ‘synchronisation.’

Correction Routine: pupils correct a teacher’s deliberate mistake (for example writing the wrong date on the board), using a formula such as ‘Stop! Il y a une erreur’ [Stop! There’s a mistake]. Pupils can also correct each other or, for example, point out if another pupil is cheating (‘tu triches!’).

Forfeit Routine: the teacher or pupils flag up another who is speaking English or not participating, using phrases such as Il a parlé en anglais!

Homework Routine: pupils are presented with their homework, using set phrases such as ‘D’abord il faut...’

4. Pupil spontaneous use of the target language is promoted

Pupil spontaneous use of the target language may occur during the routines or at other points in the lesson. This is rewarded with points and/or verbal praise. It will often, for example, be written up.

5. Pupils working out things for themselves

Pupils will not often be shown/told something but encouraged to work it for themselves. Images will be presented so that pupils have to make guesses as to what they are; techniques to reveal items gradually are used:

- quick flash; blur/out of focus; slow reveal; keyhole; mouthing words

The Approach advocates “making the class struggle to arrive at meaning.” (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.22)

6. Extensive use of textual support

During activities, such as pair work activities, pupils always have access to the written support. The term used for this by the Approach is *linguistic scaffolding*. Linguistic scaffolding is given at the same time as the visual and oral input is introduced.

7. A ‘Multi-sensory Approach’ is used

Language will often be presented using a multi-sensory approach (ibid., p.115), for example mimes. It may appear to the outside observer that the teacher is using mimes taken from a secret mime manual. Many mimes have become established, such as clasping hands to show petition for ‘peux/peut/pouvons.’ However, mimes, where possible, convey the meaning or the sound. An example of the latter would be the motion of pouring liquid for the word ‘pour’ [for/in order to]. Also where possible, mimes should convey a grammatical point, for example pointing over the shoulder for past time. Another example is emphasising masculine/feminine endings by making gestures indicating a boy/girl. In addition, they can convey orthography, for example an outstretched hand at 45 degrees to show an acute accent. Pupils are encouraged to join in with the mimes, which are then used by the teacher to *cue* the TL phrase. First, the teacher will say the phrase(s) and the pupils will do the mimes. Secondly, the teacher will drop his/her voice and do the mimes whilst the pupils say the phrase(s).

Other techniques are give for “making oneself comprehensible” (PGCE Modern Languages Department, no date, p.C5).

Learning is active, often with movement and extensive use of songs.

8. Frequent use of pair work and groupwork, conducted in the TL

Pair work occurs frequently, not just towards the end of a lesson (Harris, Burch, Jones and Darcy, 2001, p.29). There are often short bursts of pair work. The pupils are expected to speak entirely in the TL in pair work as they have been taught the language for this, usually formally in the same way other language has been taught.

The Approach encourages all whole class activities to be channelled into pair work, as far as possible. Conversely, all pair work activities are demonstrated using a clear, set procedure.

9. Use of pupil volunteers

Pupil volunteers are called 'teacher clones' by the Approach (ibid., p.29). Pupils will be involved in leading or assisting as many of the teaching activities as possible.

10. A clear sequence for the presentation of new language

New syllabus-related topic language is firstly contextualised with an appropriate contextualising question (CQ), for example 'Qu'est-ce que tu aimes faire le week-end?' then pupils are given plenty of repetition practice, including in pairs, with textual support. The Approach terms this as the language being *drilled* (ibid., pp. 23-43). New language is presented as part of a structure, rather than as nouns only, i.e. the Approach avoids what it calls Single lexical items (SLIs). For example 'j'aime les films' is introduced rather than just 'les films.'

Appendix 2: Statement to Participants and Sample Letter to Parents

Research into the teaching of modern foreign languages

I am conducting research into the teaching of modern foreign languages in secondary schools at the Institute of Education, London. I am a qualified teacher and lecturer at the University of Cumbria, Greenwich.

The purpose of the research, in brief terms, is to examine how pupils learn a foreign language and the role played in this by spoken interactions with the teacher and with each other.

I am going to ask you to talk about your French lessons and give you general themes to discuss. Say what you think honestly. Don't feel you have to agree with anyone else. Put your hand up if you feel you cannot get to say what you want to say.

The discussion will be recorded and analysed for my PhD thesis. All recordings and contributions will be kept anonymous. Please say your name before each contribution. This just helps me to hear who said what when I write up the discussion but I will not use your name, just numbers.

Thank you very much for volunteering. Please confirm that you understand and that your participation is entirely voluntary and that you have permission from your parent/s or carer/s to be here. Do ask any questions you want to now.

Thanks again,

Colin Christie.

Institute of Education, June 2007

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Research into the teaching of modern foreign languages,
Institute of Education, London

I am conducting research into the teaching of modern foreign languages in secondary schools, using XXX School as a case study. I am a qualified teacher and senior lecturer at St. Martin's College, Greenwich²⁰⁸, and have worked closely with colleagues at XXX over a number of years.

The purpose of the research, in brief terms, is to examine how pupils learn a foreign language and the role played in this by spoken interactions with the teacher and with each other.

I am seeking permission to video record and sound record a small number of French lessons this term and next academic year.

The aim of the exercise is not to measure or test pupils' level and as such these observations should not be a source of anxiety for pupils. The aim is simply to analyse the way in which pupils use language in the classroom context. All data will be viewed by me alone and analysed in terms of language use for my PhD. Language will be transcribed and may be quoted in my PhD dissertation but all data will be kept anonymous. I have received permission from the school to proceed.

Thank you very much for your help in this matter. If, however, you do not feel able to grant permission for this research, I would be grateful if you could return the attached reply slip to XXX by Friday 6th July, 2007.

Many thanks,

Colin Christie.

I do NOT wish my child to be included in the video and sound recording for the MFL classroom research project.

Name of pupil: _____

Signed (Parent/Carer): _____

Date: _____

²⁰⁸ The former name of the University of Cumbria

Appendix 3: Transcript Conventions²⁰⁹
Key to Appendix Five Colour-coding

[Indicates overlap with portion in the next turn that is similarly bracketed
[[Indicates overlap with portion in the next turn that is similarly bracketed
	Used when the singler bracket is used in the previous line/turn so that there will not be confusion regarding what brackets correspond to
1	Line number
(.)	Brief pause.
(..) (...)	Longer pauses.
...	Time lapse
beaucoup	Word or part of word mispronounced
T	The teacher in the particular excerpt.
P1	Identified pupil
P	Unidentified pupil
PB	Unidentified male pupil
PF	Unidentified female pupil
R	Researcher
.... (point)	Single brackets indicates unclear or probable item
((unint))	A stretch of unintelligible talk
(())	Comments enclosed in double paranetheses

Key to Appendix Four and Five Colour-coding:

xx	Pupil initiation (coded 5-8)
xx	Teacher code 1.4 (controlled TIL)
xx	Use of English

²⁰⁹ After Ohta (2001, pp. 282-3) and van Lier (1988, pp. 234-4)

Appendix 4: Extract from Year 8 Top Set Transcript, Lesson 3

Activity/T. Coding	Language	Pupil Coding		
	Ps Hiver	-	1	
Chef d'orchestre 2.1,3.4,3.6,4.2,4.5 4.62,4.64	T Fantastique. C'est correct. Excellent. OK. Je voudrais un volontaire pour sortir de la classe, un volontaire pour faire le policier, la policière, un volontaire pour faire une action. Allez-y! On va prendre quelqu'un qui n'a pas participé. Er, P24. Tu n'as pas participé. Oui. Est-ce que?			
	P24 Est-ce que je peux être volontaire pour faire la police?	2321	1	
3.6,4.2,4.63,4.64	T Pour faire le policier. Oui tu peux sortir de la classe s'il te plaît, P24, merci. Je vais prendre un volontaire qui n'a pas participé. P4, tu n'as pas participé aujourd'hui. OK, P4			
	P4 Est-ce que je peux être volontaire pour sortir de la classe?	2321	1	
1.4,4.64	T Oui, P4, tu sors de la classe s'il te plaît. Finalement. Allez. Plus vite, plus vite. Merci. Au revoir, P4!			
	P5 Au revoir P4	1311	1	
	Ps [AmStramGram	3312	7	ACT
1.3,3.4,4.64,4.8	T [Non! Qui? ((unint)). Ne pas crier s'il vous plaît. Merci beaucoup. Qui n'a pas beaucoup participé? P25, tu n'es pas le prof, tu vas bien faire la prof, viens. P25, tu vas bien faire la prof après le chef d'orchestre. [Et finalement. Qui n'a pas beaucoup participé?			
	P18 [P4 tricher!	2213	8	APU, CNA
4.62,4.64,4.8	T OK. Je choisis. Je choisis Non, er, P24, c'est le policier? C'est le policier. Alors ça va. Je choisis. [Non, baissez les mains! Baissez les mains!			
	P28 [P4, P4 va tricher	3313	7	APU, CNA
3.4,4.64	T OK. L'action. Quelle est l'action? Vite, vite, vite! L'action! OK.			
	P8 Stop! Il y a une erreur!	3312	7	APU
	T Regardez l'action! [Regardez l'action! Regardez l'action de P!			
	P24 Stop! Il y a une erreur!	3312	5	APU
4.8	T Oui. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?			
	P28 P4 a triché	3312	2	
1.4,4.8	T P4 a triché?			
	Ps Oui!	-	2	
4.8	T P4 n'as pas (outside) P4, tu as triché?			
	Ps Oui	-		
	PB ((unint)) policier	-		
4.64	T Regarde P4, s'il te plaît! [OK merci			

	P8	[Comment dit-on en français P stole my go?	2312	7	LL, APU
1.4,3.4,4.62,4.64,4.8	T	Er, OK, je suis désolé, P8. Tu vas changer après. Ce n'est pas grave, P8. OK. Alors, c'est l'action? Regardez l'action de P!			
	P	C'est clair	3312	7	PC
3.2,4.2,4.41,4.64	T	((unint)) stylo. La classe! Le climat est tropical			
	Ps	(repeat) Le climat est tropical	1311	1	
3.2,4.2,4.41	T	C'est le désert			
	Ps	(repeat constantly) C'est le désert	1311	1	
	Ps	(repeat constantly) Il neige beaucoup	1311	1	
	Ps	(repeat constantly) Il y a une saison sèche	1311	1	
1.4,3.2,4.61,4.64	T	Stop! P4! A mon avis le chef d'orchestre			
	P4	A mon avis le chef d'orchestre, c'est P18	1311	1	
	T	[Ah fantastique			
	Ps	(((unint))	-	7	APU, CNA
	Ps	[[chant) Tricheur!			
1.4,3.1,4.62	T	C'est correct, P4. Cinq points pour P4			
	P18	[Comment dit-on en français?	3312	7	LL
	P	[Il triche	3312	7	APU, CNA
	P18	[[Comment dit-on en anglais?	3312	7	EN
	P4	[Est-ce que je peux parler en anglais?	3312	7	LL
1.6,4.64,4.8	T	Oui mais le, pas tous les deux en même temps. Oui, P4			
	P	(Est-ce que) je peux parler en anglais?	3312	7	EN
1.4,1.6,3.4	T	C'est important?			
	P	Er, oui. P2 was looking at P18 while he was doing it	Use of EN		
1.1,2.3,3.1,4.61	T	Ah, P21 regardait P18 ((unint)). Je suis désolée, P. Excellent. Cinq points, P4	-		
	Ps	((unint)) Encore!		7	PC
	P18	Comment dit-on en français Everyone changed it from ((unint)) I hadn't even ((unint))		7	ACT
1.4,3.1,3.4,4.62,4.64 4.8	T	Tout le monde, je suis désolée, P mais ce n'est pas grave, P18, ok? Il faut être bon joueur. Cinq points pour P18 et un tick pour P18, un tick pour P4. Fantastique. On va continuer avec une autre activité. Encore?			
	Ps	Oui! Oui!	-	1	
	Ps	Encore!	-	1	
1.4,4.64	T	Encore une fois. OK ?? Je vais demander à P8			

Appendix 5: Extract from Year 11 Top Set Transcript, Lesson 1

Activity/T. Coding	Language	Pupil Coding		
Song 1.4,4.64	T OK. On va chanter encore une fois et on va passer à quelque chose d'autre. Après trois. Un, deux, trois.			
	Ps Agréable, merveilleux, enrichissant. Motivant, stimulant, passionant. Désagréable et démotivant. Monotone, déprimant et pas amusant	1311	1	
3.1	T Fantastique. [Excellent] Désagréable...			
	P3 [Un point pour P11 parce qu'il avait trois coches et je le déteste]	3132	8	TCN, APU
	P11 Oui, je, je voudrais une [[autre coche	3312	6	TCN
4.63	T [[Et je le déteste			
	P3 Je le déteste	1321	1	APU
4.62	T Dés[agréable, quand il y a un 's'			
	P3 [Je le déteste!... je te déteste	3322	8	APU
1.3,4.2,4.4 4.62	T Sshh! Ecoutez! Désagréable, quand il y a un 's', c'est un, c'est désagréable (writes 'z' on board). Ok, toute la classe. Désagréable			
	Ps Désagréable	-	1	
1.4,3,6,4,4,4.62	T Quand il y a deux 's', c'est 's', quand il y a un 's', c'est 'z'. Désa... Désagréable			
	Ps Désagréable.	-	1	
	T OK. On va continuer. Tu peux cliquer deux fois, s'il te plaît?			
	P6 Un solo, un solo pour P11	3312	8	APU
	P3 Où ? Où [est le solo pour T?	3313	6	T
1.4,4.62,4.8	T [A la fin du leçon... on a beaucoup à faire avant la fin de la leçon]. Beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup, alors si on a du temps à la fin du leçon, P peut faire [un solo [Elle te			
	P3 déteste beaucoup	3323	8	T, APU
4.8	T Je ne le déteste pas. [Alors			
	P3 [Tu détestes moi	3223	6	T, SE
4.63	T Tu me			
	P3 Tu me	1311	1	
4.63	T détestes			
	P détestes	3311	1	
1.4,4.8	T Ce n'est pas vrai			
	P3 Et P11, et la classe	3312	6	T, APU
1.4,2,3,3.1,3.4	T [Deux points P3	3312		

	P1	[Oui, c'est vrai		6		T, APU
1.4,2.3,3.1,3.4	T	Ce n'est pas vrai. (To P1) Ce n'est pas vrai. Pourquoi?				
	P1	[[Parce que toute la classe déteste P3	3323	2		
	P11	Mais elle déteste le plus, te le plus	2133	6		T, APU
4.8	T	Comment? [Ce n'est pas gentil				
	P11	[Comment dit-on she hates you the most'?	3313	6		LL, T, APU
1.5,4.61	T	Elle te déteste le plus				
	P3	Oui, toute la classe déteste ((unint))	2313	6		APU
	P11	[Elle te déteste le plus	3331	1		
	P3	[You hate me as well (to P1)	Use of EN			
1.4,4.8	T	Mais, P11 ce n'est pas vrai. Ce n'est pas vrai				
	P11	[[C'est, oui, je sais	2311	6		T, APU
	P9	[[C'est pas nécessaire	3312	8		APU
	P3	[[C'est vrai, tu détestes toute	3323	6		T, APU
4.8	T	Oui, les garçons sont ((unint))				
	P6	Oui, une croix pour P11	3312	8		T, APU, TCN
	P3	[Non! Une croix, oui	3312	6		TCN
1.4,3.4,4.8	T	[Pourquoi?				
	P6	Parce qu'elle, il parlait, er (..)	2312	2		
	P	Beaucoup d'anglais	2212	6		APU, EN
4.8	T	Non, il n'a pas parlé anglais, il a				
	P6	Parle beaucoup de (..) [unnécessaires	2113	6		APU
	P3	[Leçon après	3212	8		LE
4.63,4.8	T	Des phrases nécessaires, il a dit beaucoup de choses qui ne sont pas nécessaires				
1.4,2.3,3.1	T	Deux points pour P11				
	P6	P6!				
	P3	P11! Parce que P11 a dit la phrase. (.) [Beaucoup de	2213	8		TCN, APU
	P10	[P3, Tais-toi!	3312	8		APU
3.1,4.62,4.8	T	Mais j'ai déjà donné des points [pour P11.				
	P6	[C'était moi	3312	6		TCN
3.1,4.62,4.8	T	Ça, c'était pour P6, oui. Pardon, excuse- moi. OK, on va regarder ce texte mais j'ai				
	P3	Deux points pour P11 parce qu'elle a dit une longue phrase	3223	8		TCN, APU
1.4,2.2,3.1,4.8	T	Deux points pour P11, je crois qu'on, non, on a, oui, ok deux points pour P11				

Appendix 6: Grandmothers Text

- 1 P11 Madame, la grand-mère de P12 est, er (.) quatre-vingt-sept ans.
2 T La grand-mère de P12 a quatre-vingt-sept ans?
3 P11 C'est incroyable, non?
4 T Oui, c'est très impressionnant
5 P11 Elle doit avoir une coche
6 Ps ((laugh))
7 T Pour sa grand-mère
8 P3 La grand-mère de P12
9 T ((gives tick)) Ça, c'est pour la grand-mère de P12
10 P3 ((claps)) Pourquoi? Je [voudrais une coche
11 PB [Est-ce que je (peux) avoir une coche?
12 T Quel âge a ta grand-mère?
13 P3 Je n'avais pas un grand-mère
14 T Attends, ça, attention! Avais, c'est le passé
15 P3 Oh, oui, je
16 T Non. Parce que tu avais un grand-mère à un moment. ((writes on board)). Je.
17 Ça, c'est le présent. Je n'ai, je n'ai pas ou j'ai. I have or I haven't
18 P3 Je n'ai pas un grand-mère [mais elle comment dit-on 'was' ?
19 T [Excellent. C'est dommage, c'est triste
20 P12 C'est triste
21 P3 Comment dit-on was?
22 T Elle était
23 P3 Elle était
24 T Ah, elle avait
25 P3 Elle avait, oh, (.) erm, cent moins trois ((laughs))
26 T Cent ans moins trois! Oui, c'est difficile [les nombres.
27 P3 [Je ne, je ne
28 T Comment dit-on cent ans, cent, cent moins trois en français, pour une
29 coche ?
30 P12 Quatre-vingt-dix (.) [sept
31 P11 [Sept!
32 T [P12
33 P11 [J'ai dit sept!
34 P3 Oh, je voudrais une coche, madame
35 P11 Oui, P3 doit avoir une coche
36 P3 Oui!
37 T OK. Alors, elle [avait quatre-vingt-dix-sept ans quand elle est ((mimes))
38 P3 [Elle avait quatre-vingt-dix-sept ans quand elle est mort
39 T [[Excellent. Féminin. ((mimes)) Morte
40 P11 [[Madame, j'ai deux grands-mères.
41 P11 Madame, j'ai deux grands-mères. [J'ai deux grands-mères. Je dois avoir
42 deux coches
43 P12 [Personne âgée
44 Ps ((laugh))
45 P3 Je déteste toi, P11
46 T (laughs). Deux grands-mères. Deux coches pour tes deux grands-[mères
47 P12 [Je n'aime
48 pas les personnes âgées
49 P3 Cinq[[points pour P11!

- 47 T [[P11, madame ((name)) va me tuer si je donne deux coches pour avoir
48 deux grands-mères
49 P11 Pourquoi? Qu'est-ce que le problème avec mes grands-mères?
50 Ps ((laugh loudly))
51 T C'est pas tes grands-mères, c'est le problème avec madame ((name)) ((gives
tick))
52 P11 Oui!
53 T Tu vas demander à madame ((name))[et monsieur ((name)) après
54 P3 [Madame (name) est une grand-mère?
55 P11 OK
56 T OK. On va continuer, même si c'est très intéressant, vos grands-mères. Um,
57 (.) ce qui est important, c'est le, les tables stables, la stabilité, la sécurité, le
58 partage, [le respect, et, c'est un peu difficile parce que ça n'existe pas trop²¹⁰
59 P11 [Le respect!

²¹⁰ Year 11 top set, lesson 2

Appendix 7: Extract from Year 11 Focus Group Interview 2

P3 ((laughs)) There's so much stuff we need to do but there's also time and all that for us to ask those random questions like we've said before and for the teacher to explain them and then have a laugh and all that and then still end up doing what we need to do in the lesson

P1 Um, I think, not that you don't know this, anyway, er, I think the general routine of our lessons goes song, objectives, erm, an activity linked to the objectives, and then recap or learning new vocab then a number of smaller activities and then maybe at the end writing something down and getting our homework and that routine that we have, I say we generally have in our lessons ((unint))

P3 Begging for stickers at the end

P5 All the way through

P1 It works because, erm, we get everything we need to do done and having just that, because I said the middle section is you could do loads of different things to fill that gap, it works because having the objective at the beginning allows us to take a look at structure in written work so that we don't have to spend too much time on it at the end, erm, and our activities allow us to pick up the vocabulary and work on our, erm, speaking skills ???

P5 From what P1 said, remembering all the things she said, if you take out maybe one of those for one lesson and put in a five minute slot talking about something, obviously you can't plan it, but if you take out one of them and talk about something off topic, the conversational French, that would work best because again, it just keeps you on your toes, you, I love saying that expression so I keep doing it

R It's a good one

P5 It just makes you think differently cos if you say (??) the same thing again and again, it does just get really boring, no matter how fun it would be, again and again just

R Now what I'm interested in is you talk about conversational French, so what's the other French if it's not the conversational?

((unint)) boring French

P1 Yeah

R Right. P2

P2 When you go to France, you, you are obviously gonna talk to French people and (laughter and clapping)

P5 Just use sign language

P2 And, er, you'll be like, erm, talking formal French as you, as what we ??? right now, which is, and they'd be like 'ok where do you come from?' and it wouldn't be as smooth and you can't, you stay at the same level with those people you talk to but if you talk like the informal conversational French, you maybe go to the next level as in, erm, a closer relationship

(laughter)

P1 I ((unint)) take what P2's saying

R OK, that's interesting

P1 With the conversational French, that's good for, right, er, when you go to France and speak to French-speaking people of your own age and then the like the other, the more formal French is what we need to pass our GCSE so obviously they're both important but for different reasons

P3 I think what P5 meant by conversational, er, is er things that I usually find more interesting enough, off topic things that first help us remember ourselves ((unint)) but also the structures and the phrases and stuff help us remember French generally like in Italian the other day, we, er, learnt how to say, er, this really funny phrase, it was actually, I suppose, a little immature ...

- P3 Yeah, yeah generally it does help a lot when you say something that's funny like
- P5 I'll say it again, from what P2 said, about the conversational and non-conversational. First off, they should change the GCSEs to conversational French
- R Right
- P5 If you live in France, say you're 30 years old and living in France, you don't really need to tell people that your family makes you feel comfortable
- R Yeah, yeah
- P5 And also, it's so much more useful saying something like, um, an example that happened today is we were saying 'Yes, I did that earlier' or 'I did that yesterday'
- R Yeah, ok
- P5 That would be, that would come up so much more often than 'this table is stable'
- R Yeah, ok, yeah... yeah, like you were doing today
- P5 Unless you're a waiter
- R Yeah, yeah
((laughter))
- R So, would you say you've got them in separate places in your head, the conversational and the topic or do they, do they ever meet or..?
- P3 No, I think they, they stay together quite a lot
- P1 I think, I think now that we're doing our speaking topics in French, we try to mesh them together
Mesh!
((laughter))
- P5 I, I just have one big hole in my head where I...
((laughter))
- P5 ...where I dump all the information I learn

Key to coding

xx	Content	xx	Acquisition
xx	Fun	xx	Conversation
xx	Competition	xx	Repetition
xx	Memorisation	xx	Learning/Study

Appendix 8: Group Interviews in English: Schedule of Areas for Discussion

French lessons: general opinion; different from/same as other subjects?

Hearing and speaking mainly French all the time

Having the words and phrases written up

What you say in lessons

Mimes

Singing

Team competition

My role in lessons; how I fit in

Activities in the lesson

Pairwork

Routines (e.g. objectives, seating, requesting, points, evaluation, correction)

How good am I at French: now? in the future?

Strategies for learning and communicating in French

Grammar in French

Appendix 9: Teacher interviews in English: Question Schedule

1. When you are planning and teaching your lessons, are there any general principles which underlie your planning and teaching? Why?

2. Are there any distinctive characteristics of your lesson which might not feature in lessons of teachers from other schools?

Is there a distinctive “St. Martin’s Approach”?

3. Are there advantages to the way you teach?

4. Are there disadvantages to the way you teach?

5. What is the purpose of MFL lessons?

Appendix 10: Extract from Teacher Interview

Researcher: Are there any general principles which underlie your planning and teaching?

Teacher A: Erm. In terms the planning, the planning stages, let me just think what I do, erm. I always make sure, let me just think this through when I'm planning a lesson. The most important thing, I think, in the planning stages, once you've worked out the language you're teaching that lesson is to, because the language you're teaching that lesson won't always come out when you write your objectives down. So you write down the basic, not the basic, but the, erm, from the scheme of work from whatever topic language or classroom language you're doing, what you want them to do, about what you think you want them to do by the end of the lesson which won't necessarily be the same as by the time you've reached the end of your lesson.

Researcher: Uh hum

Teacher A: Erm, and sometimes it's completely different. ((laughs)). So I'd write, but you have to start from somewhere so I do write down, ok, I'm gonna teach them this, this, this, then the first activity which, oh, the main principle, I think, which I try to, erm, get the department to do as well, most of the lesson is probably revision of what they've done the lesson before, or building on what they already know, um. And I don't think it matters. I think it's important to have new stuff every lesson but that tends to come about anyway, from the classroom, from their language, spontaneous language, or language of interaction, but, although I still think it's quite important to be teaching them something new each lesson, to plan to teach them something new each lesson, that doesn't matter, I don't think, if it's in the last, or planned for the last twenty minutes, and sometimes it's the last ten. Because the way they become fluent is by constantly revisiting and building on what they've done before. Although I'll write down the new language I want to teach them in my planning, I'll then do, ok the first activity will be a warm-up. There's always a warm-up, usually a song, or no, seating routine usually, then a warm-up song, then the objectives routine, which is obviously all building on old, although in the objectives routine, and I think that's where we try and milk that, that routine. Objectives routine can sometimes take half an hour, 'cause we milk it for every, it's, it's so good. It's such a good, erm, I think particularly, well no for the low ability ones as well, for all, for most groups, it's via the objectives routine, I think, that they become, that language, that the lang, the structures become second nature to them. I think that's, and through other routines but the objectives routine I think is a key part of our lesson. So the objectives routine, a lot of that obviously will be language which they've done day in, day out, or lesson in lesson out but then we, I try to put in there new structures, like if I'm thinking ahead to subordinate clauses, we will put in structures like 'après avoir bla bla bla', and then they'll do another one, 'avant de' or, erm, or 'si on a le temps' or whatever, so that that's, but so that that's, the new structures are built in every few lessons but most of the objectives routine is stuff they already know. The objectives routine can take, again, twenty minutes, so by this time we're already at least half an hour into the lesson and then after the objectives routine, I'll always to an activity to revise what they did the lesson before, erm, or if we, I know that we're doing a Quizmaster, to revise the language they need for the Quizmaster. So by the time I get to the new language, the new language that I've planned for, which I might not get to if there's lots of new language I haven't planned for but if I do get to that new language, it's often in the last five or ten minutes of the lesson but I don't, I think what's important is that that doesn't matter.

Key to coding

xx	Structures	xx	Acquisition	xx	Routines
xx	Fluency	xx	Conversation/Spontaneity	xx	Repetition
xx	Interaction				

**Appendix 11: Table of Most Frequent Teacher Language,
Year 7/8 Lessons**

	Y7	Y8 Oct	Y8 Feb	Total
Fantastique	57	70	75	202
Excellent	24	67	62	153
Un/cinq points pour	30	40	44	114
FUTURE T On va + infinitive	29	29	35	93
C'est (not incl ones specified)	36	12	34	82
La classe	17	27	36	80
Continuez	13	1	44	58
Plus vite	14	23	18	55
Comment dit-on en français?	18	3	24	45
Pourquoi?	10	25	8	43
Parce que	9	22	12	43
Vite	10	27	3	40
Je vais + infinitive	0	37	2	39
3-2-1-0	14	16	9	39
Attention	3	10	25	38
C'est correct	8	15	13	36
Vas-y!	16	5	11	32
Tu peux + infinitive	10	7	13	30
AmStramGram	6	15	9	30
On continue	6	23	1	30
Plus fort	4	8	17	29
Avec ton partenaire	13	2	14	29
Je suis désolée	6	11	10	27
Regardez	5	7	14	26
C'était	14	10	1	25
Comment dit-on?	12	5	6	23
A mon avis	9	0	14	23
Je pense (que)	18	2	3	23
Je suis	0	16	6	22
Levez la main	2	1	19	22
Continue	4	17	0	21
Correct	0	0	20	20
C'est qui?	0	14	5	19
3-2-1-partez!	6	7	5	18
C'est fantastique (ça)	9	6	2	17
Concentration	5	3	9	17
Un/des etc. volontaire(s)	8	8	0	16
Attend(ez)	4	3	9	16
En français	5	9	2	16
(en) silence	4	6	5	15
Tu es	0	5	9	14
il faut + infinitive	0	12	2	14
Un/des etc. volontaire pour faire	4	4	6	14
Discutez	1	0	13	14
Donne(z)-moi un synonyme	0	9	5	14
Allez-y!	7	0	7	14
Avec les actions	8	5	1	14
A ton avis	3	7	4	14

**Appendix 12: Table of Most Frequent Teacher Language,
Year 10/11 Top Set Lessons**

	Y10	Y11 Oct	Y11 Feb	Total
C'est (incl ones specified)	73	88	73	234
Un/cinq points pour	99	115	8	222
Excellent	26	80	44	150
Fantastique	20	54	26	100
Parce que	16	34	17	67
FUTURE T On va + infinitive	26	21	16	63
Mais	19	29	13	61
SI clauses	13	19	13	45
Ça, c'est	10	15	18	43
SI TOPIC clauses	0	42	0	42
Ce n'est pas (incl ones specified)	11	27	1	39
Stop!	20	2	14	36
Il y a	6	21	7	34
Attend(ez)	5	8	18	31
Comment dit-on?	2	8	13	23
Plus	9	9	5	23
Pourquoi?	9	8	5	22
P/il/elle/qui/on est	11	5	6	22
RELATIVE CLAUSE ...QUI	8	8	5	21
P/il/elle/qui a + pp	5	9	7	21
Je vais + infinitive	10	4	6	20
P/il/elle/qui a dit	10	5	5	20
Donne(z)-moi un synonyme pour	15	1	3	19
Tu es		7	11	18
(en) silence	10	5	3	18
Moins un/5 point(s)	8	6	2	16
il faut + infinitive	2	9	5	16
RELATIVE CLAUSE ...QUE	6	7	3	16
Donne(z)-moi un antonyme pour	12	4	0	16
Beaucoup)		13	2	15
Continue	10	3	1	14
C'est bon	2	9	2	13
Par exemple	7	4	2	13
Attention	3	6	4	13
Leve(z) la main	2	2	9	13
C'est vrai	5	4	3	12
C'était (not incl others specified)	6	1	5	12
Tu veux + infinitive	9	2	1	12
Je crois (que)	0	8	4	12
Moi	5	4	3	12
Comment?	4	6	2	12

**Appendix 13: Table of Most Frequent Teacher Language,
Year 10/11 Lower Set Lessons**

	Y11 Nov	Y11 Feb	Total
C'est (incl ones specified)	66	69	135
Excellent	62	54	116
Fantastique	65	37	102
Comment dit-on?	48	1	49
Un/cinq points pour	40	0	40
FUTURE T On va + infinitive	8	15	23
C'est quoi?		22	22
Parce que	15	5	20
Attend(ez)	5	15	20
SI TOPIC clauses	16	3	19
Leve(z) la main	11	7	18
Ça marche ou ça ne marche pas?		15	15
SI clauses	3	12	15
(en) silence	15	0	15
Je voudrais		14	14
Après trois	1	13	14
Pourquoi?	8	5	13
C'est un synonyme pour	3	10	13
C'était (not incl others specified)	2	11	13
Donne(z)-moi un synonyme pour	13	0	13
1-2-3!	1	11	12
Un synonyme pour	9	3	12
Ça, c'est	2	9	11
Qu'est-ce qui manque?	11	0	11
Tu peux + infinitive	6	5	11
Tout le monde	5	6	11
Stop!	6	5	11
Tu testes	5	6	11
P/Il/elle/on/qui a + pp (chanté 11)		11	11
Mais	6	4	10
Après avoir...	4	6	10
Le contraire (de)		10	10
Comment dit-on en français?	6	3	9
une/deux coche(s) pour	5	4	9
Ça marche	1	8	9