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***Error Analysis of the Written Performance
of Austrian L2 English Learners:
Possible Factors Influencing Language
Learning Success and Failure***

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1. Introduction

My fascination and enthusiasm for the fields of error analysis and language learner differences come from my intensive twelve years of work as an English tutor. In the course of teaching students between the age of 11 and 25 I gained a great deal of valuable insight into the processes of language learning. I have always been interested in how students progress in language learning, and under which circumstances they succeed. Above all other things, I have been interested in the acquisition of morphology and syntax – more specifically, which grammatical aspects students learn quickly, and which structures cause problems, in particular. Throughout the years, I have asked myself the following questions:

Do under average students struggle more with certain grammatical features in comparison to above average students? Are the differences between the more proficient and less proficient learners caused by motivational factors or language attitude, or is grammatical performance just a matter of language aptitude? Do successful learners simply study more and participate more often in class? As I mainly tutored under average students, I constantly asked myself whether above average students face similar problems in English L2 acquisition as under average students. Generally, I wondered why some students perform better in English than others. I was interested in the factors involved in successful English L2 acquisition, and if these factors were different in nature between under average and above average students.

During the course of my work I was also astonished to see that regardless of age or mother tongue, all learners experience similar difficulties in the initial stages of L2 acquisition. I was especially surprised that nearly all students, irrespective of their language background and age, struggle with the same grammatical structures.

Based on these personal observations, the following question, which also has been central in the field of SLA, emerges: Why does nearly everybody, irrespective of their age and their language backgrounds, struggle with the acquisition of the same linguistic grammatical aspects?¹ As it would go beyond the scope of this paper, I will not tackle this broad question of SLA. Rather, I will analyze specific issues relating to the grammatical performance revealed by 12-year-old Austrian learners of English as a foreign language in 6 Viennese grammar schools. My findings aim to confirm or even find counter-evidence for already existing theories in the field, but I also hope to contribute to SLA research with some new data analysis. This is basically what I intended to investigate with this research project.

The paper is divided into two major parts. The first part serves as a theoretical framework for the empirical part which includes, among other things, an analysis of cognitive and affective factors influencing Austrian L2 learners and their morphosyntactic errors.

In chapter 2, I will briefly describe Hymes' model of communicative competence as it summarizes all the relevant aspects that make up a competent performer of a language in a concise manner. It should highlight the vast dimension of language learning as there is much more to language than its grammar. Chapter 3 and 4 clarify the difference between the confusing terms *second language acquisition* and *foreign language acquisition*, and *language acquisition* and *language learning*, respectively.

In chapter 5 I discuss various frequently mentioned models in the field of SLA, some of which focus on the mental aspects of learning, others on the social or cultural components of language learning, but all of which reveal crucial facts about L2 learning. Chapter 6 provides a discussion of cognitive and affective factors influencing success in second language learning.

¹ Several studies examining these factors already exist. I will refer to various influential models and findings in this paper.

Chapter 7 deals with the learner's internal syllabus. It gives insight into the processes that take place on the path of language acquisition and describes selected grammatical stages of L2 acquisition. Finally, in chapter 8, I will give a short overview of significant findings in the field of error analysis, which then serve as a framework for the error analysis of the written exams from the selected subjects.

In the empirical part I will basically examine whether the factors presented in chapter 6 are indeed responsible for proficiency in language learning, and which particular factors more proficient and less proficient learners differ in. I will conclude the paper with a detailed error analysis of the written language data from under average students and above average students of the subjects selected.

I. THEORETICAL PART

2. Hymes' Model of Communicative Competence²

As a starting point, I will discuss the American sociolinguist Dell Hymes' (1979) model of communicative competence as it has been very influential in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and thus serves as an ideal background for my topic.³ The answer to the question of what it means to be a competent speaker of a language is not straight forward. Does language competence imply the achievement of a native-like standard? Is it necessary to use the grammar correctly, or is it enough to get the meaning across without necessarily being formally accurate? According to Hymes, knowing a language implies more than producing grammatically correct sentences. He claims that "language is not just about grammar rules but also about the rules of use without which the use of grammar would be useless" (Hymes, 1979, p14). The following extract from the famous play *Pygmalion* by George Bernhard Shaw illustrates that successful communication involves other kinds of knowledge as well, such as knowledge of socio- cultural conventions.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL (introducing) My daughter Clara.

LIZA How do you do?

CLARA How do you do? ...

FREDDY I've certainly had the pleasure.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL My son Freddy.

LIZA How do you do?

(a long and painful pause ensues)

MRS HIGGINS (at last, conversationally) Will it rain, do you think?

LIZA The shallow depression to the west of these islands is likely to move slowly in an easterly direction. There are no indications of any great change in the barometrical situation.

FREDDY Ha! Ha! how awfully funny.

LIZA What is wrong with that, young man. I bet I got it right.

² The present chapter is based on Hymes (1979).

³ For a further discussion of this model see also Cook (2003) pp. 42-46, and Widdowson (2007) pp. 14-18.

Liza's reply is grammatically perfect but it is inappropriate in this concrete situation. Liza is not aware of the fact that Mrs Higgin's question relating to the weather is just a method of getting the conversation going, and does actually not ask for a detailed comment on the weather forecast (Widdowson, 2007, pp. 35-36).

It follows that as a competent speaker of a language there is more than just getting the grammar right. In addition, it is equally important to have knowledge of what Hymes calls *feasibility*, *appropriateness*, and *attestedness*.

Hymes' model describes four kinds of knowledge that together make up communicative competence: *possibility*, *feasibility*, *appropriateness*, and *attestedness*. According to Hymes, the first kind of knowledge, the parameter of *possibility*, refers to the formal aspect of a language – whether utterances are grammatically correct or not. For example, *She goes to school* is a grammatically possible sentence in English, whereas *She go to school* is not. It must be noted here that grammatical possibility can only be interpreted within a particular speech variety. What is possible in one variety need not necessarily be in another. Grammaticality also varies within one particular language. *He just left*, for example, is formally possible in American English but not in British English where the combination of *just* and the past tense is not the norm.

Hymes' notion of *feasibility* is a psychological measure and refers to processes in the mind. Depending on the complexity of the input, different areas in the brain are activated. "[...] [i]n language comprehension [for example], the volume of fMRI-measured cortical activation in both Broca's and Wernicke's area has been shown to increase with linguistic complexity of the sentence being comprehended (Just et al. (1996)" (Newman & Just, 2005, p.91).

Since the capacity of the brain is limited, complicated sentence structures are less feasible than simpler ones. Simpler sentences are more feasible and often also less ambiguous. If we look at the sentence *The mouse the cat the dog chased ate had a white tail*, we realize that it is grammatically correct.

Nevertheless, it is rather difficult to grasp what it means – in other words, it is less feasible. On the other hand, the utterance *Visiting aunts can be boring* is much easier to decipher - it is therefore more feasible. But still, the sentence is ambiguous and not feasible because it can be interpreted in different ways when the context is not known. In general, *feasibility* is an important component of language competence, as it makes information easily accessible (Widdowson, 2007, pp. 14-15).

This leads us to Hymes' concept of *appropriateness* which emphasizes the importance of the context of an utterance. Language always has to be interpreted in the specific situation in which it occurs. Furthermore, certain pieces of utterances only appear in particular contexts while in other situations they would be completely out of place. For instance, it would be entirely out of place to call a police officer *darling*. In addition, colloquial or taboo words are usually not used in interactions with one's headmaster or one's boss. It would be equally inappropriate to answer the phone during an examination at school. In a wider sense, speech behaviour also varies between cultures. In German, for example, we differentiate on the level of formality when addressing somebody. People we know and children are addressed with *du*, whereas for elderly people we have not met before we choose the politer form *Sie*. In German it would be impolite if we did not pay attention to this. In English there is no such clear-cut distinction (Cook, 2003, p.44).

The fourth of Hymes' notions relates to what is actually performed or attested. Some constructions may be possible, feasible, and appropriate, yet they do not occur. In other words, they are not attested. To explain this, the words *walk* and *perambulate* are synonyms and they are both listed in the dictionary. The difference between them lies in the frequency of occurrence - *walk* is more common. Similarly, *little* and *small* are semantic synonyms but they differ in the co-occurrence with other words. *Little*, for example, is more frequent with girls whereas *small* co-occurs with boys.

Learners of a foreign language have to be aware that there are fixed phrases and speech patterns in the target language which differ greatly from their own language. This is especially the case with idiomatic phrases such as *to and fro* or *by hook and by crook*. Speakers, who produced *fro and to*, or *by crook and by hook* instead, would be identified as non-native. Similarly, although the phrase *chips and fish* is grammatically well-formed, feasible and appropriate, it is commonly not used in English. Thus, communicative competence involves knowledge of the fixed word combinations of the target language as well (Cook, 2003, pp.45-46; Widdowson, 2007, p.16).

Hymes' model merely serves as a background for my investigation. It illustrates how much actually needs to be considered when learning to speak a foreign language. Learning the grammar is, in fact, not the whole story. However, learners' in the beginning stages do primarily deal with grammatical issues, especially when the language is learned in the foreign language classroom. The subjects I investigate are German learners of English in a classroom setting. The parameters most important for my study are those of *grammaticality* and *attestedness*.

3. Second Language versus Foreign Language

The terms second language acquisition (SLA) and foreign language acquisition (FLA) are sometimes considered as two different types of language learning. The basic difference lies in the environments where language learning actually takes place. Depending on where the language is spoken, it fulfils a specific social and communicative purpose. From this it follows that, unlike a foreign language, a second language is learnt in the target language country for social, economic, and professional functions (Oxford, 1990, p. 6).

On the contrary, a foreign language is not learnt in the country where this language is spoken as a mother tongue. Rather, it is taught in the language classroom for the purpose of communication some time later in life. According to this differentiation, it is foreign language learning that takes place in Austrian English language classrooms (Oxford, 1990, p. 6).

However, not all linguists make the above distinction. Rod Ellis (1997), for example, relates the term second language to any language that is learned subsequent to the mother tongue, irrespective of whether it is learned in the target language environment or in the instructed language classroom (Ellis, 1997, p. 3). Thus, he defines L2 acquisition as “[...] the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of a classroom, and ‘Second Language Acquisition’ (SLA) as the study of this” (Ellis, 1997, p. 3). In other words, “[...] second languages are any languages other than the learner’s ‘native language’ or ‘mother tongue’ ” (Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p.1).

Although I think a differentiation of the two terms is absolutely justified, I will use the term SLA as Ellis defines it throughout the paper, for this is the definition most often used in the literature. Furthermore, I closely investigate the kind of English that is learnt formally and systematically according to a prescribed curriculum in the language classroom and not in the course of everyday conversation in a natural target language setting.

4. Language Acquisition versus Language Learning

Language acquisition can be concisely described as the “[...] process by which individuals “pick up” a language through exposure to it” (Johnson, 2001, p.75). “[It] occurs when language is used for what it was designed for, communication” (Krashen, 1982, p.1). According to Krashen (1981), “[...language acquisition] requires meaningful interaction in the target language – natural communication – in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the message they are conveying and understanding” (p. 1). One form of language acquisition is the acquisition of one’s mother tongue (L1 acquisition). Another type of language acquisition is foreign language acquisition which refers to “the picking up” of an additional language in the country where this particular language is spoken (Ellis, 1997, p.3).

In this paper I will not deal with language acquisition in this sense. Instead, I will focus on what happens in an artificial environment – the English-language classroom. In Krashen’s (1981, 1982) terms I will deal with “language learning” which distinguishes itself from unconscious acquisition in a natural setting. Krashen further mentions that language learning is generally characterized by two features: error correction and rule isolation. Firstly, error correction is an indispensable method in learning a foreign language. Learners continuously make errors in the course of learning. It is the teacher’s duty to correct them so that the learners can ultimately learn from what they have done wrong (Krashen and Seliger, 1975; Johnson, 2001, pp. 76-79).

Secondly, rule isolation refers to the teaching of isolated language points. The teacher may, for example, concentrate on the teaching of a particular grammatical field, such as a tense or passive constructions. He/she then explains the rules and drills the structures. Finally, the learner has to practise these with the help of grammar books (Johnson, 2001, p.77).

From the definitions above, one can clearly see that the major difference between acquisition and learning lies in the different environments in which language input takes place – in the classroom or in the natural setting of the target-language country.

Despite this distinction, it can definitely be assumed that, no matter where one's mother tongue or a foreign language is learned, we always do both – acquire and learn. Whereas learning is clearly dominant in a foreign-language classroom, as it lacks the natural surrounding, learning also happens when exposed to the natural setting of the target-language country. Similarly, in a foreign-language classroom it is equally possible to acquire the language by picking up certain phrases uttered by the teacher (Johnson, 2001, p.77).

5. Second Language Acquisition Theories

A number of theories of second language acquisition exist. Some of them place emphasis on innate mechanisms while others consider environmental factors as the major source of language acquisition. Apart from this, each theory focuses on different sub-aspects which may influence the process of learning to a greater or less extent.

In this chapter I will provide an overview of some of the most often cited L2 theories which should serve as a theoretical background for the empirical research in the second part of this paper. I will look at Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis in greater detail, as it has been the most influential language acquisition theory, and as it covers several different aspects relevant for learning and acquisition. I will also discuss Chomsky's innateness hypothesis which highlights the innate factors of language acquisition in general. However, the question as to whether the Chomskyan theory plays a role in L2 acquisition is a controversial issue. (cf. McLaughlin, 1987; pp. 91-108, Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p. 42-63).

5.1 Innateness Position

Unlike the behaviourist model of language learning (cf. Bloomfield, 1933; Skinner, 1957), Chomsky's (1957, 1965, 1976) the innatist approach to language learning postulates that humans are born with the capacity to acquire language (cf. Pinker, 1994; Jackendoff, 2002). Chomsky refers to this innate and universal capacity as Universal Grammar (UG). Chomsky (1976) defines UG as "[...] the system of principles, conditions, and rules that are elements or properties of all human languages ... the essence of human language" (p.29).

Most of the arguments for an innate basis of UG are not arguments based on evidence for such a genetic basis. Rather the argument holds that general learning mechanisms are too weak.

It seems clear that many children acquire first or second languages quite successfully even though no special care is taken to teach them and no special attention is given to their progress. It also seems apparent that much of the actual speech observed consists of fragments and deviant expressions of a variety of sorts. Thus it seems that a child must have the ability to 'invent' a generative grammar that defines well-formedness and assigns interpretations to sentences even though the primary linguistic data that he uses as a basis for this act of theory construction may, from the point of view of the theory he constructs, be deficient in various respects (Chomsky 1965, pp. 200-201).

Chomsky states that the environmental input a child receives is an insufficient basis for the construction of a requisite grammar. This is the essence of Chomsky's *poverty of stimulus* argument, which states that the primary linguistic data a child observes does not include enough information to account for grammar knowledge. The language a child is exposed to is often defect. In other words, a caretaker's speech frequently reflects slips of the tongue, false starts, and even ungrammatical expressions. This is when the UG comes into play as it contributes to the ability to filter out what is right and wrong, so that the infant is able to develop an appropriate pattern of basic linguistic rules (Chomsky, 1965).

As Chomsky points out:

To learn a language, then, the child must have a method for devising an appropriate grammar, given primary linguistic data. As a precondition for language learning, he must possess, first, a linguistic theory that specifies the form of the grammar of a possible human language, and second, a strategy for selecting a grammar of the appropriate form that is compatible with the primary linguistic data (Chomsky, 1965, p. 25).

In this context, Chomsky talks of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) when referring to the child's ability to construct a grammar based on primary linguistic data, using Universal Grammar as the starting point (Jackendoff, 2002, p.70).

The LAD influences the process whereby children infer rules from the language data of their environment. As Widdowson (1996) describes it:

[...] the LAD provides [...] a closed set of common principles of grammatical organizations, or Universal Grammar (UG), which is then variously realized in different languages, depending on which one the child is actually exposed to in its environment (p.12).

In other words, the language the infant is exposed to only serves as a trigger that activates the UG which then makes it possible to form general rules for language acquisition. The capability to learn a language is innate. It is just a matter of maturity when the processes for acquisition are activated. Learning a language, therefore, can be compared to learning how to walk which every normal child will do around the same age when he/she is cognitively mature enough. It is, in fact, different from learning to read or write, for which permanent instructions are necessary (Chomsky, 1959; Lenneberg, 1967).⁴

Chomsky's theory provides explanations for a number of phenomena. Any innate component to our knowledge of language is logically more or less shared by every other member of our species. In other words, if that is correct, we have a "ready-made explanation" for universal properties of language (Kirby 1999, p.14).

However, as the innatist model neglects the influence of the social environment, it is not able to explain every aspect of language acquisition (Widdowson, 1996, p.12). Furthermore, whether the UG also plays a crucial role in L2 acquisition has been a matter of constant debate. Among others, Dulay and Burt (1978) support the idea that UG does influence L2 processes.

Language learners have a predisposition to organize input in ways that exhibit a creative independence from external environmental characteristics. This aspect of language acquisition is believed to be rooted in innate and universal structural properties of the mind (p.68).

Through exposure to the target language, the learner is able to creatively automate patterns of this language. This explains the similarity of the sequences

⁴ For a discussion on Chomsky's innatist model of language acquisition, see also McLaughlin (1987) pp. 91-108, and Mitchell & Myles (1998) pp. 42-63.

of acquisition across different language groups.⁵ But learners do not only imitate word by word what they hear, they also create sentences never heard of before. This confirms that not all linguistic features are learnt via the input but are due to internal creative mechanisms.

Some researchers only believe in a partial influence of UG on language learning. Still others claim that it has no influence at all. Despite this controversy, the Chomskyan model at least serves as a valuable framework for L2 acquisition in general.⁶

⁵ The sequences of L2 acquisition will be discussed in a later chapter.

⁶ An account of the debate as to whether UG influences L2 acquisition can be found in Ellis (1997) p.69, Mitchell & Myles (1998) pp. 44-45.

5.2 The Monitor Model

Stephen Krashen (1981, 1982, 1985) developed the well-known *Monitor Model* to explain various processes responsible for language learning achievement.

His theory consists of five hypotheses: *The acquisition-learning distinction, the monitor hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis*. All of these are relevant for L2 language acquisition, especially the so-called input hypothesis.⁷

5.2.1 The Acquisition-Learning Distinction

This distinction has already been explained in a previous chapter. To sum up briefly for the completeness of the model discussed here, Krashen (1981, 1982) distinguishes between *acquiring* and *learning* a language. He claims that the process of acquisition is similar to how children develop competence in their mother tongue. They pick up a language through mere exposure to it, without consciously paying attention to grammatical patterns. Instead, “[they] have a ‘feel’ for correctness. Grammatical sentences ‘sound’ right, or ‘feel’ right, and errors feel wrong, even if we do not consciously know what rules was violated” (Krashen, 1982, p. 10).

On the other hand, Krashen (1981, 1982) also draws attention to a conscious process that takes place in language progression. This is what he means by the term learning – the conscious attention to the rules of a language.

⁷ For a discussion of Krashen’s Model of language learning see also McLaughlin (1987), pp.19-58, Johnson (2001), pp.89-95.

5.2.2 The Natural Order Hypothesis

Krashen's idea of a natural order in second language acquisition is based on Dulay and Burt (1974b,1975). They found that independent of the child's first language there is evidence of a natural sequence which all normal children follow during the process of second language acquisition. Although the order for first and second language acquisition is different, some stages in the sequence are indeed identical.

Krashen (1985) generally summarizes this hypothesis as follows:

[...] we acquire the rules of language in a predictable order, some rules tending to come early and others late. The order does not appear to be determined solely by formal simplicity and there is evidence that it is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes (p.1).

The order of the acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language will be outlined in the following chapter (Krashen, 1985).

5.2.3 The Monitor Hypothesis

According to Krashen (1981, 1982), it is more effective to acquire a language through the direct involvement in conversation where the main focus is on conveying meaning. The conscious learning of rules seems to be of minor importance to the process of language learning. In Krashen's terms, formal learning only has a monitoring or editing function. It controls the output of the learner. "Learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been 'produced' by the acquired system. This can happen before we speak or write, or after (self-correction)" (1982, p.15).

Additionally, the monitor can only be used under three conditions. First of all, the learner needs enough time to reflect upon the rules. Secondly, the focus must be on form rather than on meaning, which is more likely to be the case in written communication. However, “[...] [e]ven when we have time, we may be so involved in *what* we are saying that we do not attend to *how* we are saying it” (Krashen 1982, p. 16). The third criteria that has to be met refers to the knowledge of the rule. The monitor can only be employed when the learner is familiar with a specific rule (Krashen, 1981, p.3; Krashen, 1982, p.16).

Some learners use the monitor more often than others (Krashen 1982, p.18-20). Those who rely too much on their monitor are called monitor over-users as their conversation frequently is clumsy and not at all fluent. On the other hand, there are those who hardly ever use the monitor which results in a fluent but fairly erroneous conversation. Instead, the optimal monitor user only occasionally requires the monitor. They refer to it “when it is appropriate and when it does not interfere with communication” (Krashen, 1982, p.19).

5.2.4 The Input Hypothesis

This hypothesis is particularly concerned with the type of input necessary for successful language learning to take place. In other words, it describes the nature of the input which enables one to move on to the next stage in the hierarchy described earlier.

[...] a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to move from stage i to stage $i+1$ is that the acquirer understand[s] input that contains $i+1$, where 'understand' means that the acquirer is focussed on the meaning and not the form of the message (Krashen, 1981, p. 21).

In order to reach this higher level, the input needs to be a little more advanced than we are able to understand ($i+1$). The question that now arises is how we are able to understand input which contains completely new knowledge. In fact, we do understand this new information as we automatically consider the situation in which communication takes place. According to the input hypothesis, it is first of all necessary to figure out the meaning of the input. As a consequence, new patterns are acquired (Krashen, 1982, p.21).

5.2.5 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The idea that affective variables, such as motivation and attitude, play an important role in language acquisition has frequently been confirmed. The variables, in particular, which are among the most influential ones will be investigated later in this paper. Krashen (1982) considers affect as a filter through which language has to pass before it is actually acquired. The filter may be either high or low, depending on the attitude towards the target language.

Those whose attitudes are not optimal for second language acquisition will not only tend to seek less input, but they will also have a high or strong Affective Filter [...]. Those with attitudes more conducive to second language acquisition will not only seek and obtain more input, they will also have a lower or weaker filter (Krashen, 1982, p.31).

The filter will be high when the learner is under pressure, feels bored, or has a low self-esteem, while it will be low when he/she is self-confident, or willing to learn something. In general, positive feelings make learners more open to language learning whereas negative feelings prevent the input from coming in (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, pp.39-40).

Although Krashen's monitor theory has been very influential in the field of second language acquisition it has been the target for some criticism.⁸

While some of the original claims no longer excite much interest among researchers and/or have been superseded by other developments, they served a valuable purpose by identifying some of the relevant issues and, where apparently wrong, by obliging critics to seek out and substantiate alternatives (Larsen Freeman & Long, 1991, p. 249).

5.3 The Output Hypothesis

According to Swain's (1985) *Output Hypothesis*, languages are not only learned through comprehensible input, but also through written and oral output. In other words, learners need opportunities to use the foreign language in order to make linguistic improvement. Output shows the gaps in the learner's interlanguage. It mirrors what he/she is already capable of and what he/she still needs to acquire. The output shows the learners clearly where their weaknesses are and where they actually have to become more precise (Swain, 1995).

In addition, the output of a learner also reveals the learner's "hypothesis about comprehensibility or linguistic well-formedness" (Swain, 1995, p. 126). That is to say, a learner reveals his/her experimenting with the rules of the target language, and he/she shows whether he/she is able to apply them appropriately (Swain, 1995).

⁸ For criticism of this model see Mc Laughlin (1978), pp. 19-58.

5.4 The Interaction Hypothesis

The central idea of interactionists (e.g. Long, 1983; Allwright, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987; Hatch, 1992; Pica 1994) is that language acquisition takes place through interaction. When learners have enough opportunity to talk with others in the target language, they will acquire the features of the new language more quickly. When people interact with each other, they have to actively involve themselves in the conversation, that is, if the interaction fails they are forced to negotiate meaning (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, pp.42-44).

Ellis (1997) describes negotiation of meaning as “the interactive work that takes place between speakers when some misunderstanding occurs (p.141)”. Thus, in the case of misunderstandings, speakers are asked to speak more slowly, repeat things, use synonyms and different structures or body language to clarify what they actually intend to bring across. In short, interactionists consider the modification of speech as a very important issue for language acquisition. This hypothesis is often criticized as it neglects the idea of innate features of language acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, pp.42-44).

5.5 The Information Processing Model

McLaughlin's information processing model (1987) is a cognitive model of language acquisition which holds that in the beginning, acquisition processes are controlled and only gradually do they finally become automatic through continuous practice. In the initial stages, learners need more concentration on the specific features they want to acquire. Later they manage to produce them without any direct attention to it. This enables them to focus on new features that will equally become routinized at a later stage of development.

According to this model, “learning involves a shift from controlled towards automatic processing” (Mitchell & Myles, 1998. p.86). Especially in the initial stages of L2 learning, learners concentrate on particular aspects of the new language. Their act of learning is controlled. Only later, after extensive practice of the target language structures, are they used automatically (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 41).

The constant acquisition of new knowledge leads to what McLaughlin calls *restructuring* which destabilizes some structures in the interlanguage, which seemed to have already been acquired- This usually leads to the temporary reappearance of L2 errors which is referred to as *backsliding*, meaning the sudden appearance of erroneous forms which have already been produced correctly. This phenomenon explains, for example, the sudden use of wrong past tense forms such as *goed* or *breaked* although the learner has used them correctly a hundred times before (cf. Mitchell & Myles, 1998, pp.85-89, Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 42).

McLaughlin’s model is insofar relevant for this thesis as the phenomenon of *backsliding* appears to be involved in the production of certain erroneous forms in written performance of the 12-year-old subjects investigated.

5.6 The Acculturation Hypothesis

Schumann's socio-cultural model (1978)⁹ places social factors in the centre of interest for language learning procedures. The central claim here is that social factors are primarily responsible for the intensity of the contact with the target language culture. More intensive contact means more chance for interaction through which the language is learned. Such models refer to situations where the target-language is learned through natural communication in the target-language country, and not to artificial classroom settings (Ellis, 1997, p.41-43).

During the 1970s, the American applied linguist John Schumann hypothesized the importance of attitudes towards the target language culture in foreign language acquisition. The more positive the learner's view of the target language society is, the more successful the learner will actually be in acquiring the language of this particular society. In Schumann's (1978) terms, "[...] the speech of the second language learner will be restricted to the communicative function if the learner is socially and/or psychologically distant from the target language" (p.76).

Schumann confirmed his hypothesis with a study conducted with the Spanish speaking Costa Rican immigrant Alberto, who was living in the United States. He investigated Alberto's progress in English acquisition for a ten-month period and found that his English did not develop any further or, in Selinker's (1972) terms, it *fossilized* at a very early stage.

Like pidgin languages, Alberto's language showed reduced linguistic features such as simplified word order, restricted vocabulary, little inversion in questions, and poorly developed inflectional morphology. Schumann found that the reason for this early fossilization was not due to age or lack of intelligence but it was rather a matter of what he called lack of *acculturation*.

⁹ This chapter is based on Schumann (1978) if not indicated otherwise.

Alberto worked at night, socialized primarily with Spanish speakers and did not enrol in English classes. In other words, he failed to communicate with speakers of the target language, and therefore his language did not develop further. Alberto did not feel the need to integrate more intensively into the new culture because his English was sufficient for simple communicative purposes (Krashen, 1982, pp. 45-52; Littlewood, 1984, pp.70-71; McLaughlin, 1987, pp.109-132; Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991 pp.251-266; Mitchell & Miles, 1998, p.39; Johnson, 2001 pp.96-103).

As Schumann (1978) summarizes his hypothesis:

[...] social and psychological distance are seen as the primary factors hindering second language development, because even if cognitive maturation results in the adult learner requiring both exposure and instruction, the socially and/or psychologically distant adult will probably not take advantage of instruction and will not attend to linguistic input provided by exposure to the target language environment. Thus the pidginization hypothesis predicts that where social and psychological distance prevail, we will find pidginization persisting in the speech of second learners (p.115).

The question as to whether the attitude towards a language has an influence on language learning will be investigated in the empirical part.

5.7 The Good Language Learner Model

Naiman's Good Language Learner Model (Naiman et al., 1978) consists of the three independent variables *teaching*, *the learner*, *the context* and of the two dependent variables *learning* and *outcome*. All of these variables are determined by various factors listed in the five boxes in figure 1. Naiman's model intends to highlight all the possible influences in language learning and the interaction of these factors. This, finally, creates the specific outcome. Naiman's model is frequently described as being "[...]essentially atheoretical, and [it] explains very little" (Skehan, 1989, p.4). What it does is illustrate the large amount of factors that play a role in language acquisition (Skehan, 1989, pp.3-6).

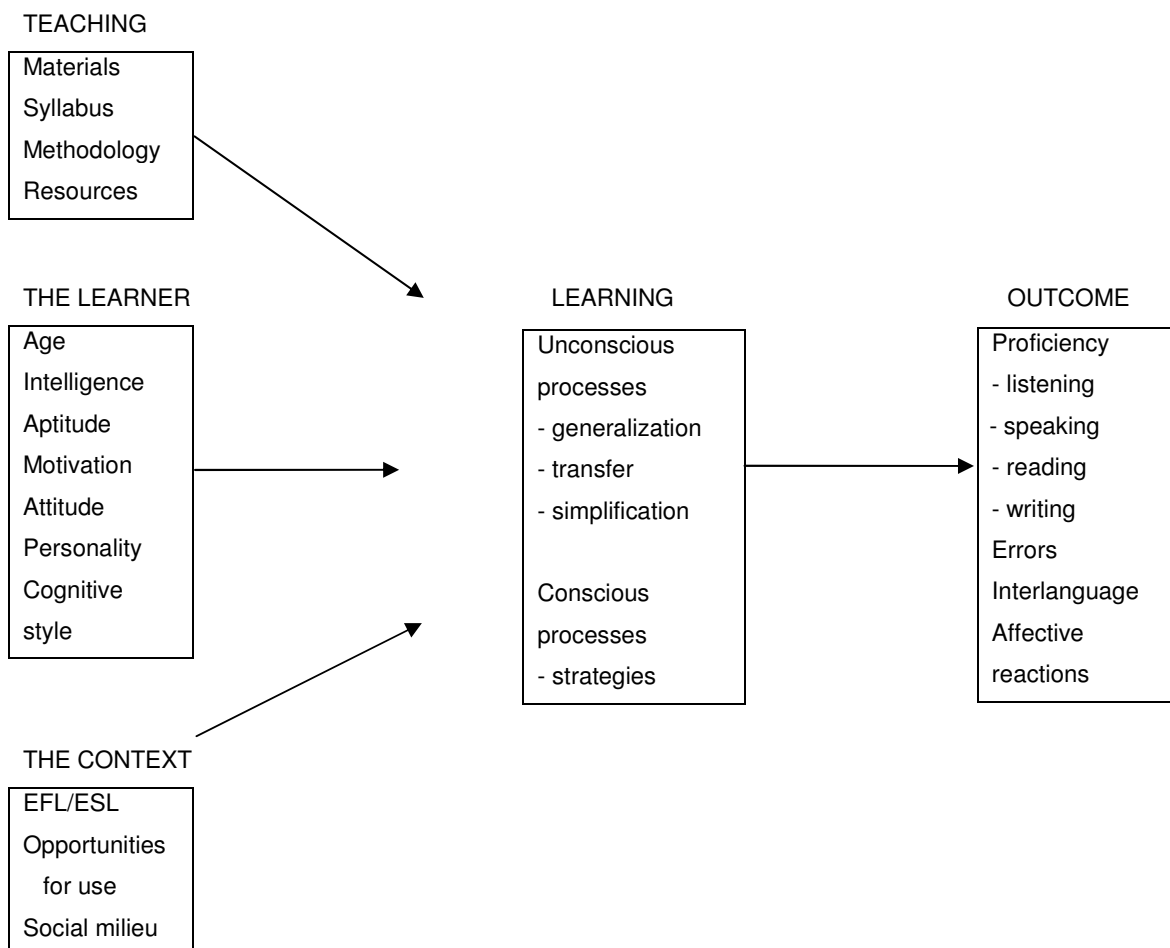


Fig.1: The Good Language Learner Model: Naiman et al. (1978)

In this paper I will examine if the factors of verbal intelligence, motivation, and attitude, that are also seen as influential in Naiman's model, really do have a significant effect on language learning performance after all.

5.8 Carroll's Model of School Learning

Like Naiman, Carroll (1965) places emphasis on the interaction of individual factors in his model of language learning which basically comprises of instructional factors and individual differences. He subdivides the first into the factors of *time* and *instructional intelligence* and the latter into *general intelligence*, *aptitude*, and *motivation*. In the case of *time* he refers to the amount of time a learner spends on practising: The greater the instruction time, the higher the chance for success. *Instructional intelligence* is basically the quality of teaching. The idea of what actually makes a good teacher has been a matter of constant debate. *General intelligence* involves the capacity to follow instructions, whereas *language aptitude* is defined as a special talent for language learning. Finally, Carroll relates *motivation* to a student's desire and willingness to learn a language. His intention is to show how the differences in one category might influence another and with this the whole language learning process (Skehan, 1989, pp. 6-7).

Considering the models presented in the previous chapter, a number of valuable clues for L2 acquisition can be summarized as follows: While some of the theories focus on particular aspects of language learning, others present a broader field. Some models concentrate on affective factors while others emphasis the role of instruction or learning methods. What can be clearly seen is that some of the theories overlap and present similar ideas.

I have picked out interesting aspects of some of the models illustrated in order to investigate their influence on second language learning. This will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

6. Factors Affecting Success in L2 Acquisition

Learners differ immensely in their speed of language learning and in their ultimate achievements. In this section, I will briefly look at selected aspects responsible for these individual differences. Among the factors that are commonly believed to contribute to language learning are: the cognitive factors intelligence and aptitude, motivation and attitudes, the personality of the learner, cognitive styles, learning strategies, the age of acquisition as well as the influence of one's native language (cf. Naiman et. al, 1978; Els et. al, 1984; Gardner, 1985; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Johnson, 2001).

In particular, the present chapter will highlight the already well-researched cognitive factors of language aptitude and intelligence and the variables motivation and attitude. The influence of these variables on L2 success will be investigated in the empirical part. I will not deal with the other factors mentioned, as this would take us beyond the scope of this investigation. Furthermore, they are not relevant for my own data analysis. On the whole, all of these factors in combination explain why some learners are more proficient language learners while others fail more easily.

6.1 Language Aptitude and Intelligence

When discussing cognitive factors in this context, one basically means the variables intelligence and language aptitude which both refer to the mental makeup of an individual. In contrast to general intelligence, aptitude refers to a specific ability, the ability "to acquire, with training, a specific skill or to attain a specific level of performance" (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2001, p. 199).

Thus, language aptitude can briefly be described as a special talent for language learning which some individuals have more of than others. According to the psychologist John Carroll (1973), it is “the rate at which persons at the secondary school, university and adult level [...] successfully master a foreign language” (p.5). Carroll (1981) further claims that language aptitude is “relatively fixed over long periods of an individual’s life span, and relatively hard to modify in any significant way” (p.86). This was confirmed by Politzer & Weiss (1969), Yemi-Komshian (1965) and Skehan (1988).

In this context it is important to mention Carroll’s *Four – Component Model of Aptitude* (1965) which describes the four basic components of language aptitude: *the phonetic coding ability, grammatical sensitivity, memory ability, and inductive language learning ability*. *Phonetic coding ability* refers to the ability to recognize and memorize the sounds of a foreign language, and the ability to produce these sounds. *Grammatical sensitivity* involves the awareness of the grammatical rules and functions of a foreign language. *Memory ability* relates to a person’s ability to remember new information. Finally, *inductive language learning ability* concerns the ability to figure out grammatical patterns from given language data (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, pp. 166-170; Doughty & Long, 2005, pp.591-593).

While some theorists believe that language aptitude is a specific innate faculty, others share the opinion that it belongs to a general factor of intelligence (Neufeld 1978; Oller & Perkins 1978b). In addition, Carroll (1981) and Skehan (1982) talk of an overlap between intelligence and aptitude.

Regardless of whether language aptitude is a factor independent of a more general level of intelligence or not, the question arises as to whether intelligence and aptitude correlate positively with success in language learning. According to Gardner (1985), the claim for a positive relation between aptitude and intelligence and the language learning achievement on the other hand, is legitimate.

He states:

Such relationships presumably are due to the fact that the more intelligent students better understand the nature of the language learning task, more readily comprehend explanations provided by the teacher and/or the learning materials, and are more likely to deduce principles and develop techniques to facilitate learning (p. 18).

Nevertheless, the answers to whether there is a relationship or not are contradictory. Whereas some experts do not see any correlation at all (e.g. Lenneberg, 1967; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Krashen, 1981) others have found some link (Pimsleur, 1966; Reves, 1983; Skehan, 1989;) or at least a relationship to a particular language skill. For example, in his study, Genesee (1976) could prove a relationship between intelligence and reading and writing whereas he did not find evidence of a relation between intelligence and communication skills. In this context, Skehan (1982) claims that language aptitude is more responsible for the success in foreign language learning than intelligence because it provides more information about language processing in general.

According to Krashen (1981), the influence of aptitude depends on the environment in which the language is learnt. Thus, language aptitude plays no crucial role when the language is acquired in the target language country, while on the other hand it is important when the language is learnt in a classroom environment where the focus is on form rather than meaning.

In this study I will examine the relationship between verbal intelligence and language performance. This specific form of intelligence basically relates to the knowledge of vocabulary and the ability to look at utterances in an analytic manner.

6.2 Effort Avoidance

Rollett & Bartram (1977, 1998) define *effort avoidance* as “[...] Neigung, unangenehm erlebtem Leistungseinsatz bzw. den damit verbundenen Anstrengungen in bestimmten, inhaltlich definierten Aktionsfeldern aus dem Weg zu gehen“ (Rollett, 1997, p.140).

Indeed, people tend to avoid tasks which are considered highly demanding and which therefore require a lot of effort. This strategy is primarily used to increase ones own well-being. Paradoxically, someone who manages to effectively avoid unpleasant obligations is considered most successful. A lot of students would actually show brilliant exam results in a particular field if only they practiced more. Instead, they prefer to develop specific avoidance strategies such as, “Aufschieben, schlampige Ausführung, möglichst langsame Arbeitsweise, Weiterdelegierung bestimmter Aufgaben an andere, Vergessen der Hausaufgaben, Zuspätkommen, Schulversäumnisse [...]“ (Rollett & Bartram, 1998, p.12).

Such strategies can be useful when employed to solve tasks with the most minimal effort. In cases where ones own development is being disturbed and the strategies are introduced to escape mandatory obligations, avoidance of effort is likely to become problematic. In other words, “Schüler und Schülerinnen mit sehr ausgeprägten Anstrengungsvermeidungstendenzen können mit den üblichen, in der Schule eingesetzten, Motivierungsmethoden nicht erreicht werden, da sie keinerlei Interesse mehr an der Leistung zeigen“ (Rollett, 1997, p.140).

Effort avoidance is often the result of a strict up-bringing and lack of support from the parent or the teacher. The latter is supported by Kretschmann (1974), whose study confirmed that teachers who show insufficient pedagogical engagement are more likely to produce students who avoid effort.

In this study I will investigate whether under average students are more likely to avoid effort than above average students, and whether above average students are more assiduous than under average students. In fact, Rollett (1977) confirmed that the degree of effort avoidance is an indicator of success at school.

6.3 Motivation

The argument that affective factors, in particular motivation and attitude, influence language learning success has received considerable support. In general, motivation determines “[...] *why* people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity, and *how hard* they are going to pursue it” (Doughty & Long, 2005, p.614). Thus, a motivated person “is one who wants to achieve a particular goal, devotes considerable effort to achieve this goal, and experiences satisfaction in the activities associated with achieving this goal” (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993, p.2).

Gardner and Lambert (1972), two of the most influential theorists in the field of second language acquisition, differentiate between integrative and instrumental motivation. Someone who shows integrative motivation is interested in the language that he/she is about to learn, in the people who speak that language and in these people`s culture. In contrast, somebody who is instrumentally motivated acquires a language because he/she wants to achieve a particular goal by speaking it. As Scovel (2001) puts it, instrumental motivation involves “practical, professional, or economic reasons for studying a new language [...]” (p.122) such as a higher salary or any other kind of appreciation. It has been claimed that integratively oriented learners are more highly motivated and are generally more successful in language acquisition (Gardner, 1985; Lukmani, 1972).

Another distinction assumes that two types of motivation exist: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the person's own desire, his/her inner needs to perform a task without being externally pushed towards it. "The joy is the journey not the destination" (Scovel, 2001, p.121). On the contrary, extrinsic motivation is always triggered by an external force such as any kind of reward or a grade (Ellis, 1997p. 75-76).

In this context it is also important to mention that motivation is not a stable phenomenon. Rather it is, as Ellis (1997) puts it, "[...] dynamic in nature; it is not something that a learner has or does not have but rather something that varies from one moment to the next depending on the learning context or task" (p.76).

In fact, the term motivation has been defined and categorized in a number of other ways (cf. Rheinberg, 2006), but I have basically highlighted the instrumental – integrative distinction as well as the intrinsic – extrinsic distinction of motivation as they are the most frequently mentioned terms in the classroom learning context.

The investigation of motivational factors might be problematic as it is often impossible to tell whether motivation is the result of success or vice versa (Skehan, 1989, pp.64-65). Do students perform well because they are highly motivated, or are they actually motivated as they perform well? What about less proficient learners? Are they demotivated because they are not successful, or were they already demotivated before the bad results? Savignon (1972), Burstall et al. (1974), Hermann (1980) are in support of the so-called *resultative hypothesis*. They concluded from their studies that motivation is the result of achievement. On the other hand, in his study, Gardner (1985) found evidence that motivation is the reason for success.

In the empirical part I will investigate whether general motivation and praise by the teacher and the parents reward have an influence on their language performance. In psychological terms, the focus of this investigation will be the factor of extrinsic motivation.

6.4 Attitudes

In a typical language learning situation, there are a number of people whose attitudes towards one another can be significant: the learner, the teacher, the learner's peers and parents, and the speakers of the language. Each relationship might well be shown to be a factor controlling the learner's motivation to acquire the language (Gardner, 1985, pp.40-50; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, pp.175-184).

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) describe attitudes as "[...] a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (p.6). Attitudes can be categorized into educational and social attitudes. Educational attitudes refer to the way one thinks of the teacher, the subject or the act of learning. Social attitudes are attitudes we have towards the culture and the people of the target language. Any kind of attitude may foster as well as hinder language acquisition processes (Gardner, 1985, p.45). The idea that attitudes play a role in acquiring a language is also supported by Spolsky (1969).

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), learners who want to resemble the people of the target language, and who would like to understand their culture are more eager to learn these people's language. Others, who confirmed the idea that positive attitudes relate to success in language learning, are Schumann (1978, see also chapter 5.6), Oller, (1977), Els et al (1984). Counter-evidence was found by Scherer and Wertheimer (1964), Burstall et al. (1974), and Genesee and Hamayan (1980). Their studies provide evidence of the fact that especially with children attitudes are not yet fully developed. Therefore, success in second language learning cannot be a matter of attitude.

Johnson (2001) gives a plausible explanation for this.

It is possible that at the advanced level attitude towards reference group will be more important than lower down. At the advanced stage 'getting inside the culture' is important. It is then that you study the literature and culture of the target language, and for these activities a degree of sympathy towards that language and culture is necessary (p.133).

Interestingly, studies (e.g. Jordan, 1941; Jones, 1950a; Gardner & Smythe, 1975a) reveal that attitudes tend to become more negative with age. The reasons might be that maturation and education cause learners to be more critical of the whole learning context.

In this paper I will investigate if there is relationship between second language proficiency and the following three aspects: attitude towards the English teacher, attitude towards the English lesson, and attitude towards the English lesson.

7. The L2 Learner's Internal Syllabus

7.1 Interlanguage

Interlanguage is a term coined by Selinker (1969, 1972) which refers to a learner's language during the language learning process. It reveals how far a learner has already progressed in the process and which structures still need to be learned to reach native-speaker like competence. A learner's interlanguage is determined by his/her mother tongue and by faulty combinations of features of the L2 (McLaughlin, 1987, pp.59-82; Ellis, 1997, pp.31-35). A learner's interlanguage is constantly changing as soon as the individual is exposed to new linguistic input.

[...] learners are interacting with their environment to produce an internalized representation of the regularities they discover in the linguistic data to which they are exposed. This internal representation is their interlanguage competence. So long as learners continue to learn, this internal representation is changing and developing (Corder, 1992, p. 20).

7.2 Sequences in L2 Acquisition

As revealed by the interlanguage of the learners, English morphemes are acquired in a predictable order, irrespective of the learner's L1 (Bailey et al., 1974; Dulay & Burt, 1974a, 1974b; Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985), the age during which he/she starts to learn an additional language, and the learning environment (Ellis, 1997, pp.20-30; Mitchell & Myles, 1998, pp.31-35)

As Els (1984) puts it:

[The order is] invariant to a high degree, and therefore independent of the nature of the data collected (oral vs written), independent of learner characteristics (L1 background, age), and independent of input characteristics (type/amount of ESL instruction) (Els, p. 87).

Dulay and Burt (1974a, 1975) suggested the following sequence of groups which has been confirmed by various other morpheme studies (Littlewood, 1984, p. 39).

- Group 1: present progressive –ing
 plural – s
 copula ‘to be’
- Group 2: auxiliary ‘to be’
 articles *the* and *a*
- Group 3: irregular past forms
- Group 4: regular past –ed
 third-person-singular-s
 possessive -s

The existence of a natural order of acquisition was not confirmed by all of the English morpheme studies such as those by Hakuta (1974a) and Fathman (1979), who found no supportive evidence. They do believe in the existence of a psychologically natural order, but they claim that this is to a certain degree determined by the learner’s L1 (Littlewood, 1984, p. 40). Furthermore, the predictable sequence in L2 acquisition appears to be different from that in L1 acquisition due to different internal principles at work (Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p. 35).

The state of the art research is clearly summarized in Littlewood (1984):

[...] we can say that there is evidence that second language learners have a strong tendency to acquire a set of English morphemes in a predictable order. There is also evidence for variation between learners, caused by the mother tongue or by individual factors (p. 41).

The issue of the order of acquisition is further discussed in a later chapter within the framework of Krashen’s Monitor Model.

Finally, in this context it needs to be mentioned that forms of a lower stage do not simply disappear in favour of a more target-like version. Indeed, under certain conditions such as stress or the feeling of pressure a learner might fall back to an earlier stage. Therefore, Lightbown and Spada (1999) suggest: "It is perhaps better to think of a stage as being characterized by the emergence and increasing frequency of a particular form rather than by the disappearance of an earlier one" (p. 85).

7.2.1 Learning to Form Negations

In this sub-chapter I will illustrate the sequential acquisition of morphemes in terms of the construction of negatives (cf. Ravem, 1968; Adams, 1978; Cancino et al. 1978, Schumann, 1979).

The following stages are similar to that undergone in L1 acquisition and they are nearly identical for all L2 learners irrespective of their L2. Only slight differences occur within the stages described below (Littlewood, 1984, pp.41-43; Lightbown & Spada, 1999, pp. 77-78).

In the first stage, learners tend to put the negative constituent *no* or *not* before the verb, resulting in utterances such as *No bicycle* or *I not like it*. In stage two, negations with the negative marker *don't* occur, in addition to the forms of stage one. However, *don't* is unmarked for person, number, and tense, and learners sometimes use it before modals as well. Examples for negations of this stage are *He don't like* and *I don's can sing*. In stage three, forms like *You cannot go there*, *She don't like it*. occur, which reveals that learners are already able to work out some of the negation rules such as placing the negative element after the auxiliary.

Despite this growing awareness, they still do not mark *don't* for person, number, and tense. Finally, learners who have reached stage four manage to use the negative almost perfectly. Only sometimes they mark tense, person and number twice resulting in forms such as *I didn't went*, and *She doesn't wants* (Littlewood, 1984, pp. 41-43; Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

7.2.2 Learning to Form Questions

Like negations, the development of questions in L2 acquisition also happens in sequences. These sequences are more or less identical for all L2 learners, regardless of their mother tongue, and they also mirror the order followed by L1 learners. Some variations occur which are due to the native language and individual learner differences (Littlewood, 1984, pp. 44-45). Detailed studies in this field exist (Ravem, 1968; Cancino et al. 1978, Pienemann et al. 1988;). I will now carry on with a brief discussion of the three stages of question formation as classified by Adams (1978).

Stage one is characterized by rather arbitrary question forms. Learners mainly do not change the declarative sentence. Instead, they mark the question with a change in intonation, resulting in expression like *I did good?*, *It's a spider over there?*, and *What she is doing?*.

In stage two learners introduce inversion for the first time, producing questions such as *Do you know*, *Is there a dog over there?* Adams assumes that the first formations of inversions with the auxiliary *do* are expressions which are imitated rather than based on rule formation.

Stage three is enriched by systematic inversions, and learners start to mark do for person, number and tense resulting in formations such as *Why did you ...?*, *Where does he ...?* Nevertheless, the tense is sometimes marked twice as in *Where did he found it?*¹⁰.

7.2.3 Reference to Past Events

In the beginning stages of second language learning learners do not manage to mark the verb in the past due to their limited knowledge about target language rules. Instead, they make use of alternative methods to refer to past events. They may order events in terms of their occurrence, or they add a specific time or a concrete place to highlight that the action took place in the past. Examples for these are *My son come. He work in restaurant. or January. It's very cold.* Then they learn to form irregular past forms such as *ate* or *went*. At a later stage learners begin to mark the past resulting in correct sentences like *The people worked in the fields.* Although students know one way of marking the past tense, they overgeneralize this rule in that they also add *-ed* to irregular verbs resulting in hybrid forms such as *rided*, or *eated*. In this context, it has to be pointed out that learners find it easier to mark the past tense if the verbs describe events (for example, *arrive*). It appears to be more difficult to form the correct past tense with words relating to activities (for example, *sleep*) or words describing states (for example, *want*) (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p.84; Ellis, 1997, pp.23-24).

This order clearly shows that the correct use of a past form does not necessarily mean that this form has already been acquired. Nevertheless, learners who produce hybrid forms are indeed more advanced than learners who only produce the correct irregular form as they reveal that a reorganization process has started.

¹⁰ For the purpose of this paper, this short overview of question development is sufficient. A more detailed categorization can be found in Pienemann et al. (1988).

When students learn to understand the grammatical rules of the L2 they begin to restructure their knowledge so that it becomes more target language like. “As learners restructure their grammatical system, they may appear to regress whereas in fact they are advancing” (Ellis, 1997, p.23-24).

On the whole, “at any one time a learner may mark some verbs correctly for past tense, fail to mark others at all, and overgeneralize the regular – *ed* [...] with yet other verbs” (Ellis, 1997, p.24).

8. Error Analysis

8.1 Errors versus Mistakes

Before moving on to the major part of error analysis, it is important to clarify the differences between errors and mistakes. Pit Corder, an influential linguist in the field of error analysis, has made this distinction as early as 1967.

A mistake is an “inconsistent deviation” (Norris, 1983, p.8) from a linguistic item of both, an L1 and an L2. In other words, the person knows a specific rule of a language but he/she is unable to produce it in a particular moment. These slips of the tongue, as mistakes are commonly referred to, frequently happen in times of pressure, fatigue, inattention, or strong emotions (Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p.17; Corder 1967, p. 24; Scovel, 2001, p.48-49). Corder (1967) describes mistakes as “[...] adventitious artefacts of linguistic performance and [which] do not reflect a defect in our knowledge [of the language]” (Corder, p. 24).

Unlike mistakes, errors reveal gaps in the person’s knowledge of a language as he/she has not yet learned the rule applied in the target language. Errors give valuable insights into the process of language learning for they mirror a person’s linguistic competence at a particular stage of language development. They also show what strategies the learner makes use of and how he/she generally progresses in language learning. On the whole, they reveal what has already been acquired and what still needs to be worked on to reach target–language–like competence (Corder, 1967, p. 25).

In fact, it is often impossible to tell whether a certain incorrect linguistic performance is either a mistake or an error. To find out, one has to check the consistency of a learner’s erroneous form. If he/she frequently produces an incorrect linguistic version and hardly ever gets it right, he/she is likely to have committed an error.

Another way to distinguish between an error and a mistake is to ask the learner to correct his/her utterance himself/herself. If he/she manages to do so, he/she might have made a mistake. On the whole, in many of the cases, one cannot tell for sure whether a student has not yet fully acquired a certain linguistic item or whether the deviant construction is just due to lack of concentration. In some context he/she might use a linguistic item appropriately while in another context he/she might fail to use this particular structure (Ellis, 1997, p.17-18).

Classifying an inappropriate structure into the category of error or mistake is especially difficult with written data. How should a teacher know that the student might have used the appropriate form in another context? As this is often hard to tell, I decided to only use the term error throughout my paper to refer to all kinds of erroneous forms used by the subjects. Furthermore, as the tasks of the written exam done by my subjects is based on the current curriculum, all of the students should be familiar with what I intended to check.

8.2 Errors in L2 Acquisition

The question concerning the reasons for the occurrence of errors in L2 learning has been the focus of interest in applied linguists for the last two decades. Different assumptions exist explaining why certain structures are more prone to errors than others. There are two main positions which try to answer these questions. According to Contrastive Analysis (CA), most of the errors are due to the influence of the L1. In contrast, cognitive based theories ascribe lack of L2 performance to factors that lie within the L2 language itself. The intention of this present chapter is to outline these two opposing positions in greater detail. The first type of error, which CA is concerned with, is referred to by Richards (1971) as interlingual errors. On the other hand, he calls the latter, which are the focus of cognitive based theories, intralingual errors.

8.2.1 Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors are caused by the learner's negative transfer of features of the mother tongue to the L2.

Whenever a learner of an L2 tries to comprehend or to produce utterances in [a new language], he relies on all sorts of knowledge that might help him. One component of this knowledge is what he knows about his first language and application of this leads to [negative] transfer (Klein, 1986, p. 27).

The applied linguistic CA theory, which started in the 1950s and the 1960s, holds that a learner's native language determines to a large extent the acquisition of an additional language. Lado (1957), the pioneer of CA, states that "individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings [...] of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture [...]" (p.2).

As Kittson puts it

Between any two languages whatever, there is a wide gulf of difference; differences of construction, of word-order, of idiom; there are differences even so subtle that they appear wholly to defy formal definition. In acquiring the habit of linguistic expression in a foreign tongue, our constant difficulty is the deep-seated linguistic habits already acquired (Kittson, cited in French, 1963, p.4).

With this, CA refers to the behaviourist learning theory (Skinner, 1957), according to which L2 learning involves the learning of new habits which result in the gradual eradication of old habits, namely that of the L1. Especially in the beginning stages, language learners often automatically transfer deeply rooted L1 features to the foreign language. In the course of this process of replacing old habits for new ones, learners commonly cause a mishmash of their L1 and their L2 in all linguistic fields. In other words, if the linguistic structures or habits of the L2 are too different from those of their L1, the new language is susceptible to erroneous forms (Ellis, 1997, p.52; Norrish, 1983 p.22). Lado, one of the pioneers of CA, formulated this as early as the 1957 as follows: "Those elements that are similar to the (learner's) native language will be simpler for him, and those areas that are different will be difficult" (p. 2).

To illustrate the process of negative transfer, a German learner at the beginning stage of English language acquisition is likely to produce word for word translations such as *I have hunger* and *I am born in 1990*. These erroneous utterances are due to the dissimilarity of German and English in these particular structures. English does not use the verb *have* and the noun *hunger* to express the idea of being hungry. Instead, it uses *I am hungry* of which the German equivalent would be *Ich bin hungrig*.

This is completely appropriate German, but most of the German speakers do not say this. Instead, they use the expression *Ich habe Hunger* (Johnson, 2001, p. 59). Equally, *I am born in 1990* is the result of a literal translation of the verb in *Ich bin 1990 geboren*. Here, English and German differ in the aspect of tense and this is taken over into the other language.

The L1 may also be the cause for the avoidance, as Schachter (1974) calls it, of target language structures. She claims that linguistic features that appear to be too different from those of the native language are frequently avoided.

It is evident that transfer errors happen. How should learners of a new language know that two languages function in very different ways? Psychologically, negative transfer can be explained in terms of proactive inhibition processes occurring on the path to the mastery of the L2. Thus, the presence of the native language inhibits the acquisition of a new language. Especially structures that are deeply rooted in the brain are less likely to be transferred into the linguistic system of a new language (Krashen, 1983).

Negative transfer happens in all linguistic fields. Certain fields are more prone to negative transfer than others. In particular, the use of tense, lexis and word order are most often affected by the influence of one's mother tongue. The area most obviously affected by the L1 is the field of pronunciation. A vast number of people speaking English as L2 never get rid of their native accent (Scovel, 2001, pp.45-48).

The question now arises as to why the L1 influences an L2. One answer could lie in the factor of age during which the new language is acquired. In general, children before puberty find it easier to acquire a second language and, therefore, show less mother tongue interference (Lenneberg, 1967).

According to Lenneberg (1967) and Krashen (1983), with older children, the structures of the native language are more deeply engrained in the brain due to philogenetic development. They are therefore more resistant to change (Krashen, 1983).

Zobl (1980) suggests another reason for this phenomenon. He claims that L1 transfer happens, in particular, when the L2 is experienced as alien by the learner. Then they fall back on native language structures which they are familiar with to be on the safe side.

The level of mother tongue interference varies, depending on the learner's stage of development. There are times when the learners are more prone to L1 influence. Take, for example, the process of question formation in English by German native speakers. In the initial stages they manage pre- verbal negation. Only then when they learn that, like German, English also sometimes has post-verbal negation, German influence occurs, resulting in sentences such as *I not go* (Ellis, 1997, p. 51-54).

The L1 is not always an obstacle for L2 learning. Instead, there are times when a learner's mother tongue facilitates the learning of an additional language. In this case we talk of positive transfer. This happens when the habits of both languages are similar and need not be modified (Littlewood, 1984, p.17)

The influence of the mother tongue on a foreign language has often been supported, but it is still not clear how great it actually is. In the beginning of CA it was believed that most of the errors that occur in L2 acquisition are due to L1 influence. Nowadays, the majority of errors in the process of leaning a new language are ascribed to other sources. This recent view is confirmed by George's study (1972) which revealed that only one-third of the errors are due to negative transfer (Ellis, 1997, p.52, Mitchell & Myles, 1998, p.30).

8.2.2 Intralingual Errors

Errors which are common for all learners of an L2, irrespective of their language backgrounds, are referred to as developmental errors or intralingual errors (Richards, 1970). The origin of these errors lies within the structure of the target language itself, in the sense that separate structures mutually interfere and merge into one. More precisely, they “develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor target language” (Richards, 1970, p.5). This results in errors such as *I am go* being a mixture of the present progressive and the present simple or *I did not played* where the past tense is marked twice. The reasons for the occurrence of these errors, also called cross-associations, might be the period of time that lies between the teaching of the first and the second item. If the time gap is too short, the students are more likely to confuse the individual items resulting in mutual interference. Furthermore, the occurrence of mutual interference is higher when the students are not familiar enough with the items taught and the structures have not yet been completely internalized. Finally, homophones are often the target for mutual interference as well.

Intralingual errors mirror the learner’s competence in a language at a specific stage in the learning process. Richards (1971) describes intralingual errors basically as these kinds of errors that

[...] persist from week to week and which recur from one year to the next with any group of learners. They cannot be described mere failures to memorize a segment of language, or as occasional lapses in performance due to memory limitations, fatigue, and the like [...] (p.173).

Rather, they reveal general problems learners encounter when learning a new language. Some of the problems relate to “faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules, and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply” (Richards, 1971, p.174).

Most of the intralingual errors belong to the category of overgeneralization. Overgeneralization comprises of all the errors which are caused by the extension of rules in contexts where it does not actually apply. For instance, learners frequently produce sentences such as *He can sings*. This shows that the learner has already been taught the basic rule of third person singular –s for the present simple tense. What he, in fact, has not learned yet is that there are exceptions to this rule. Another example of an overgeneralization error is the use of verbs with nouns to which they do not apply as in *drive a bike* for *ride a bike*. In general, it can be claimed that overgeneralization is a facilitating process in the sense that the learners “[...try] to simplify the input or the output to reduce the strain on working memory” (Scovel, 2001, p.147).

Another type of intralingual error is caused by incomplete application of rules. For example, the learner’s question *You read much?* reveals that the learner has not yet internalized the rule of present simple question construction.

According to Dulay and Burt (1972), most of the errors that are made by learners of an L2 are ascribed to the category of intralingual errors and not to L1 interference. In fact, both the mother tongue as well as the target language itself determine the interlanguage of the language learner. As French (1963) puts it:

Errors arise because the pupil is always able to escape from a difficulty by saying or writing, not what he wants to say, but what he is able to recall. The plain fact is that when a pupil sits down to write a “composition exercise” he is limited in his expression to the few hundred words which he retains at the threshold of his memory, available at immediate recollection; the thousand or more which he can recognize if they are presented to him are not at the end of his pen. Therefore more or less consciously he twists and turns what he wishes to say in his own language, until he can fit it to the content of English words he has at his command (pp. 26-27).

II. EMPIRICAL PART

9. Research Questions

The overall aim of this study is to find out where some of the differences between more proficient and less proficient Austrian learners of English as a second language lie. More precisely, I am interested in whether second language written competence can be traced to the following aspects: motivation by parents and teachers, attitudes to the second language and the language teacher, effort avoidance, learning methods, amount of time spent on studying, participation in class, and language aptitude. Based on these, the following hypotheses emerge:

There is a difference between good language learners and poor language learners in terms of success in English language learning and the following variables:

Hypothesis 1: ... the students' verbal intelligence

Hypothesis 2: ... the students' effort avoidance tendencies

Hypothesis 3: ... the students' assiduity

Hypothesis 4: ... the students' motivation by the teacher

Hypothesis 5: ... the students' motivation by the parents

Hypothesis 6: ... the students' attitude towards the English language

Hypothesis 7: ... the students' attitude towards the English teacher

Hypothesis 8: ... the students' attitude towards the subject English

Hypothesis 9: ... the students' amount of time on home-study

Hypothesis 10: ... the students' study behaviour

Hypothesis 11: ... the students' classroom behaviour

In the second part of the empirical section, I will examine and categorize the errors in written English data made by students with an average age of 12. The central question revolves around whether there is a difference in the type and frequency of errors produced by more proficient and less proficient individual learners.

10. Subjects

I investigated subjects with the age of 12 who attend the 2nd form of Viennese grammar schools, all of them acquiring English as a second language in a classroom setting. All of the students had been exposed to two years of structured English input. The study excluded students whose mother tongue was not German and those with a bilingual background. Furthermore, students with dyslexia or any other form of spelling disorder were not tested. The total number of subjects was 36, among them were 18 students who had a higher English level, that is to say with a final mark of 1 or 2, and 18 students who had a lower English level with a final mark of 4 or 5. Average students were excluded. I carried out my investigation in 6 different grammar schools in the districts 6, 8, 10, 15, 17 and 22 in Vienna. The students were from 8 different classes, each with a different English teacher. The same number of good learners and poor learners was tested in order to receive balanced results. All of the subjects had four 50-minute English classes a week and were regularly asked to do homework after each lesson.

11. Organisation

The investigation was carried out in June 2008. I selected schools where I knew either a teacher or a student, and schools which are situated near my place of residence. This saved a lot of time and sped up my work as I needed two or three occasions per class to collect the data. After getting consent from the 'Stadtschulrat' I contacted the headmaster/headmistress of the schools for an approval to carry out the investigation. He/she then allocated the relevant teachers who were asked to help me with the investigation. First of all, they were asked to distribute the parents' letters among the students which included the description of the study and a request to approve the participation of their children. The teachers then provided two lessons, one after the other, in which I administered the exam, the questionnaire and the psychological tests to those students who were allowed to take part. Everything was carried out in a quiet surrounding so as to eliminate any interfering factors which could influence the students' performance and finally the results.

12. The Data

This research was carried out on the basis of four different types of data: a word association test, the so-called Effort Avoidance Test, a questionnaire, and a written exam.

12.1 The Word Association Test

All the students were tested with the word association test (CFT 20) developed by Weiß (1987) which reveals information about the verbal intelligence of a student. It consists of a total number of 30 terms. The student's task is to find out which of the five additional terms defines the given term most accurately. In other words, a student has to choose which of the five terms matches the given term. In general, this test checks a student's familiarity with words (see appendix).

12.2 Effort Avoidance Test (Anstrengungsvermeidungstest)

The Effort Avoidance Test was developed by Rollett and Bartram (1977) to record the students' tendencies to avoid demanding school work. It comprises a total of 41 items with two alternatives (right and wrong) to choose from per question. 27 of the items measure the concept of effort avoidance, whereas the remaining 14 provide information about the second scale called assiduity (Pflichteifer) (see appendix).

This test can either be administered individually or in a group without any time limit. In this study I carried the test out in small groups of 2 to 8 students. The results produce 3 types of students:

- Students with a normal concept of effort avoidance.
- Students for whom intervention might be helpful.
- Students for whom therapy is absolutely essential.

12.3 Questionnaire

I developed a questionnaire to collect information about the students' attitude towards their English teacher, the English lesson, the English language, the teacher's and the parents' motivation, the individual student's participation in the lesson, the amount of time spent on home study, and their style of learning. In my empirical research I intend to look at whether these factors have an influence on language learning achievement. If they do, I will find out which students are more susceptible to these factors and to what extent.

The questionnaire consisted of a total of 36 items which had to be answered by choosing between two, three or four alternatives (see appendix). The questionnaire is in German as the questions were presented to native speakers of German. Therefore, I also labelled the tables relating to this questionnaire in German.

12.4 The Written Exam

The basic data consisted of a total number of 36 samples of written exams, each sample consisting of 4 grammar tasks and 4 text production tasks (see appendix). I developed these 8 exam questions based on the current curriculum. That is to say that all of the relevant students should have already been taught the grammar and topics that I intended to investigate. The grammar section consisted of grammatical aspects mainly taught by the use of drill-exercises where the rules are basically meant to be learnt by heart.

The main aim of the first grammar task was to examine the students' ability to differentiate between general (*present simple*) events and actions going on in the moment of speaking (*present progressive*). I wanted to assess whether it is easier for the above average students to make this distinction.

To do so, I included typical sentences which usually cause difficulties as they form exceptions to the rules in various ways. For example, a modal verb such as *can* is always followed by the first form, irrespective of the subject to which it is related. The modal in itself remains unchanged, never resulting in forms such as *cans* when referring to the third person singular. In addition, I intended to assess the ability of question formation in present progressive and particularly in present simple, as well as the knowledge of the rules for present simple negation. Based on this, I assessed whether there is a significant difference with regard to the total number of errors committed by the two groups. Then, I looked at which of the sentences caused problems in particular.

The second grammar task deals with *present simple questions*. The students were asked, for example, to form questions such as *Does Bob like building houses?*. Here I intended to test the students' knowledge of the rules for present simple question formation, as well as their knowledge of the correct question words. Again I included an exception to the rule (*Who always watches 'Tom & Jerry' on TV?*). As with grammar 1, I first of all examined whether the two groups show significant differences in the total number of errors. Secondly, I looked at the first three questions in greater detail, and assessed whether these questions (constructed with the auxiliaries *do/does*) cause more problems for the less proficient learners. Finally, I counted the number of completely error-free *do/does* questions.

The third grammar task focused on selected *irregular verbs* which generally cause great difficulties for German speakers. German speakers, for example, frequently have problems with the formation of the past and the past participle of the verbs *bekommen* and *bringen*, often resulting in the incorrect English versions of *become-became-become* and *bring-brang-brung*. I intended to assess whether the total number of errors in the production of irregular verbs was higher with the less proficient learners, and which of the irregular verbs, in particular, caused problems.

Finally, in grammar task 4 I not only tried to find out whether the students were able to remember how to compare things, but also whether they could recall the irregular superlative form *worst*. As with all the grammar tasks I looked at whether there was a difference between the total number of errors and whether the irregular comparisons cause more difficulties with the poorer learners.

The second section of the exam consisted of 4 different kinds of writing tasks (see appendix). In task 5 the idea was to test the students' ability to write about themselves. In particular, I looked at whether the under average students produced more errors caused by the influence of their mother tongue than the above average students. In addition, I developed categories affected by German influence and assessed which categories were more susceptible to it. Task 6 should look at whether present simple questions were successfully embedded within a context. In task 7 I counted the number of errors with regard to the use of verbs in the holiday report. I especially wanted to find out whether it is easier for the above average students to apply the past tense in a text than it is for the selected under average students. Furthermore, I divided the errors into categories to find out what causes problems here in particular.

Finally, task 8 primarily looks at whether there is a significant difference between the two groups with regard to the use of given words in the text.

The general intention of the text section was to explore the subjects' ability to use grammatical patterns in context, some of those from the grammar section. I was interested in how much the students were actually able to recall from what they have already been taught at school. In particular, I wanted to find out whether learners at the age of 12 are already able to grasp the aspect of past and present in a foreign language. Furthermore, I examined the use of basic vocabulary and special English constructions in a written context. I was also interested in what role the mother tongue actually plays in written texts.

It took the students 60 minutes on average to complete the exam. They were not allowed a break in order not to influence concentration in a negative manner and to avoid cheating.

First of all, I corrected the exams myself, and then I had a native speaker look over it once more to insure that there were no errors.

13. Statistical Methods

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Goodness of Fit Test

The test for normal distribution was calculated separately for both groups by using the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov-Goodness of Fit Test*.

Mann Whitney U – Test (MWU- Test)

The Mann Whitney U – Test was used to compare the mean ranks of the students' questionnaires.

T-Test

The T-Test was used to compare the means of participation and behaviour in the lesson, the CFT 20, the AVT and with specific grammar tasks (tables 17, 19, 25) and text production tasks (tables 28, 32, 37).

Fisher's Exact Test and Fisher's Exact Test

The comparison between the expected and observed frequencies (cross-tables) was calculated with the Chi-Square Test and (when more than 20% of the cells had expected frequencies less than 5) Fisher's Exact Test.

14. Data Analysis: Results

To answer the research questions posed in chapter 9, the sample of students tested was divided into a group of good language learners and a comparable one of poor language learners.

14.1 Verbal Intelligence

As the findings of the T-Test show, the under average students and the above average students differ significantly in the degree of verbal intelligence with $p = .003$. In other words, the above average students scored higher on the CFT 20 Test.

Tab. 1. Verbal Intelligence

CFT	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Wortschatztest	schlechte Schüler	23,00	2,990	.003
	gute Schüler	26,44	3,468	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

Hypothesis 1, which states that there is a significant relationship between English language proficiency and the degree of verbal intelligence, could be fully confirmed.

14.2 Effort Avoidance and Assiduity

The T-Test reveals the findings illustrated in table 2. In fact, no significant difference was found in the effort avoidance scale ($p = .144$), but there is a slight tendency of good students to show less effort avoidance. However, in the assiduity scale good language learners and poor language learners differ significantly with $p = .04$. In other words, the less proficient learners tested are generally less assiduous.

Tab. 2. Effort Avoidance

AVT	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Effort Avoidance	schlechte Schüler	7,39	3,256	.144
	gute Schüler	5,78	3,209	
Assiduity	schlechte Schüler	5,94	2,182	.040
	gute Schüler	7,33	1,680	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

Hypothesis 2, which postulates that there is a significant relationship between effort avoidance and success in English language learning, could not be confirmed. However,

hypothesis 3, which states that there is a significant relationship between success in English language learning and a student's assiduity could be fully confirmed.

14.3 Questionnaire

14.3.1 Motivation by the English Teacher

As highlighted in table 3, each group examined seems to experience the same degree of motivation by the English teacher. However, concerning the item *lack of motivation and demoralization (Wirst du von deinem/deiner EnglischlehrerIn für schlechte Leistungen demotiviert?)*, there is a slight tendency for poor learners to experience more demotivation. In general, the above average students and the under average students appear to be motivated and praised to the same extent.

Tab. 3. Motivation by the English Teacher.

Motivation by the English teacher	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Wirst du von deinem/deiner EnglischlehrerIn für gute Leistungen gelobt?	schlechte Schüler	17.56	316,00	.324
	gute Schüler	19.44	316,00	
Wirst du von deinem/deiner EnglischlehrerIn für schlechte Leistungen demotiviert?	schlechte Schüler	20.00	360,00	.154
	gute Schüler	17.00	306,00	
Motiviert dich dein/deine EnglischlehrerIn?	schlechte Schüler	18.72	337,00	.882
	gute Schüler	18.28	329,00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

The scale teacher's motivation of the two items is presented in table 4. The reliability analysis shows $\alpha = .618$. The item *Wirst du von deinem/deiner EnglischlehrerIn für gute Leistungen gelobt?* could not be included in the scale due to a low item total correlation.

Tab. 4. Scale Motivation by the English Teacher. Cronbachs Alpha = .618

Item	Item-trennschärfe
Wirst du von deinem/deiner EnglischlehrerIn für schlechte Leistungen demotiviert? (umkodiert)	.543
Motiviert dich dein/deine EnglischlehrerIn?	.543

The T-Test reveals that both groups perceive the degree of motivation from the teacher in a similar manner.

Tab. 5. Scale Motivation by the Teacher

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Teacher's Motivation	schlechte Schüler	18.22	328.00	.857
	gute Schüler	18.78	338.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Hypothesis 4 could not be confirmed because there is no significant relationship between success in English language learning and a student's motivation by the English teacher.

14.3.2 Motivation by the Parents

The students' success in language learning does not appear to be influenced by the degree of praise and the amount of awards by the parents. Only the first item shows a tendency into this direction (see table 6).

Tab. 6. Motivation by the Parents

Motivation by the parents	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Wirst du von deinen Eltern für gute Leistungen in Englisch gelobt?	schlechte Schüler	16.00	288.00	.074
	gute Schüler	21.00	378.00	
Wirst du von deinen Eltern für gute Leistungen in Englisch belohnt?	schlechte Schüler	17.78	320.00	.619
	gute Schüler	19.22	346.00	
Wirst du von deinen Eltern für schlechte Englischleistungen bestraft oder geschimpft?	schlechte Schüler	20.00	360.00	.213
	gute Schüler	17.00	306.00	
Glaubt VP dass Eltern sie wegen schlechten Noten weniger lieben	schlechte Schüler	17.50	315.00	.151
	gute Schüler	19.50	351.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Hypothesis 5 could not be confirmed as there is no significant relationship between success in English language learning and a student's motivation by his/her parents.

14.3.3 Attitude towards the English Language

On the whole it can be said that the attitude towards the English language between the under average and the above average students is the same. Most of the students find it important to learn the English language as they state that it is the global language which one needs for communication all over the world. Despite this, there are slight differences in the answers to the question *Ich lerne Englisch nur weil ich muss* (see table 7).

Tab. 7. Attitude towards the English Language

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Gefällt dir die englische Sprache?	schlechte Schüler	16.75	301.50	.267
	gute Schüler	20.25	364.50	
Findest du es sinnvoll. Englisch zu lernen?	schlechte Schüler	16.28	293.00	.126
	gute Schüler	20.72	373.00	
Ich lerne Englisch nur weil ich muss	schlechte Schüler	16.00	288.00	.087
	gute Schüler	21.00	378.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Hypothesis 6 could not be confirmed, as there is no significant positive relationship between success in English language learning and a student's attitude towards the English language.

14.3.4 Attitude towards the English Teacher

There is no significant difference between the good language learners and the poor language learners in relation to how much they like their teacher or not. In addition, they do not differ in their perception of their teacher – whether he/she is perceived as strict or not. However, the two groups show a significant difference (*p* = .036) with respect to the extent of fear of the teacher. The poor learners show a significantly higher fear of their English teacher (see table 8).

Tab. 8. Attitude towards the English Teacher

Attitude towards the English Teacher	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Magst du deinen Englischlehrer/ deine Englischlehrerin?	schlechte Schüler	17,56	316,00	.553
	gute Schüler	19,44	350,00	
Ist dein Englischlehrer/ deine Englischlehrerin streng?	schlechte Schüler	20,14	362,50	.301
	gute Schüler	16,86	303,50	
Hast du Angst vor deinem Englischlehrer/ Englischlehrerin?	schlechte Schüler	21,03	378,50	.036
	gute Schüler	15,97	287,50	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Hypothesis 7, which postulates that there is a significant positive relationship between success in English language learning and the student's attitude towards the English teacher could only be partly confirmed.

14.3.5 Attitude towards English as a School Subject

The two groups differ significantly as to the degree of their general pleasure derived from the English lessons, and the degree to which they look forward to a lesson. The above average students are more fond of the English lesson ($p = .01$), and they look forward to the English lesson to a greater extent ($p = .04$). On the contrary, there is no significant difference between the under average students and the above average students when it comes to the degree of interest in the lesson.

Tab. 9. Attitude towards the English Lesson

Behaviour in the Lesson	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	p
Gehst du gerne in den Englischunterricht?	schlechte Schüler	14.39	259.00	.010
	gute Schüler	22.61	407.00	
Freust du dich auf den Englischunterricht?	schlechte Schüler	15.42	277.50	.040
	gute Schüler	21.58	388.50	
Bist du am Englischunterricht interessiert?	schlechte Schüler	16.47	296.50	.218
	gute Schüler	20.53	369.50	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Interestingly, Fisher's Exact Test shows with $p = .345$ (one-sided) that the above average students examined do not differ significantly from the under average students when it comes to stating that English is their favourite subject. None of the subjects stated that English is his/her favourite subject. Furthermore, only 6 of the 18 good language learners and 3 of the 18 poor language learners state that English is not one of their first three favourite subjects.

Tab. 10. English as the Favourite Subject

English as one of the three favourite subjects		schlechter Schüler	guter Schüler	Gesamt
Englisch ist eines der drei Lieblingsfächer	Anzahl	3	6	9
	Erwartete Anzahl	4,5	4,5	9
	% von Englisch eines von 3 Lieblingsfächer.	33,3%	66,7%	100%
Englisch ist nicht unter den drei Lieblingsfächer	Anzahl	15	12	27
	Erwartete Anzahl	13,5	13,5	27
	% von Englisch kein Lieblingsfach.	55,6%	44,4%	100%
Total	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	% von Englisch als Lieblingsfach.	50%	50%	100%

Hypothesis 8 could only be partly confirmed. Therefore it can be said that the two groups differ significantly in most aspects relating to the factor of attitude towards the subject English. Interest in the English lesson seems not to have an influence on success in English language learning. Furthermore, as confirmed by the study the good learners do not like English more than the poor learners.

14.3.6 Home-Study

As table 11 indicates, the under average students and the above average students differ considerably with respect to the frequency of doing homework with $p = .003$. In general, the under average students do not do their homework on a regular basis. They do not differ significantly in all the other factors relating to home-study. For example, the two groups do not differ in the frequency of copying their homework from someone else.

Tab. 11. Time Spent on Students' Home-Study

Home-Study	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Wie viel macht es dir aus, für Englisch zu Hause arbeiten zu müssen?	schlechte Schüler	20.11	362.00	.289
	gute Schüler	16.89	304.00	
Wie oft machst du deine Englischhausübung?	schlechte Schüler	13.86	249.50	.003.
	gute Schüler	23.14	416.50	
Schreibst du deine Englischhausübung ab?	schlechte Schüler	20.00	360.00	.336
	gute Schüler	17.00	306.00	
Wie oft pro Woche gibt es Englischhausübung?	schlechte Schüler	18.50	333.00	1.00
	gute Schüler	18.50	333.00	
Ich mache jede Woche etwas für das Fach Englisch.	schlechte Schüler	17.03	306.50	.359
	gute Schüler	19.97	359.50	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Fisher's Exact Test reveals that the two groups investigated do not show a significant difference relating to time spent on home study ($p = 1.00$) per day (see table 12).

Tab. 12. Time Spent on Students' Home-Study per Day

Home-Study per Day		schlechte Schüler	gute Schüler	Gesamt
Täglich für Englisch üben	Anzahl	1	0	1
	Erwartete Anzahl	.5	.5	1
	% von täglich Üben.	100%	.0%	100%
NICHT täglich für Englisch üben	Anzahl	17	18	35
	Erwartete Anzahl	17.5	17.5	35
	% von nicht täglich üben.	48.6%	51.4%	100%
Total	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	% von Übungsaufwand.	50%	50%	100%

Fisher's Exact Test also highlights that the under average students and the above average students do not differ significantly in the amount of time spent on home-study per week ($p = 1.00$). As table 13 illustrates, the above average students tested do not study more than the under average students. 77,8% of the 18 under average students study for English on at least four days per week.

Tab. 13. Time Spent on Home-Study per Week

Home-Study per Week		schlechte Schüler	gute Schüler	Gesamt
Mindestens an 4 Tagen pro Woche Englisch üben	Anzahl	14	15	29
	Erwartete Anzahl	14.5	14.5	29
	% von gute vs. schlechte Schüler	77.8%	83.3%	80.6%
Weniger als an 4 Tagen pro Woche Englisch üben	Anzahl	4	3	7
	Erwartete Anzahl	3.5	3.5	7
	% von gute vs. schlechte Schüler	22.2%	16.7%	80.6%
Total	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	von gute vs. schlechte Schüler	100%	100%	100%

Hypothesis 9, which suggests that the amount of time spent on home-study influences English language proficiency, could only be partly validated. There is no significant relationship between English language learning proficiency and the amount of time spent on home study. However, the two groups differed significantly with regard to the frequency of doing their homework.

14.3.7 Study Behaviour

Fisher's Exact Test shows no significant difference in study behaviour between the two groups with $p = .754$. Whether the learners study on their own or with the help of someone else seems to be irrelevant to their language learning success (see table 14).

Tab. 14. Study Behaviour

Study Behaviour	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	p
Lernst du für Englisch alleine?	schlechte Schüler	18.08	325.50	.754
	gute Schüler	18.92	340.50	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Furthermore, the examined subjects do not reveal a significant difference with respect to the preferred way of learning, which was confirmed by Fisher's Exact Test with $p = .558$ (see table 15). Both the good language learners as well as the poor language learners do not mind whether they have to study on their own or someone else helps them.

Tab. 15. Learners' Preferred Study Behaviour

Preferred Study Behaviour		schlechte Schüler	gute Schüler	Gesamt
Lieber alleine Lernen	Anzahl	1	4	5
	Erwartete Anzahl	2.5	2.5	5
	% von alleine.	20%	80%	100%
Lieber mit jemanden anderen	Anzahl	13	7	20
	Erwartete Anzahl	10	10	20
	% von mit anderen.	65%	35%	100%
Egal ob alleine oder mit jemanden anderen	Anzahl	4	7	11
	Erwartete Anzahl	5.5	5.5	11
	% von egal.	36.4%	63.6%	100%
Gesamt	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	% von Englisch als Lieblingsfach.	50%	50%	100%

Hypothesis 10, which postulates that there is a significant difference between the two groups relating to success in English language learning and the student's study behaviour, could not be verified

14.3.8 Classroom Behaviour

The findings reveal that the good English learners and the poor English learners differ significantly in their classroom behaviour. The under average students take part in the English lesson less frequently, and they tend to chat more often during the lesson. On the contrary, there is no significant difference between the under average students and the above average students when it comes to the amount of attention paid to the teacher, and requests for further explanation. There is a tendency of the under average students to chatter more during lessons (see table 16).

Tab. 16. Classroom Behaviour

Classroom Behaviour	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Arbeitest du im Englischunterricht mit?	schlechte Schüler	13.86	249.50	.004
	gute Schüler	23.14	416.50	
Schwätzt du im Englischunterricht?	schlechte Schüler	21.44	386.00	.076
	gute Schüler	15.56	280.00	
Hörst du dem Englischlehrer/ der Englischlehrerin zu?	schlechte Schüler	17.56	316.00	.540
	gute Schüler	19.44	350.00	
Fragst du im Unterricht nach, wenn du etwas nicht verstehst?	schlechte Schüler	16.31	293.50	.187
	gute Schüler	20.69	372.50	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Hypothesis 11 could only be partly confirmed. The two groups differ significantly in some aspects of classroom behaviour while in other aspects they do not show any difference at all.

14.4 Error Analysis of the Written Exam: Grammar Results

This chapter presents the major findings from the four grammar tasks: *present simple and present progressive*, *present simple question construction*, *irregular verbs*, and *comparison*.

14.4.1 Grammar Task 1: Present Simple and Present Progressive

In the grammar task on the present simple and the present progressive, the above average students and the under average students differed significantly in the total number of errors with $p = .028$. In this case, I marked a sentence as erroneous when any type of error occurred. Therefore, for example, if a student used the correct tense, but made a spelling mistake or did not mark for third person singular I counted this as an error. The under average students revealed a total number of 147 errors of a total number of 216 possible correct answers, while the above average students committed 115 errors of the total of 216.

Tab. 17. Rate of Errors in Grammar Task 1 (Present Simple & Present Progressive)

	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Rate of Errors:	schlechte Schüler	8.16	1.75	.028
Grammar 1	gute Schüler	6.38	2.78	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

More specifically, as illustrated in table 18, the two groups differed significantly in two of the twelve given sentences. These were sentence one (*Look! It is raining very hard.*) with $p = .043$, and sentence three (*She is hiding behind the curtains.*) with $p = .043$). The under average students found it particularly difficult to use the present progressive form in sentence one, despite the given imperative *Look!* which clearly signals the necessity of the *ing* – form. In addition, the present progressive sentence number three (*She is hiding behind the curtains.*) caused great difficulty with less proficient learners.

Tab. 18. The 12 Items from Grammar Task 1 (Present Simple & Progressive)

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
rain	schlechte Schüler	21.50	387.00	.043
	gute Schüler	15.50	279.00	
see	schlechte Schüler	18.00	324.00	.704
	gute Schüler	19.00	342.00	
hide	schlechte Schüler	22.00	396.00	.020
	gute Schüler	15.00	270.00	
not have	schlechte Schüler	18.00	324.00	.552
	gute Schüler	19.00	342.00	
enjoy	schlechte Schüler	21.00	378.00	.058
	gute Schüler	16.00	288.00	
sing	schlechte Schüler	20.50	369.00	.178
	gute Schüler	16.50	297.00	
watch	schlechte Schüler	21.00	378.00	.058
	gute Schüler	16.00	288.00	
do	schlechte Schüler	19.50	351.00	.296
	gute Schüler	17.50	315.00	
read	schlechte Schüler	19.50	351.00	.296
	gute Schüler	17.50	315.00	
make	schlechte Schüler	18.50	333.00	1.00
	gute Schüler	18.50	333.00	
can	Schlechte Schüler	18.00	324.00	.635
	gute Schüler	19.00	342.00	
climb	schlechte Schüler	20.50	369.00	.163
	gute Schüler	16.50	297.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Interestingly, only 3 of the 18 above average students produced an error within the first sentence (*Look! It is raining very hard.*). Two of these errors related to the use of the present simple form (e.g. **Look! It rains very hard*) and one sentence was erroneous because the students omitted the auxiliary in front of the ing-construction **Look! It raining very hard.*

On the contrary, the under average students created six different types of erroneous sentences when filling in the gap in sentence one. Among these were the use of the past simple (**Look! It rained. (2)*)¹¹, the past progressive (**Look! It was raining. (1)*), the use of the present simple *rain without marking for person (1)*, the adjective *rainy*, a progressive form without the auxiliary (**Look! It raining. (2)*), and a combination of *was* and *rain* (**Look! It was rain.(1)*). Altogether, 7 of the poor learners committed an error in sentence one.

Concerning sentence three (*She is hiding behind the curtains.*), above average students committed four types of errors. Firstly, they used a present simple form (**She hides (4)*) or a present simple form without marking the third person singular (**She hide (1)*). Furthermore, they created a progressive form without the auxiliary (**She hiding.(1)*), and an erroneous past simple tense (**She hided(1)*). In brief, 7 good learners produced an error in sentence three.

On the contrary, the under average students committed nine different erroneous types of variations in sentence three (**She is hiding behind the curtains.*). They were: the use of a correct present simple (**She hides. (1)*), a present simple without the third person singular –s (**She hide. (5)*), a correctly formed past progressive (**She was hiding(2)*), an incorrectly formed past simple (**She hided.(1)*), a present progressive with a wrong auxiliary (**She are hiding. (1)*), a present progressive with a spelling error (**She is hideing. (1)*), a present progressive without the auxiliary and with a spelling error (**She hideing. (1)*), a passive construction with a spelling error (**She was hiden. (1)*), and one of the students wrote **She was building. (1)*. 14 under average students were not able to produce an error free sentence number three.

¹¹ The numbers in brackets refer to the number of errors committed in this specific category.

14.4.2 Grammar Task 2: Present Simple Question Construction

Concerning the construction of present simple questions, there is a significant difference in the total number of errors with $p = .016$. An error in this case refers to any type of error in a present simple question construction such as the use of the auxiliary in the wrong person or tense (e.g. **When do Spongebob cook burgers?*, **When did Spongebob cook burgers?*), the omission of an auxiliary (e.g. *Where Spongebob cooks burgers?*), the use of the wrong type of auxiliary (e.g. **What are Bob likes?*), the wrong spelling of an auxiliary (e.g. **What dose he like?*), the double marking for person (e.g. **When does Mickey reads Harry Potter?*), and the introduction of the wrong question word (e.g. **How does he cook?* instead of *What does he cook?*). A correct sentence in this context is a sentence without any error at all.

Tab. 19. Present Simple Question Construction: Grammar Task 2

	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Rate of Errors: Grammar 2	schlechte Schüler	3.28	.752	.016
	gute Schüler	2.11	1.745	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

To be more specific, the two groups differed significantly in the construction of the first three questions which needed to be formed with the auxiliaries *do* and *does*. Question number four only required the question word *who* which is not followed by an auxiliary in this sentence. The good language learners were considerably better at forming the first three questions, whereas there was no considerable difference between the groups with regard to question four (see table 20).

Tab. 20. List of the 4 Items from Grammar Task 2 (Present Simple Question Construction)

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	p
question 1 (do/does)	schlechte Schüler	22.00	396.00	.008
	gute Schüler	15.00	270.00	
question 2 (do/does)	schlechte Schüler	21.50	387.00	.018
	gute Schüler	15.50	279.00	
question 3 (do/does)	schlechte Schüler	22.00	396.00	.013
	gute Schüler	15.00	270.00	
question 4 (inversion)	schlechte Schüler	19.00	342.00	.742
	gute Schüler	18.00	324.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

If one only considers the first three questions, then it can be said that the two groups revealed significant differences with $p = .042$. In other words, the above average students were much better at present simple question formation with the auxiliaries *do* and *does* (see table 21).

Tab. 21. Use of Auxiliaries *do/does* in Present Simple Questions: Grammar Task 2

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	p
Rate of Errors in do/does questions: (questions 1-3)	schlechte Schüler	15.42	277.50	.042
	gute Schüler	21.58	388.50	

p = Signifikanzniveau

As the tables 22, 23 and 24 show, the good learners managed to use the auxiliaries *do* and *does* significantly more often than expected in each of the first three questions compared to the poor learners who produced significantly fewer *do/does* questions than expected.

Tab. 22. Use of do/does: Question One

Do /does : Question One		schlechte Schüler	gute Schüler	Gesamt
Do / does not used	Anzahl	15	9	24
	Erwartete Anzahl	12	12	24
	% von nicht verwendet	62.5%	37.5%	100%
Do / does used	Anzahl	3	9	12
	Erwartete Anzahl	6	6	12
	% von verwendet.	25%	75%	100%
Total	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	% von Englisch als Lieblingsfach.	50%	50%	100%

Chi Quadrat = .4,5 $p = .3$

Tab. 23. Use of do/does: Question Two

Do /does: Question Two		schlechte Schüler	gute Schüler	Gesamt
Do / does not used	Anzahl	15	10	25
	Erwartete Anzahl	12.5	12.5	25
	% von nicht verwendet	60%	40%	100%
Do / does used	Anzahl	3	8	11
	Erwartete Anzahl	5.5	5.5	11
	% von verwendet.	27.3%	72.7%	100%
Total	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	% von Englisch als Lieblingsfach.	50%	50%	100%

Chi Quadrat = .3,27 $p = .073$

Tab. 24. Use of do/does: Question Three

Do /does : Question Three		schlechte Schüler	gute Schüler	Gesamt
Do / does not used	Anzahl	14	8	22
	Erwartete Anzahl	11	11	22
	% von nicht verwendet	63.6%	36.4%	100%
Do / does used	Anzahl	4	10	14
	Erwartete Anzahl	7	7	14
	% von verwendet.	28.6%	71.4%	100%
Total	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	% von Englisch als Lieblingsfach.	50%	50%	100 %

Chi Quadrat = 4,2 $p = .043$

There were 108 possible correct answers for the first three questions. As shown in figure 2 from the 108 questions only 37 were formed by the use of a present simple auxiliary. However, from these, certain students did not mark the auxiliary for person (*Where do Spongebob cooks hamburgers?) or did not omit the -s from the main verb (*Where does Spongebob cooks hamburgers?). In other words, not all of these 37 questions were completely error-free. 10 of the 37 questions were produced by under average students and 27 by above average students. Of the 10 questions from the poorer language learners, 6 were erroneous while only 4 were completely error-free. On the contrary, out of the 27 present simple questions constructed by the good language learners only 3 were erroneous, whereas 24 were formed without any error at all. In brief, the above average students produce considerably more error-free present simple questions than under average students (see figure 2).

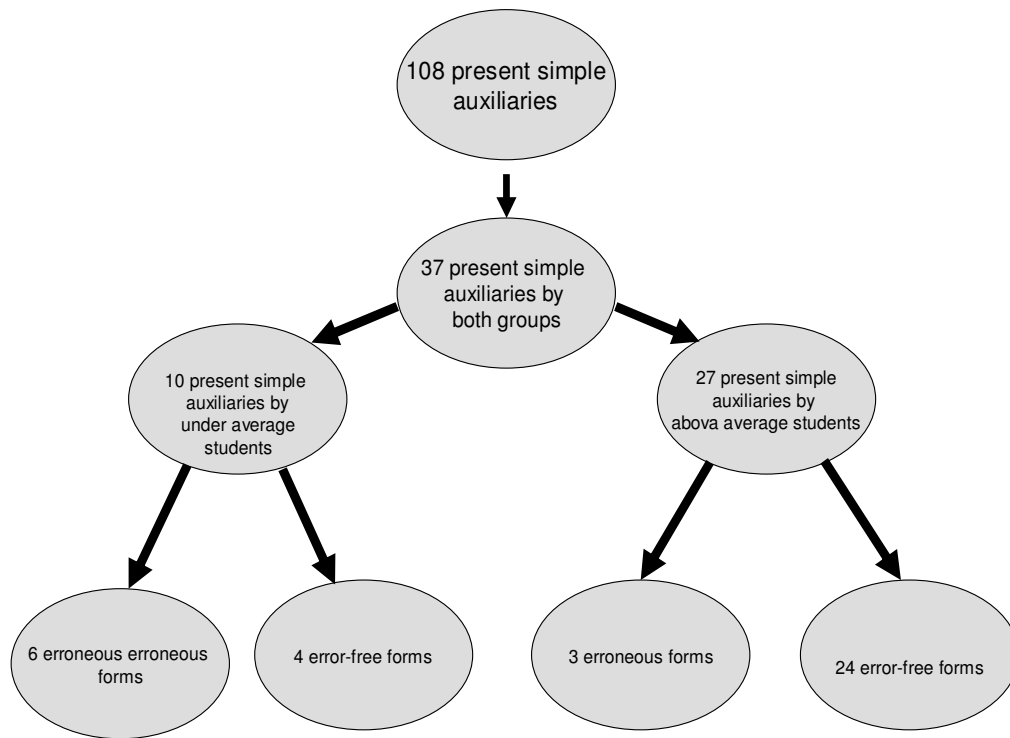


Fig.2: Present Simple Questions: Total Number of Erroneous and Error-Free Present Simple Questions with Auxiliaries do/does

14.4.3 Grammar Task 3: Irregular Verbs

Table 25 clearly shows that both groups of students differ significantly with regard to the total number of errors when using irregular verbs with $p = .007$. The under average students produced a total number of 159 errors, whereas above average students committed only 87 errors in this field.

Tab. 25. Irregular Verbs: Grammar Task 3

	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Rate of Errors:	schlechte Schüler	8.83	4.854	.007
Grammar 3	gute Schüler	4.83	3.222	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

There were significant differences, especially in the students' knowledge and spelling of the verbs *broke*, *buy*, *caught* and *brought*. In addition, the above average students tended to be more successful with the present tense *have*, and the past forms *left* and *fell* (see table 26).

Tab. 26. List of the 20 Irregular Verbs Items

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
<i>break</i>	schlechte Schüler	19.50	351.00	.463
	gute Schüler	17.50	315.00	
<i>broke</i>	schlechte Schüler	21.50	387.00	.047
	gute Schüler	15.50	279.00	
<i>feel</i>	schlechte Schüler	17.50	315.00	.378
	gute Schüler	19.50	351.00	
<i>felt</i>	schlechte Schüler	18.50	333.00	1.00
	gute Schüler	18.50	333.00	
<i>be</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.50	369.00	.078
	gute Schüler	16.50	297.00	
<i>was/were</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.50	369.00	.114
	gute Schüler	16.50	297.00	
<i>buy</i>	schlechte Schüler	22.00	396.00	.008
	gute Schüler	15.00	270.00	
<i>bought</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.50	369.00	.114
	gute Schüler	16.50	297.00	
<i>catch</i>	schlechte Schüler	19.00	342.00	.678
	gute Schüler	18.00	324.00	
<i>caught</i>	schlechte Schüler	22.00	396.00	.020
	gute Schüler	15.00	270.00	
<i>bring</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.00	360.00	.154
	gute Schüler	17.00	306.00	
<i>brought</i>	schlechte Schüler	23.00	414.00	.003
	gute Schüler	14.00	252.00	
<i>leave</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.50	369.00	.186
	gute Schüler	16.50	297.00	
<i>left</i>	schlechte Schüler	21.00	378.00	.096
	gute Schüler	16.00	288.00	
<i>have</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.00	360.00	.074
	gute Schüler	17.00	306.00	
<i>had</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.00	360.00	.154
	gute Schüler	17.00	306.00	
<i>fall</i>	schlechte Schüler	20.00	360.00	.305
	gute Schüler	17.00	306.00	
<i>fell</i>	schlechte Schüler	21.00	378.00	.096
	gute Schüler	16.00	288.00	
<i>get</i>	schlechte Schüler	19.50	351.00	.511
	gute Schüler	17.50	315.00	
<i>got</i>	schlechte Schüler	19.50	351.00	.511
	gute Schüler	17.50	315.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

14.4.4 Grammar Task 4: Comparison

There are no significant differences between the two groups with regard to the total number of errors in the comparison task with $p = .092$.

Table 27 reveals that the under average students had difficulties when forming the comparative of the adjective *interesting* in sentence 2 (*David Beckham is more interesting than Ronaldinho.*). In this sentence, four of the nine errors made by the under average students related to the use of a comparative form, three errors relate to an erroneous formation of a comparative, and one student left it out. The two errors made by the more successful group are caused by the use of an erroneous comparative.

What is interesting here is that almost none of the 36 students were able to produce the superlative of the irregular comparison form *bad*. Only 1 out of the total of the 18 less proficient students, and 3 out of 18 proficient students managed to apply the correct irregular superlative form *worst* (see table 27).

Tab. 27. Rate of Errors in Comparisons and Total Number of Errors: grammar 4

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	<i>p</i>
Comparison 1	schlechter Schüler	20.00	360.00	.154
	guter Schüler	17.00	306.00	
Comparison 2	schlechter Schüler	22.00	396.00	.013
	guter Schüler	15.00	270.00	
Comparison 3	schlechter Schüler	18.00	324.00	.721
	guter Schüler	19.00	342.00	
Comparison 4	schlechter Schüler	19.50	351.00	.296
	guter Schüler	17.50	315.00	
Rate of Errors: Grammar 4	schlechter Schüler	21.28	383.00	.092
	guter Schüler	15.72	283.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

14.5 Error Analysis of the Written Exam: Text Results

In this section the findings of the four text production tasks will be discussed.

14.5.1 Text 1: Writing about Oneself

In text 1 I intended to explore the differences between the two groups concerning the influence of the German language in text writing. The students were asked to provide information about the following: their *name*, *age*, *birthday*, *place of residence*, *hair*, *eyes*, *hobbies* and *abilities*. I was mainly interested in seeing to what extent these answers are affected by the students' mother tongue. I developed 10 grammatical categories affected by German language influence all of which could be identified in the first texts of my subjects.

The categories are: *tense t* (e.g. *I'm born at the 1.1.1996.), *preposition prep* (see table 30), *spelling sp* (e.g. *Dezember), *capital letter cap* (e.g. *My Birthday), *singular and plural sg/p* (e.g. *My hairs are brown.), *adjective & adverb adj/adv* (e.g. *I don't know what I can good.), *article art* (e.g. *I can play piano. for I can play the piano.) , *German like vocabulary voc: G* (e.g. *My hobby is skaten.), *wrong vocabulary voc: w* (e.g. *I like play computer. for I like playing computer games.), and *word order WO* (e.g. *I have on 1.1.1996 my birthday.).

Tab. 28. Rate of German Influences

	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Rate of Errors: Influence of the German Language	schlechte Schüler	4.11	2.374	.006
	gute Schüler	2.17	1.543	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

On the whole, the under average students committed significantly more errors than the above average students with $p = .006$.

As table 29 reveals, the categories of *preposition* and *word order*, in particular, were influenced by the mother tongue of the under average students. These categories were followed by *wrong spelling*, the wrong use of *singular and plural*, and the use of *wrong words*. Similarly, table 29 shows that *word order*, and the use of *singular and plural* were also very susceptible to mother tongue influence in the case of the above average students. These were followed by the use of *wrong vocabulary* and confusion of *plural and singular* forms.

Tab. 29. Categories of German Influence in Text 1 of Under Average Students

Schulleistung	t	prep	sp	cap	sg/pl	adj/adv	art	voc:G	voc:w	WO	E
gute Schüler	2	4	7	1	8	1	2	1	7	9	42
schlechte Schüler	3	13	10	7	9	4	5	4	8	13	76

st = student E = total number of errors

However, a significant difference between the two groups could only be found with regard to German language influence on prepositions (see table 30). No significant difference was ascertained in the other categories.

Tab. 30. Rate of German Language Influence on Prepositions in Text 1

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	p
Rate of German language influence on prepositions	schlechter Schüler	21.83	393.00	.028
	guter Schüler	15.17	273.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Table 31 presents the distribution of preposition errors due to German language influence. Both groups found it difficult to use the correct preposition when giving his/her home-address, which resulted in erroneous versions such as **I live in Xstreet*. All of the preposition errors committed by both groups clearly show the influence of the German language as these errors are word by word translations from German into English.

Tab. 31. Distribution of Preposition Errors: text 1

student's version	correct version	errors of under-average students	errors of over-average students
*I live IN Xstreet.	I live ON Xstreet.	6	3
*I was born AT the ...	I was born ON ...	3	1
*I go IN the park/cinema.	I go TO ...	3	0
*I am good IN	I am good AT	1	0
Total number of preposition errors:		13	4

To sum up, it can clearly be observed that the under average students produced far more errors related to their mother tongue than the above average students.

14.5.2 Text 2: Dialogue

In analysing the 36 dialogues I focused on the construction of English present simple questions. The students' task was to form a total of 7 questions relating to *name, age, birthday, place of residence, hobbies, brothers and sisters, and friend*. Correct sentences here are sentences with no error at all.

As table 32 reveals, the under average students and the above average students show significant differences in their ability to produce questions relating to the categories in table 33 with $p = .012$.

Tab. 32. Rate of Errors in the Dialogues

	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Rate of Errors: Dialogue	schlechte Schüler	2.39	1.335	.012
	gute Schüler	3.72	1.674	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

Table 33 presents the total number of errors committed in each of the seven categories. 83 questions out of 126 were actually incorrectly constructed by the 18 under average students. Among these, most of the errors occurred in the questions relating to *hobbies* and *brothers and sisters*, followed by questions for *names*, *place of residence* and *friend*. The constructions for *age* and *birthday* seem to be the easiest to formulate for under average students. On the contrary, above average students produced a total of 59 errors. Again, most of the difficulties occurred in the questions relating to *hobbies* and *brothers and sisters* followed by questions about place of *residence*. The fourth difficult question is related to *name*, finally, followed by the question relating to *birthday* in place 5.

Tab. 33. Total Number of Errors in Individual Categories: Text 2 (Dialogue)

students	name	age	birthday	residence	hobbies	brothers & sisters	friend	E
gute Schüler	8	3	6	11	13	13	5	59
schlechte Schüler	12	7	8	12	16	16	12	83

E = Errors

In particular, questions relating to *friends* cause problems with the under average students tested (see table 34).

Tab. 34. Category 'Friend'

Do /does : question three Category <i>friends</i>		schlechte Schüler	gute Schüler	Gesamt
Category <i>friend</i> : erroneous	Anzahl	12	5	17
	Erwartete Anzahl	8.5	8.5	17
	% von friend	70.6%	29.4%	100%
Category <i>friend</i> : error-free	Anzahl	6	13	19
	Erwartete Anzahl	9.5	9.5	19
	% von friend	31.6%	68.4%	100%
Total	Anzahl	18	18	36
	Erwartete Anzahl	18	18	36
	% von friend	50%	50%	100%

Chi Quadrat = 5.46 $p = .019$

In addition, I divided the errors committed into the following categories:

Tab. 35. Error Categories and Examples: Dialogue

qu: aux	error with regard to the use of the auxiliary in question construction Ex: * <i>Where <u>live</u> you?</i> (c: Where do you live?) * <i>Have <u>you</u> a brother?</i> (c: Do you have a brother?)
qu: t	question formed in the wrong tense Ex: * <i>When <u>was</u> your birthday?</i> (c: When is your birthday?) * <i>Where <u>are</u> you living?</i> (c: Where do you live?)
verb: sg/pl	use of singular verb where plural is correct and vice versa Ex: * <i>What's <u>s</u> your hobbies.</i> (c: What are your hobbies).
voc: w/g	wrong word (w) or use of the German word (g = gap in the lexicon) Ex: * <i>What do you do in your <u>Freizeit</u>?</i> (c: What do you do in your free time?) * <i>Who do you <u>leave</u>?</i> (c: Where do you live?)
voc: sp	wrong spelling of a word Ex: * <i><u>bea</u>rthday</i> (c: birthday), * <i><u>hous</u></i> (c: house), * <i><u>hobbys</u></i> (c: hobbies)
blend	merging of two words into one Ex: * <i><u>Whats</u> your name?</i> (c: What is your name?) * <i><u>Whos</u> your best friend?</i> (c: Who is your best friend?)
cap	wrong use of capital letter Ex: * <i>What's your <u>Name</u>?</i> (c: What's your name?)
nn¹²	non-native = word(s) or sentence (s) which do not exist in English; Ex: * <i>Where <u>is</u> your house?</i> (c: Where do you live?) * <i>What <u>are</u> your favourite activities?</i> (c: What are your hobbies?)
wr	word reversal = words used in the wrong order Ex: * <i>sisters and brothers</i> (c: brothers and sisters)
o	omission of a letter or one or more words Ex: * <i>Do you <u>have brothers</u> and sisters?</i> (c: Do you have any brothers and sisters?)
O	omission of a whole question
Ger	Gerund Ex: * <i>What do you like <u>to do</u>?</i> (c: What do you like doing?)
qu: w	wrong question Ex: * <i>How <u>are</u> you?</i> (c: How old are you?)

Ex = Example c = correct English version

¹² This category refers to Hymes' notion of *attestedness* (see chapter 2). Although these elements are grammatically correct, they are not used in communication, at least not by native speakers of English.

Not surprisingly, the above average students committed significantly less errors with the questions in the dialogue. In total, they produced more error-free questions and had less errors in all the above described categories, apart from the category *qu:aux* (see table 36). What is obvious is that both groups found it equally difficult to form questions which need an auxiliary, each group made 21 errors in this category. In addition, students had difficulties in choosing appropriate vocabulary as well as in spelling vocabulary. The students also frequently used blends and non – native constructions.

Errors relating to gerund-constructions and the right choice of question did not occur with the more successful students tested. Furthermore, there were no striking differences concerning the order of the remaining categories as illustrated in table 36. On the contrary, the only category where the under average students were superior was in the use of a wrong tense when forming a present simple question.

In summary, it can be generalized that there are similarities between the two groups in every field of error investigated in these question constructions. The only major difference is that the number of errors in the dialogues was higher with less proficient learners in almost each and every of the individual categories.

Tab. 36. The Order of the Errors that Occur in Texts from Above Average Students and Under Average Students: Text 2 (Dialogue)

ranking of errors	type of error: above average students	total number of errors: above average students	type of error: under average students	total number of errors: under average students
1.	qu: aux	21	qu: aux	21
2.	O	11	voc: w/g	17
3.	voc: w/g	9	voc: sp	15
4.	voc: sp & bl	7 & 7	O	13
5.	wr	6	bl & nn	11 & 11
6.	qu: t & nn	5 & 5	wr	9
7.	o	4	o	6
8.	cap	2	verb: sg/pl	5
9.	verb: sg/pl	1	cap	4
			qu:t	3
			Ger & qu: w	1 & 1
E		78		117

E = total number of errors

14.5.3 Text 3: Writing about Past Events

In the holiday report (text 3) I first of all assessed in how many sentences the verb was used correctly in the past tense. There is a significant difference between the two groups in the error-free use of the verbs in text 3 (see table 37). The under average students produced considerably more erroneous verbs in this context.

Tab. 37. Rate of Errors in Relation to the Total Number of Sentences

	Schulleistung	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>p</i>
Rate of Errors in Relation to the Total Number of Sentences	schlechte Schüler	.461	.461	.000
	gute Schüler	.748	.179	

M = Mittelwert *SD* = Standardabweichung *p* = Signifikanzniveau

Secondly, when looking at the different error categories, table 38 clearly reveals that the under average students had significantly more problems with the categories *wrong sg/pl* and *non-existent verb constructions*. In other words, the poor learners used verb combinations which do not exist in English more often, and they also found it harder to mark the verb for singular and plural. Examples for all of these categories are presented in table 39.

Tab. 38. Distribution of Errors in Verbs: Text 3

	Schulleistung	Mittlerer Rang	Rangsumme	p
wrong tense	schlechte Schüler	20.78	374.00	.186
	gute Schüler	16.22	292.00	
wrong verb	schlechte Schüler	20.61	371.00	.198
	gute Schüler	16.39	295.00	
wrong sg/pl	schlechte Schüler	21.78	392.00	.014
	gute Schüler	15.22	274.00	
erroneous past simple	schlechte Schüler	19.47	350.50	.310
	gute Schüler	17.53	315.50	
wrong tense & wrong verb	schlechte Schüler	16.83	303.00	.169
	gute Schüler	20.17	363.00	
non-existent verb mixes	schlechte Schüler	23.00	414.00	.001
	gute Schüler	14.00	252.00	
others	schlechte Schüler	18.11	326.00	.713
	gute Schüler	18.89	340.00	

p = Signifikanzniveau

Tab. 39. Error Categories: Text 3

wrong tense:	the verb is used in a tense other than the past simple tense Ex: *We <u>eat</u> in a restaurant. (c: We ate ...) *The people <u>were coming</u> . (c: The people came.)
wrong verb:	an inappropriate ¹³ verb in the correct past tense Ex: *We <u>became</u> hungry. (c: We got hungry.) *I <u>became</u> a bikini. (c: I got a bikini.)
wrong sg/pl:	the use of the verb in the singular where plural is needed and vice versa Ex: *This <u>was</u> the best holidays. (c: These were the best....) *We <u>was</u> in Italy. (c: We were in Italy.)
erroneous past simple:	error in the production of the past simple Ex: *We <u>sleeped</u> in a hotel. (c: We slept in a hotel.) *They <u>catched</u> the shark. (c: They caught the shark.)
wrong tense & wrong verb:	the use of an inappropriate verb in the wrong tense Ex: *We <u>live</u> in a cottage. (c: We stayed at a cottage.) *Suddenly I <u>am</u> hungry. (c: Suddenly I got hungry.)
non-existent verb mixes:	wrong combination of words Ex: *I'm <u>watch</u> TV. (c: I watched TV.) *It <u>wasn't</u> rain. (c: It didn't rain.)
others:	other types of errors; as they were not produced very often they do not "deserve" a category of their own. Ex: wrong voc & wrong spelling: *I <u>canot</u> sleep. (c: I could not sleep.) wrong verb & wrong sg/pl: *We <u>was</u> fishing. (c: We went fishing.)

Ex = Example c = correct English Version

¹³ The term *appropriate* here is used in Hymes' sense (see chapter 2).

14.5.4 Text 4: Creative Writing

The use of given words in a creative text seemed to be equally difficult for both groups of students. The under average students produced 36 errors whereas the above average students produced 32 errors, thus only 4 errors less. There were no differences in the use of *wood* and hardly any differences in the use of *fell down*, *afraid* and *bear*. What obviously caused problems with both groups is the adjective *rainy* and the phrase *climbed a tree*. Surprisingly, the more proficient students had more difficulty in using *climbed a tree* in a text, with a total of 15 errors compared to only 12 errors from the less proficient students. Furthermore, the above average students found it easier to use the adjective *rainy* in the text. They produced 4 errors less than the under average students (see table 40).

Tab. 40. Correct Use of Given Words: Text 4

Words to Use	Errors by Under Average Students	Errors by Above Average Students
<i>wood</i>	1	1
<i>fell down</i>	6	5
<i>bear</i>	0	1
<i>climbed a tree</i>	12	15
<i>rainy</i>	15	10
<i>afraid</i>	2	0
	36	32

In addition, it is of great interest that both groups did not differ in the degree of German language influence when using the phrase *climbed a tree*. Although the students were asked to use the exact phrase (*climbed a tree*), they did in fact change it in their own texts, resulting in utterances such as **climbed on a tree*, **climbed onto a tree*, **climbed of a tree*, **climbed up the tree*, **climb the tree*, **climed a tree*, **climiped at a tree*. This clearly shows processes of mother tongue interference at work here.

15. Discussion of the Major Results

Most of the existing research so far in the field of learning English as a second language has been concerned with the investigation of general factors responsible for success and failure in L2 learning. Some of the factors frequently investigated have been motivation and attitude, language aptitude, age of L2 learning, learner strategies and personality variables. In various studies all of these factors have produced controversial results. Furthermore, in the field of error analysis theorists have investigated possible causes of errors. In brief, it can be claimed that some errors occur due to the influence of one's mother tongue, while a great number of errors are the result of the 'mixing up' of target language structures. However, not much research has been carried out yet when it comes to analysing the interlanguage of native speakers of German who are learning English as a second language in a classroom setting. In this present section some of the major findings of the investigation at hand will be presented, and possible reasons for these will be given.

This study provides evidence that the above average students tested and the under average students tested differ significantly in the number of *intra-* and *interlingual errors* as defined by Richards (1971) (see chapter 8). In other words, the poor language learners committed considerably more of both kinds of errors.

When looking at sentences 1 and 3 in the grammar task 1 (the present simple vs. present progressive task), which caused significant problems for both groups, it can be observed that the under average students produced a higher amount of different types of errors when inserting the verb. While the above average students committed only two types of errors in sentence 1 (*Look! It is raining very hard.*), the under average students committed a total of seven different types of errors (for examples see chapter 14.4.1).

Upon closer inspection of sentence 3 (*She is hiding behind the curtains.*), it can be seen that the above average students produced four types of errors in contrast to the under average students who had a total of 14 types, thus twice as many. This clearly reveals that the interlanguage of the poor language learners is much more confused, therefore resulting in a number of alien, non-native verbal constructions in grammar task 1. This confusion can be observed in all the 8 tasks. In the text production task 3 (holiday report), for example, the under average students produced significantly more errors in the category non-existent verb construction (see chapter 14.5.3).

What is more, the types of errors that the good learners make seem to be much more “intelligent” that is to say they are more systematic. For example, in the case of sentence 1, the above average students produced erroneous sentences such as **Look it rains!* and **Look it raining*. In other words, they are able to use a correct present simple form by adding the third person singular marker. In the latter erroneous example, they produced the correct tense but did not insert the auxiliary *is* which is necessary for present progressive formation. This type of error is comprehensible, as German only uses one verb when referring to an action going on at the moment of speaking. Therefore, it is very confusing for learners of English with German as their mother tongue to understand that the here and now is indeed expressed with two verbs in English, one of them being the auxiliary *be*.

On the other hand, the under average students produced, among other errors, incorrect present simple forms. They also used past simple and past progressive, and one student even wrote **It rainy a lot*, while another produced **It was rain*. Similar evidence for the rather limited interlanguage system of the less successful learners could be found in the grammar task 2 (present simple question constructions). In particular, it was significantly more difficult for the under average students to use the auxiliaries *do* and *does* with present simple questions.

Evidence for the more limited interlanguage system of the under average students tested could also be found in the grammar task 3 (Irregular Verbs). Even in cases where the under average students were merely supposed to learn by heart and not necessarily comprehend complex facts, were they much less successful than the above average students. At first, one might list a possible general laziness to learn these verbs as the reason for this outcome. However, this study does not provide any evidence that the under average students studied less at home than the above average students. Neither was a difference found in the students' degree of effort avoidance. Even if it was true that the two groups studied for the same amount of time, this does not mean that during this time the under average group studied the irregular verbs. Rather, it could be the case that the above average students learn these particularly tricky verbs voluntarily without the teacher having to tell them to do so. In contrast, the under average students, if not told to study, might study less.

Lack of revision and practice also seemed to play a role in the use of the irregular superlative of the adjective *bad* in the comparison task. Here, both groups did not master the superlative *worst* sufficiently. First of all, this form is indeed very difficult to remember as the comparative *bad* and the superlative *worst* are completely different. Therefore, it is all too clear that they are generally very difficult to internalize. Interestingly, many of the students produced an erroneous version of *worst* such as **worstest* and **worses*, which indicates that they did remember having been taught that *bad* is irregular and that the form is in fact rather complex. However, most of the learners made the superlative form of *bad* regular resulting in **badest*. In other words, they overgeneralized the rules for forming comparisons.

This leads to the conclusion that the under average students tested are less familiar with English grammar rules, which generally results in a less rule-governed, more "chaotic" interlanguage system.

With regard to mother tongue interference, the number of German language traces is also much higher in the texts of the poor language learners. This is actually not surprising. What else should the learners “rely on” if they have not yet fully acquired certain rules of the foreign language? To fill the gap in their linguistic knowledge, they simply draw on their mother tongue with the hope that it works well in this particular situation. Sometimes it does, however, unfortunately most of the time it does not, causing negative interference. In this investigation negative transfer could be found especially with prepositions and word order (for examples see chapter 14.5.1).

The question now arises as to why the more successful learners tested show fewer errors in general. Their total number of errors was much lower in almost each of the 8 tasks, and they also did better than the less successful learners in nearly every category investigated.

The findings of this paper clearly show that the significant differences in the frequency and types of errors must be caused by other factors than those relating to motivation and attitude. Unlike Gardner who confirmed that motivation plays a role in learning, this study could not support his view. Similarly, Hermann's Resultative Hypothesis (1980), according to which success in L2 learning increases motivation, could not be confirmed, as the good learners tested did not state to be more motivated and praised than the poor learners. This is striking, because one would expect good language learners to be motivated more and praised to a greater extent by their teacher, as they mainly produce excellent results. On the other hand, one might suppose that poor language learners would state that they were motivated and praised less by their teacher due to their bad results. However, the findings of this study did not confirm this. The reason for the fact that both groups did not differ in their perception of motivation and praise might be their different perception of appreciation.

As successful language learners might take praise and motivation for granted, they do not attach any importance to this. On the other hand, praise for an only slightly better performance could be a “big deal” for a less successful learner.

Similarly, no evidence could be found for Schumann’s (1987) claim that attitude towards the foreign language and the target language culture influence language learning success. The findings of this investigation do not provide evidence that the poor learners’ attitude towards the target language is more negative. One possible explanation for the similarity of the two groups in this respect might be that only in later stages does attitude play a role in learning processes. It is then that learners are mature enough to take a critical look at the language, culture and society of speakers of the target language. This would support Burstall et al. (1974), who claim that attitudes do not play a role in the beginning stages of foreign language learning. The findings may also confirm the proposed assumption that attitudes become more negative with age (Jordan, 1941, Jones, 1950a, Gardner & Smythe, 1975).

Rather, as the findings of this study show, explanations for the differences between the two groups appear to be strongly related to the students’ verbal intelligence, the degree of active participation in class, the frequency of chatting during the lesson, and the frequency of doing homework. This research clearly reveals that the poor learners participate too little in the English lesson, and they do not do their homework on a regular basis. In other words, as confirmed by this study, one of the major reasons for the failure of the less proficient learners can be largely found in the lack of active involvement in foreign language learning. Due to this insufficient engagement in the language learning process, the students do not revise the new structures taught by the teacher. Therefore, new rules cannot be internalized. This finding supports the behaviourist theory of habit formation (Skinner, 1957), which postulates that new habits or rules are internalized through regular practice (see also chapter 5.1).

On the contrary, it could be confirmed that language aptitude contributes to language learning. The findings of this study reveal that there is a considerable difference between the two groups in terms of verbal intelligence. The 18 above average students tested scored significantly higher on the CFT 20 than the 18 under average students. The question here is whether this test really assesses L2 aptitude since it actually measures familiarity with German vocabulary rather than with English vocabulary. Furthermore, I believe that one fairly short test developed to assess language aptitude is not enough to make generalizations about a person's language aptitude.

What is also striking is that none of the 36 students stated English as their favourite subject and only 6 good language learners and 3 poor language learners stated that English is among their first three favourite subjects. One might have expected that more of the 18 above average students would have stated English is among one of their first favourite subjects. This clearly shows that success in the subject English is not at all related to the degree of enjoyment with the subject. A possible reason for the dislike of the subject English might be the fact that it is one of the main subjects at school, which means that it requires a great amount of home-study and more intensive preparation for tests and exams. Other possible explanations might be the teacher's teaching methods or his/her personality. This data is too limited to make any assumptions about how much the eight individual teachers actually contribute to the popularity of their own lessons. To do so, a detailed analysis of their teaching methods and the students' opinion about them would be necessary. This would, in fact, be an interesting topic for future research. In this study no significant difference could be found with regard to the attitude towards the English teacher. One would expect less successful learners to be less fond of their English teacher and to perceive the teacher in a stricter manner. However, this could not be validated by the present research data.

Finally, it can be observed that although the above average students are better in almost all of the error categories investigated, they still produce a large amount of errors on the whole. Many of the above average students examined do not in fact perform their tasks exceptionally. This poses the question as to what extent teacher's are to blame for this. It would be interesting to look at what teaching methods they employ, whether the topics are revised at certain intervals, and whether the students are given enough opportunity to actively participate in the lesson. When I distributed the exams for this investigation, a student told me, *"Wissen Sie, Frau Professor, wenn wir lernen sind wir gut."* She said that she actually found the exam extremely difficult and if I had let her know beforehand, she would have had enough time to study which would have resulted in a better performance. I think this student's statement really explains a lot. It clearly shows that the rules taught have not been stored in the student's long-term memory yet due to lack of practice. This reveals that individual rules have been dealt with but that they have not revised in particular intervals to make them more resistant to errors.

In this context the question of the reliability of marks arises. It would be of great interest to examine whether the marks from the 36 tested students are really justified. Are all of the under average students really under average, and do all the above average students really deserve the English marks 1 and 2?

What this study, above all other things, clearly reveals is that the under average students and the above average students differ in particular with regard to verbal intelligence, their degree of assiduity, their degree of active participation in class, and the frequency of doing homework. From this it can be concluded that the poorer learners need to be more actively involved in the learning processes.

It is important to create conditions where even the poorer learners are motivated and even 'pushed' to take part. Group work, pair work as well as presentations are optimal opportunities to make learners actively involved in the lesson. This is the least a teacher can contribute to the students' language learning development. What a teacher cannot influence is what actually happens at home, whether the students do their homework, whether they study enough and whether they employ meaningful strategies. Even in this sense, the teacher can only motivate the students to learn and tell them the amount of work necessary to gain proficiency. In this context, I dare to say that also parents can contribute a lot to the learning process of their children in that they, for example, look after their children, motivate them to study, help them with school issues, and generally do not expect too much. Children should not feel the pressure in order to keep the pleasure. It would go beyond the scope of this paper to go into further details here. The question of how parents can influence their children's learning process is definitely not easy to answer, least of all within this limited framework. I am convinced that parents can contribute to their children's success but also that they can hinder it to a great extent. It would be interesting for future research to look at how parents can hinder and speed up the process of learning.

Finally, it would be of interest to investigate whether success in foreign language is limited to language aptitude. In other words, it would be interesting to analyze what happened if the less proficient students did their homework more often, and if they participated more actively in class. Would they improve, and by how much would they improve? Is there a limit which they cannot go beyond?

To conclude this discussion I want to emphasize that the data sample refers to a rather small number of only 18 above average students and 18 under average students. It would be fascinating to investigate the same issue with a larger data sample to find out whether these findings equally correspond to a larger framework.

As this section reveals, a great number of factors can be made responsible for success and failure in language learning. Furthermore, it is not easy to find out which factors are most responsible as the cause is usually a combination of several factors. In brief, there is still a huge number of questions that need to be answered in the vast field of foreign language learning.

16. Abstract

On the one hand, the aim of this study was to analyze and categorize errors committed by above average students and under average students in their written English performance and then compare the differences between the two groups. On the other hand, I intended to identify possible factors responsible for the success and failure of the selected subjects.

In order to carry out this study I tested students with an average age of 12, who were learning English as a foreign language in a classroom setting. From the total number of students tested, 18 were under average with a final mark of 4 or 5, and 18 were above average with a final mark of 1 or 2. The students attended grammar schools in the districts 6, 8, 10, 15, 17, and 22 in Vienna. The study excluded students with a mother tongue other than German, and those with dyslexia and any other type of spelling disorder. All of the students had already been exposed to two years of English input.

The subjects were tested with the effort avoidance test (AVT) developed by Rollett and Bartram (1977), the CFT 20 (Weiß, 1987), and a questionnaire on motivation, attitudes, behaviour in the English lesson and time spent on home-study. Furthermore, the students had to take a written exam to assess their grammatical knowledge of the English language. Error categories were established on the basis of this exam, and the differences between the selected under average students and above average students within these categories were analyzed.

The AVT showed a significant difference between the two groups in the assiduity scale but not in the effort-avoidance scale. In addition, the CFT 20 revealed that the above average students score higher with regard to verbal intelligence.

The students also differ in specific aspects regarding their classroom behaviour and home-study behaviour. In particular, the above average students show a more favourable behaviour in the English lesson, in that they take part more frequently.

On the contrary, the under average students do not participate regularly and chat more frequently during the English lesson. In addition, the findings reveal that the under average students are more afraid of their English teacher. Concerning the general pleasure derived from the subject English, the above average students look forward to the English lesson more, and they are generally more fond of the English lesson than the under average students. The two groups also differ considerably in some aspects relating to home-study behaviour. They show significant differences in the frequency of doing homework, in that the above average students do their homework on a more regular basis compared to the under average students.

On the other hand, the above average students and the under average students do not differ significantly in motivational and attitudinal factors. In other words, they do not differ in the degree of perceived motivation and praise, and in their attitude towards the English language. Interestingly, although the above average students actually do their homework on a more regular basis, they do not necessarily spend more time on home-study. That is to say, they do not study more after school than the under average students. The findings also highlight that whether the students study on their own or with the help of someone else is irrelevant for language learning success. Surprisingly, none of the students tested indicated English as their favourite subject. Hence, even excellent students do not seem to like English more than less successful ones. What is also astonishing is that the under average students do not copy their homework from someone else more often than the above average students.

Furthermore, the two groups do not differ in the amount of attention paid to the teacher, interest in the lesson, and request for further explanation. All of the students, regardless of the level of proficiency, additionally show a similar behaviour when it comes to asking the teacher to repeat or elaborate on explanations.

As the error analysis clearly shows, the under average students committed considerably more errors in almost each error category examined. It was, for example, far more difficult for under average students to distinguish *present simple* and *present progressive* (chapter 14.4.1). The use of *do* and *does* for present simple questions also caused significantly more difficulties for under average students, because they either did not use the auxiliary or it was wrongly spelled (chapter 14.4.2 & 14.5.2). In addition, significant differences occurred in the irregular verbs task where the students were merely supposed to learn the words by heart (chapter 14.4.3). The comparison task revealed a significant difference between the two groups in only one of the four sentences (chapter 14.4.4).

The students also differed significantly in the degree of German language influence in their written texts (chapter 15.5.1), and in the use of the correct past simple tense in the holiday report (chapter 15.5.3). No significant difference could be found when it came to the use of given words in texts (chapter 14.5.4).

In brief, this thesis tried to show that the *interlanguage* of the under average students tested is indeed less developed and much more chaotic than that of the above average students, resulting in a higher amount of alien, non-native English constructions by the less proficient learners in nearly every linguistic field investigated.

Zusammenfassung

Das Ziel dieser Untersuchung war einerseits, Englischschularbeiten von guten und schlechten Englischschülern zu analysieren und die Fehler zu kategorisieren um die Unterschiede zwischen den beiden Gruppen festzustellen. Weiters sollten mögliche Ursachen für die guten und schlechten Leistungen der Schüler herausgefunden werden.

Für diese Untersuchung wurden Schüler, die im Durchschnitt 12 Jahre alt waren und Englisch als lebende Fremdsprachen in der Schule lernten, getestet. Von den insgesamt 36 Schülern, erbrachten 18 davon unterdurchschnittliche Leistungen, mit den Noten 4 oder 5 im Zeugnis, während die restlichen 18 überdurchschnittliche Leistungen mit der Zeugnisnote 1 oder 2 vorweisen konnten. Die Schüler kamen aus 6 verschiedenen Gymnasien in Wien, aus den Bezirken 6, 8, 10, 15, 17 und 22. Schüler mit nicht Deutscher Muttersprache und Schüler mit Legasthenie oder anderen Rechtschreibschwächen durften an der Untersuchung nicht teilnehmen.

Die Versuchspersonen wurden mit dem Anstrengungsvermeidungstest (AVT) von Rollett und Bartram (1977), dem Wortschatztest CFT 20 von Weiß (1987) und einem Fragebogen getestet. Der Fragebogen beinhaltete Fragen zu Motivation, Einstellung, Verhalten in der Englischstunde und dem Übungsverhalten zu Hause. Außerdem mussten die Schüler eine Schularbeit schreiben, damit ihr Grammatikwissen des Englischen getestet werden konnte. Diese Schularbeit stellte die Basis für die Entwicklung von Fehlerkategorien dar, die als Vergleich der guten und schlechten Schüler dienen sollten.

Das Ergebnis des Anstrengungsvermeidungstests zeigte einen signifikanten Unterschied in der Skala Pflichteifer, jedoch nicht in der Skala Anstrengungsvermeidung. Weiters zeigte der CFT 20, dass die überdurchschnittlichen Schüler im Bereich verbaler Intelligenz besser abschnitten.

Die Schüler unterschieden sich auch in einzelnen Bereichen bezüglich des Verhaltens im Unterricht und des Übungsverhaltens zu Hause. Es zeigte sich, im Besonderen, dass die besseren Schüler viel öfter im Unterricht teilnehmen während die schlechteren Schüler nicht regelmäßig am Englischunterricht teilnahmen und zudem signifikant häufiger schwätzten. Außerdem enthüllten die Ergebnisse, dass die schlechteren Schüler mehr Angst vor dem Englischlehrer hatten. Was die allgemeine Freude am Englischunterricht betrifft, freuen sich die guten Schüler mehr auf die Englischstunde als die schlechten Schüler. Die Gruppen unterscheiden sich auch in Bereichen des Übungsverhaltens zu Hause. Schlechte Schüler machen signifikant weniger oft Hausübung.

Andererseits unterscheiden sich die guten von den schlechten Schülern nicht signifikant in den Bereichen Motivation durch Eltern, und dem Lehrer und der Einstellung zur englischen Sprache. Beide Gruppen gaben an, das gleiche Ausmaß an Lob und Motivation zu erhalten. Interessanterweise machen die guten Schüler zwar regelmäßiger die Englischhausübung, aber sie üben nicht unbedingt mehr zu Hause für das Fach Englisch. Weiters wurde herausgefunden, dass es keine Rolle für den Lernerfolg spielt, ob die Schüler alleine lernen oder mit jemand anderem.

Überraschenderweise gab keiner der 36 Schüler Englisch als sein/ihr Lieblingsfach an. Die guten Schüler scheinen also Englisch nicht wirklich mehr zu mögen. Weiters ist interessant, dass die schlechten Schüler die Hausübung nicht öfter abschreiben als die guten.

Die guten und schlechten Schüler unterscheiden sich ebenfalls nicht im Ausmaß in dem sie dem Englischlehrer/der Englischlehrerin zuhören und im Interesse am Englischunterricht. Gute Schüler fragen auch nicht öfter nach, wenn sie etwas nicht verstanden haben.

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19. Appendix

19.1 CFT 20 Wortschatztest

AUFGABEN	ANTWORTEN
1) Besteck	a) Hecke b) Löffel c) Steckdose d) Teller e) Hindernis
2) Bluse	a) Hemd b) Wind c) Anzug d) Apparat e) Stärke
3) Laune	a) Zauberei b) Verständnis c) Krankheit d) Traum e) Stimmung
4) informieren	a) zusammenstellen b) verändern c) Auskunft geben d) aufpassen e) genehmigen
5) Garderobe	a) Fahrzeug b) Kirche c) Truppe d) Kleideraufbewahrung e) Gegensatz
6) Prozess	a) Gebühr b) Umzug c) Rechtsstreit d) Schöffe e) Fund
7) Patient	a) Kranker b) Gruppe c) Pille d) Verwandter d) Kunde
8) Schal	a) Möbel b) Raubtier c) Halstuch d) Mantel e) König
9) Zweifel	a) Ärger b) Unsicherheit c) Vertrauen d) Gewissen e) Hoffnung
10) Phantasie	a) Form b) Grundsatz c) Trugbild d) Vorstellungsgabe e) Verstand
11) Anwalt	a) Scheidung b) Landschaft c) Gehalt d) Ansicht e) Verteidiger
12) Miete	a) Wohnung b) Schwäche c) Haus d) Geldbetrag e) Gewinn
13) Athlet	a) Maske b) Gewicht c) Bergkuppe d) Komiker e) Sportler
14) Paragraph	a) Schreibzeug b) Gesetzesabschnitt c) südamer. Land d) Erklärung e) Gegensatz
15) Symphonie	a) Zusammenfassung b) Versammlungshaus c) Takt d) Musikstück e) Zuneigung
16) Bewusstsein	a) Wachheit b) Religion c) Schlaf d) Geiz e) Gewissen
17) Vergnügen	a) Schönheit b) Bequemlichkeit c) Freude d) Bescheidenheit e) Liebe
18) Rabatt	a) Empfangsbescheinigung b) Menge c) Begrenzung d) Briefmarke e) Preisnachlass
19) Aggression	a) Angriff b) Strafe c) Verteidigung d) Hoffnung e) Hemmung
20) Genuss	a) Kunst b) Sucht c) Honig d) Abenteuer e) Wohlbehagen
21) Urteil	a) Ergebnis b) Hinweis c) Schiedsspruch d) Abneigung e) Neid
22) Existenz	a) Vertrauen b) Dasein c) Gewinn d) Ansicht e) Verbannung
23) Resultat	a) Schwingung b) Vortrag c) Ausweisung d) Ergebnis e) Wiederherstellung
24) Chaos	a) Durcheinander b) Beschädigung c) Währung d) Ärger e) Demonstration
25) Sehnsucht	a) Liebe b) Gewinn c) Wunsch d) Freude e) Glück
26) Charakter	a) Anmut b) Unzuverlässigkeit c) Fleiß d) Eigenart e) Kategorie
27) konsumieren	a) genießen b) verbrauchen c) süchtig d) versuchen e) zusammenzählen
28) Droge	a) Betäubungsmittel b) Reitertruppe c) Apotheke d) Getreide e) Spritze
29) ironisch	a) böse b) spöttisch c) uneinig d) humorvoll e) einfühlsam
30) dementieren	a) abordnen b) zurücktreten c) vorführen d) zerstören widerrufen

19.2 AVT

	stimmt	stimmt nicht
1 Mein Taschengeld spare ich, damit ich mir dann etwas besonders Schönes kaufen kann.	☐	☐
2 Meine Mutter will immer gerade dann, dass ich ihr helfe, wenn eine gute Sendung im Fernsehen läuft.	☐	☐
3 Ich arbeite nicht gern, wenn ich es tun muss.	☐	☐
4 Es passiert mir oft, dass ich gar nicht höre, wenn der Lehrer (die Lehrerin) uns Aufgaben gegeben hat.	☐	☐
5 Ich habe keine Lust mehr zu arbeiten, wenn ich an das Spielen denke.	☐	☐
6 Morgens gehe ich schon früh von zu Hause weg, damit ich nicht zu spät zur Schule komme.	☐	☐
7 Wenn man dafür nicht soviel arbeiten müsste, wäre ich gern ein guter Schüler.	☐	☐
8 Wenn ich einmal in der Schule etwas nicht gekonnt habe, dann versuche ich es nachzulernen.	☐	☐
9 In der Schule werde ich oft nicht fertig, weil mein Nachbar mich stört.	☐	☐
10 Ich vergesse öfter etwas.	☐	☐
11 Wenn ich arbeite, muss ich immer daran denken, was ich jetzt Schöneres machen könnte.	☐	☐
12 Mit meinen Aufgaben werde ich oft nicht fertig, weil ich dazwischen zu lange nachdenken muss.	☐	☐
13 Wenn ich im Unterricht etwas nicht verstanden habe, dann frage ich einen anderen, ob er es mir erklärt.	☐	☐
14 Ich kann nichts dafür, wenn ich mir das, was ich auswendig lernen soll, nicht merken kann.	☐	☐
15 Mein Lehrer (meine Lehrerin) sagt oft, dass ich schneller arbeiten soll.	☐	☐
16 Vor einer Arbeit (einem Test) lerne ich besonders fleißig, damit ich sie (ihn) gut schaffe.	☐	☐
17 Wenn ich einmal in der Schule gefehlt habe, dann frage ich einen Schulkameraden, was wir in dieser Zeit gelernt haben und lerne es nach.	☐	☐
18 Wenn draußen die Sonne scheint, kann ich einfach nicht arbeiten.	☐	☐
19 Ich habe oft Langeweile.	☐	☐
20 Ich sehe morgens immer nach, ob ich alles in der Schultasche habe (ob ich alles bei mir habe) was ich brauche.	☐	☐

	stimmt	stimmt nicht
21 Warum soll ich am Wochenende lernen, wenn die anderen Leute auch nicht arbeiten.	☐	☐
22 Ich verstehe überhaupt nicht, warum man das Einmaleins auswendig lernen soll.	☐	☐
23 Die Lehrer verwenden zu viele Wörter, die ich nicht verstehe.	☐	☐
24 Wenn ich keine Hausaufgaben aufbekäme, könnte ich in der Schule viel besser aufpassen.	☐	☐
25 Ich kann doch nichts dafür, wenn ich in der Schule schlecht bin.	☐	☐
26 Ich bemühe mich, dass meine Hefte sauber und ordentlich aussehen.	☐	☐
27 Bei Übungsaufgaben schreibe ich nicht ab, weil man nur etwas lernt, wenn man es selbst versucht.	☐	☐
28 Ich kann meine Aufgaben nicht ordentlich machen, weil ich immer gestört werde.	☐	☐
29 Rechtschreibung ist nicht wichtig, man könnte ja auch alles ganz anders schreiben.	☐	☐
30 Meine Nachbarn wollen sich öfter von mir Sachen leihen, weil ich immer alles dabei habe.	☐	☐
31 In der Schule machen wir viele Dinge, die wir doch gar nicht gebrauchen.	☐	☐
32 Wenn ich mich bei einer Aufgabe verschrieben habe, mache ich sie noch einmal.	☐	☐
33 Wenn der Lehrer (die Lehrerin) vergessen hat, die Hausaufgabenhefte (Übungshefte) einzusammeln, dann erinnere ich ihn (sie) daran.	☐	☐
34 Ich kann nur gut arbeiten, wenn ich mich vorher ausgeruht habe.	☐	☐
35 Was mich nicht interessiert, will ich gar nicht machen.	☐	☐
36 Wenn ich lange schreiben muss, werde ich ganz müde.	☐	☐
37 Ich freue mich, wenn meine Eltern mit mir für die Schule üben.	☐	☐
38 Der Lehrer (die Lehrerin) nimmt mich nie dran, wenn ich aufzeige, warum soll ich mich dann melden.	☐	☐
39 In der Klasse ist es immer so laut, dass man gar nicht richtig aufpassen kann.	☐	☐
40 Wenn ich eine Arbeit angefangen habe, höre ich erst auf, wenn ich damit fertig bin.	☐	☐
41 Ich würde den ganzen Vormittag im Bett bleiben, wenn ich könnte.	☐	☐

19.3 Questionnaire

Fragebogen für die Schüler

1) **Geschlecht:** ☐ männlich

☐ weiblich

2) **Alter:** Jahre _____

Monate _____

3) **Schulstufe & Schultyp:** _____

Name & Bezirk der Schule: _____

4) **Legastheniker?** ☐ ja

nein ☐

5) **Was ist dein Lieblingsfach?**

6) **Was sind deine 3 Lieblingsfächer?**

Leistungsbild:

7) **In wie vielen Fächern hattest du letztes Semester eine 5 im Zeugnis?**

☐ in keinem

☐ in einem

☐ in zwei

☐ in mehr als zwei

8) **Welche Zeugnisnote hattest du letztes Semester in Englisch?**

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

9) **Welche Zeugnisnote bekommst du dieses Semester in Englisch?**

Merkmal Unterrichtsverhalten:

10) **Gehst du gerne in den Englischunterricht?**

☐ sehr

☐ etwas

☐ weniger

☐ gar nicht

11) **Freust du dich auf den Englischunterricht?**

☐ sehr

☐ etwas

☐ weniger

☐ gar nicht

12) **Bist du am Englischunterricht interessiert?**

☐ sehr

☐ etwas

☐ weniger

☐ gar nicht

13) Arbeitest du im Englischunterricht mit?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

14) Schwätzt du im Englischunterricht?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

15) Hörst du dem Englischlehrer/ der Englischlehrerin zu?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

16) Wenn du im Englischunterricht etwas nicht verstehst, fragst du deinen Englischlehrer/ deine Englischlehrerin ob er/sie es noch einmal erklärt?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

Merkmal Einstellung zum Englischlehrer/ zur Englischlehrerin und Motivation durch Lehrer/in:

17) Magst du deinen Englischlehrer/deine Englischlehrerin?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

18) Ist dein Englischlehrer/deine Englischlehrerin streng?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

19) Hast du Angst vor deinem Englischlehrer/deiner Englischlehrerin?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

20) Wirst du von deinem Englischlehrer/ deiner Englischlehrerin für gute Leistungen gelobt?

- ☐ immer ☐ manchmal ☐ nie ☐ Ich schaffe keine guten Englischleistungen.

21) Wirst du von deinem Englischlehrer/ deiner Englischlehrerin für schlechte Leistungen demotiviert?

☐ immer ☐ manchmal ☐ nie ☐ Ich habe keine schlechten Englischleistungen.

22) Motiviert dich dein Englischlehrer/deine Englischlehrerin?

☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

Merkmal Motivation durch Eltern:

23) Wirst du von deinen Eltern für gute Leistungen in Englisch gelobt?

☐ immer ☐ manchmal ☐ nie ☐ Ich schaffe keine guten Englischleistungen.

24) Kaufen dir deine Eltern etwas oder geben sie dir Geld, wenn du in Englisch gute Noten hast?

☐ immer ☐ manchmal ☐ nie ☐ Ich schaffe keine guten Englischnoten.

25) Schimpfen deine Eltern mit dir oder bestrafen sie dich, wenn du schlechte Noten in Englisch hast?

☐ immer ☐ manchmal ☐ nie ☐ Ich habe keine schlechten Englischleistungen.

26) Glaubst du, dass dich deine Eltern weniger lieb haben, wenn du schlechte Englischnoten nach Hause bringst?

☐ ja ☐ eher ja ☐ eher nein ☐ nein

Merkmal Übungsverhalten:

27) Was trifft für dich am ehesten zu?

- a) Es macht mir überhaupt nichts aus, wenn ich zu Hause etwas für den Englischunterricht arbeiten muss. ☐
- b) Es macht mir nicht unbedingt viel aus, wenn ich zu Hause etwas für den Englischunterricht arbeiten muss. ☐
- c) Es macht mir etwas aus, wenn ich zu Hause etwas für den Englischunterricht arbeiten muss. ☐

28) Machst du deine Englischhausübungen ... ?

☐ immer ☐ meistens ☐ fast nie ☐ nie

29) Schreibst du deine Englisch HÜS ab?

☐ immer ☐ meistens ☐ fast nie ☐ nie

30) Wie oft pro Woche gibt es Englischhausübung?

- ☐ jedes Mal ☐ fast jedes Mal ☐ fast nie ☐ nie

31) Was trifft für dich zu?

- a) Ich lerne Englisch nur vor Tests (Grammatiktest, Vokabelwiederholung) und Schularbeiten. ☐
 b) Ich lerne auch manchmal Englisch wenn keine Schularbeit (Test) vor der Tür steht. ☐

32) Ich mache jede Woche etwas für das Fach Englisch.

- ☐ trifft zu ☐ trifft meistens zu ☐ trifft weniger zu ☐ trifft nicht zu

33) Ich mache jeden Tag etwas für das Fach Englisch.

- ☐ trifft zu ☐ trifft nicht zu

34) Ich mache mindestens an 4 Tagen pro Woche etwas für Englisch.

- ☐ trifft zu ☐ trifft nicht zu

35) Lernst du für Englisch alleine? ☐ immer ☐ meistens ☐ nie**36) Lernst du Englisch lieber**

- ☐ alleine ☐ mit jemand anderem ☐ egal

Merkmal Einstellung zur Englischen Sprache:**37) Gefällt dir die Englische Sprache?**

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht

38) Findest du es sinnvoll, Englisch zu lernen?

- ☐ sehr ☐ etwas ☐ weniger ☐ gar nicht
 Wenn sehr/etwas, warum? Wenn weniger/gar nicht, warum nicht?

39) Ich lerne Englisch nur weil ich muss

- ☐ trifft zu ☐ trifft eher zu ☐ trifft eher nicht zu ☐ trifft gar nicht zu

40) Wenn ich es mir aussuchen könnte, würde ich

- ☐ Englisch lernen wollen ☐ Englisch nicht lernen wollen

19.4 The Written Exam

Check-Up für die 2.AHS

Juni 2008

1) Setze die Verben in die richtige Zeit: Present Simple oder Present Progressive/Continuous?

- a) Look! It _____ (rain) very hard.
- b) Can you _____ (see) her? She _____ (hide) behind the curtains.
- c) Sandra usually _____ (not have) breakfast in the morning.
- d) She normally _____ (enjoy) a cup of coffee after lunch.
- e) Listen! She _____ (sing) very loudly today.
- f) My father _____ (watch) the news every day.
- g) Tom, _____ (you do) your homework or _____ (you read)?
- h) _____ your mother often _____ (make) pizza?
- i) Peter _____ (can) play football very well.
- j) A: Can you _____ trees? (climb) B: Yes, of course.

2) Frage nach den unterstrichenen Satzteilen (NICHT nach dem ganzen Satz!)

- a) Spongebob cooks burgers in a restaurant.
- b) Mickey reads Harry Potter books after school.
- c) Bob likes building houses.
- d) Peter always watches 'Tom and Jerry' on TV.

3) Setze die Verben in die Present (1.Spalte) und Past (2. Spalte). (z.B. gehen=go-went)

brechen	_____	_____	bringen	_____	_____
fühlen	_____	_____	verlassen	_____	_____
sein	_____	_____	haben	_____	_____
kaufen	_____	_____	fallen	_____	_____
fangen	_____	_____	bekommen	_____	_____

4) Comparison: Steigerung (z.B. schön-schöner-am Schönsten)

- a) Cristiano Ronaldo is the _____ (good) football player in the world.
- b) David Beckham is _____ (interesting) than Ronaldinho .
- c) Toni is the _____ (big) fan of Manchester United.
- d) The Austrian football team is the _____ (bad) of all.

- 5) Schreibe einen kurzen Text über dich selbst. Folgendes muss enthalten sein (Name, Alter, Geburtsdatum, Wohnort, Aussehen: Haare, Augen, Freizeitaktivitäten, Was magst/tust du sonst noch gerne? Was kannst du gut?...)
- 5) Schreibe einen Dialog. Du triffst eine Person, die du noch nie zuvor gesehen hast und möchtest Folgendes über sie wissen: Name, Alter, wann sein/ihr Geburtstag ist, Wohnort, Freizeitaktivitäten, ob er/sie Geschwister hat, wer sein/ihr bester Freund ist und warum.
- 7) Schreibe einen kurzen Text über deine Sommerferien. Was hast du gemacht? Du kannst auch eine Feriengeschichte erfinden. (mindestens 10 Sätze)
- 8) Schreibe eine spannende Geschichte mit folgenden Wörtern. Alle Wörter MÜSSEN im Text vorkommen. Die Reihenfolge ist egal. (mindestens 10 Sätze)

wood- fell down- bear-climbed a tree- rainy-afraid

Lebenslauf

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