A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE ROLE OF CONTEXT IN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE FROM A PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

ESTUDIO LONGITUDINAL DE LA FUNCIÓN DEL CONTEXTO EN EL DISCURSO DEL AULA DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA PRAGMÁTICA

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To my parents

A mis padres

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Caminante, son tus huellas
el camino y nada más;
caminante, no hay camino,
se hace camino al andar

—Antonio Machado

This work entails, overall, twelve years of my life. During all this time, there was a constant need to finish what had been started more than a decade ago. Finally, here it is.

One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers,
but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings

—Carl Jung

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Be true to your work, your word and your friends.

—Henry David Thoreau

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Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me;
I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend.

— Albert Camus

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My north, my south, my east and west, my working week and my
Sunday rest, my noon, my midnight, my talk, my song.

—W. H. Auden

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For those things that are yet still to come, for those places that are yet to be visited, for those souls that are yet to be loved. The journey is just beginning and I will be awaiting you all.

Laura Maguire

Presentación y resumen de la investigación[1]

Al tratar de definir el concepto de “contexto”, las propuestas más destacadas serán las que hacen referencia a las condiciones interrelacionadas que hacen que algo suceda, ya sean ambientales o relacionadas con las situaciones en que se producen. Ahondando en el aspecto más lingüístico de la palabra, se puede decir que “contexto” se refiere a todo lo que rodea una parte de discurso y enmarca su significado. Aunque cierto, todo lo anteriormente mencionado resulta a todas luces insuficiente para comprender el complejo concepto que estamos tratando de desarrollar. La naturaleza del contexto, según explica la Pragmática en general, es tan heterogénea que muchos autores han tratado de definirla, tanto desde una perspectiva empírica como desde una más teórica (Akman *et al.* 2001, Blackburn *et al.* 2003).

En el presente estudio, el centro de atención se encuentra en cómo el contexto afecta a la comunicación, en cómo la dependencia del contexto está relacionada con el éxito o el fracaso de los actos comunicativos y en cómo la intrínseca faceta dinámica del contexto resulta esencial para entender el modo en que la gente transmite un mensaje determinado y, en última instancia, logra el éxito del acto comunicativo.

El contexto puede verse como un mero conjunto de proposiciones, haciendo de este modo caso omiso de tendencias como el *análisis conversacional* (Heritage 1984, Schegloff 1992), la *sociolingüística* (Gumperz 2003) o la *sociopragmática* (Fetzer 2004, 2010). Lo que estas tendencias tienen en común (en contraste con el punto de vista proposicional) es que consideran al propio contexto como un proceso social y como un producto al mismo tiempo. El contexto ya no es un concepto aislado y autónomo, sino que se ve como un elemento relacional con la capacidad de variar, modificar y cambiar en función de distintas variables, como los significados sociales, las interacciones culturales, etcétera.

Esta tesis se basa en el Modelo Dinámico del Significado (DMM por sus siglas en inglés: *Dynamic Model of Meaning*) desarrollado por Kecskes (2004, 2006a, 2006b y 2008a). Este modelo concreto es el que servirá de marco para toda la tesis, ya que propone posibles soluciones a la mayoría de los puntos más débiles de las teorías sobre el contexto anteriormente mencionadas. En primer lugar, el modelo se centra en la creación del significado y propone que el contexto situacional no es el único contexto posible (Barsalou 1993; Evans 2006; Porayska-Pomsta 2003). Por el contrario, se basa en experiencias previas que ayudan al hablante a transmitir un mensaje y ser comprendido por los interlocutores. Asimismo, el modelo de Kecskes tiene en cuenta los aspectos socioculturales de la lengua.

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[1] Este apartado ofrece una breve presentación a la investigación en castellano, requisito del Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

Motivación

La principal motivación para llevar a cabo el presente estudio se divide realmente en tres. En primer lugar, el interés por completar la teoría del DMM en aquellos casos en los que surgieron problemas de comunicación entre los interlocutores. Tras haber revisado la literatura existente sobre el DMM, a la autora le pareció evidente que este modelo necesitaba ser ligeramente modificado si se deseaba aplicarlo a los casos en que los interlocutores no eran adultos monolingües, ya que todo el modelo se basa en lo que podríamos llamar una «comunicación estándar»; es decir, un hablante, un mensaje que llega al oyente y un oyente que entiende el mensaje.

Aunque el DMM sí tuvo en cuenta aspectos interculturales (Kecskes y Zhang 2009) y relacionados con la L2 (Jiang 2000, Kecskes y Cuenca 2005, o el Modelo Lingüístico Dual (*Dual Language Model* en inglés) presentado por Kecskes en 2006) el modelo no logra tratar con éxito el uso de los tres contextos propuestos (lingüístico, situacional y privado) cuando los interlocutores son niños aprendiendo una L2 en un contexto escolar.

Objetivos de investigación y proposiciones

Esta tesis sigue el enfoque metodológico cualitativo; por lo tanto, en lugar de las hipótesis típicas del análisis cuantitativo, se emplea la forma cualitativa equivalente de organizar el análisis de los datos, es decir, se utilizan proposiciones (Yin 2003).

Stake (1995), Baxter y Jack (2008) o Yin (2003) afirman que una pregunta de estudio adecuada debe proporcionar el porqué. En otras palabras, cuáles son las metas, los objetivos y los propósitos del estudio y por qué éste debería ser de interés para el mundo académico.

PREGUNTA DE ESTUDIO

¿Por qué?

El objetivo es llenar el vacío en la literatura existente sobre los tres contextos proporcionados por el DMM (lingüístico, situacional y privado) con el fin de explicar los problemas de comunicación en la interacción profesor-niños en el discurso del aula, para lo cual se crea un cuarto elemento del contexto: el contexto de la gestión adaptativa (*adaptive management* en inglés).

¿Cómo?

Los autores antes mencionados indican claramente que la pregunta de investigación principal de un estudio cualitativo debe incluir también el cómo. En este caso en particular, he desarrollado la pregunta de investigación en dos subpreguntas, puesto que los datos muestran diferencias cualitativas que deben analizarse tanto si el malentendido en el proceso comunicativo se evita como si no.

PREGUNTAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Pregunta de investigación principal

¿Cómo funciona la interacción profesor-niño en el discurso en el aula cuando los tres contextos mencionados anteriormente no son compartidos por los hablantes y la comunicación no tiene éxito?

Subpregunta 1 de la investigación

¿Utiliza el profesor ciertas estrategias para evitar una posible interrupción de la comunicación? Si es así, ¿cuáles?

Subpregunta 2 de la investigación

Cuando la comunicación entre el profesor y el niño no tiene éxito, ¿cuál de los tres contextos primarios (lingüístico, situacional o privado) es el que da lugar al malentendido? ¿Cuál es el que no comparten ambos interlocutores?

PROPOSICIONES

Proposición 1

La comunicación se ve afectada por la madurez cognitiva de los interlocutores cuando no se comparte un conocimiento o experiencia previa de la situación.

Proposición 2

Siguiendo la categorización que la gestión adaptativa hace de las estrategias reparadoras utilizadas para que la conversación fluya sin complicaciones, deberían hallarse diferencias cualitativas con respecto a los dos tipos básicos de estrategias: operativas y de participación (*operative* e *involvement* en inglés).

Proposición 3

Se analizan los tres contextos (lingüístico, situacional o privado) siguiendo el DMM. Deberían hallarse diferencias cualitativas en cuanto a los problemas de comunicación o, en algunos casos, a los malentendidos que se producen en la comunicación y que están relacionados con el desarrollo cognitivo de los sujetos.

Proposición 4

El estudio longitudinal muestra el contraste y la variación de los datos a medida que el estudio progresa, validando así aún más las proposiciones 1, 2 y 3.

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Part I

CHAPTER 1.
INTRODUCTION

> *Processing contexts and establishing repositories of contexts in the mind have both individual specific elements and common elements. That is why communication is full of misunderstandings.*
>
> (Kecskes 2008a: 390)

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1.1. CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

In an attempt to explain the phenomenon of language in humans, linguists, neurolinguists, psychologists and philosophers have developed a vast number of research projects and put forward many theories. The first debates among them focused on the faculty of language as such, and whether it was acquired (Skinner 1957) or innate (Chomsky 1968). New technologies now allow for a deeper insight into what goes on in the brain in relation to the creation and interpretation of language, and, thus, the acquisition of a first language (L1) is still the object of much research, especially from a neurological perspective.

Once it had been generally acknowledged by scholars that the L1 was *acquired* thanks to an *innate endowment* for language, attention diverted to elucidating whether speakers of languages other than their native language (i.e. L2 speakers) had also acquired or rather learned that L2. With this in mind, all sorts of possible factors were examined, including neurological, psychological and external elements.

All this research provided very insightful and useful information for teachers, who could from that moment be aware of the several factors affecting the learning process of their students and be more sensitive to their differences and needs. Some of the key factors for L2 acquisition and learning are the student's profile and age, the kind of input received or the context and situation in which the learning process takes place (Ellis 1994, Krashen 1982). In fact, it is the relevance of context for the understanding and acquisition of an L2 that sets the ground for the present dissertation.

In trying to define the concept of "context", the most salient proposal is the one dealing with interrelated conditions that make something happen, whether environmental or related to the settings in which they occur. Delving into the linguistic aspect of the word, one may say that context refers to all that surrounds a part of discourse and frames its meaning. Nonetheless, even a combination of these two proposals would be clearly insufficient to comprehend the complex concept we are trying to unfold. The nature of context, as explained by Pragmatics in general, is so heterogeneous that many authors have tried to define it, both from an empirical and from a more theoretical perspective (Akman *et al.* 2001, Blackburn *et al.* 2003).

In the present dissertation, the main aim is to focus on how context affects communication, how context-dependency is connected to successful communicative acts and how the intrinsic dynamic facet of context is essential to understand how people convey a given message, and ultimately, achieve a successful communicative act. In the words of Fetzer and Oishi:

> The theoretical construct of context has been described in different research paradigms, and depending on their goals, various aspects have been highlighted, such as the importation and invocation of context in pragmatics and in social-interaction-based paradigms, as a psychological construct in relevance theory and in cognitive grammar, or as a set of antecedent premises which are required for a speech act or discourse to be felicitous.
>
> (Fetzer and Oishi 2011: 2)

Throughout my study, I take into account the literature on Sperber and Wilsons's Relevance Theory, as well as the basic classic authors in Pragmatics, such as Grice (1957), Austin (1962), Searle (1969) or Brown and Levinson (1978). As seen from the quote by Fetzer and Oishi, all these authors and their theories have helped Pragmatics to move forward in the understanding of context, and, although, these theories are not the aim of this dissertation, they are, indeed, the foundations on which the more modern, and updated, definition of context has its grounds.

As early as 1962, Austin already hinted the idea that, in order for any speech act to be considered *real* or situated in reality, it had to be placed within the context in which it was produced. Speech acts were considered by Austin a way to enhance the idea that utterances could be used to perform or assert things, not only to state facts. For Mey (2001: 222) speech acts should always be situated in a given context, and this is what he calls “pragmatic acts”. A pragmatic act is a “situated speech act” seen as creative and proactive.

> All speech acts are to a certain extent created by their contexts, in that the context pre-determines what the speaker is going to say, even before he or she has opened their respective mouths. In other words, the act of speaking obtains its validity and value from the context, which I regard, for that reason, as pro-active.
>
> (Mey 2011: 178)

Context, therefore, should be considered pro-active, but it is also important to revise the Austinian speech act theory when dealing with context, as it only describes the context in which the specific speech acts takes place but does not link it to other factors that are significantly relevant for us, e.g. the way in which speech acts are linked to culture and genre (Mey 2001, Fetzer 2006) or the speaker tries to adapt to the ongoing context (Caffi 2007, Sbisá 2001).

This notion of “adaption” is critical for this dissertation, and is tackled in detail as the dissertation progresses. To get there, previous studies are taken into account, some of which considered that notion in relation to the environment (Edelman 1992), while other authors, like Damasio (1994) or Futuyma (1998), focused on the adaptive nature of context from a neurobiological perspective (i.e. how the brain reacts to contextual changes).

Interesting as these perspectives are, seeing adaptation as a mere change regarding the external environment is, in my opinion, too limited. Although this study deals at some point with cognitive development, it is not from the viewpoint of the Theory of Neuronal Group Selection (TNGS), which follows the Darwinian theory of evolution and deals with higher brain functions that are of no interest for this study. Rather, this work deals with the strategies that speakers use to adapt to conversations. A cognitive stance is taken, where appropriate, following a model that will be developed throughout the following chapters.

It is fair to say, though, that the studies mentioned above do not view adaption, only as a static function of the brain; the dynamism of context (in fact, experience, and learning from experience) is considered a key factor when dealing with external contexts. Moreover, those studies provide a name for the context resulting from the learning experience of the animal or the human being, i.e. the “learning context” (Nyan 2011: 211).

From those studies, two notions are important for our purposes. The first one is the idea that the context is not something static but dynamic. The second point is the relationship between context on the one side, and communication, message and meaning construction on the other side. This aspect of dynamism has been already explored by authors in the field like Duranti and Goodwin (1992). Moreover, relevance theory authors, as well as cognitive grammarians have tackled this issue:

> The dynamics of context is implicit in the relevance-theoretic framework, and it is explicit in cognitive grammar, pragmatics, and social interaction. Moreover, context is seen as both given and reconstructed in interactional sociolinguistics. Against this background, context is no long seen as an analytic prime. Rather, it is dynamic, relational, and a parts-whole configuration.
>
> (Fetzer and Oishi 2011: 2)

The following section starts with the dynamics of context and ends with the theoretical framework for this dissertation.

Dynamic construct of context

One can view context as only a set of propositions, thereby ignoring trends such as *conversation analysis* (Heritage 1984, Schegloff 1992), *sociolinguistics* (Gumperz 2003) or *sociopragmatics* (Fetzer 2004, 2010). What these trends have in common (in contrast with the propositional view) is that they view context in itself both as a social process and as a product. Context is no longer an isolated and autonomous concept; it is seen as a relational element with the ability to vary, modify and change according to different variables, such as social meanings, cultural interactions, etc… In the words of Ochs (1992): "Language systematically varies across social contexts, and such variation is part of the meaning indexed by linguistic structures […] The meanings so indexed are referred to as social meanings" (Ochs 1992: 337).

There are two concepts which are dealt with in great detail in the following chapters but which are pinpointed here as a starting point for discussion in subsequent sections.

The first one is the *static* versus *dynamic* conception of utterances. This is parallel to the contrast between *context-free* and *context-dependent* meaning. There is a complete and thorough discussion of it in chapter 3, where the contributions on the topic made by scholars such as Sperber and Wilson (2002), Fetzer and Fischer (2007) or Kecskes (2008a) are presented.

In this respect, the author's position is that context plays a key role in meaning construction and is dynamic, as opposed to Levinson's (2003) approach:

> The idea that utterances might carry with them their own contexts like a snail carries its home along with it is indeed a peculiar idea if one subscribes to a definition of context that excludes message content, as for example in information theory. Context is then construed as the antecedent set of assumptions against which a message is construed. But it has long been noted in the study of pragmatics that this dichotomy between message and context cannot be the right picture.
>
> (Levinson 2003: 33)

The second concept relates to the view of context as entailing a *common ground shared by the participants* in the conversation. In fact, Zeyrek and Webber (2008) provide a name to this necessary common ground; they call it "discourse context". The concept of "common ground" (or, more specifically, "assumed common ground" as stated by Kecskes and Zhang (2009)) is developed and explained in chapter 3, since this concept is one of the central components of the dynamic structure of context.

So far, a brief overview of the construct of context and its dynamic nature has been provided. The reason for doing so stems from the theoretical background upon which this whole dissertation is based: the Dynamic Model of Meaning as developed by Kecskes (2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2008a).

This particular model serves as a frame for the whole dissertation, as it propounds a solution to most of the flaws found in the aforementioned theories on context. Firstly, the model focuses on the construction of meaning and proposes that the situational context is not the only possible context (Barsalou 1993; Evans 2006; Porayska-Pomsta 2003). On the contrary, it relies on prior experiences which help the speaker to convey a message and to be understood by the interlocutors. Moreover, Kecskes's model takes into account socio-cultural aspects of language. These viewpoints emerge from the conception of language as a dynamic element.

This dynamic approach to meaning and context that the Dynamic Model of Meaning (hereafter DMM) puts forward has its foundations in the work of Goodwin and Duranti (1992) and Gee (1999). These authors talk about the reciprocity of language and context as being essential in communication. This notion is adopted by Kecskes and presented as one of the pivotal elements of his model. Thus, the DMM gives equal importance to the message and the context in which it is uttered.

As for the dynamism of the model, Kecskes (2008a) clarifies in two statements the sources from which he took the idea:

> As Katz (2005) puts it, language is never context free, and as we have seen, is reciprocal.
>
> A theory of meaning which takes into account bilingual and multilingual interactions is key as, nowadays, communication is based on intercultural aspects and diversity (Fauconnier 1997, Rampton 1995).
>
> (*Ibid.*: 389–390)

Given that this study is based on the creation of meaning in a bilingual setting, this model is very adequate to meet our goal and support our data.

There is an important caveat that I would like to highlight at this stage. It has been already claimed that the concept of context is as broad as any definition about this concept can be. In a similar vein, and depending on the theoretical framework under study, there is a whole range of semantic theories which deal with the word "context". We can find in the literature the concepts "contexts of reference", "learning contexts", "encoded contexts", "internalized contexts", "evaluation contexts" or "coded contexts", to name a few. Therefore, and in order to avoid misleading and confusing terminology, the term "context" is used in the present dissertation with the meaning intended in the Dynamic Model of Meaning and the "adaptive management context". These concepts are fully developed and explained in chapter 3.

1.2. MOTIVATIONS OF THE STUDY

The motivations to carry out the present study are threefold. First of all, the interest in completing the theory of the DMM in those cases where communication problems arose between interlocutors. After having reviewed the existing literature on the DMM it seemed clear to the author that this model needed some revision if it was to be applied to those cases where the interlocutors were not monolingual adults, since the whole model is based on what may be called "standard communication" (i.e. a speaker, a message getting to the hearer and a hearer understanding the message).

Although the DMM did take into account intercultural aspects (Kecskes and Zhang 2009) and L2 aspects (Jiang 2000, Kecskes and Cuenca 2005, or the Dual Language Model put forward by Kecskes in 2006b) at some point or other, it does not, to the author's knowledge, account for the use of the three contexts it puts forward (i.e. linguistic, situational and private) when interlocutors are infants learning an L2 in classroom contexts.

The second driving force was to be able to prove with real-life data that my first motivation could be supported. For this purpose, the data gathered in the UAMLESC *Corpus* proved to be the perfect dataset for the study. This *corpus* is a longitudinal *corpus* gathered by a team of researchers at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and which was directed by Dr Jesús Romero-Trillo and Dr Ana Llinares-García. The two directors, together with Dr Silvia Riesco-Bernier and the author of this dissertation were involved in videotaping, transcribing and analysing, over a period of seven years, the spoken discourse of infants studying English in different types of schools in Madrid. The project started in 1998 and finished in 2005. The degree of involvement, commitment and huge effort of the whole team was, and still is, reflected in the amount of publications carried out by the members of this research team; Romero-Trillo and Llinares-García (2001), Llinares-García (2002) Ramirez-Verdugo (2003), Maguire (2002), Romero-Trillo (2002), Riesco-Bernier (2007), Romero-Trillo and Maguire (2011) or Maguire and Romero-Trillo (in press). There was a clear motivation to continue exploiting this rich and unique data to fulfil the first motivation of the study depicted above. If the DMM were to be revised when the interlocutors were infants in classroom discourse, the data for the UAMLESC *Corpus* was a perfect match for this second motivation.

In order to complete the theoretical development of the DMM, the author decided to carry out a single-case study.[2] Having taken part in the collection of the data for the UAMLESC *Corpus* for over 4 years, the author of this dissertation was a solid connoisseur of both the data and the context in which the samples where collected. Therefore, this was a unique opportunity to combine field observation, data gathering and data analysis with the current theory of the DMM through a single-case study.

---

[2] Long conversations with Dr. Krsto Pandza, an expert on case studies and Dr. Oswaldo Lorenzo, expert on qualitative methodology, gave rise to the inner desire to focus on a single-case study and doing a fully qualitative dissertation.

1.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

The contributions are, obviously, rooted in the motivations of the study and in the gaps found in the literature. The contribution is twofold, the first one is a theoretical contribution, and the second is an empirical one.

The DMM is a model which deals with meaning construction and, ultimately, with successful communication. For the author, the most important pillar upon which this model is based is the idea of interrelated contexts. The model develops three contexts (linguistic, situational and private) and explores how they interrelate in communication. All three of them play a crucial role when communicating, and when one or more of them are not shared by both the speaker and the hearer, there is no common ground between them and communication problems arise. (Cf. chapter 3 for a full explanation of all these concepts.)

The DMM provides the theoretical framework and the tools in the model up to the point where communication was altered. However, the model does not provide a solution to communication problems or possible ways to remedy or prevent miscommunication. The theoretical contribution of this dissertation emanates from the need of adding another context to the three existing ones. This fourth context (called “adaptive management context”) provides remedial strategies if a fail in communication is detected. In this sense, the adaptive management context deals with the cognitive processes involved in managing the information supplied by the other contexts in a dynamic and synergic way. (Romero-Trillo and Lenn 2011, Romero-Trillo and Maguire 2011).

In sum, the present dissertation explores the notion of communication from the point of view of the traditions that have considered context as the essential element for the optimal understanding of a message. The contribution describes the historical evolution of the notion of “context”, with special emphasis on the discussion between context-free and context-bound descriptions of interaction, and chooses the Dynamic Model of Meaning as the unifier of these diverging traditions. My proposal represents a further step in the understanding of context by incorporating a fourth element of context, i.e. the adaptive management context, which we deem essential to understand cognitive dynamism. The aim of this dissertation is to describe the role of adaptive management and to show how this fourth element of context is basic when describing cognition in communication and creating social rapport.

The second contribution, which is empirical in nature, originates from the analysis of data. Following authors such as Flood and Carson (1993), Burrell and Morgan (1993) or Gill and Johnson (2002), an inductive approach was taken. First, data were observed, then the theoretical contribution was made. By looking at the data, the author realised that the DMM did not account for miscommunication in those cases where interlocutors were not monolingual adults. It was therefore decided to delve into the literature on misunderstandings in order to provide a theoretical framework. The data, however, were analyzed and annotated using the four contexts already mentioned in order to test the author's hypothesis. The results proved the following statement right:

> Especially in cases of misunderstanding, it is quite common that the parties disagree, not because they don't want to reach consensus [but because] they are unable to see what the other party sees.
>
> (Mey 2011: 175)

Given the dynamic nature of the theoretical model, the empirical contribution did not follow only an inductive approach. Rather it went from data to theory and vice versa, therefore combining inductive and deductive methods. Hence, the empirical contribution deals with the results obtained through the qualitative analysis of the data and the report of the single-case study, but is at the same time supported by the existing literature in the field.

Inasmuch as an empirical contribution is needed in any dissertation, a purely descriptive dissertation, like this one, needs a theoretical contribution. Both contributions are dealt with in great detail in the chapters to come; the theoretical one mostly in chapter 3, the empirical one in chapter 5.

1.4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSITIONS

This dissertation follows the qualitative methodology approach. Therefore, instead of the hypotheses typical of quantitative analysis, the equivalent qualitative way of organizing the analysis of the data (i.e. propositions (Yin 2003), is used).

Stake (1995), Baxter and Jack (2008) or Yin (2003) state that a proper study question should provide the answer to the question "Why?". In other words, which are the goals, aims and purposes of the study and why the study should be of interest to academia. The answer corresponding to this question in the present dissertation is detailed below.

1.4.1 Study question

Why?

The aim is to fill in the gap in the existing literature regarding the three contexts provided by the DMM (private, situational and linguistic) in order to account for communication problems in teacher-infant interaction in classroom discourse by creating a fourth element of context: the adaptive management context.

How?

The above-mentioned authors clearly state that the main research question of a qualitative study should embody the "How?" concept. In this particular case, I have unfolded the research question into two sub-questions, as the data showed that there are qualitative differences which have to be unravelled whether the misunderstanding is prevented or not.

1.4.2 Research questions

Main research question

How does teacher-infant interaction in classroom discourse work when the three above-mentioned contexts are not shared and communication is not successful?

Research sub-question 1

Does the teacher use certain strategies to prevent a possible communication breakdown? If so, which ones?

Research sub-question 2

When the communication between teacher and child is not successful, which of the three primary contexts (linguistic, situational or private) is the one creating the misunderstanding? Which is the one not shared by both interlocutors?

1.4.3 Propositions

Proposition 1

Communication is altered due to the interlocutors' maturity when common ground is not shared.

Proposition 2

Following the adaptive management categorization of the remedial strategies used to make conversation flow without disruption, differences should be found regarding the two basic types of strategies: operative and involvement.

Proposition 3

Following the DMM, the three contexts (linguistic, situational and private) are analyzed. Qualitative differences should be found in terms of the communication problem or, in some cases, misunderstanding that each context deals with. These misunderstandings are linked to the cognitive development of the subjects.

Proposition 4

The longitudinal study shows the contrast and variation of the data as the study progresses, thereby further validating propositions 1, 2 and 3.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The present dissertation consists of five different sections. Part I depicts the main guidelines and serves as an introduction to both the study and the dissertation. Part II reviews the existing literature in pragmatics and second language acquisition, and includes the theoretical contribution of the dissertation. Part III describes the data and methodology used in the study and the discussion of the results obtained from the analysis of the data. The empirical contribution is also included in this third part. Part IV summarizes the findings and contributions. Part V includes the annexes.

Part I serves the purpose of introducing several key concepts that are present throughout the dissertation. The basic role that context plays in communication and in the construction of meaning is explained in this first part. It is also in this part that the concept of language and context as dynamic elements (as opposed to static) is emphasized. These two lines of thought are the main drivers of this study. This first chapter depicts in a clear and systematic way the main contributions of this work, together with the research questions and the research objectives that motivated it.

The reader will find in Part II a literature review of several areas of applied linguistics. This part is divided into two chapters. Chapter 2 covers areas ranging from second language acquisition to classroom discourse and teacher talk. This chapter neither covers nor intends to cover all the second language acquisition trends and theories. Its aim is twofold. First of all, it intends to provide a general overview of the ultimate origins of the theories which constitute the basis of our study, in order for the reader to fully comprehend the primary ideas underlying it. Secondly, it serves to contextualize the present work within the framework of classroom discourse.

Chapter 3 is one of the key chapters of this dissertation, since it contains my theoretical contribution, which I have labelled “the adaptive management context”. However, before getting to my proposal, the focus of attention turns to pragmatics, more concretely to interlanguage pragmatics. As in the case of chapter 2, the aim is not to cover all the possible pragmatic trends, but rather to guide the reader through some of the most salient theories in the field towards Kecskes’s Dynamic Model of Meaning, which is the most direct theoretical background of my theoretical contribution.

Part III is also subdivided into two chapters. Chapter 4 covers the methodology of the study and the analysis of the data, and accomplishes two main goals. The first one is to frame this study under the qualitative methodology. In order to do so, several qualitative methodologies are explained, including action research or ethnography, before focusing on the methodology of single-case studies, which is the one that was finally applied in this study. The second goal of chapter 4 is to describe the database used for the study: the UAMLESC *Corpus*.

Chapter 5 focuses on the results and the discussion of the findings. It comprises the empirical contribution of this dissertation and is further subdivided into two sections. The first one presents the results of the analysed data through the display of frequency tables and graphs. Data are first presented using an overall perspective, and then each element or type of context is explained in chronological order in order to illustrate the trends and frequency patterns found during the analysis of data. The second section of chapter 5 is devoted to discussing and interpreting the qualitative findings set forth in the first section. An explanation of the trends is provided, based on the literature in the field. Moreover, several real-life examples from our *subcorpus* are used in order to illustrate the main findings of this dissertation.

Part IV includes three chapters. Chapter 6 presents a summary of the results and the conclusions in order to link the theory and the empirical results to the main findings of the study. Special attention is paid to the contributions derived from the main findings, and some pedagogical implications and further research guidelines are put forward. Chapter 6' is the Spanish version of chapter 6. The last chapter, in turn, is devoted to listing the references and the bibliography consulted.

Part V provides the three annexes to the dissertation. The first one provides the proposed codification and the transcription patterns used when tagging the *subcorpus*. Annex II displays examples of adaptive management elements. This appendix tries to offer a sample example of those adaptive strategies used by the teacher to prevent miscommunication in the classroom. The last annex gathers examples regarding the Dynamic Model of Meaning. Special attention is paid to isolating the context which is being problematic for the speakers as well as the age of the infants to see the progression of the data.

Part II

CHAPTER 2.
SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

> *The initial L1 state in the child's mind has no language-specific knowledge; the initial state of the L2 learner already contains one grammar, complete with principles and actual parameter settings. With different starting points for L1 and L2 acquisition, it would hardly be surprising that the end result were different.*
>
> (Cook and Newson 2007: 229)

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2.1. INTRODUCTION

Gone are the days when learning a foreign language meant translating texts and memorizing both vocabulary and grammar rules. The path leading from that point to current teaching methods is paved with theories on the best ways to teach and to learn; theories which are themselves based on dozens of other theories on how languages are learned/acquired, how the mind works in order to retain and process information in such a way that will enable it to produce language later on, and how the participants' circumstances (knowledge, strategies...) and other factors affect communication.

Explaining all those theories is by far not the aim of this work. Nevertheless, in order to fully comprehend the language production model proposed by Istvan Kecskes (2008a) on which the author's theoretical contribution is based, it seems necessary to have a general idea of some of the most representative theories on language acquisition (both L1 and L2) and pragmatics that constitute the natural path leading to Kecskes's theory.

This chapter and the next one are devoted to providing a generic background on second language acquisition (hereafter, SLA) and pragmatics, respectively. In the present chapter on SLA, an introduction to first language acquisition is offered first, as a basis to understand section 2.3, where some of the most significant theories on SLA are briefly covered. This chapter finishes with section 2.4, where the characteristics of classroom discourse are briefly discussed so that they can be taken into account later on when analyzing the language samples on which the present dissertation is based.

2.2. FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Before starting to explain second language acquisition (SLA) it seems logical to set out the basic trends and opinions regarding the mechanisms whereby humans acquire a first language.

Up to the 50's, behaviourist hypotheses were predominant in the linguistic arena. Although different trends existed, they all shared the common assumption that language, just like any other human behaviour, could be learned by means of appropriate conditioning (i.e. by reinforcing certain behaviours and punishing others).

Noam Chomsky's proposal of a universal grammar (Chomsky 1959) therefore meant an important qualitative jump in first language acquisition theories, as it was the first one to hypothesize that language acquisition may be based on internal processes rather than on imitation and reinforcement. According to Chomsky's theory, all human beings are innately endowed with all linguistic rules that could occur in any language, plus a set of discovery procedures which allow each speaker to recognise the specific rules governing the *primary linguistic data* (that is, input) he is exposed to, as represented in figure 2.1 below:

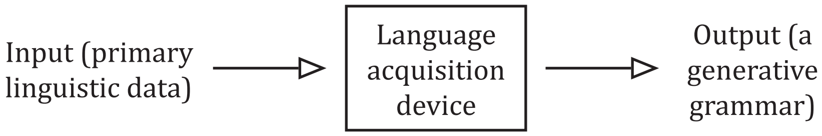
Input (primary linguistic data)
Language acquisition device
Output (a generative grammar)

Figure 2.1. Process of L1 acquisition based on Chomsky's LAD
(Cook and Newson 2007: 53)

According to Chomsky (1968), this model enables the understanding of the LAD's functioning:

> Having some knowledge of the characteristics of the acquired grammars and the limitations on the available data, we can formulate quite reasonable and fairly strong empirical hypotheses regarding the internal structure of the language-acquisition device that constructs the postulated grammars from the given data.
>
> (Chomsky 1968: 113; also in Baghramian 1999: 307)

Nevertheless, it was not until Eric Lenneberg published in 1967 his *Biological Foundations of Language* that Chomsky's hypothesis came to be solidly backed by empirical data. Lenneberg's work demonstrated the existence of an innate element in the child's brain that makes it particularly suitable for language acquisition. In other words, every human being is biologically endowed with a capacity for language by means of a latent language structure. This capacity, however, diminishes as maturation takes place. This latter assumption, as we will see later, led to a series of hypotheses about the existence of a critical period for both first and second language acquisition.

Even if over forty years have gone by since then, Chomsky's and Lenneberg's contributions are still taken as the basis for any theory on language acquisition, including that of second languages.

It is extremely tempting to assume that the same mechanisms that account for the acquisition of the native language work in exactly the same way as the ones that allow for the acquisition of an L2. However, as Ellis puts it:

> Factors such as language transfer, typological distance and interaction, and the much wider possible range of L2 social environments, ages of acquisition, levels of learner cognitive and brain development, motivations, educational environments, and language exposure conspire in multiple factorial interactions to make bilingualism and second language acquisition (SLA) far more complex and fascinating than the mere sum of two first language acquisition (L1A) parts.
>
> (Ellis 2005: 3)

In the following section, some important considerations on SLA are provided in order to offer a background for the language production model proposed by Istvan Kecskes in 2000 and which, in turn, constitutes the very basis for my proposal of a fourth context. Such proposal is dealt with in a later chapter of this dissertation, but, with the aim of leading the reader through the path of theories that finally led to Kecskes's proposal, the focus in section 3 is placed on the most salient theories on SLA, while section 4 presents some fundamentals regarding the characteristics of classroom discourse that are considered to affect the learning or acquisition of a second or foreign language.

2.3. SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

2.3.1 Introduction

Although language acquisition has been a matter of relative interest throughout history, it is not the author's intention to provide a detailed list of all theories and linguistic trends there is a record of, or even of the profuse literature on this subject published in the last half century. Rather, a brief presentation of a few selected theories on SLA is provided. These theories emerged after Chomsky's and Lenneberg's contributions mentioned in the previous section, and, in some way or other, eventually came to be mainstays of Kecskes's language production model.

It is important to note, though, that even if these theories share with Chomsky's and Lenneberg's the assumption of an innate capacity for language in humans, a very important difference arises regarding the idea of that universal grammar:

> If most people, or indeed *all* people, have multiple grammars in their minds, the idealization to the monolingual native speaker is misleading. [...] If the architecture of the human mind involves two languages, we are falsifying it by studying only monolingual minds.[...] The arguments about language acquisition discussed earlier were couched in terms of the potential inherent in all human children irrespective of the environment they encounter. Following the same line of reasoning, potentially all children can become bilingual; the ability to know more than one language is available to us all, even if it may decline after childhood. [...] Since every human being has the potential to do this, UG Theory has to take multilingualism as the norm for the human mind. Multiple grammars in the mind are not the exception but the norm, prevented only by accidental environmental features.
>
> (Cook and Newson 2007: 223–224)

2.3.2 The functioning of the bilingual mind

Indeed, there is quite a debate as to whether speaking two languages implies having some sort of addition to one's universal grammar (UG), or, on the contrary, two different grammars.

Chomsky, for example, argues that bilingualism is simply the extreme end of a continuum of grammatical variation inherent within all speakers (Chomsky 2000).

However, there are quite a few scholars (the vast majority, in fact) who support the existence of more than one grammatical system in the mind. Roeper (1999) puts forward the concept of a universal bilingualism, based on the fact that "any consistent grammar cannot have contradictory rules. Therefore one must postulate two grammars, even if they differ only in a single rule" (*ibid.*: 170).

In a similar vein, Cook and Newson back the co-existence of different grammars in any typical human mind:

> Any transition from one [linguistic] stage to another involves bilingualism in the sense of knowing two grammars or having two sets of parameter settings for an appreciable amount of time. The abstraction of competence to a single grammar is a fiction for most L1 native speakers who can use different dialects or genres and for most L2 learners; the typical human mind must entertain more than a single grammar.
>
> (Cook and Newson 2007: 223)

Yang (2002), with his proposal of a *variational model,* also argues in favour of multiple grammars in the child's brain, which allows him to respond on both sides of a parameter.

> The variational model puts the parameter back into explanations of child language: learner's deviation from the target form is directly explained through parameters, which are also points of variation across languages. The child's language is a statistical ensemble of target and non-target grammars: deviation from the target, then, may bear trademarks of possible human grammars used continents or millennia away, with which the child cannot have direct contact.
>
> (Yang 2010: 1166)

The first theory on SLA I would like to discuss is Selinker's Interlanguage Hypothesis, as it contains the roots from where the dual language approach imbibed to propose an alternative model. The term "interlanguage" was created by Selinker to refer to an emerging linguistic system, developed by a learner of a second language (L2) who has not become fully proficient in that language yet but is approximating the target language. This linguistic system preserves some features of the rules from the speaker's first language, or overgeneralizes target language rules in speaking or writing the target language in such a way that the result can be considered neither L1 nor L2 (Selinker 1972). Language transfer is therefore one of the important factors shaping the learner's interlanguage (Johnson and Johnson 1998).

Selinker differentiates between positive transfer (the use of an L1 word or structure results in a correct utterance or expression in the L2) and negative transfer (the use of an L1 word or structure results in an incorrect utterance or expression in the L2).

Focusing on linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of L2 development and use as independent from the cognitive and conceptual aspects that conform the linguistic system, the final goal of the interlanguage is the attainment of a competence similar to that of a native. According to the interlanguage hypothesis, the development of this competence in a second language would entail the emergence of a new conceptual system specific to the new language.

Selinker made another very interesting contribution to SLA theory when he suggested the existence of a latent psychological structure that adults usually activate when learning a second language. The fact that they activate this structure instead of the latent language structure proposed by Lenneberg (1967) would account for the very low rate (about 5%) of adults who attain native-like competence in a second language. The remaining 95% stop evolving in the L1-L2 continuum at some point. Selinker termed this phenomenon “fossilization”:

> [F]ossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular NL will tend to keep in their IL relative to a particular TL, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the TL.
>
> (Selinker 1972: 214)

Where NL stands for “native language”, IL for “interlanguage”, and TL for “target language” (i.e. the L2 the speaker is trying to acquire competence in).

However, identifying the exact point at which a learner’s competence has stopped evolving along the L1-L2 continuum is not an easy task.

In order to determine the specific stage at which a learner’s L2 competence lies at any given moment, and, in this way, have a better insight into the internal mechanisms, processes and stages used by the learner in his attempt to acquire an L2, Corder (1967, 1971) proposed that error analysis be used.

Errors can certainly indicate the approximate stage of language development of a student. However, several flaws have been pointed out in error analysis:

- Many errors may present the same external form as correct utterances, thus giving the impression that the student has reached a level of competence beyond his actual level.
- Since the learner may be using avoidance as a communicative strategy, the information available to the teacher or researcher is not complete.
- It may not always be possible to tell apart errors (i.e. systematical production of utterances that are not considered correct in the target language) from mistakes (i.e. occasional incorrect utterances or slips). In Ellis's words:

> [The distinction between errors and mistakes] assumes that competence is homogeneous rather than variable. Thus, if learners sometimes use a correct target form and sometimes an incorrect, non-target form, it cannot necessarily be concluded that the learner 'knows' the target form and that the use of the non-target form represents a mistake. It is possible that the learner's knowledge of the target form is only partial; the learner may not have learnt all the contexts in which the form in question can be used.
>
> (Ellis 1994: 51)

At this point, the author would like to state her support to the idea of a new conceptual system, since the existence of a different language (and conceptual) system for each language is present in all the linguistic theories that eventually constituted the cornerstones of Kecskes's Dual Language System. This system was put forward by Kecskes as an alternative to the Interlanguage Theory.

2.3.3 Comprehensibility and negotiation of meaning

While in the cognitive sphere of linguistics the debate centred on the existence of one or more than one systems in the mind responsible for the acquisition and production of language, in the field of applied linguistics, the debate had to do with whether conversation should be regarded as grammar practice or as a tool for grammar acquisition; or, in a more general way, whether it was input or output that allowed for language acquisition. Some of the most salient points of view in this regard are presented below.

2.3.3.1. Input-based hypotheses

In relation to the hypothesis of a universal sequence in language acquisition, several linguists looked into the role of input as a likely major factor. A brief discussion of the theories on input put forward by Krashen (1977, 1980a, 1980b, 1985), Long (1980, 1983), Swain (1985), and Gass (1988) follows next.

One of the first scholars to defend the importance of input in the acquisition of a second or foreign language was Stephen Krashen, who developed a theory of second language acquisition based on five theoretical mainstays (Krashen 1977, 1980a, 1980b, 1985):

2.3.3.1.1. THE ACQUISITION-LEARNING HYPOTHESIS

Before Krashen, other authors (cf. Bialystock and Frohlich 1977; Lawler and Selinker 1971; Corder 1967; Widdowson 1977) had already suggested the existence of two different ways of improving or managing competence in the L2. Therefore, the idea was not new; but since this distinction was one of the key suppositions on which Krashen based his model of L2 learning and production, a brief comparison between "acquisition" and "learning" is provided below:

Acquisition	Learning
implicit, subconscious	explicit, conscious
informal situations	formal situations
uses grammatical 'feel'	uses grammatical rules
depends on attitude	depends on aptitude
stable order of acquisition	simple to complex order of learning

Table 2.1. Acquisition vs. learning
(adapted from Krashen and Terrell 1983).

2.3.3.1.2. THE MONITOR HYPOTHESIS

According to this hypothesis, the acquired competence " 'initiates' our utterances in a second language and is responsible for our fluency" (Krashen 1982: 15), while the learned competence works as a monitor, or editor, of the correctness of the learner's own production in the L2 (see figure 2.2 for a representation).

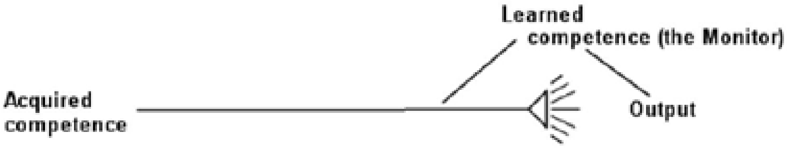

Figure 2.2. The role of acquired and learned competences in L2 production (Krashen 1982: 16).

2.3.3.1.3. The Natural Order Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that the order in which the acquisition of grammatical structures takes place can be predicted (Krashen 1982). Although Brown initially proposed this hypothesis in relation to the first language in 1973, Dulay and Burt soon after (1974, 1975) concluded that the acquisition sequence of certain morphemes was roughly the same for children of different L1 learning English as a second language.

These findings were backed by similar results obtained from research with adult L2 learners, which seemed to suggest a *natural sequence.* However, not all studies showed the same consistency in the acquisition of these morphemes, which caused the idea of a natural sequence to wane.

More recently, Goldschneider and DeKeyser (2001) supported the idea of a natural order and accounted for the variance between previous studies by relating it to the salience of the morphemes. This salience consisted of five features: perceptual salience, semantic complexity, morpho-phonological regularity, syntactic category, and frequency.

In connection to the differences between the acquisition of certain morphemes in L1 and L2, it is difficult to ascertain whether such differences are due to the influence of the L1 or to maturational factors which affect cognitive processes (Dulay and Burt 1974, 1975).

2.3.3.1.4. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Initially presented by Dulay and Burt in 1977, this proposal tries to account for how affective factors act on the process of acquiring a second language. Following this hypothesis, affective variables "impede or facilitate the delivery of input to the language acquisition device" (Krashen 1983: 32), and, therefore, also the amount of input that is finally acquired.

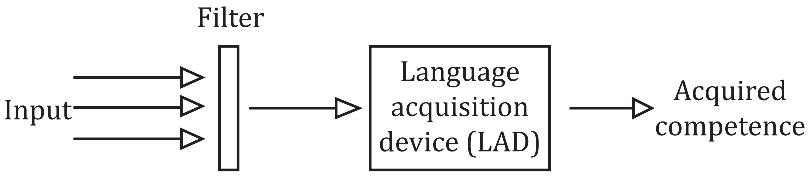

Figure 2.3. Operation of the affective filter (adapted from Krashen 1982: 32)

2.3.3.1.5. The Comprehensible Input Hypothesis

In Krashen's theory, "comprehensible input" refers to the L2 language samples that the learner is exposed to and which he can understand. For input to become intake (term introduced by Corder in 1967 to refer to data taken in and used by the L2 learner to promote L2 acquisition), it has to be comprehensible at the i+1 level (that is, at the stage just beyond the student's current linguistic competence).

> This is equivalent to saying that comprehensible input and the strength of the filter are the true causes of second language acquisition. Other variables may relate to second language success, that is, we may see positive correlations between other variables and measures of achievement in second language, but in all cases in which language acquisition is attained, analysis will reveal that the relationship can better be explained in terms of comprehensible input plus filter level.
>
> (Krashen 1982: 33)

Krashen's model of L2 acquisition and production (made up of the five hypotheses presented above) could therefore be represented as follows:

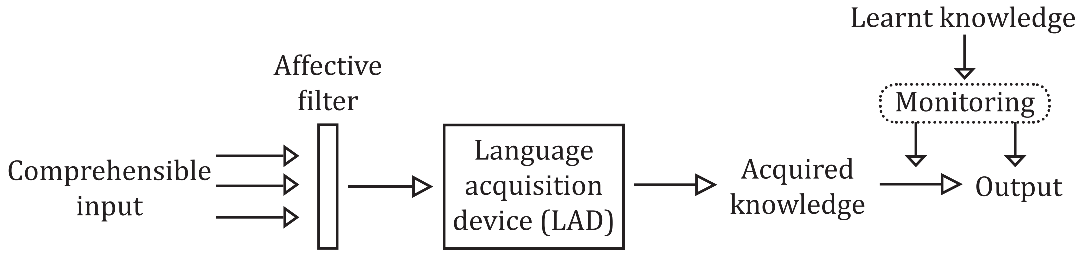

Figure 2.4. Krashen's model of L2 learning and production
(adapted from Krashen 1982).

When a native speaker or the teacher tries to make input comprehensible for the L2 learner, two closely related phenomena emerge. The first one is "foreigner talk", a term coined by C. A. Ferguson (1971) to refer to the speech variety used by native speakers when addressing non-native speakers. The second one, which is more important for the present dissertation because data were obtained in a classroom context, is "teacher talk", term used by Chaudron (1983, 1985, 1988) to refer to the adapted form of language that teachers use in the classroom in order to make input comprehensible to their students. The latter is dealt with in a little more detail in section 2.4 of this chapter. Let us now refocus on input-based hypotheses.

Krashen's has not been the only proposal among the input-based hypotheses, nor has it been free from criticism. The main weaknesses, according to authors such as Long (1983), Gregg (1984), Faerch and Kasper (1986), White (1987), or McLaughlin (1987), can be summarized as follows:

- The idea of providing input within the *i+1* linguistic competence of a learner implies the existence of a preset natural order of acquisition, but not all the research in this respect seems to back the existence of such a sequence.
- Krashen's proposal is not sufficiently backed by empirical data.
- In order to comprehend input, it is necessary to use both bottom-up and top-down processes.

Long (1983) prefers to talk about "negotiation of comprehensible input". He argues that Krashen's input hypothesis is not duly backed by empirical data about the modifications made in foreigner talk, and that no evidence seems to support the hypothesis that input modifications made by native speakers are actually beneficial for the learner: “[this modification may] serve only the immediate needs of communication, not the future interlanguage development of the learner, for by definition it denies him or her access to new linguistic material” (Long 1983: 212).

In Long’s view, three methods exist to aid communication: context (both linguistic and extralinguistic), the “here and now”, and the modification of the interactional structure of the conversation. Of these, only the latter two would be likely to aid L2 development, “for each allows communication to proceed while exposing the learner to linguistic material which he or she cannot yet handle without their help” (*ibid.*).

After analysing in detail the changes in interaction that take place in native speakers’ conversations with non-native speakers, Long (*ibid.*) reported a significant lower number of conversational frames (words such as “now”, “well”, “so”...) and a significant higher number of confirmation checks, comprehension checks, clarification requests, repetitions and expansions. All these changes indicate that meaning is being negotiated.

Long identified, on the one hand, negotiation to avoid conversational trouble (“strategies”) and, on the other hand, negotiation to repair discourse when trouble occurs (“tactics”):

Strategies (S) (for avoiding trouble)	Tactics (T) (for repairing trouble)
S1 Relinquish topic-control	T1 Accept unintentional topic-switch
S2 Select salient topics	T2 Request clarification
S3 Treat topics briefly	T3 Confirm own comprehension
S4 Make new topics salient	T4 Tolerate ambiguity
S5 Check NNS’s comprehension	
Strategies and Tactics (ST) (for avoiding and repairing trouble)	
ST1 Use slow pace	ST4 Decompose topic-comment constructions
ST2 Stress key words	ST5 Repeat own utterances
ST3 Pause before key words	ST6 Repeat other’s utterances

Table 2.2. Tactics and strategies used by speakers (Long 1983: 132).

The word "negotiation" implies at least two parts trying to reach an agreement. According to Long, while the native speaker uses the strategies and tactics just mentioned, the L2 learner applies communication strategies to overcome communication difficulties. Elaine Tarone proposed in 1977 the following taxonomy of communication strategies:

1. Avoidance
    a. Topic avoidance
    b. Message abandonment
2. Paraphrase
    a. Approximation
    b. Word coinage
    c. Circumlocution
3. Conscious transfer
    a. Literal translation
    b. Language switch
4. Appeal for assistance
5. Mime

(Tarone 1977: 197)

Tarone regards communication strategies as "tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning, in situations where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal" (Tarone 1980: 420) and seemingly having the primarily function of negotiating "an agreement on meaning between two interlocutors" (Tarone 1981: 288).

In a similar vein, researchers such as Scarcella and Higa (1981), and Varonis and Gass (1985) talked about *negotiation of meaning.*

Going back to Long, it is important to note that, for him, language acquisition consisted of more than just the negotiation of comprehensible input:

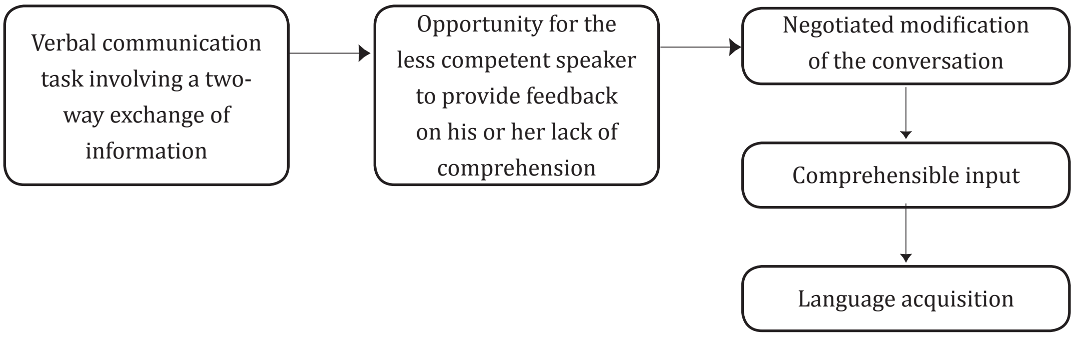
Verbal communication task involving a two-way exchange of information
Opportunity for the less competent speaker to provide feedback on his or her lack of comprehension
Negotiated modification of the conversation
Comprehensible input
Language acquisition

Figure 2.5. Process of language acquisition, according to Long (1983: 214).

The last theory on input I would like to discuss is Susan Gass's Comprehended Input Hypothesis (Gass 1988). Although marginally related to my topic, I think is an interest theory as it implies a refocus on input as a key factor for the improvement of the L2. She prefers the term "comprehended" because, as she states, "comprehensible" implies some sort of control by the person providing the input (which can be either comprehensible or not comprehensible), whereas if the term "comprehended" is used, control by the L2 learner is implied (Gass 1988).

Comprehended input, however, is just one of the five elements Gass includes in her framework for the explanation of how input becomes output in SLA, as can be seen below:

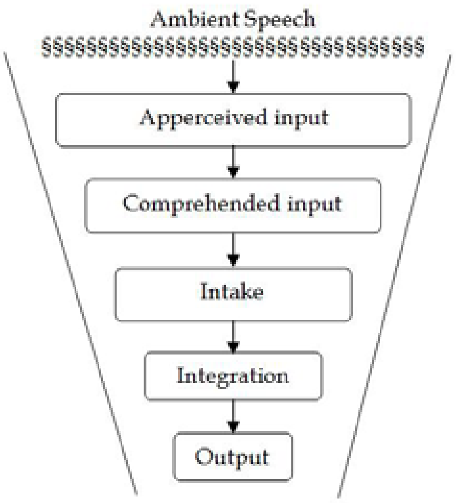
Ambient Speech
§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§§
Apperceived input
Comprehended input
Intake
Integration
Output

Figure 2.6. How input becomes output, according to Gass (1988: 200).

Furthermore, she concludes that negotiation and modifications of speech and interaction are not necessary conditions in the acquisition process, but rather "serve to increase the possibility of a greater amount of data becoming available for further use" (Gass 1988: 204).

None of these hypotheses, however, allocated output a direct role in the development of L2 proficiency.

2.3.3.2. Output-based hypotheses

In 1985, Merrill Swain proposed the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis as a complement to Krashen's and Long's theories. According to Swain, L2 development results from learners producing the target language more frequently, more accurately, and in a wider variety of circumstances.

Note that Swain does not deny the importance of comprehensible input for acquiring semantic competence. Nonetheless, she defends the crucial role that comprehensible output plays in the development of the learners' grammatical competence. Neither does she deny the existence of a negotiation of meaning, which "paves the way for future exchanges, where, because the message is understood, the learner is free to pay attention to form" (Swain 1985: 248). As was just mentioned, the novelty of her proposal lies in the fact that output is also given a main role in the acquisition of the L2.

Furthermore, comprehensible output provides learners with the opportunity to test their hypotheses about the language. Besides this, Swain argues that using the language, and not just comprehending it, "may force the learner to move from semantic processing to syntactic processing" (*ibid.*: 249).

To sum up, in this section I have discussed four hypotheses on input, each of which allocates it varying degrees of relevance within the acquisition or learning process: from considering it the most relevant factor (Krashen, Gass) to regarding it as an argument for the negotiation of meaning (Long), or a very necessary step for the production of a more relevant element (Swain's comprehensible output).

All of them have something in common, though: they all concede input a very high level of importance. However, other highly influential factors affecting L2 acquisition have been put forward by other researchers.

2.3.4 Other factors affecting L2 acquisition

Individual learner factors such as personality, motivation, learning style, aptitude, and age may influence not just the rate and final mastery of the target language but the *natural order* discussed above as well.

Of these factors, age is probably the one that has received the most attention from researchers since Lenneberg (1967) talked about a *critical period* for language acquisition.

As we saw earlier, the latent language structure that, according to Lenneberg, endows humans with the capacity for language diminishes its effectiveness as maturation takes place. A few years after Lenneberg's hypothesis, Selinker suggested some adults could somehow manage to reactivate that latent language structure and achieve native-like competence, while most adult learners have to activate the latent psychological structure, which allowed them to learn a L2 but not to reach the same competence as if they had been capable of activating the latent language structure.

Thirty years later, the age factor continues to occupy SLA research. Nowadays, however, the idea of a critical period has been generally qualified and redefined as a severe *limitation* (but not *impossibility*) for older adolescents and adults to acquire language from mere exposure. The aim of current studies on the influence of age in SLA tends to focus on whether it is neurocognitive factors or social-psychological factors which cause this limitation.

DeKeyser and Larson-Hall (2005), for example, conclude that "a number of factors, such as differences in input, use of L1 and L2, and a variety of social-psychological factors may reinforce the A[ge] o[f] A[cquisition] effect, but they far from fully explain it" (DeKeyser and Larson-Hall 2005: 98). More importantly, they reach the conclusion that the main difference between young and adult learners lies in the different mechanisms they use, which calls for different approaches when teaching them, since “children can learn very little explicitly, [while] adults can learn very little implicitly” (*ibid.*: 101).

This, in turn, could be due to L2 learning involving “distinct cognitive and neural components with differential susceptibilities to the effects of age”, as Birdsong (2005: 125) puts it.

2.4. CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

It is easy to notice that the language taught in the classroom differs in many ways from the language students are expected to use when outside the classroom; that is, the input they receive is very different from the output they are expected to produce.

Since the author’s theoretical proposal of a fourth context is backed by data collected in a classroom context, a brief summary of classroom discourse features is included next so that the peculiarities of the language samples collected can be taken into account later on in the discussion of findings. Specifically, three aspects are covered in this section which are relevant to the presentation at hand: teacher talk (which was already mentioned in the summary of input-based hypotheses), the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) model, and the content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

2.4.1 Foreigner talk and teacher talk

As already mentioned in the section on input-based hypotheses, both native speakers and teachers adapt their speech in an attempt to make input comprehensible to the L2 learner. Both adaptations share a good deal of characteristics, among which the most common adjustments are probably the following ones, which were identified by Chaudron (1988) for teacher talk but may be equally valid for foreigner talk:

1. Rate of speech appears to be slower.
2. Pauses, which may be evidence of the speaker planning more, are possibly more frequent and longer.
3. Pronunciation tends to be exaggerated and simplified.
4. Vocabulary use is more basic.

5. Degree of subordination is lower.
6. More declaratives and statements are used than questions.
7. Teachers may self-repeat more frequently.

(Chaudron 1988: 85)

It is crucial to bear this set of characteristics in mind during the discussion of results and the analysis of the data collected. For further reference on the topic, see Salaberri 1999. For a deeper insight into the specific characteristics of foreigner talk, see Scarcella and Higa (1981, 1982), Sato (1986), Hatch (1978), Pica and Long (1986), and Pica (1987, 1988).

All of these adaptations take place for the sake of negotiating meaning and keeping the communication going on. An additional aim in L2 learning contexts is to provide comprehensible input that the students can later acquire. Chaudron's list however, only reflects adaptations in language and in the way linguistic input is delivered, but classroom discourse has other features which may affect the richness and quality of pragmatic input and social interactions presented to the learners, which, in turn, eventually has an effect on the L2 learner's overall capacity to interact in the L2 language and culture.

Next is a sketch of some of such additional features which are present in two L2 learning contexts within the classroom: traditional settings and the CLIL classroom.

2.4.2 Traditional settings

Classroom discourse has probably been one of the most prolific fields of L2 research of the latest decades, given the relevance that input has had in most models and hypotheses on SLA (cf. Krashen 1977, 1980a, 1980b, 1985; Long 1980, 1983; Swain 1985; Gass 1988). This fact led to further debates among scholars regarding the degree of *naturalness* of the L2 linguistic and pragmatic samples that the learner is exposed to, as well as the amount of such samples.

McTear (1975) observed four types of language use within a traditional EFL classroom:

1. *Real communication.* Spontaneous speech; exchange of opinions, jokes...
2. *Pseudo-communication.* New information conveyed in unnatural way.

3. *Meaningful.* Information is already known, but meaning is contextualized.
4. *Mechanical.* No exchange of meaning takes place.

Rather than creating clear-cut categories, or considering classroom language and outside-the-classroom language as totally separated and opposed, other authors, such as Kramsch (1985), prefer to consider instructional and natural discourse as two poles of a continuum:

	Instructional discourse	Natural discourse
Roles	Fixed statuses	Negotiated roles
Tasks	Teacher-oriented, position-centred	Group-oriented, person-centred
Knowledge	Focus on content, accuracy of facts	Focus on process, fluency of interaction

Table 2.3. Instructional vs. natural discourse (Kramsch 1985: 18).

One of the aspects that differ between classroom discourse and natural discourse is turn-taking. Typically, classroom discourse is characterized by the need to maintain centralized attention and a more or less pre-established content and sequence of utterances. But more important in relation to turn-taking is the relatively strict allocation of turns and the fact that it is usually the teacher who allocates them. Besides, the teacher may stop or interrupt a student's turn far more frequently than would be considered normal in natural speech.

Another aspect where classroom and natural discourses differ is their structure. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1992) observed that most exchanges controlled by the teacher consisted of three phases:

1. Teacher initiates exchange, usually by asking a question on the topic at hand.
2. Student responds, usually by providing the answer requested by the teacher, but another rather frequent form of response is by stating lack of knowledge (i.e. saying that he does not know the answer).

3. Teacher provides feedback by commenting on the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the student's response.

The most common name for this structure is initiation-response-follow-up (IRF); although other terms are also used, such as elicitation-response-follow-up (ERF), initiation-response-feedback (IRF), or initiation-response-evaluation (IRE).

Sinclair and Coulthard (1975, 1995) also proposed a hierarchical system of classroom discourse analysis, which could be represented as follows:

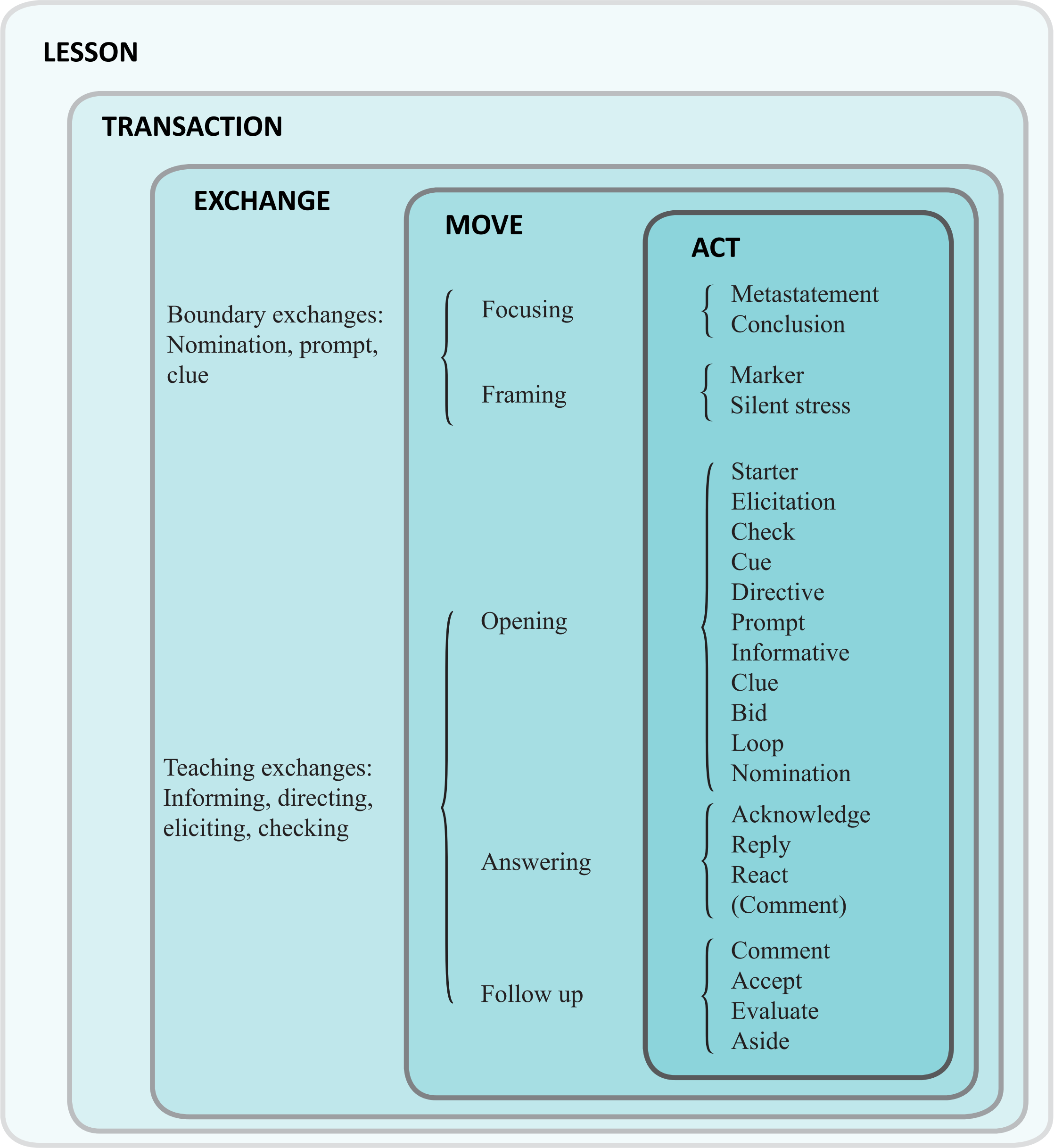
LESSON
TRANSACTION
EXCHANGE
MOVE
ACT
Boundary exchanges: Nomination, prompt, clue
Focusing
Framing
Metastatement
Conclusion
Marker
Silent stress
Teaching exchanges: Informing, directing, eliciting, checking
Opening
Starter
Elicitation
Check
Cue
Directive
Prompt
Informative
Clue
Bid
Loop
Nomination
Answering
Acknowledge
Reply
React
(Comment)
Follow up
Comment
Accept
Evaluate
Aside

Figure 2.7. Hierarchical dependence of classroom discourse analysis elements (adapted from Sinclair and Coulthard 1975 and 1992).

Both turn-taking and the IRF model are typical of classroom discourse and common to most classroom contexts. However, it has further implications in the case of the L2 lesson, as it also restricts the quantity and quality of the linguistic and pragmatic input the students receive, which, as has already been seen for the case of linguistic input (cf. Chaudron 1983, 1985, 1988 on teacher talk above), and is also mentioned in chapter 3, is a key element for the development of the learner's competence in the L2.

Thus, Lee warns that teachers tend not to make their students aware "of their pragmatic choices and consequences" (Lee 2001: 23). This, added to what McCarthy calls the "impoverished range of utterance functions" (McCarthy 1996: 122) that students are allowed to practice in the classroom, leads to an insufficient competence in L2 contexts (both language-wise and pragmatics-wise).

Nevertheless, not all classroom discourse follows the IRF pattern. Several researchers have put forward different models that would help describe classroom discourse in further detail.

One such researcher is Ellis (1984), who proposes a bidemensional matrix consisting of interactive goals and address. These two elements can be further subdivided as shown in figure 2.8:

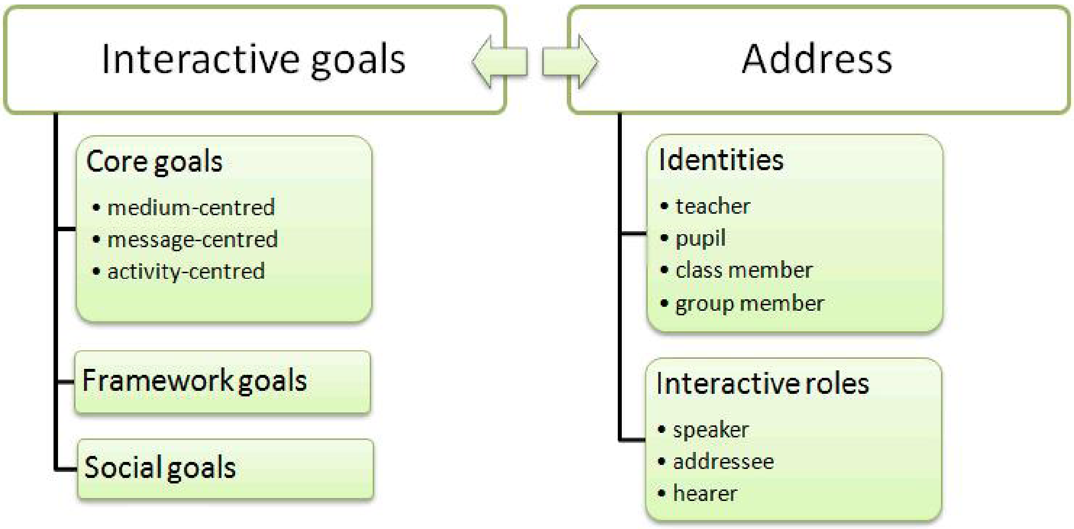
Interactive goals
Address
Core goals
• medium-centred
• message-centred
• activity-centred
Framework goals
Social goals
Identities
• teacher
• pupil
• class member
• group member
Interactive roles
• speaker
• addressee
• hearer

Figure 2.8. Elements interacting in classroom discourse, based on Ellis (1984).

Van Lier (1982, 1988), in turn, suggested the existence of four types of classroom interaction, depending on whether the teacher controls both topic and activity, only the topic, only the activity or neither topic nor activity.

2.4.3 The CLIL classroom

Notice that previously the author mentioned that she was going to introduce some additional features of classroom discourse that are present in two "L2 learning contexts within the classroom" and not two "types of L2 classrooms". The reason is precisely that the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) classroom cannot be properly called an L2 classroom in a traditional fashion, but it certainly tries to promote L2 acquisition and therefore the discourse that takes place in it has a few characteristics in common with the discourse in a traditional L2 classroom.

The combination of language classes and content classes has received different names in research and applied linguistics: content-based instruction (CBI), immersion education, bilingual teaching, (language X) as medium of instruction... However, the term "content and language integrated learning" (CLIL) seems to have found a stronghold in Europe, especially since the European Union adopted the term and passed several laws and recommendations in order to promote the learning of other European Union languages in schools. The Commission of the European Communities defines CLIL as:

> [A]ny dual-focused educational context in which an additional language, thus not usually the first language of the learners involved, is used as a medium in the teaching and learning of non-language content.
>
> (COM(2003) 449: 15)

Several questions arise upon close examination of CLIL classroom discourse, and although in this context "teachers are in the fortunate situation to use genuine materials in lessons which are meant to discuss genuine issues" (Mewald 2007: 140), it is not less certain that there remain a number of questions regarding the characteristics of such learning and the influence on the final FL competence of the learners:

> Does [the existence of an authentic situation], however, guarantee authentic communication? What is authentic communication in subject lessons like? Is it any different if led in the FL or in the mother tongue? Do CLIL lessons produce any communication at all or do utterances recede in the question-answer interaction typical for many subject lessons? Can CLIL lesson[s] support oral FL competence?
>
> (*Ibid.*: 140)

It seems logical to suppose that something apart from the language used has to differentiate content classroom discourse from language classroom discourse. Also, as Snow, Met and Genesee (1989) point out:

> It is unlikely that desired levels of second or foreign language proficiency will emerge simply from the teaching of content through a second or foreign language. The specification of language learning objectives must be undertaken with deliberate, systematic planning and coordination of the language and content curricula.
>
> (Snow *et al.* 1989: 204)

If content teachers merely poured knowledge codified in the FL to their students, it would be “content teaching *in* another language” (De Bot 2002: 32; his emphasis), and not very different from traditional content-based approaches, where form is considered secondary to meaning. De Bot (*ibid.*), thus calls for the joint work of language teachers and content teachers so that both form and function are really integrated into language teaching.

In this regard, Coyle (2000, 2002; Coyle *et al.* 2010) reflects in his language triptych “the need to integrate cognitively demanding content with language learning and using” (Coyle *et al.* 2010: 36).

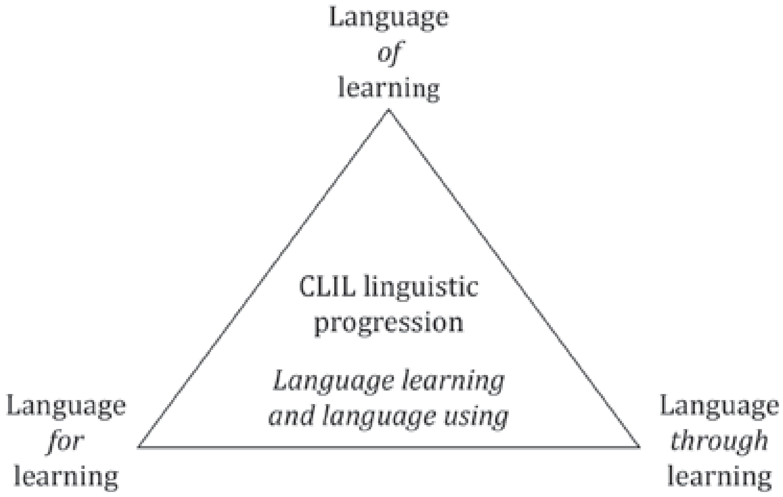
Language *of* learning
CLIL linguistic progression
Language learning and language using
Language *for* learning
Language *through* learning

Figure 2.9. The Language Triptych (Coyle *et al.* 2010: 36).

Other researchers, such as Ellis (2001), Doughty and Williams (1998), Lyster and Ranta (1997), and Dalton-Puffer and Smit (2007), also concluded that explicit instruction in the L2 fosters the learner's conscious attention and awareness of form, which has been shown to speed up language learning.

2.5. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has served the purpose of describing the trends in SLA as well as depicting several concepts that are deemed essential to understand this study. Classroom discourse and teacher talk have been briefly described in order to call the reader's attention to the particular environment and interlocutors that provided the data on which the study was carried out.

It is important to highlight at this point the relevance of Krashen's or, more specifically Long's, views on negotiation, strategies and tactics in order to repair discourse. Nevertheless, this study does not focus on the negotiation of meaning, but rather on the cognitive nuances that are implied by the interlocutors.

The present dissertation does not focus on SLA or, even more specifically, on interlanguage theory. The emphasis is rather on viewing language as embracing a linguistic level and a conceptual level. In Kecskes's words, "the conceptual system pulls together cognitive constructs and knowledge" (Kecskes 2008b: 31). Those very words capture the essence of the main aims of the study: conceptual level, cognition and knowledge.

CHAPTER 3.

TOWARDS A FOURTH CONTEXT

> *The dynamic behaviour of human speech implies a reciprocal process between language (message) and actual situational context […] Language encodes prior contexts and is used to make sense of actual situational contexts, so language is never context-free. There are no meanings that are context-free because each lexical item is a repository of context (contexts) itself; that is to say, it is always implicitly indexed to a prior recurring context(s) of reference. Even when an explicit context (actual situational context) is not available, one is constructed from stored knowledge originating in prior experience during the process of comprehension.*
>
> (Kecskes 2008a: 388)

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3.1. THE STUDY OF MEANING AND CONTEXT: PRAGMATICS

3.1.1 Definition

The fact that for several decades pragmatics was considered some sort of "wastebasket" where anything related to meaning that was not strictly linguistic could fit has certainly not helped much in the search for a common ground on which to base its definition. Nonetheless, this obstacle has never hindered pragmaticians and linguists alike from making their attempts at this difficult task.

Given the wide range of different concepts and definitions of pragmatics and the consequences each different view would entail for the interpretation of the study's results, it seems advisable to start by making a brief historical overview of its definitions.

The modern usage of the term *pragmatics* is attributed to philosopher Charles Morris (1938), who attempted to establish a unified and consistent *theory of signs,* or *semiotics.* Within semiotics, Morris distinguished three distinct branches of inquiry: syntactics (the relation of signs to one another), *semantics* (the relation of signs to their designata), and *pragmatics* (the relation of signs to their interpreters). More specifically, Morris said of pragmatics:

> Since most, if not all, signs have as their interpreters living organisms, it is a sufficiently accurate characterization of pragmatics to say that it deals with the biotic aspects of semiotics, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs.
>
> (Morris 1938: 30)

Almost two decades later, several philosophers provided interesting insights that would give a definite turn to pragmatics as a discipline. One of them was Wittgenstein (1953), who posited that the meaning of a word depends on the use we make of it at a specific moment. A few years later, Austin (1962) introduced the notion of "speech acts", which was further developed by Searle (1969, 1975). The last one of such crucial philosophical contributions was Grice's developments in the field of logic of conversation (1975). The work of these philosophers was taken in by the first "true" pragmaticians, among which stand out Sperber and Wilson, and Brown and Levinson.

But what, then, is pragmatics? Traditionally, pragmatics has been considered the study of the relationship between language and context, but consense vanishes as soon as a more specific definition is sought for. In his introduction to *Pragmatics* (1983), Levinson analyses several possible definitions of this discipline and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of each one of them. Among the ones he proposes, the following one was relatively revolutionary in that it mentions the participant's cognition as one of the factors that ought to be included in the study of language understanding:

> Pragmatics is the study of the relations between language and context that are basic to an account of language understanding. [...] The weaknesses are, unfortunately, equally clear. First, pragmatics will then include the study of the interaction between linguistic knowledge and *the entirety of participants' knowledge of the world.*
>
> (*Ibid.*: 21; my emphasis)

In fact, even more recent work still includes only a language-related-to-context view of pragmatics:

> Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener. It has, consequently, more to do with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in those utterances might mean by themselves.
>
> (Yule 1996: 3)

> Pragmatics can be taken to be concerned with aspects of information (in the widest sense) conveyed through language which (a) are not encoded by generally accepted convention in the linguistic forms used, but which (b) none the less arise naturally out of and depend on the meanings conventionally encoded in the linguistic forms used, taken in conjunction with the context in which the forms are used.
>
> (Cruse 2000: 16)

> Pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society.
>
> (Mey 2001: 6)

The above definitions take good account of the relation between language and context. However, they all lack an element which of utmost importance for the author's theoretical framework: cognition. Katz (1977) had already hinted at this element when he claimed that pragmatic theories “explicate *the reasoning* of speakers and hearers in working out the correlation in a context of a sentence token with a proposition” (*ibid.*: 19; my emphasis).

But even after Katz’s and Levinson’s definitions of pragmatics (1977 and 1983, respectively) there were still many definitions to come. More recent definitions which include cognition, in a more or less explicit way, as an object of study within pragmatics, gradually get closer to the concept of this discipline that sustains the present dissertation. Some of such contributions are presented next:

> [Pragmatics is] the study of language from the point of view of the users, *especially of the choices they make,* the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication.
>
> (Crystal 1985: 240; my emphasis)

> [Pragmatics is] a general *cognitive,* social and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behaviour (where the string ‘cognitive, social, and cultural’ does not suggest the separability of what the terms refer to).
>
> (Verschueren 1999: 7; my emphasis)

> It is more helpful if we adopt a broader approach whereby Pragmatics is defined as the cognitive, social and cultural study of language and communication. [...] The overriding goal of Pragmatics is to gain an understanding of what you could call the meaningful functioning of language (i.e., how *cognition, society, and culture* contribute to the way human beings use language in their daily lives).
>
> (Moyer 1995: 127–128; my emphasis)

> Meaning is not something which is inherent in the words alone, nor is it produced by the speaker alone, nor by the hearer alone. Making meaning is a dynamic process, involving the **negotiation of meaning** between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance.
>
> (Thomas 1995: 22; Thomas’s emphasis)

Hundreds of additional definitions could be added to the list. Most likely, some of them would add some interesting views or ideas about pragmatics, but the key point has been stated clearly enough: pragmatics needs to look into the speakers’ minds and cognitive processes (among other aspects) in order to account for how meaning is made.

The following section provides a quick overlook of different trends on the study of pragmatics that constitute the background for Kecskes's Dual Language Model.

3.1.2 Pragmatic trends

As already mentioned in the introduction, four philosophers greatly contributed to present-day pragmatics: Wittgenstein, Austin, Searle, and Grice. However, only the last three of them established or made significant contributions to pragmatic theory in a strict sense. Austin's theory of speech acts is explained next, followed by an account of Searle's development of that theory and his introduction of the concept of "illocutionary force". Then, Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory, (a logical consequence of Austin's and Searle's work) is examined. Finally, a brief account is provided of Grice's concepts of "implicature" and "cooperative principles", both of which are cornerstone principles of present-day pragmatics (more specifically of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory) and therefore also of the author's work.

3.1.2.1. Austin

British philosopher J. L. Austin posited in a series of lectures delivered at Harvard during the mid-fifties (posthumously published as *How to Do Things With Words* in 1962) that utterances did more than just state facts: they also *performed* certain actions by themselves (hence the name of "speech act theory").

Austin initially divided utterances into *constatives* and performatives. The former reflected reality and could be assessed in terms of their truth or falsity, while the latter affected reality and could be considered either *felicitous* or *infelicitous* depending on whether or not they fulfilled a set of what he termed felicity conditions:

> (A. 1) There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include de uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and further,.

> (A. 2) the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked.
>
> (B. 1) The procedure must be executed by all participants both correctly and.
>
> (B. 2) completely.
>
> (*G*. 1) Where, as often, the procedure is designed for use by persons having certain thoughts or feelings, or for the inauguration of certain consequential conduct on the part of any participant, then a person participating in and so invoking the procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves, and further.
>
> (*G*. 2) must actually so conduct themselves subsequently.
>
> (Austin 1962: 15)

Austin later abandoned this duality and claimed that all utterances have both constative and performative elements.

Another interesting contribution of Austin's was his three-fold distinction between locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, that is, between the actual words uttered, the force or intention behind the words, and the effect of the illocution on the hearer.

It is the second group of acts (also called "speech acts") that later became the main object of study of pragmatics. For Austin, the force of illocutionary acts was indicated by the use of specific types of performative verbs, which he classified into:

- verdictives: "the giving of a verdict, as the name implies, by a jury, arbitrator, or umpire" (*ibid.*: 153).
- exercitives: "the exercising of powers, rights, or influence" (*ibid.*: 151).
- commissives: "The whole point of a commissive is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action" (*ibid.*: 156).
- behabitives "[are] a very miscellaneous group, and have to do with attitudes and *social behaviour*" (*ibid.*: 151; Austin's italics).
- expositives: "the clarifying of reasons, arguments, and communications" (*ibid.*: 163).

After having explained Austin's contribution to speech act theory, I now turn to Searle, who was an unquestionable exponent and representative of this theory. His contributions were of utmost importance to the development of speech act theory and to pragmatics.

3.1.2.2. Searle

John R. Searle was Austin's student and continued Austin's work in speech act theory, further developing some of the concepts already suggested by his mentor.

One of the developments Searle introduced to speech act theory consisted in the proposal that all speech acts comprise both a proposition and an illocutionary force:

> Whenever a speaker utters a sentence in an appropriate context with certain intentions, he performs one or more illocutionary acts. In general an illocutionary act consists of an illocutionary force *F* and a propositional content *P*.
>
> (Searle and Vanderveken 1985: 1)

Illocutionary force, in turn, consists of seven components (illocutionary point, degree of strength of the illocutionary point, mode of achievement, propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and degree of strength of the sincerity conditions), of which the illocutionary point is the most important one, although all of them to some extent exert their influence on the fulfilment of the illocutionary act (*ibid.*).

Contrary to Austin, Searle suggested that illocutionary acts can be classified into different categories, not according to specific performative verbs but according to the illocutionary point of the utterance (Searle 1979):

- Assertives. The point or purpose is to commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition.
- Directives. They are attempts by the speaker to get the hearer to do something.
- Commissives. Illocutionary acts whose point is to commit the speaker to some future course of action.

- Expressives. The illocutionary point of this class is to express psychological states.
- Declarations. Its successful performance brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality.

The next step in this overview of the history of pragmatics is to look into how the philosophical work of Austin's and Searle's was adopted and adapted to several linguistic models and hypotheses created to account for the fact that interlocutors can understand one another's implied meanings, i.e. those expressed by means different from strictly linguistic elements.

3.1.2.3. Relevance Theory

When dealing with Speech Act Theory, it is a must to mention Gordon and Lakoff (1971), and Morgan (1978), who were the forerunners of Brown and Levinson's ideas on indirect speech acts.

Gordon and Lakoff (1971) introduced the conversational postulates and claimed the existence of an equivalence between form and indirect speech acts. In other words, they believed in an established, fixed relationship between form and meaning.

Morgan (1978), on the other hand, put forward the existence of a scale going from conventional meaning to natural meaning (i.e. from literal meaning to inferred meaning), and the transition of utterances from one end of the scale to the other.

Neither of these theories, however, accounted for the fact that, depending on context, different meanings can be inferred from one and the same utterance.

It is this gap in Gordon and Lakoff's and Morgan's theories that Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson tried to bridge with the introduction of Relevance Theory in their book *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (1986), where they attempted to provide an explanation of how meaning is created by the speaker and grasped by the hearer. With this in view, they introduced cognition into their scheme. As stated by these two pragmaticians, "the central claim of relevance theory is that the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning" (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 250).

Their proposal is based on the claim that “an input is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a POSITIVE COGNITIVE EFFECT [...], a worthwhile difference to the individual’s representation of the world” (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 251; their emphasis).

Such relevance may be assessed in terms of the relationship between the cognitive effect attained and the processing effort required to attain that effect. In other words:

> (a) Other things being equal, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input, the greater the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.
>
> (b) Other things being equal, the greater the processing effort expended, the lower the relevance of the input to the individual at that time.
>
> (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 252)

Being aware of the importance of being relevant, the speaker will try to make his utterance relevant enough to deserve his addressee’s attention. This implies that:

> The fact that every utterance conveys a presumption of its own relevance (i.e. the Communicative Principle of Relevance) motivates the use of the following comprehension procedure in interpreting the speaker’s meaning.
>
> Relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure.
>
> (a) Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects. In particular, test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.
>
> (b) Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied.
> (Wilson and Sperber 2002: 258–259)

Having provided a cognitive account of the creation of meaning, Sperber and Wilsons’s work, inspired by the ideas of philosophers Austin and Searle (but also of their forerunners in pragmatics Gordon and Lakoff (1971) and Morgan (1978)) is one of the two mainstays of pragmatics as we know it today. The other pillar of present-day pragmatics is Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Theory, which is based on Grice’s concept of “implicature” and his cooperative principle. A summary of the most influential ideas of their work is presented below.

3.1.2.4. Gricean 0ragmatics

H. P. Grice's most salient contribution to pragmatics was his theory of implicature, or the meaning implicated by specific utterances (Grice 1957; 1969; 1982; 1989). Within this framework, he distinguishes between conventional implicature and conversational implicature, the first being the meaning implicated by the words on their own and the latter, the nonconventional implication that the speaker wants to convey to the hearer.

His model implies that communication takes place thanks to inference: in addition to the traditional coding-decoding process, utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning. Some of these expectations are derived from the compliance or flouting of a cooperative principle ("[m]ake your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged"; Grice 1975: 45) and four different conversational maxims:

> quality:
> 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
> 2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
>
> quantity:
> 1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
> 2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
>
> relation:
> Be relevant.
>
> manner (clarity):
> 1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
> 2. Avoid ambiguity.
> 3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
> 4. Be orderly.
>
> (Grice 1975: 45–46)

Although Grice's work is doubtlessly one of the landmarks of modern linguistics and philosophy of language, and there are few (if any) scholars that would deny the important role of inference in the interpretation of utterances, new trends have emerged claiming that, contrary to Grice's view, inference is not an automatic process, but rather:

> We start wondering why the speaker says what he says when, and only when, there is something wrong with the output of the normal interpretive process, which consists in simply assuming (without reflection) that the speaker means what he says. Only when the unreflective, normal process of interpretation yields weird results does an inference process take place whereby we use evidence concerning the speaker's beliefs and intentions to work out what he means on the basis of what he says.
>
> (Recanati 2002: 108)

However, no further discussion of Grice's theories is provided in this dissertation, as the main points thereof that influenced present-day pragmatics have already been set out. Grice's Politeness Theory is the last one to be tackled before moving on and focusing on interlanguage pragmatics.

3.1.2.5. Politeness Theory

According to Brown and Levinson (*ibid.* 1978, Levinson and Brown 1987), certain illocutionary acts can threaten the addressee's face by limiting their freedom of action or expressing disapproval about the addressee, for example. The effects of such face-threatening acts (FTA) can be lessened through the adoption of certain strategies, which will depend on the weight of the FTA, based on three different parameters: power, distance and rating of imposition.

In Brown and Levinson's theory, the term *face* is understood in the sense defined by Goffman (1967):

> [Face is] the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes.
>
> (*Ibid.: 5*)

In other words, someone's face is his feeling of self-worth or self-image.

Two types of face are distinguished: positive face (an individual's desire to be liked, approved of, respected, and appreciated) and negative face (an individual's desire not to have his freedom of action restricted and not to be criticized).

For the present dissertation, it is worth pointing out two ideas of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory that have a remarkable effect on later developments and, eventually, on the present study. The first one is that their theory was the first one to include the social effects that the use of illocutionary acts can have and how these effects have an impact on communication. In other words, politeness is considered both a sociocultural and a sociolinguistic element.

The second idea to be highlighted here is that politeness consists of a series of choices made by the speaker according to the goals he intends to attain in a specific context*;* i.e. politeness is also an element of pragmatics.

The threefold nature of politeness (cultural-linguistic-pragmatic) implies that, within the field of SLA, pragmatic competence is just as important to attain effective communication as linguistic and cultural competences, and, therefore, should be explicitly taught side by side with them. Nevertheless, it must be noted that an L2 learner's pragmatic knowledge need not evolve at the same pace as his linguistic competence, even though the former may be highly dependant upon the latter (Olshtain and Cohen 1989; Bardovi-Harlig 2003).

The specific branch of pragmatics that deals with how this knowledge is learned or acquired by L2 learners is *interlanguage pragmatics,* to which the following section is devoted.

3.1.3 Interlanguage Pragmatics

Interlanguage pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics share three theoretical mainstays: Gricean pragmatics, Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory, and the interlanguage hypothesis proposed by Selinker.

So far this dissertation has briefly presented the origins of present-day pragmatics, namely Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson 1986, 1995; Wilson and Sperber 2000, 2002), and Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987), which were based, respectively, on Austin's (1962) and Searle's (Searle 1969, 1975; Searle and Vanderveken 1985) work on speech act theory, and on Grice's theories about implicature and conversational principles.

The present dissertation, however, is not about pragmatics in general, but rather about a very specific aspect closely related with it: the creation of meaning in second language learners' minds. As already stated, interlanguage pragmatics is the specific branch of pragmatics that deals with how this knowledge is learned or acquired by L2 learners, in the same way as Selinker's interlanguage hypothesis (see chapter 2 above) deals with how learners develop their linguistic competence along the interlanguage continuum (which ranges from their native language to the target language).

Interlanguage pragmatics has been defined as "the study of non-native speaker's use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993: 3).

As mentioned above, there seems to be a close relationship between linguistic competence and pragmatic competence which, nonetheless, does not guarantee a simultaneous and parallel evolution of both competences (Olshtain and Cohen 1989; Bardovi-Harlig 2003). This has led to a variety of studies and opinions regarding, on the one hand, the exact degree of influence of one element over the other, and, on the other hand, whether pragmatic competence is better acquired by L2 learners who receive implicit information on the target language's pragmatics or by those who receive explicit information on this aspect of the target language.

As to the degree in which pragmatic and linguistic competences are dependent on each other, no exact formula seems to have been found. However, different studies have identified a set of factors that affect such degree of dependence; namely, quantity and quality of input. Based on this conclusion, Schmidt (1993), Kasper (1996, 2001), Koike (1996) and Bardovi-Harlig (2001), among other authors, emphasize the need to strengthen explicit L2 pragmatic teaching, particularly in foreign language contexts, where both native input and real situations are scarce, and thus, the learning of pragmatic strategies used in the target culture is highly restricted:

> Only through exposure to contextualized language at all levels will students become truly proficient in language use, and understand the target language ways of speaking.
>
> (Koike 1996: 276)

Kasper, however, states that in the case of adult L2 learners, providing additional knowledge on the pragmatic uses of the target language is not as important as making them aware of the related knowledge they already possess in their mother tongue:

> So, the good news is that there is a lot of pragmatic information that adult learners possess, and the bad news is that they don't always use what they know. There is thus a clear role for pedagogic intervention here, not with the purpose of providing learners with new information but to make them aware of what they know already and encourage them to use their universal or transferable L1 pragmatic knowledge in L2 contexts.
>
> (Kasper 1997: HTML document)

Furthermore, Ellen Bialystok calls for a development of *analyzed representations of the language,* combined with explicit teaching of pragmatic uses that somehow differ from those in the first language:

> Culturally specific forms and rules for pragmatic language use may require some specific analysis by adult learners both in the sense of organizing implicit knowledge into new explicit categories and in the sense of increasing the repertoire of language structure by learning new forms (...) Second language learners would have to learn all these pragmatic conventions and the forms for conveying them.
>
> (Bialystok 1993: 53)

Among the pragmatic conventions for which explicit instruction and awareness-raising may be needed, Bialystok (*ibid.*) mentions differences in social distinctions (such as marks of social status or age), a wider variety of alternative forms used in the L2 to express the same intentions, and conversational rules (turn-taking, interrupting, opening and closing).

3.2. THE DUAL LANGUAGE MODEL

As already mentioned in the introduction to this section, for the correct understanding of the theory that is being put forward in the present dissertation, it is essential to understand pragmatics as encompassing a series of cognitive processes, both in the speaker's and the hearer's minds.

This section of chapter 3 is devoted to Keckskes's Dual Language Model. To begin, a succinct introduction is provided to the three elements that constitute the theoretical backbone of Keckskes's proposal; namely, Keckskes's Dual Language Model; Levelt's Model of Language Production, and Grosjean's Language Mode Theory. The chapter ends with the presentation of Kecskes's Dual Language Model.

3.2.1 Definition

The Dual Language Model (hereafter, DLM) is a bilingual production model put forward by the Hungarian philosopher Istvan Kecskes (2000), who focuses on conceptualization of knowledge and the way in which, once conceptualized, that knowledge is finally mapped onto specific linguistic and syntactic forms.

The DLM integrates three psycholinguistic models on language production: Kecskes's Dual Language System (hereafter DLS), Levelt's Language Production Model, and Grosjean's Bilingual Language Mode Theory. These three models are not exclusive, but rather complementary.

Since the core of this theory is Kecskes's DLS, an explanation of it follows next. After that, the two elements that Kecskes later adapted and included into his DLS to create the DLM are also explained.

3.2.1.1. Kecskes's Dual Language System

Kecskes and Papp introduced the concept of *dual language* in 2000 (Kecskes and Papp 2000) as an alternative to *interlanguage* because, as they pointed out, the language learner is not "in between" but rather:

> in the process of changing her/his existing conceptual and linguistic systems by adding new information which will result in qualitative changes in the original conceptual system and the eventual emergence of a new linguistic system that is rooted in one and the same conceptual system.
>
> (Kecskes 2007: 31–32)

This proposal is rooted in a two-level approach to semantics, which considers that *semantic* and *conceptual* representations are processed by two separate cognitive modules (as opposed to one-level theories, which claim that semantic representations are a part of the conceptual system too). In other words, a two-level approach “recognizes the relative independence of the linguistic level from the conceptual level” (Kecskes 2007: 31), which is an essential point for the theoretical framework presented in this dissertation.

The question thus arises of “how the emerging new language with its own socio-cultural foundation will affect the existing L1-governed knowledge and conceptual base of the language learner, and how this effect is reflected in the use of both languages” (Kecskes and Cuenca 2005: 49), which is what the Dual Language System aims to account for.

As explained by Kecskes and Cuenca (2005), the Dual Language System (DLS) refers to an organism with two language channels and a common underlying conceptual base (CUCB), which is “the basis and originator of all bilingual or multilingual linguistic actions, a ‘container’ which includes everything but the language system itself (rules plus lexicon)” (*ibid.*: 50). This CUCB feeds and is fed through both language channels, which in turn interact constantly through the CUCB and thus “make bi- and multilingual development and language use unique, and this is why neither of the participating languages can be compared to a monolingual system” (*ibid.*: 50).

This constant interaction gives rise to three different types of concepts in the CUCB: common concepts (i.e. concepts attached to both cultures with differences only at the lexical level), culture-specific concepts (i.e. concepts which are developed through one of the language channels and have a specific socio-cultural load attached to them), and synergic concepts (i.e. concepts which are lexicalized in both languages but have a different socio-cultural load in each language) (Kecskes 2007).

Nonetheless, it should be noted that language channels do not compete, but rather collaborate in expressing preverbal thought. The role each language plays keeps changing depending on conceptual-pragmatic factors and linguistic constraints (Kecskes 2006b).

As already mentioned, Kecskes drew on two other psycholinguistic models of language production to complement his DLS and create his DLM. The first of them was Levelt’s model.

3.2.1.2. Levelt's model of language production

The view that human beings are born with a rich, invariant, and language-independent conceptual system to whose concepts they attach different labels on the basis of the culture and language that surrounds them (Chomsky 1987) was the ruling view on monolingual acquisition for several decades. This opinion was shared (to varying degrees) by experts in bilingualism such as Paradis (1985) and Perecman (1989).

However, in 1989, Levelt proposed a language production model that challenged the very roots of Chomsky's viewpoint, as he asserted that the process of conceptualization is both language- and culture-specific. Furthermore, he claimed the existence and participation of four separate components in language production, each of which "is an autonomous specialist in transforming its characteristic input into its characteristic output. The procedures apply largely without further interference or feedback from other components" (Levelt 1989: 27).

The four components mentioned by Levelt (1989) are:

> (i) *A Conceptualizer, which generates preverbal messages.* These messages consist of conceptual information whose expression is the means for realizing the speaker's intention, (ii) *A Formulator consisting of two subcomponents.* The Grammatical Encoder retrieves lemmas from the lexicon and generates grammatical relations reflecting the conceptual relations in the message. Its output is called "surface structure". The Phonological Encoder creates a phonetic plan (or "internal speech") on the basis of the surface structure. It has access to the form information in the lexicon, and it also incorporates procedures for generating the prosody of an utterance. (iii) *An Articulator, which unfolds and executes the phonetic plan as a series of neuromuscular instructions.* The resulting movements of the articulators yield overt speech. (iv) *The Speech Comprehension System,* which makes self-produced internal and overt speech available to the conceptual system; this allows the speaker lo monitor his own productions.
>
> (*Ibid.*: 87)

Levelt mapped out this language production model into the diagram replicated in figure 3.1 below (ibid.: 87).

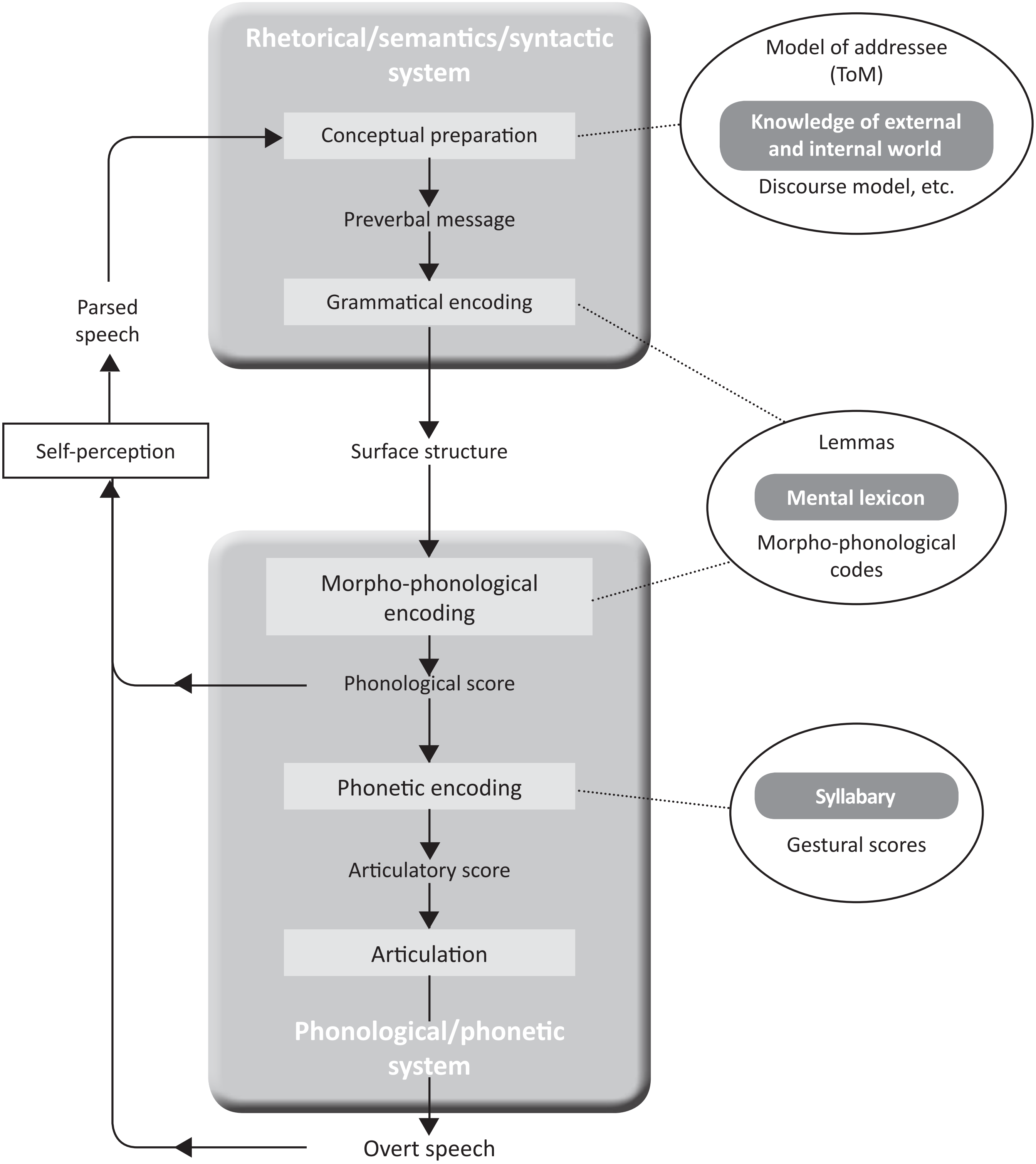
Rhetorical/semantics/syntactic system
Conceptual preparation
Preverbal message
Grammatical encoding
Model of addressee (ToM)
Knowledge of external and internal world
Discourse model, etc.
Parsed speech
Self-perception
Surface structure
Lemmas
Mental lexicon
Morpho-phonological codes
Morpho-phonological encoding
Phonological score
Phonetic encoding
Syllabary
Gestural scores
Articulatory score
Articulation
Phonological/phonetic system
Overt speech

Figure 3.1. Levelt's blueprint for speech production
(Levelt 1999: 87).

It is important to note that Levelt conceived his system for L1 acquisition, but Kecskes incorporated it into his DLM.

3.2.1.3. Grosjean's Language Mode Theory

The third conceptual model that Kecskes incorporated to his DLM was Grosjean's theory about language modes, or "the state of activation of the bilingual's languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time" (Grosjean 2001: 3). According to this theory, bilinguals can activate their languages and language processing mechanism to a greater or lesser extent depending on factors ranging from participants (language proficiency, usual or preferred mode of interaction...) to situation (physical location, presence of monolinguals...) and form and content of the message (language used, topic...).

These concepts may well have been reformulated by Kecskes in his Dynamic Model of Meaning (DMM, which constitutes another mainstay of his theoretical framework and which is developped in detail in the next chapter) as the private, the situational and the linguistic contexts, respectively.

According to Grosjean (2001), there are basically two speech modes: monolingual (i.e. the bilingual turns down the activation level of one language to "very low") and bilingual (the bilingual speaker uses one of the languages as basis but keeps the other one activated and resorts to it from time to time, giving way to code-switches and borrowings), but this must not be understood as a clear-cut distinction, since, as has already been mentioned, the factors influencing the choice of language mode are many and very varied ones.

In the DLM this distinction is unnecessary because both languages share a common underlying conceptual base (CUCB) which "results in a unique bilingual language mode that is usually characterized by the activities of the two constantly available language systems that may lead to relatively frequent switches of codes" (Kecskes 2006b: 265).

3.2.2 The Dual Language Model

So, how did Kecskes get all these three models to work synergically in the Dual Language Model? As can be seen in figure 3.2 (Kecskes 2006b: 261), Kecskes divides the language production process into three different stages which correspond to Levelt's conceptualizer (CUCB in Kecskes's terms), formulator (language systems; also called CAIS or constantly available interacting systems), and articulator components (see 4.1.2 above for more details on Levelt's model).

The process, according to Kecskes, is as follows (see figure 3.2 for graphical representation):

> In the DLM, production begins with the speaker's intention, which results in the preverbal message formulated and which is pre-structured in the CUCB (conceptualizer). From the CUCB, the preverbal message gets into the language channels (formulator) where it gains its final form (articulator) by mapping conceptual representations onto linguistic representations and comes to the surface in a language mode required by the interplay of context and the speaker's strategies.
>
> (*Ibid.*: 260)

Kecskes nonetheless warns that this is not a linear process. Rather, there is a continuous, bidirectional interplay between the conceptual and linguistic levels; i.e. between the conceptualizer and the articulator.

Figure 3.3 summarises the evolution from Austin's and Searle's philosophical search of meaning in language to Kecskes's Dual Language Model. All the authors mentioned in it considered cognition a key element in the creation of meaning by both speaker and hearer, however, none of them probably delved as much into what cognitive elements both interlocutors need to share as Kecskes when he put forward his DLM.

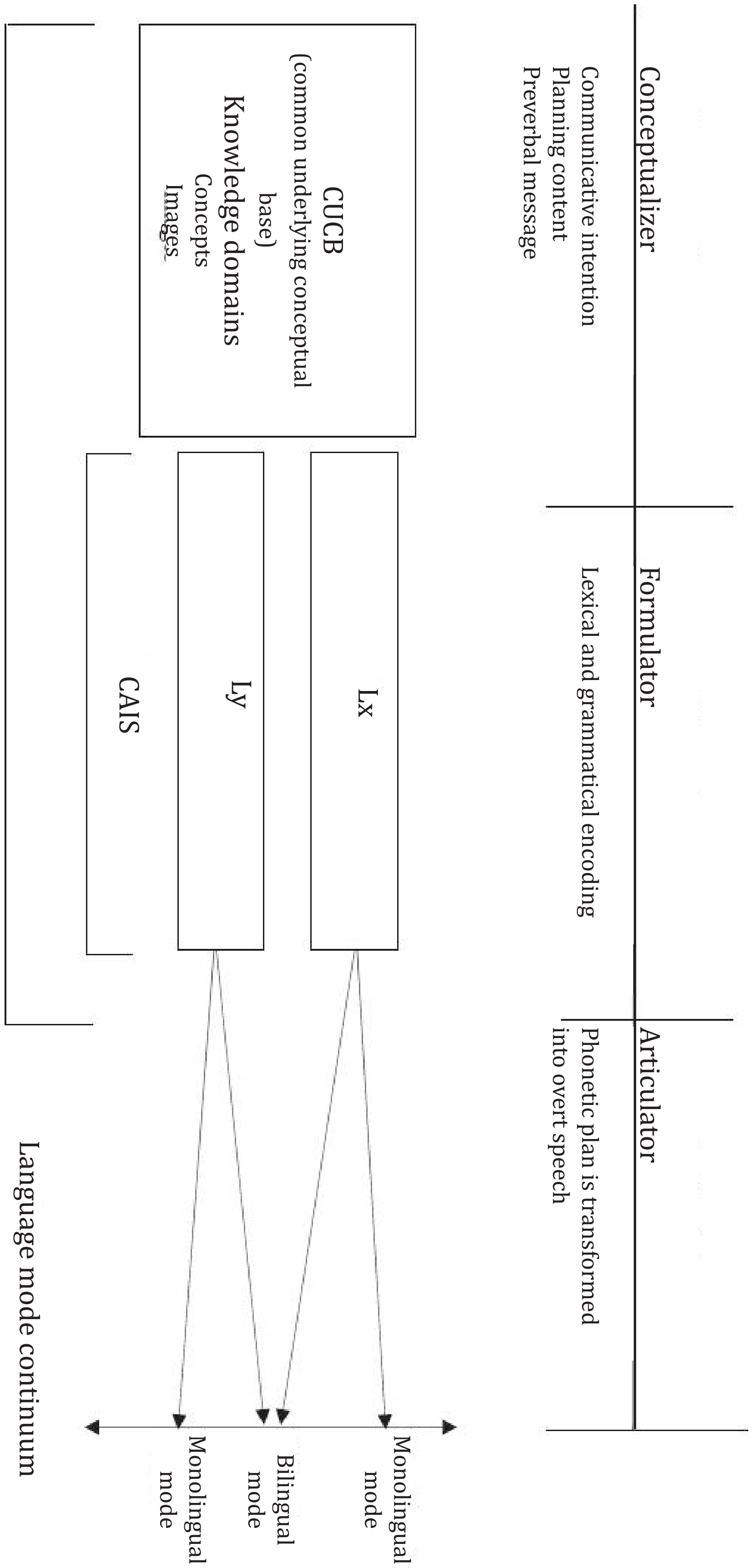
Conceptualizer
Communicative intention
Planning content
Preverbal message
Formulator
Lexical and grammatical encoding
Articulator
Phonetic plan is transformed into overt speech
CUCB
(common underlying conceptual base)
Knowledge domains
Concepts
Images
Lx
Ly
CAIS
Dual language system
Language mode continuum
Monolingual mode
Bilingual mode
Monolingual mode

Figure 3.2. Representation of Kecskes's Dual Language Model (*Ibid.*: 261).

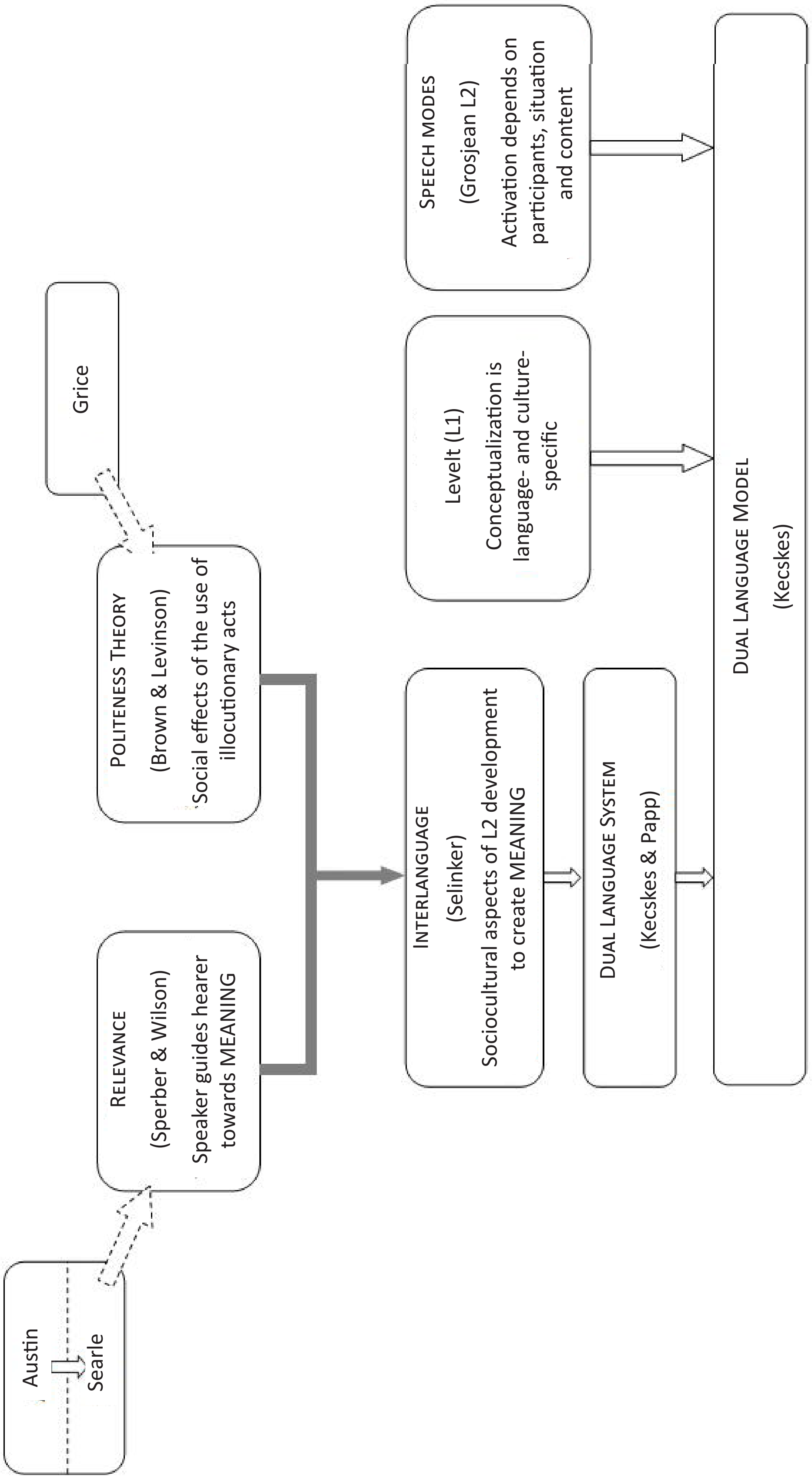
Austin
Searle
Relevance
(Sperber & Wilson)
Speaker guides hearer towards MEANING
Politeness Theory
(Brown & Levinson)
Social effects of the use of illocutionary acts
Grice
Interlanguage
(Selinker)
Sociocultural aspects of L2 development to create MEANING
Dual Language System
(Kecskes & Papp)
Levelt (L1)
Conceptualization is language- and culture-specific
Speech Modes
(Grosjean L2)
Activation depends on participants, situation and content
Dual Language Model
(Kecskes)

Figure 3.3. Theoretical background of Kecskes's Dual Language Model.

3.3. DYNAMIC MODEL OF MEANING AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

3.3.1 The process of communication

Although the previous chapter provided a thorough explanation of the theories of Grice, Searle or Sperber and Wilson, it is necessary to bring them together under the umbrella of the concept of "communication" to fully comprehend why they are so critical for the understanding of the model proposed in the present dissertation.

Grice was a pioneer in explaining and developing the communication process when he claimed that, in order for communication to take place, the recognition of *intention* was needed (Grice 1957; 1969). In other words, he states that the speaker utters a coded message, then the hearer decodes the message, tries to infer what the speaker has tried to convey and, if they share the same contextual assumptions and the same intention, communication takes place.

Any act of communication is the realization of a *cognitive* process that follows trial-and-error dynamic mental process in a conversation (Kecskes and Zhang 2009). This process has a social resonance beyond the mere transfer of information and is constructed with the aid of what we have called "triangulation".

> Triangulation is the process by which the addressor, the addressee and the context constitute a liaison in which the absence or deficient behaviour of any of these three elements would make communication impossible. Triangulation is related to the notion of 'intention' (Grice 1957; 1969) whereby a speaker's coded message is decoded not only linguistically but with reference to the original intention, if successful communication exists.
>
> (Romero-Trillo and Maguire 2011: 228)

Therefore, intention is linked to triangulation as Audi (1993) posited, and it is impossible to identify or describe this metaphysical phenomenon without reference to the participants and the context.

Nevertheless, in many occasions, communication suffers from cognitive disfluencies that might lead to misunderstanding and, in these cases, the effort of participants to achieve the correct interpretation of the message is not always successful.

3.3.1.1. The coded model

More authors have delved into the communication process. For instance, Sperber and Wilson tried to state what they called "coded model" (Sperber and Wilson 1986/1995; Wilson and Sperber 1986; Wilson 1998). These authors saw the act of coding and decoding as central for communication. They stated that for communication to take place, the basic elements needed were a sender, a receiver, a message and a code to be able to decode the message sent by the sender. If those elements are available, communication is achieved.

In a later approach, Sperber and Wilson (2002) assumed that coding was tightly connected to the context in which communication takes place. Communication was no longer seen as an independent, context-free act, but as an exchange of meaning which was context-dependent and set up in contextual parameters. Thus, new elements came into play; the exchange of information was still central to the communication process, but also the "speaker, the hearer, time of utterance, place of utterance, and so on" (Sperber and Wilson 2002: 6).

Contextualism can be considered to be a descendent of the Speech Act Theories of Meaning proposed by Austin (1962) or Searle (1969). It is important to distinguish between two different views on contextualism: the epistemological perspective and the semantic-pragmatic perspective.

For the epistemological interface:

> [C]ontextualism refers to the position that the truth-conditions knowledge-ascribing and knowledge-denying sentences (sentences of the form 'S knows that P' and 'S doesn't know that P' and related variants of such sentences) vary in certain ways according to the context in which they are uttered.
>
> (DeRose 1999: 187)

On the contrary, for the semantics-pragmatics view, the main debate lies on the analysis of "rich pragmatic effects throughout what is said by a sentence, or throughout the proposition expressed, or throughout semantic content" (Kecskes 2008a: 387).

> Some authors within the pragmatics tradition have used a more refined terminology and have differentiated between "context-free" and "context-

> sensitive" utterances. "Context-free" utterances are not constrained by the situation in which they are being uttered, i.e., they have full-fledged autonomous meaning per se. On the contrary, utterances that are "context-sensitive" are ancillary to context for correct interpretation.
>
> (Romero-Trillo and Maguire 2011: 229)

Authors such as Cappelen and Lepore (2005), Borg (2007) or Wieland (2009) have delved into this dichotomy. For all of them, it is the situation in which the utterance is realized which underlies the context-free or context-sensitive predisposition of the given utterance.

3.3.1.2. What do we understand by "context"?

When trying to define the term "context", the more basic linguistic definition refers to any physical, social or external factor that might affect the interpretation of language and can throw light on its meaning. The extent to which context can modify or affect a sentence, utterance, phrase or proposition has been extensively studied. The importance of context understood as the circumstances that can affect linguistic variation and interpretation has been a subject of study since the early 20's of the past century (e.g. Malinowski 1989, Austin 1962, Heritage 1984, Pomerantz 1984, Goodwin and Duranti 1992). Others, such as Levinson (1983), studied the relationship between language context and what he called "encoded structures of a language" (Levinson 1983: 9). Yule (1996), in turn, revised the idea of "contextual meaning" in the classic sense of the influence that context may have upon the sentences being uttered.

3.3.1.3. The Graded Salience Hypothesis and context

It is probably impossible to find nowadays any linguist who does not think that context affects language production and comprehension. The role and relevance of context, however, keep being a point of debate among linguists. There are some trends that embrace a basic conception of context and its influence in meaning, while others allocate context a prominent role. Among the former are the proposals made by scholars such as Mac Whinney (1987) and Bates (1999), who state that context constrains and even biases the interpretation of the hearer. Fodor (1983) also proposed a rather basic conception of context, but, contrary to

Mac Whinney or Bates, he delves into the retrieval of meaning (where, as he claims, context plays but an “accidental” role.

In trying to reconcile the proposals represented by Mac Whinney, Bates and Fodor, Rachel Giora developed a third option, which she called the “Graded Salience Hypothesis” (Giora 1997, 2003).

> According to the graded salience hypothesis [*sic*], then, coded meanings will be accessed upon encounter, regardless of contextual information or authorial intent. Coded meanings of low salience, however, may not reach sufficient levels of activation to be visible in a context biased toward the more salient meaning of the word.
>
> (Giora 2003: 10)

Giora talks about salient meaning, salient context and salient lexical processes. What she understands by the word “salient” are coded and prominent meanings of lexical units to which the speakers have immediate access, therefore independent of context at first. However, these lexical units are revised when there is a misfit with context. In other words, when trying to interpret meaning, if the interlocutor finds herself with a wrong or ineffective assumption of a salient lexical meaning, she will immediately revise and contextualize the situation in order to get the expected meaning of the utterance. And how does the interlocutor do this? By relying on prior experience. Quoting Giora:

> [S]alient meanings are processed automatically (though not necessarily solely), irrespective of contextual information and strength of bias in the first phase of comprehension when lexical processing and contextual processing run parallel.
>
> (Giora 2003: 24)

It is important to mention that *salience* has degrees and it can be measured. There are degrees in terms of frequency of words, familiarity, conventionality or prototypes. There are many authors that have studied and researched these degrees. Thorough studies on the matter can be found in Burguess and Lund (1997), Gernsbacher (1984), Gibbs (1982) or Talmy (2000). Research seems to show that familiarity is the most crucial element affecting the retrieval of salient meanings.

For Giora, salient meanings are retrieved first irrespective of the literal or figurative meaning. This statement created big debate. Two authors that had a different view and clearly disagreed with Giora where Hillert and Swinney (2001): "[T]o begin with, there is no clear ground upon which to firmly establish definitions of what constitutes a purely 'literal' *vs.* 'figurative' (non-literal) expression" (*ibid.*: 107).

As a result of these divergent views, Giora decided to re-state what she had said back in 1997: "I will show that the figurative/literal divide is not a good predictor. Instead, the distinction of interest that can best predict ease of comprehension is the degree of salience of a certain meaning in a certain context" (Giora 1997: 187).

Nowadays context and salience are two basic concepts in linguistics. A great supporter of Giora's Graded Salience Hypothesis (GSL) is Kecskes. He incorporated Giora's concepts into the model he developed and that is explained in detail later on in this dissertation. Kecskes claimed that "The GSH supports an approach that emphasizes the dynamism of the interplay of lexical units and context" (Kecskes 2006a: 232).

With this ends a brief overview of the current perspectives regarding context. A basic explanation of Giora's Graded Salience Hypothesis and how it contributed to the concept of "context" as Kecskes conceives it has also been provided with the aim of calling attention to the dynamism of language; a dynamism that will eventually culminate in the Dynamic Model of Meaning. Before looking into Kecskes's model in detail, a brief introduction is given next to the view of context held by the author of this dissertation.

Between the radical positions of one sign or another regarding context, there are some academics who postulate a moderate view. One of such academics is Istvan Kecskes (Kecskes 2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2008a, 2008b; Kecskes, Davidson and Brecht 2005; Kecskes and Zhang 2009). He argues that we should understand "context" in a broader sense, not only as the external circumstances that might affect meaning, but also other dialectics of context. Thus, he classified context into three different subclasses, which he termed "private context", "actual situational context" and "linguistic context". Kecskes's aim was to develop a model of meaning in which a broad concept of "context" was introduced and highlighted as a means to achieve successful communication acts. For this reason, he developed what he called the “Dynamic Model of Meaning” based on the premise that human speech is dynamic and “language is never context-free” (Kecskes 2008a: 388).

3.3.1.4. Current linguistic perspectives and context

For linguistics to get to the point where context is considered a key element when understanding meaning, many theories were developed in the meantime. Discourse analysis has always tackled the relationship between linguistic units and context. I would like to emphasize at this stage two approaches that were extremely relevant, in my viewpoint. The so called “traditional approach”, supported by authors such as Brown (1980) or Pennycook (1994), who explored lexico-grammatical forms in different contexts. The opposite position is that of Ball’s (1990) who claims that “the issue in discourse analysis is why, at a given time, out of all possible things that could be said, only certain things were said” (Ball 1990: 3). Therefore, Ball provides another turn of the screw to the concept of “context” by trying to provide an explanation and not just a description, like the traditional approaches did.

Yet a step further was the concept of “relation” provided by Kecskes (2003). Lexical meaning and context are described and explained, but, more importantly, a relationship is established between the two of them. Instead of considering lexical units as either “context-free” or “context-bound”, all words are related to context. To put it another way, words are not thought of as isolated lexical units anymore; they all are context-related.

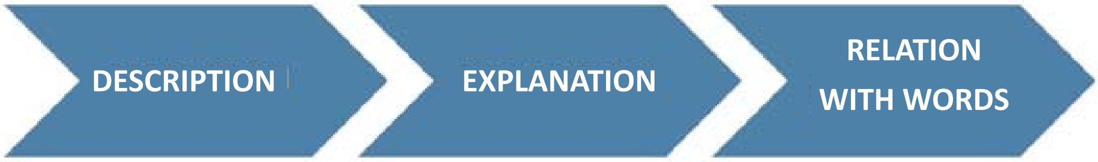

Figure 3.4. The development of context.

When I refer to utterances as being “context-free”, I mean words that are not constrained (hence “free”) by the situation in which they are being uttered; that is, words have meaning values in themselves. On the contrary, words that are “context-sensitive” rely on context to be interpreted correctly.

As with any new approach, linguists started to position themselves in two extreme viewpoints. On the one hand, we have scholars claiming that context might affect in a very extreme and radical way the meaning of what is being uttered. Recanati (2002), for example, pointed out that “any piece of contextual information may turn out to be relevant to establishing the correct interpretation for the speech act” (*ibid.*: 107). In a similar vein, scholars like Sperber and Wilson or Searle state that every utterance is context-sensitive and therefore, context-dependent.

> The interpretation of every utterance modifies the context in which the next utterance is interpreted. Context-sensitivity is the ability to take this ever changing context into account.
>
> (Sperber 2005: 54)

Other authors supporting this view are Bibok and Németh (2001) or Barsalou (1993). For them, context entirely specifies the meanings of words or lexical units. There are some less radical authors, such as Stanley and Szabo (2000) or DeRose (1999), who are particularly concerned with the context sensitivity of epistemic claims. They allow room for the possibility of context-free utterances, but they also state that context is basic to the creation of meaning and, as a consequence, context does affect meaning.

Violi (2000) is another linguist who supports this idea:

> It is not the existence of a given context that makes the use of the word possible, but the use of the word that initiates a mental process in the listener which seeks to construct a context in which its present use could be most appropriate.
>
> (Violi 2000: 117)

The above quotation defines his position about context and hints (or at least it does seem to me that he does) at the dynamic essence of language, a point which will be later developed by the Dynamic Model of Meaning. It is this view of context that I have assumed throughout the study.

The extent to which context plays a key role when trying to interpret meaning is very well explained by Giora’s Graded Salience Hypothesis (henceforth GSH) (1997, 2003), as was seen in 3.3.1.3 above. In my viewpoint, this was a huge step in the understanding of the creation of meaning and a great contribution to discourse analysis research.

Figure 3.5 below summarises the evolution of the different notions of "context" until the conception present in Kecskes's Dynamic Model of Meaning:

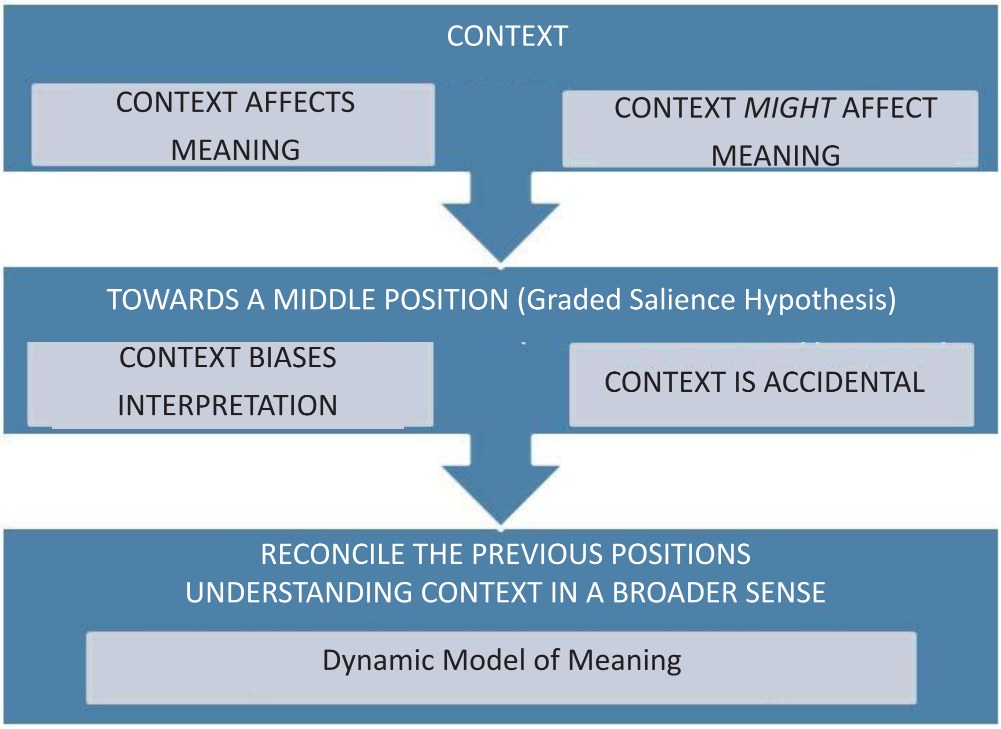
CONTEXT
CONTEXT AFFECTS MEANING
CONTEXT *MIGHT* AFFECT MEANING
TOWARDS A MIDDLE POSITION (Graded Salience Hypothesis)
CONTEXT BIASES INTERPRETATION
CONTEXT IS ACCIDENTAL
RECONCILE THE PREVIOUS POSITIONS
UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT IN A BROADER SENSE
Dynamic Model of Meaning

Figure 3.5. Summary of trends and positions regarding context.

3.3.2 The Dynamic Model of Meaning

The Dynamic Model of Meaning (hereafter, DMM) aims at blending the two main approaches to language existing in the linguistic domain. On the one side, the *cognitive* approach, supported by authors like Langacker (1998), who viewed language as "an integral facet of cognition (not a separate "module" or "mental faculty)" (*ibid.*: 1). On the other side, the *generative* view, with Noam Chomsky at the head.

Wittgenstein (1953) supported the idea that meaning varies according to certain attributes associated with linguistic expressions. In a similar token, Wierzbicka (1996) claims that meaning is part of the word and, therefore, invariant. Since the meaning of words is a crucial element in the understanding of utterances (and the comprehension of such process of understanding is the aim of the DMM), a closer look at Wierzbicka's approach to meaning is provided below.

3.3.2.1. Wierzbicka and the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Theory

Wierzbicka made a first attempt to bring together the cognitive and the generative approaches when she developed the Natural Semantic Metalanguage Theory (Wierzbicka 1996). According to this theory, meaning in invariable and rests on the lexical level rather than on the conceptual level. With the same aim, Bierwisch (1996, 1997) put forward the Two-Level Model, which, contrary to Wierzbicka's proposal, claims that meaning rests on the conceptual level.

At this point, I would like to clarify that, compared to the DMM, Wierzbicka's theory is more word-centred than context-centred, as Kecskes puts it: "the DMM tends to be a more 'context-friendly' theory than the NSM" (Kecskes 2003: 49). This, however, does not mean that Wierzbicka denies the role of context. In fact, in the natural semantic metalanguage theory context plays a crucial part in the creation of meaning.

Wierzbicka started in the late 60's with a research program aimed at providing semantics and meaning with an explanatory value so that complex meanings could be defined or explicated. She drank from the classics of the 17th century, such as Descartes, Pascal or Leibniz. She started developing her model on her own (Wierzbicka 1972, 1980). It was not until much later that, with the help of Goddard (Goddard and Wierzbicka 2002), she linked the NSM to the Universal Grammar and ended up with the concept of "metalanguage" (which Goddard and Wierzbicka presented as the core of any language in the world).

Wierzbicka was a source of inspiration to Kecskes and the DMM. It is remarkable, however, that Wierzbicka's idea of language and meaning and the one posed by Kecskes should have been related to each other a few *centuries before* they were even proposed. Leibniz, for example, discussed already the dynamism of language and the variability of concepts, which keep changing with the help of agents in order to create meaning:

> Whatever is thought of by us is either conceived through itself, or involves the concept of another. Whatever is involved in the concept of another is again either conceived through itself, or involves the concept of another; and so on. So one must either proceed to infinity, or all thoughts are resolved into those which are conceived through themselves. If nothing is conceived through itself, nothing could be conceived at all.
>
> (Leibniz 1973 [1679]: 1)

After having explained the two main positions regarding meaning, there was room for a middle position in the way linguists could view and understand language and meaning. I agree that the aforementioned two approaches are the closest to the DMM, and in fact, the three of them tackled the question of trying to identify a common semantic core. However, the Dynamic Model of Meaning was developed to fill the gap regarding the creation of meaning and context. In Kecskes' words, the Dynamic Model of Meaning offers an "alternative to the mainstream approaches. DMM emphasizes that meaning can be understood only if we take into account its dynamic structure" (Kecskes 2003: 19).

Now that the DMM has been presented and supported by the previous trends, the model is explained in depth. First, considering its main statements, and then, proceeding with a detailed explanation of each of the elements that compose the model. Primarily, the more conceptual level, i.e. coresense and consense are tackled. After that, the three contexts proposed by the DMM (linguistic, situational and private) are explained. Once the contexts have been stated, the more socio-cultural aspects of the model come into play (common ground and situation-bound utterances). The last part of this chapter deals with what I have called "the fourth context", which is my contribution to this model.

3.3.2.2. Main claims of the model

The Dynamic Model of Meaning is based on two main statements or claims. The first one emphasizes the intercultural aspect of communication. Authors such as Fauconnier (1997) or Blommaert (1998) deal with the different aspects of meaning when the speakers are not monolingual, but rather bilingual or even multilingual. For both Kecskes and Fauconnier, meaning construction systems and prompting systems differ depending on the type of speaker we have. In Fauconnier's words "meaning construction refers to the high-level, complex mental operations that apply within and across domains when we think, act, or communicate” (Fauconnier 1997: 1).

It seems clear at this point that if different speakers have different prompting systems, then different cultures will have different background knowledge. This last argument, validated, among others, by Wierzbicka (1996), is also supported by the DMM: “both the meaning construction system and the meaning prompting systems differ in languages because both are culture specific” (Kecskes 2008a: 390).

The second claim refers to the inherent relationship between lexical items and context. Gumperz (1982) or Gee (1999) agree that utterances are not context-free, but rather context-dependent. In a similar vein, Kecskes states that “[t]he Dynamic behaviour of human speech implies a reciprocal process between language and context” (Kecskes 2004: 13).

Assuming, then, that language is context-dependent and dynamic, the DMM goes a step further by considering meaning as twofold; i.e. *consense* and *coresense.*

3.3.2.3. Coresense

Since the differentiation of the lexical level and the conceptual level of the model is one of the cornerstones of the present dissertation, it is, therefore, important to tackle the more conceptual level of the model. For this reason, an explanation of “coresense” and “consense” follows next.

Citing Kecskes (2008a: 393), “Coresense is a denotational, diachronic, relatively constant, and objective feature that reflects changes in the given speech community”. When our knowledge about the world is uttered or written, there are two levels that interact between them; the lexical level and the conceptual level.

The lexical level takes into account the word-specific semantic properties (WSSPs), in other words, the semantic load that some lexical items may carry. The concept was first used by Cruse (1992), who posited that words such as “die” or “pass away” carry a different semantic load, or different semantic properties. Therefore, the speaker can choose which one to use depending on the context.

The conceptual level, in turn, deals with the culture-specific conceptual properties (CSCPs). Some lexical units can be culture-specific and have different meanings depending on the speech community in which they are uttered. Some words may have CSCPs whereas other may not. For example, the word “salt” may not have any CSCPs associated. Another example provided by Kecskes (2008a) about the difference between the Spanish word “almuerzo” and the American-English one “lunch”, which differ in their CSCPs. The coresense of “lunch” and “almuerzo” is the same “there is no word-specific semantic property attached to either, however, they differ in culture-specific conceptual properties” (*ibid.*: 394).

3.3.2.4. Consense

“Coresense is actual, subjective, referential, and connotational, and changed by actual situational context” (Kecskes 2008a: 393), while “[c]onsenses are the variations of coresense in context” (Kecskes 2008a: 396).

In other words, coresense and consense are related in the sense that consense varies with context, therefore changes synchronically, while coresense does it diachronically.

3.3.2.5. Dynamic Model of Meaning and context

Current linguistic perspectives and approaches to the concept of “context” have been highlighted and explained previously in the chapter. The DMM developed a broader concept of “context” in which dynamism and contexts are seen as constructs to be used as repository and triggers of knowledge. The model comprises three contexts; “linguistic context”, “private context”, and “situational context”.

3.3.2.5.1. Linguistic context

The linguistic context, as explained in the DMM, is based on the lexical level and corresponds to what is uttered or written by interlocutors. When a speaker wants to create meaning and tries to communicate, he has to express the ideas he has in his mind in a coded form in the shape of a language that is understood by the speech community he belongs to. In order to express ideas, arguments or beliefs, we need to be supported by a linguistic context:

> Our mind exists simultaneously both in the head and in the world. So linguistic context is what is uttered (or written) ‘out there’ in the world by a speaker […]. So the linguistic context is created on line.
>
> (Kecskes 2006a: 234)

3.3.2.5.2. PRIVATE CONTEXT

When a speaker is determined to express his ideas of the world through the linguistic context previously mentioned, he needs prior experience to be encapsulated in any given lexical item for communication to be successful. In order for a speaker to create meaning, we need, at least, two interlocutors, i.e. a speaker and a hearer. Both should have what is called a “private context” that is, “the world knowledge that is represented in the head of the interlocutors” (Kecskes 2008a: 403).

According to the DMM, the speaker formulates in an utterance his private context, therefore, including the concept of the linguistic context. In other words, when trying to convey meaning, the speaker does so by using a linguistic context allegedly understood by the hearer. Both interlocutors must share the same private context (that is, they must share a prior and a present experience). Otherwise misunderstanding will arise.

Taking things a step further, the concept of “private context” needs to be aligned with intercultural communication. For the speaker and the hearer to share the same private context, they need to understand cultural differences. This is another point where misunderstandings might occur. Cultural differences are, nowadays, part of our everyday lives, so interlocutors must make an effort, sometimes, in explaining and exchanging their private context for the sake of a successful communicative act.

3.3.2.5.3. SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

When the private context is uttered, the speaker does so in an actual situational context (that is, “the world knowledge that is outside in the world as interpreted by the interlocutors” (Kecskes 2008a: 404)) and the hearer comes into play. Here is where we need to find a match between the speaker’s private context, the hearer’s private context and what is actually uttered in a given situation (i.e. the actual situational context). Only if those three factors match, creation of meaning (and, therefore, a successful communicative act) will occur. When a speaker tries to convey meaning he has to adapt what he says to the situational context in which he is saying it. Moreover, the same lexical unit may vary depending on the actual situational context in which it is being uttered. Therefore, there is reciprocity between language and situational context to make a perfect match or fit to create meaning. This confirms, once more, the dynamism of human speech.

3.3.2.5.4. Clarifications and remarks

Once the three concepts stated in the DMM have been defined, a question arises that needs to be answered and clarified. When the DMM claims that, for communication to take place, we need the three contexts dynamically intertwined, is the model claiming the existence of a hierarchy or different status for each context?

I think that there is no hierarchy among these three concepts and that all of them are equally important to the model. Actually, the three of them have to work effectively to create meaning. Without the linguistic context, we will not be able to decode the message the speaker wants us to convey; if the two interlocutors do not share the same private context, misunderstandings will arise, too. Likewise, unless all the interlocutors are involved in the same activity or situation, there is sure to be trouble when they try to communicate. Therefore, the three contexts are needed to create meaning and, as the quotation below shows, they are equally important:

> The Dynamic Model of Meaning (DMM) was put forward by Kecskes (2003) as an attempt to give equal importance to message and context in meaning-construction, blend the external and internal approaches to context, and reconcile the two extreme approaches to word meaning, one of which states that each word has an invariant meaning (e.g., Wierzbicka 1996).
>
> (Kecskes 2004: 14)

Moreover, another author that clearly supports this view talks about the "simultaneity" of processes regarding language:

> Gee (1999) claimed, two things seem to happen simultaneously: people attempt to fit their language to a situation or context that their language, in turn, helped to create in the first place.
>
> (Kecskes 2008a: 398)

What seems to be clear is that there is no hierarchy and that the three contexts have the same status of importance and relevance when it comes to meaning creation. Interestingly enough, "[b]oth private context and actual situational context have a decisive role in the communication process, but at different stages" (Kecskes 2008a: 403). In other words, although the three contexts have to come into play to help interlocutors communicate among themselves, they do not seem to occur at the same time, but rather at different stages in the communication process.

To summarize, these three contexts have to function in a dynamic way because each one of them plays a different key role, but they do not function at the same time. To put it in a different way, they are independent in the time they appear in the communicative act but dependent for the creation of meaning.

Figure 3.6 below summarizes the model posited by Kecskes. The figure illustrates the way in which the three contexts intertwine and relate to one another in order to create meaning in any given communicative act.

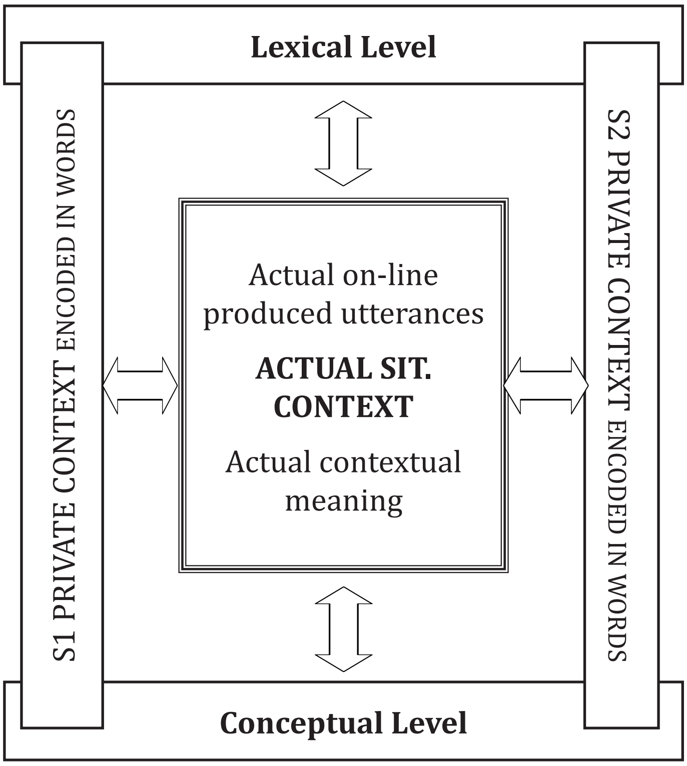
Lexical Level
S1 PRIVATE CONTEXT ENCODED IN WORDS
S2 PRIVATE CONTEXT ENCODED IN WORDS
Actual on-line produced utterances
ACTUAL SIT. CONTEXT
Actual contextual meaning
Conceptual Level

Figure 3.6. Interaction of the three types of context, as proposed by Kecskes (*ibid.* 2008a: 389)

So far, this section has delved into the more conceptual level of the model (i.e. coresense and consense) and the three contexts developed by the model (private, linguistic and situational). Our next goal is to explore the more socio-cultural aspects of the DMM, for which the concepts of "common ground" and "situation-bound utterances" are developed in more detail, as they are a crucial cornerstone for the model and for the present dissertation.

3.3.2.6. Dynamic Model of Meaning and common ground

For a speaker and a hearer to create meaning they need to share the knowledge of what is being uttered; but the speaker will have prior knowledge based on her own prior experience and so will the hearer. If their respective knowledges about the content and concepts expressed in the utterance are not equal, misunderstanding is likely to arise. Sharing knowledge, thus, is also key to understanding and creating meaning. The concept of "shared knowledge" implies that interlocutors must have a mutual knowledge of both the linguistic context and the situational context (i.e. a common ground) for correct communication to take place.

Moreover, both interlocutors must be willing to cooperate to achieve the communicative act. If the speaker and the hearer do not understand the need to cooperate in order to communicate, effective communication will not take place. "Cooperation" is a mixture between the *intention* the speaker has and the *attention* devoted by the hearer to the communicative act in the common ground domain.

When trying to explain the role of cooperation and common ground in communication, it is a must to mention the two dominant approaches regarding these concepts: the pragmatic and the cognitive views. The former, represented by Clark (1996) and Brennan (Clark and Brennan 1991) and their Contribution Theory, state that common ground is categorized as mental representations to be adopted by the interlocutors, in order to warrantee successful communication.

Cognitivists, on the contrary, do not award a significant weight in communication to those mental representations that already exist in the minds of the speakers. For cognitive researchers such as Barr and Keysar (Barr 2004; Barr and Keysar 2005) or Colston and Katz (2005) it is the actual use of those representations what makes communication efficient. Therefore, it is through language use that speakers can create a common ground.

The pragmatic view is more static, while the cognitive is more dynamic. Cooperation, attention and intention are concepts approached by the Dynamic Model of Meaning, which is the central conceptual model for this dissertation. According to the DMM "[c]ommunication is the result of interplay of intention and attention on a socio-cultural background" (Kecskes and Zhang 2009: 333). This model proposes a combination of the pragmatic and the cognitive views of cooperation and common ground under the term "socio-cognitive perspective".

3.3.2.6.1. SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECT OF INTENTIONS: TYPES

For this socio-cognitive perspective, intention is related to cooperation, whereas attention is related to a more egocentric speech. I accept the concept of "cooperation" as explained by authors such as Grice (1957) or Sperber and Wilson (1986), but adding and incorporating the dynamic component of communication as uttered by the speakers. I also accept Thompson's view, for whom "cooperation is an explicit feature of interaction" (Thompson 1996: 152).

The concept of "intention" adopted by the DMM goes back to Searle (1975, 1983, 2007), who talks about the intention of the speaker to convey a message and, the intention of the hearer to recognize the intention and decode the message:

> The simplest cases of meaning are those in which the speaker utters a sentence and means exactly and literally what he says. In such cases the speaker intends to produce a certain illocutionary effect in the hearer and he intends to produce a certain illocutionary effect in the hearer and he intends to produce this effect by getting the hearer to recognize his intention to produce it, and he intends to get the hearer to recognize this intention in virtue of the hearer's knowledge of the rules that govern the utterance of the sentence.
>
> (Searle 1975: 59)

The DMM accepts this view, but highlights that any intention is dynamic and emergent. When an interlocutor utters a lexical item, the intention of the speaker is to get to the hearer in a way that the communication act is satisfied for both parties. The speaker will also consider that the hearer has a social and cultural component attached, and therefore it is not something isolated. The DMM poses three types of intentions (informative, performative and emotive (Kecskes and Zhang 2009)). *Informative intentions* tend to "indicate that the speaker intends to inform the hearer about something new" (Kecskes and Zhang 2009: 340). *Performative intentions* try to express the intention of an action on the side of the speaker. Lastly, *emotive intentions* involve the feelings or evaluations of the speaker. This last type of intentions aligns with the way Searle conceived intentions, i.e. as part of the perception, desires or beliefs of the speaker.

Summing up, "[c]ooperation is therefore a consistent effort of interlocutors to build up relevance to intentions in their communication" (Kecskes and Zhang 2009: 341).

3.3.2.6.2. Socio-cultural aspect of attention: types

As previously mentioned, attention is related to a more egocentric speech. If the hearer is not willing to cooperate and puts himself in an egocentric position, communication will fail (Kecskes and Mey 2008).

The concept of "attention" has been in the literature for decades now. Authors such as Della Corte, Benedict and Klein (1983) gave special consideration to the egocentric character of attention. Other authors, like Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) or Sinclair and Brazil (1982), have dealt in detail with the issue of attention in children and classroom discourse. For now, however, I will concentrate on attention as "the cognitive resource available to interlocutors that make communication a conscious action" (Kecskes and Zhang 2009: 342). According to this conception , we can clearly link attention to Giora's concept of "salience" (Giora 2003). The more available (i.e. the more salient) the resources are, the easier they are to retrieve, and, as a consequence, the more attention the hearer pays to them.

Attention can present three different states (Kecskes and Zhang 2009):

- Mindful state. Resources are available and very easily retrieved, and, therefore, communication is fluent.
- Mindless state. The hearer might be more reluctant to access those salient meanings, hence, making communication less fluent.
- Mind-paralyzed state. At least one of the interlocutors is impaired.

Interlocutors carry a socio-cultural burden that accompanies them through the communication process. Sometimes, attention is not only a question of salient meanings, but also of salient information shared by both the speaker and the hearer. Interlocutors must share the same background to have access to the same salient information and to retrieve it successfully. Therefore, shared knowledge and shared experience are key success factors for communication.

3.3.2.6.3. TOWARDS THE CREATION OF MEANING: ASSUMED COMMON GROUND

Kecskes and Zhang (2009) seem to have achieved a concept that further explains and highlights the importance of shared knowledge. They talk about "assumed common ground", which is

> perceived as an effort to converge the mental representation of shared knowledge present in memory that we can activate, shared knowledge that we can seek, and rapport, as well as knowledge that we can create in the communicative process.
>
> (Kecskes and Zhang 2009: 331)

They conceive common ground as being a twofold entity: core common ground and emergent common ground.

Core common ground is the shared knowledge that pertains to a whole or a certain speech community. It is independent of where it occurs, when, or between whom. Therefore, it does not depend on the actual situational context. Core common ground implies having social interaction, a cultural sense and a formal sense (a linguistic system).

By contrast, the emergent common ground does depend on the situational context because it belongs to the individuals that create this common ground. It is a "private knowledge created in the course of communication" (Kecskes and Zhang 2009: 347). Emergent common ground "derives from individual's prior personal experience and perceptions of the current situation" (Kecskes and Zhang 2009: 349). In order for emergent common ground to take place, the interlocutors must share the same private knowledge and experience, i.e. share the same private context. Because this type of common ground knowledge depends on context, both interlocutors must share the same situational context. Obviously, we must not forget that, in order for successful communication to take place, the same linguistic context must be shared and used by the interlocutors.

Summarizing, as opposed to core common ground, which is more general, emergent common ground is personal, context-sensitive and relies on the individual's prior personal experience.

3.3.2.7. Dynamic Model of Meaning and situation-bound utterances

Another area that is covered by the DMM and that, from my viewpoint, should be explained when trying to detail the model, is the group of expressions called "situation-bound utterances" (hereafter, SBU). SBU's are linked to situational context and pragmatic units. Although the term, as such, was coined by Kecskes (1997, 1998 and 1999), other authors such as Coulmas (1979) and Keifer (1996) have tackled this issue. Coulmas does not use the expression "situation-bound utterances", but already reflects the idea that there are certain expressions that are formulaic and are linked to the situation in which they are uttered: "Routine formulae are expressions whose occurrence is closely tied to types of recurrent social situations" (Coulmas 1979: 239). Ferenc Keifer, in turn, talks about *bound utterances* that are linked to both context and situation:

> Bound utterances are stereotypical utterances which are automatically evoked by certain speech situations. Bound utterances are semantically compositional, and they do not differ syntactically and morphologically from free utterances, but their contextual meaning is determined by the speech situation they are associated with, the understanding of their function requires a frame semantic-type account.
>
> (Keifer 1996: 575)

With these two authors in mind, Kecskes completed the term by adding the word "situation", and provided the following definition:

> [Situation-bound utterances] constitute a particular group of formulaic expressions. SBU's are highly conventionalized, prefabricated units whose occurrence is tied to more or less standardized communicative situations.
>
> (Kecskes 1999: 146)

It is important to mention that SBU's are not the same as idioms. It is true that both of them are formulaic expressions, but idioms are independent of the situation in which they occur, while SBU's, as we have tried to explain, are dependent of the situation.

SBU's are a very important component of the DMM, as they too participate in the creation of meaning and, therefore, have both coresense and consense:

> In the DMM Situation-Bound utterances also have coresense and their instantiations in actual situations are the consenses. The coresense here is the communicative, pragmatic function that the SBU is capable of executing in a particular situation.
>
> (Kecskes 2003: 116)

SBU's are used in recent research to account for native-like competence, as they seem to be good predictors of fluency in non-native speakers. Before the term was coined by Kecskes, researchers like Shapira (1978), Yorio (1989) and Schmidt (1983) carried out studies in L2 environments measuring formulaic sequences. With a different focus, Bohn (1986) studied the pragmatic behaviour of L2 Learners in monolingual environments when using formulaic language. Other studies carried out by Kecskes and Papp (Kecskes 1999, Kecskes and Papp 2000) show that, when encountered with SBU's, non-native speakers use their L1 conceptual system. In Kecskes' words:

> Even if L2 learners can develop a 'native-like grammar', its use will not be native-like because of the insufficient conceptual fluency in L2 and individual variables which may function as hurdles.
>
> (Kecskes 1999: 146)

In this section an explanation of the origins of SBU's and their several applications to current research has been provided. These applications range from the most theoretical to the most practical ones in the field of L2 acquisition in context.

3.3.2.8. Towards a fourth context: the Adaptive Management context

In order to prevent or avoid mis/non-understanding (Bazzanella and Damiano 1999), there is a need for optimal communication. This last notion is best explained by Romero-Trillo (2007) who proposed the theory of Adaptive Management, which can be defined as:

> [T]he capacity of a speaker to adapt the grammatical, lexical and pragmatic parameters of discourse through a series of remedial elements and through a principled process, in order to comply with the demands of a new cognitive stage in a conversation via a cognitive standardized process.
>
> (Romero-Trillo 2007: 83)

This notion of adaptation is related to Giora's Graded Salience Hypothesis (GSH) (Giora 1997, 2003). When the interlocutors face a possible misunderstanding in a communicative act, they will revise, adapt and contextualize in order to retrieve the most salient or expected meaning of the utterance or word that is creating problems.

> The process of interpretation of the possible meanings in a given situation is what is called "contextual sifting", which can be defined as the process of cognitive filtering that leaves out the incorrect assumptions in a given communicative situation, and sieves through the correct elements to guarantee successful communication. In the analysis of contextual sifting to avoid communication cultural loads are included (Wierzbicka 2010).
>
> (Romero-Trillo and Maguire 2011: 234)

In my opinion, the main constraint of the DMM concerning the notion of adaption is that it does not consider the possibility of adapting to create a successful communicative act. In other words:

> The DMM does not foresee or contemplate the possibility of adjusting meaning or of using remedial strategies to correct misunderstanding, as it assumes that intention and cooperation are always present in the communicative process. In other words, the DMM is dynamic – as its name indicates – and it does not fix a univocal meaning to either the words or the context, however, it is not dynamic in terms of adaptation to unexpected outcomes.
>
> (Romero-Trillo and Maguire 2011: 234)

In order to include the possibility of adaption of meaning in order to correct misunderstandings, I would like to suggest that the adaptive management be incorporated to the process of creating meaning. The adaptive management would then become the process needed by the interlocutors to adapt to the discourse in order to reach a new cognitive stage. The main idea behind this concept is to unite the linguistic, private and situational contexts under just one adaptive context that helps the interlocutor to dynamically adapt, modify or access the assumptions conveyed by the former contexts.

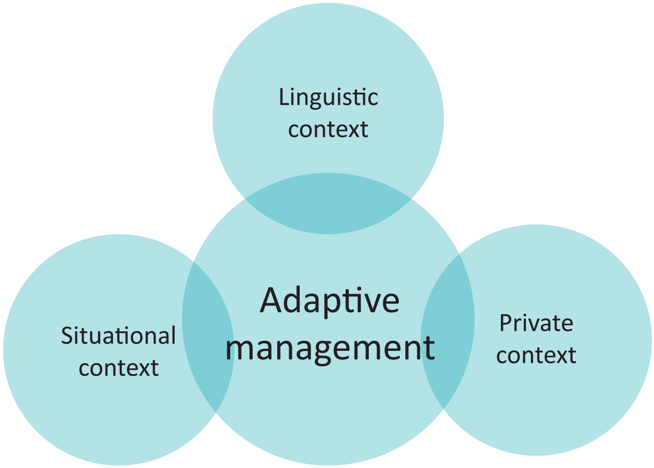

Figure 3.7. The four elements of context (Romero-Trillo and Maguire 2011: 235)

One can argue that "meaning is the result of the interplay of Adaptive Context and the three other contexts (lexical, private and situational). In this sense, Adaptive Context is not concerned with content per se, but it deals with the cognitive process by helping manage the information supplied by the other contexts in a dynamic and synergic way" (*ibid.*: 235).

According to Romero-Trillo and Maguire (2011):

> Adaptive Management (the fourth element that supplements the trio of the DMM: linguistic, situational and private) contributes to the scaffolding of information by feeding the linguistic and cognitive strategies that can orient the stance of the speaker/hearer towards a given message. It adapts the ideas in the mind of the speakers through a process of feedback that helps them guess the most likely optimal meaning from a pragmatic repertoire.
>
> (*Ibid.*: 235)

3.3.2.8.1. The structure of the Adaptive Management

Bearing in mind that the adaptive management is considered a cognitive tool that structures communication towards an optimal stage of mutual comprehension between speakers, its organization is as follows:

- Operative adaptive management. “Its aim is to deal with the management of concepts and language comprehension to make a conversation flow without disruption” (*ibid.*: 237). Examples of this operative element could be: “well”, “now”, “so”, etc.

  Operative adaptive management has a threefold aim.

  - Signalling the orientation of the message.
  - Helping the addressee’s comprehension of the speaker’s stance.
  - Helping the speaker to create the necessary attitudinal comprehension to process the propositional meaning from a textual perspective.

- Involvement adaptive management. “Its aim is to deal with the management of social rapport to safeguard the face of the interactants” (ibid.: 237). Examples of this are pragmatic markers such as “you know”, “you see”, “I mean”.

  Involvement adaptive management can be further sub-classified as:

  - *Rhetorical adaptive management,* which “serves to verify correct understanding but does not require a response from the listener. They take correct cognitive reception for granted, e.g. ‘you know, you see, I mean’” (*ibid.*: 237).

  - *Overt adaptive management,* which seeks to avoid miscommunication through metalinguistic verification. It is mainly verbalized by fixed expressions that different languages formulate with a varying degree of discourse-grammaticalization (Romero-Trillo 2001). It can be addressee-oriented: “do you know what I mean?”, “if you see what I mean”, or self-oriented: “Is it clear what I mean?”. Sometimes the addressee might confirm correct or incorrect comprehension” (*ibid.*: 237-238).

To summarize, operative elements are mainly attitudinal, whereas involvement elements contribute to create the necessary cognitive orientation to understand the force and aim of the message in the mind of the speakers.

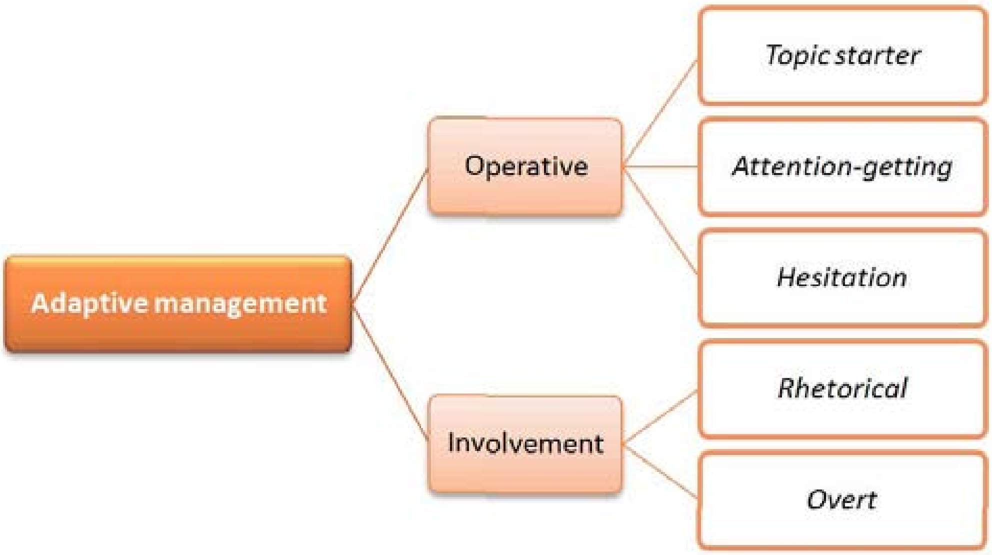

Figure 3.8. Structure of the adaptive management.

3.3.2.9. Conclusion

In this chapter the basic pragmatic theories on context have been reviewed, with special attention to the importance of the adaptive management context for the attainment of optimal communication in conversation. To illustrate its role, the adaptive management is suggested with the aim of introducing to the understanding of a message an independent cognitive component that supplements the elements of context as described by the Dynamic Model of Meaning (i.e. the situational, private and linguistic contexts. The classification of the different types of adaptive management has shown the essential role of pragmatic markers in the process of contextual sieving and how the dynamic interaction with the three contexts of the DMM (private, linguistic and situational) might alter their nature.

I am convinced that the adaptive management is the last and necessary stage in the creation of meaning; the speaker-hearer cognitive interplay needs to be built upon a subsequent staging of situational, private and linguistic contexts. It is interesting to notice that the order in which each of the contexts takes part in the creation of meaning is not fixed. In this sense, the adaptive management functions as the corollary that ends the definition of the cognitive stance of the interlocutors with respect to the cognitive construction of the message.

Part III

CHAPTER 4.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA

> *Finishing a case study is the consummation of a work of art. A few of us will find case study, excepting our family business, the finest work of our lifetime. Because it is an exercise in such depth, the study is an opportunity to see what others have not yet seen, to reflect the uniqueness of our own lives, to engage the best of our interpretative powers, and to make, even by its integrity alone, and advocacy for those things we cherish. The case study ahead is a splendid palette.*
>
> (Stake 1995: 136)

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4.1. INTRODUCTION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTER

Once our proposal of the adaptive management context has been duly presented in relation to the general framework of pragmatics and Kecskes's Dynamic Model of Meaning, it seems adequate to provide proof for it. This chapter is thus devoted to explaining the research methods applied for the study, as well as an overview of the data on which it is based.

The first part of this chapter presents the foundations of qualitative research, first from a general perspective, and then from the more specific view of its application in the field of linguistics. By starting with some philosophical roots and paradigms of social science we aim to provide insight into some qualitative techniques that are particularly prominent in the research arena. This prepares the ground for the introduction of qualitative research as a tool for research on second language acquisition in classroom contexts. Several methods are tackled and explained, but special attention is paid to the qualitative methodology used in the present study.

The second part of the chapter presents the *corpus* of data used in this investigation, as well as a detailed description of the design of the *subcorpus* used in the study.

The chapter finishes with the proposed methodology that is going to guide the rest of the dissertation.

4.2. QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

4.2.1 Why qualitative research?

Deciding which methodology to use when conducting research is one of the first problems the researcher encounters. There are three options to be considered; the *quantitative approach,* which refers to the systematic, empirical investigation of quantitative properties involving analysis of the data. In general terms, the main objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses which have been numerically tested previously. The second option is the *qualitative approach,* which can be described as "an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (Maanen 1979: 520). It is important to note that quantitative and qualitative approaches are not mutually exclusive; they can be applied at the same time and to the same study. In fact, the third possibility is to use a blend of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The choice depends on what aspects of the study the researcher wants to emphasize or focus on.

The literature tells us that there has always been a tendency to carry out what is called the *traditional research:*

> The hallmarks of the old scholarships of traditional research are replicability and generalisability. Research is held to be good quality if people can do the same thing with the same results, and if the method and its findings can be generalised to all similar situations.
>
> (McNiff and Whitehead 2002: 133)

While the previous statement can be true for managerial sciences, for example, and in the realm of a traditional quantitative approach to research, my viewpoint is that these criteria are inappropriate for the new scholars of qualitative research. It is neither possible nor desirable to aim for replication or generalisation, since "the aim is to understand rather than predict, to liberate rather than control" (Stringer 1999: 201).

Currently, social sciences in general (and linguistics in particular) stress the process of human understanding, i.e. cognition, rather than the strict, static rules that the traditional approach fixes, and which have to be followed. A movement away from the restrictive conventional rules of the research game is needed.

As Guba (1990) suggests, there is an overweening concern with validity, reliability, objectivity, and generalizability. These methodological criteria can have meaning only within a paradigm of inquiry that is defined in the conventional way and based on the premise of tangible reality. However, it does not apply to the arena of human inquiry; "everything that social inquirers study depends on mental constructions, mental interpretations" (Guba 1999: xii). Human inquiry is based on cognition, and this is directly linked to mental interpretations. Therefore, when dealing with human beings, it is difficult to stay within the concepts of reliability and objectivity, and a shift towards a softer (which does not mean less relevant or rigorous) type of research is needed.

Stringer (1999) claims that the application of the scientific method to human events has failed to provide a means for predicting and controlling individual or social behaviour. There has been a group of professionals such as teachers, health workers, and practitioners who often find that the theoretical knowledge of the academic world has limited relevance to the exacting demands of their everyday lives. This truly reflects the idea of this dissertation and this is the starting point for the present study. Qualitative methodology has been selected in the light of the four areas which this dissertation intends to cover:

- The *corpus* study.
- The aim of the study.
- The theoretical contribution.
- The contextual understanding.

This qualitative approach is based on two basic implications: on the one side, first-hand collection of data; on the other, knowledge of the research setting by the researcher. It is a single-case study.

4.2.2 Philosophical assumptions about qualitative research

Assumptions of a philosophical nature regarding research and methodology are made throughout the present section. Understanding alternative points of view, other perspectives and different boundaries with respect to theory and methodology will create in the reader an awareness of different possible approaches to research and what each of such approaches has to offer.

Some of the perspectives and approaches highlighted deal with the ontological nature of social sciences and with how cognition and individual consciousness can play a key role in the design of any given study. Some others delve into epistemology and the way reality and experience can be treated. Finally, a general approach is provided to the way human beings tackle the environment they live in and how they interact with it. The aim is to provide an overview of the current sociological paradigms and dimensions, together with the proper methodology derived from each of the different perspectives, that a researcher needs to understand in order to conduct solid research.

As Burrell and Morgan suggest, "[d]ifferent ontologies, epistemologies and models of human nature are likely to incline social scientists towards different methodologies" (Burrell and Morgan 1993: 2). Therefore, the present section also intends to shed some light on the assumptions made in this study in that respect, as well as on the selection of a coherent methodology aligned with the data supporting the research.

4.2.2.1. The ontological perspective

In the case of social sciences in general, the reality under research is extremely complex and, therefore, demands that plenty of factors from different areas of knowledge be taken into account. The definition of the word "ontology" states that anything pertaining to existence or reality deals with the more transcendental properties of the human being. Hence, what we need to discern first is whether the reality to be investigated is external to the individual or, on the contrary, is the product of the individual's consciousness. In other words, whether the reality is given "out there" in the world or is the product of one's mind.

There are two opposite poles regarding the aspect of ontology: realism and nominalism. They are characterised as follows:

> Realism: reality is external to the individual imposing itself on individual consciousness; it is given "out there", and is of an objective nature.
>
> Nominalism: reality is a product of individual consciousness, a product of one's own mind or of individual cognition.
>
> (Flood and Carson 1993: 247)

Once both extremes have been stated and defined, the next step is to highlight the type of study being carried out in order to identify and relate the study with either one of the positions. In the case of our research, the aspects under study are related to the inner side of the individual, as the end product is the result of each individual's consciousness and knowledge. This dissertation is, therefore, conceived under the realm of the nominalistic approach.

4.2.2.2. The epistemological perspective

Epistemology deals with the grounds of knowledge and with the way that knowledge is acquired and transmitted to other human beings. As with the ontological assumptions, in the case of epistemology there are also two opposing standpoints too.

Following Burrell and Morgan (1993), we can claim that positivists seek to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its elements; while for the so-called anti-positivists the social world is essentially relativistic and can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied.

Flood and Carson (1993) make use of Burrell and Morgan's dichotomy, but they put more emphasis on knowledge than on the social world:

> Positivists: Knowledge is hard, real, and capable of being transmitted in a tangible form.
>
> Anti-Positivists: Knowledge is soft, more subjective, spiritual, or even transcendental-based on experience, insight, and essentially of a personal nature.
>
> (Flood and Carson 1993: 247)

The idea of a social world implies that individuals are an essential part of the gear because they are not isolated human beings; individuals are made of knowledge and experience. This is the essence of epistemology.

The "producers" of the data supporting our *corpus* are people, individuals (infants, to be more specific). These infants acquire knowledge through experience. When the *corpus* was designed, the aim was not to predict what would happen, but rather to look at the individuals involved, understand the processes they were involved in, and, finally, try to draw conclusions. In our study the anti-positivist trend was favoured, since the focus was on the way children processed and transmitted knowledge.

4.2.2.3. The "human being" perspective

The last aspect to be taken into account before choosing the methodology deals with the way we view human beings and their nature. As with the two previous aspects (ontology and epistemology) we have two opposite poles: determinism and voluntarism.

> Determinism: humans are mechanistic, determined by situations in the external world; human beings and their experiences are products of their environment; they are conditioned by external circumstances.
>
> Voluntarism: humans have a creative role and have free will; human beings create their environment; human beings are voluntaristic.
>
> (Flood and Carson 1993: 247)

What makes our *corpus* a peculiar and interesting tool of analysis is precisely the combination of free will and creativity in a classroom environment during the compilation of data. Without these elements the *corpus* would have been a radically different one. In the light of this, it seems clear that our view of human beings belongs to the realm of voluntarism.

4.2.2.4. Methodological debate

The ontological and epistemological position and our perception of human beings clearly influence the methodology to be used. For this reason, two methods have been highlighted by authors such as Burrell and Morgan (1993), Gill and Johnson (2002), or Flood and Carson (1993). All these authors agree on the fact that there are two basic methods of analysis; the idiographic and the nomothetic.

The idiographic approach to social science is based on the view that one can only understand the social world by obtaining first-hand knowledge of the subject under investigation.

The nomothetic approach to social science lays emphasis on the importance of basing research upon systematic protocols and techniques. This is epitomised in the approach and methods employed in the natural sciences, which test hypotheses in accordance with the canons of scientific rigour.

A comparison of both methods is displayed below:

Nomothetic	Idiographic
1. Deduction	1. Induction
2. Explanation via analysis of causal relationships and explanation by covering-laws	2. Explanation of subjective meaning systems and explanation by understanding
3. Generation and use of quantitative data	3. Generation and use of qualitative data
4. Use of various control, physical or statistical, so as to allow the testing of hypotheses.	4. Commitment to research in everyday settings, to allow access to, and minimize reactivity among the subjects of research
5. Highly structured research methodology to ensure replicability of 1, 2, 3 and 4.	5. Minimum structure to ensure 2, 3 and 4 as a result of 1.

Table 4.1. Nomothetic *vs.* idiographic methods according to Gill and Johnson (2002).

What is of high interest for the present study is the distinction between an inductive and a deductive method of study. Induction can be explained as the general inferences made from particular instances; that is, the development of theory from the observation of empirical reality. Deduction, in turn, deals with presuppositions made on the basis of principles or laws, and entails the development of a conceptual and theoretical structure which is then tested by observation.

In any given study both deductive and inductive methods can be found. Moreover, both methods are conceived as being reciprocally consequential. Thus, someone can draw conclusions from a conceptual background and deduct (i.e. hypothesize about) what should happen in a different situation. Afterwards, the hypothesis are tested empirically. On the contrary, someone can start by observing data and then, inductively, develop a conceptual framework. All this is best explained in the figure below:

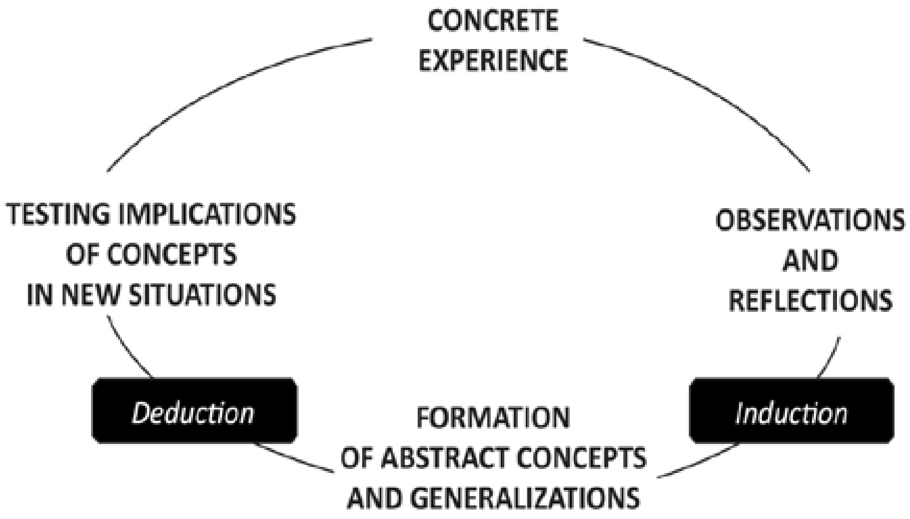
CONCRETE EXPERIENCE
OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS
Induction
FORMATION OF ABSTRACT CONCEPTS AND GENERALIZATIONS
Deduction
TESTING IMPLICATIONS OF CONCEPTS IN NEW SITUATIONS

Figure 4.1. The Lewinian experimental learning model
(adapted from Kolb 1984: 21).

According to Kolb (1984), the deductive and inductive methods are a continuum rather than opposing poles. This view seems to be very useful in that it contemplates research as a whole and allows the researcher to go from the deductive to the inductive methods, or vice versa, during the research process as needed.

Although this study is mainly inductive, I would like the reader to keep in mind what Kolb proposed, and consider this research as dynamic. The deductive method is by no means excluded from this study, but this dissertation is mainly idiographic and, therefore, inductive.

* * * * * * * * * *

This section has been devoted to the discussion of different philosophical approaches which, in turn, support different research methods. The aim was to provide the reader with further information on the philosophical and methodological options adopted in the research on which this dissertation is based.

Below is a summary of the concepts discussed in this section. The views favoured in our research are marked in bold letters.

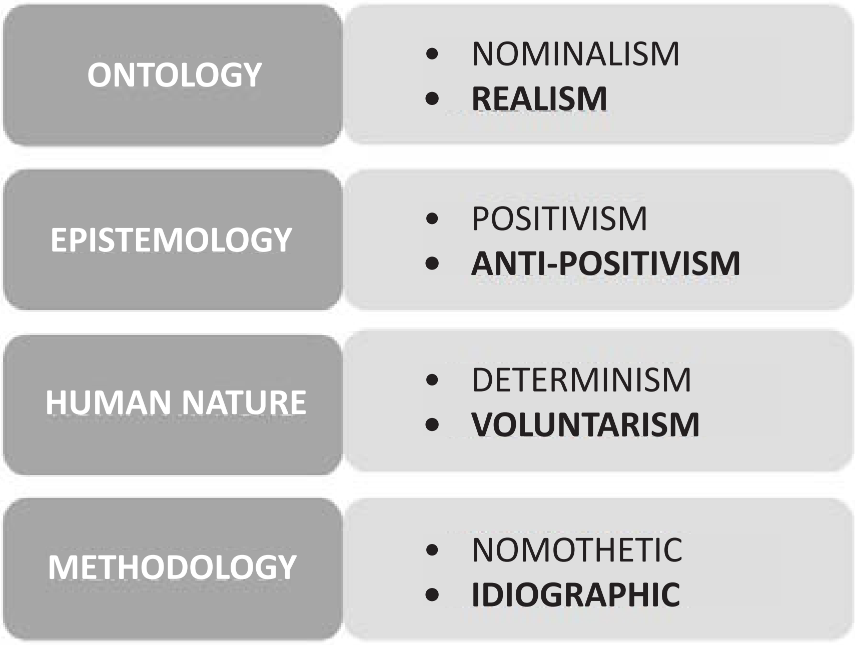
ONTOLOGY
NOMINALISM
REALISM
EPISTEMOLOGY
POSITIVISM
ANTI-POSITIVISM
HUMAN NATURE
DETERMINISM
VOLUNTARISM
METHODOLOGY
NOMOTHETIC
IDIOGRAPHIC

Figure 4.2. Summary of philosophical-methodological frameworks.

Another mainstay of the research that needs to be taken into account is the method applied to the analysis of the data. The following section provides an introduction to different qualitative techniques which were considered to be adequate for the aim of this study.

4.2.3 Qualitative techniques

Qualitative research and qualitative analysis encompass many concepts and methods. Content analysis, participant observation, ethnography or action research, are among the most widely-used. This section discusses three basic qualitative techniques (action research, ethnography and case-study) which clearly exemplify the evolution of qualitative methods and, in a way, explain why qualitative methods are evolving and becoming more and more prominent each day.

A brief historical overview of the foundations of qualitative research in L2 contexts and its most remarkable approaches to research are depicted next. After this historical overview, each of the three above-mentioned qualitative methods is presented in more detail.

4.2.3.1. Qualitative methods in the classroom in L2 contexts

Second language acquisition research has its origins in the late 50's when researchers started to wonder which was the best learning method to acquire a second language. This was mainly reflected in the Pennsylvania Project, which compared the results obtained by teenagers learning French and German as a foreign language who used three different learning methods. These methods were the so-called "traditional learning method" (which basically included grammar and translation), the "audio-lingual method", and a combination of the audio-lingual method with some grammatical support. These methods continued to be the norm during the 60's and 70's (Allwright 1975, 1988, and Wilkins 1972). However, the validity of these methods was questioned because some of the results were based on preconceptions of the researchers and there was no clearly-defined scientific methodology.

A significant turn in methodology was made by Gaies (1977), who stated that, in order for the research to be more relevant, a smaller sample and more description were needed for the results obtained to be more rigorous. Many researchers agreed with him and welcomed this change.

Another breakthrough in research methodology was the consideration of the communicative interaction between the students and the teacher as a key element when dealing with L2 research in classroom contexts. The well-known book *Towards an Analysis of Discourse* by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) was a revolutionary text because its authors proposed an approach based on the analysis of discourse in the classroom, i.e. classroom discourse. Even today, this book is a referent for any researcher dealing with discourse in classroom contexts.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), in turn, introduced the approach called "ethnomethodology", which implies observing the class and involving the researcher in the research carried out.

At this point, the teacher was still considered the key element in L2 research. However, Schumann and Schumann (1977) and Hosenfeld (1975) suggested that the student be the centre of the learning experience. For these authors, it was the student with his experience who could reveal key data and add value to the research. In particular, Schumann and Schumann, developed the use of diaries where the students could take notes on their experience of acquiring an L2.

Traditional instruction based on grammar and translation became less and less popular while the students and their cognitive processes became more and more central to L2 acquisition research. The final push came from Breen (1985), who used ethnography, sociology and psychology to understand what was going on in the classroom. Formal instruction was no longer interesting for the researcher. Instead, what became the centre of attention was the human side of the participants and the cognitive value that observation by a researcher could add to qualitative research.

From this moment onwards, qualitative research started to focus on the researcher-observer and the case-study methodology started to gain relevance and respect.

The next sections provide a thorough explanation of action research, ethnography and case-study research. After each method's description, its relation to the pertaining methodology and L2 setting is established.

4.2.3.2. Action research

Action research deals with inquiry processes, problem-solving techniques, causes of the problems and possible implementations and solutions to those problems. Nowadays, it is a widely-used technique in many fields, from organizations to medical settings or institutions, such as schools, which are undergoing difficulties and turn to action research (hereafter AR) for solutions.

The term itself is controversial because the term is now misapplied. For example, Kemmis claims that "field experiments and certain types of process consultation do not qualify as action research" (Kemmis 1988: 47), yet they often receive that name.

The term “action research” may receive other names depending on the discipline that is being researched. Some other names include: “participatory research”, “collaborative inquiry” or “action learning”, to name a few. Stated in a very simple way, one could say that AR is basically “learning by doing”.

Several researchers have tried to provide a standard definition of AR, but their contributions are far from complete, as each definition varies depending on the aspects of the method that the definer wants to highlight.

Thus, Rapoport (1970) emphasizes the problem-solving goal of AR, as did Lewin (1948). A step forward was given by Kemmis when he added a social realm that had been missing at the beginning:

> Action Research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and social justice of (a) their own social or educational practices (b) their understanding of these practices and (c) the situation in which the practices are carried out.
>
> (Kemmis 1988: 42)

The AR definition was completed when a third goal was considered to be essential to AR: the generation of knowledge by the researcher. From my viewpoint, a complete definition is one that comprises the problem-solving attempt, takes into account the social situation of the participants and includes the researcher as a key success factor for the study. For example the one below, provided by Gilmore, Krantz and Ramírez:

> Action Research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to further the goals of social science simultaneously. Accomplishing this twin goal requires the active collaboration of the researcher.
>
> (Gilmore, Krantz and Ramirez 1986: 161)

Action Research and L2

AR is a very valid, useful and practical qualitative method. Indeed, it has a very extended background in linguistics. One example is the work of Burns (1999, 2000), who first started applying AR to teachers of English as a foreign language and then continued to use AR in other areas of linguistics. It is also worth mentioning the work of Carr and Kemmis (1986), who were among the first ones to consider this methodology as a useful one to explore AR itself from a critical point of view. Both Burns's and Carr and Kemmis's work present AR as a tool for systematic and self-reflective analysis. The participants involved in this AR projects in second language acquisition found this methodology very useful to make improvements, especially for the development of learning materials for the students.

All these authors and works have deeply helped AR to become a widely-used method in linguistics and proved to be a solid methodology when conducting qualitative research.

4.2.3.3. Ethnography

Ethnography has its roots in the work of Herodotus, who recorded "the infinite variety and strangeness he saw in other cultures" (Reeves 1979: 527). Current anthropological ethnography goes back to the founder of the American Anthropological Association, Franz Boas. As Wallace (1972) puts it, "Franz Boas stepping off the boat in an Eskimo village with his suitcase in hand, preparing for a long stay in residence" (*ibid.*: 469) is exactly what ethnography is about; "the ethnographer becomes part of the situation being studied in order to feel what is like for the people in that situation" (Reeves 1979: 527).

The literature states that a good ethnographic research will take, at least, a year, specifically when dealing with ethnographic studies at schools. Wolcott recommends that the time of study comprise at least the whole academic year (Wolcott 1975). A good ethnographer should be "the main instrument of observation" (Mead 1959: 38; cf. Metraux 1959; Pelto 1970; Wolcott 1975). He should also be the instrument of selection, coordination and interpretation. Moreover, an ethnographer should be trained, he has to be qualified to conduct the research, if possible, having previous experience in the culture he is about to research and become immersed into. Also, the capacity of empathy is a very important one. Another requirement for the ethnographer is "[to] be able to record, categorize, and code what is being observed, that is, to take field notes" (Reeves 1979: 2).

Below is a simile between the linguist and the ethnographer that depicts the idea that the literature has about this type of researcher:

> The ethnographer is like the linguist who has studied and recorded a foreign language so that others can learn the rules for producing intelligible speech in that language.
>
> (Reeves 1979: 529)

Ethnographers face three main problems when conducting this type of research:

> Handling the delicate balance between self and other in fieldwork and in writing.
>
> Engaging in the everyday life of the culture being studied.
>
> Choosing criteria to apply in judging the quality of ethnographic research.
>
> (Humphreys, Brown and Hatch 2003: 5)

In my view, ethnography is a very time-consuming methodology and the costs of conducting an ethnographic research should be carefully studied before getting immersed in this type of research. Ethnography deals with what is called "participant observation", that is, the researcher is playing a role in the scene being studied. This strong role has, sometimes, created problems in the researcher when going back to his normal environment. Though very extreme, in my view, literature states that an ethnographer is never the same person after coming back from this type of research, apparently, the social immersion can be very, or even too strong (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 248).

It has been proved that ethnography is a very useful technique when studying only one case, and participant observation is preferred. Gold (1958) and Junker (1960) provide a fourfold typology, which is extremely useful when trying to understand the types of participant observation that can be found in ethnographic research.

> The complete participant - takes an insider role, is fully part of the setting and often observes covertly.
>
> The participant as observer - the researcher gains access to a setting by virtue of having a natural and non-research reason for being part of the setting. As observers, they are part of the group being studied. This approach may be

> common in health care settings where members of the health care team are interested in observing operations in order to understand and improve care processes.
>
> The observer as participant - In this role, the researcher or observer has only minimal involvement in the social setting being studied. There is some connection to the setting but the observer is not naturally and normally part of the social setting.
>
> The complete observer - the researcher does not take part in the social setting at all. An example of complete observation might be watching children play from behind a two-way mirror.
>
> (Gold 1958: 217–213)

Ethnography in L2 Settings

Ethnography started as a resource to study biological and racial differences in human cultures. For example, in North America there have been studies dealing with tribal communities. One such study is the one by Goldschmidt (2001). In Britain, a study published by Kuper (1996) linked the French linguists to current sociological theories at the time. Also worth mentioning are the ones that Malinowski carried out about the Trobriand Islands in the first decades of the 20th century.

In the early 60's the works by Gumperz and Hymes (1964) and Hymes (1964) developed the concept of "educational ethnography", which applied ethnography to classroom settings in western schools.

As Harklau (2005) details, "over the past 25 years, ethnography has become a major approach to research on second language learning and teaching" (Harklau 2005: 179). Ethnographic classroom-based studies are widely-used nowadays and cover a wide variety of topics. For example, Nunan (1996) researched about lesson plan adjustments. Gomes and Martins (1996) used ethnography to tell the experience of learners of English as a second language. Nelson and Carson (1996), among others, studied and applied ethnography to classroom interactions.

It is necessary to clarify that ethnographic studies in L2 are not the only ones carried out in a classroom context. The work of Hornberger (2000) and Lam (2000) shows how ethnography can be used to research cognitive and innatist positions with regard to reading and writing development in a second language.

It is important to bear in mind that ethnography is not the only technique which requires that a researcher be actively involved in the study. The next methodology (case study) also relies on the work of a committed researcher.

4.2.3.4. Case study

Conducting case studies research is nowadays a preferred qualitative technique in many research areas. Some of the best-known authors in the field are Eisenhardt (1989), Yin (1988) or Strauss and Corbin (1990)

There are six basic steps to conduct this type of research:

1. Determine and define the research questions
2. Select the cases and determine data gathering and analysis techniques
3. Prepare to collect the data
4. Collect data in the field
5. Evaluate and analyze the data
6. Prepare the report

This technique has six basic sources of evidence from where to gather the information of the cases to be the object of the study. These sources are the following:

1. Documentation
2. Archival records
3. Interviews
4. Direct observations
5. Participant observations
6. Physical artefacts

Every source is explained in table 4.2 below with its strengths and weaknesses.

Source of evidence	Strengths	Weaknesses
Documentation	Stable, unobtrusive, exact, broad coverage.	Retrievability, biases, selectivity, access.
Archival records	Same as for documentation, plus precise and quantitative.	Same as for documentation, plus accessibility due to privacy reasons.
Interviews	Directly focused on case-study topic.	Poor constructed questions, inaccuracies due to poor recall, interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear.
Direct observations	Covering events and contexts in real time.	Time-consuming, cost-hours needed, presence of the observer.
Participant observation	Same as for direct observations.	Same as for direct observations, plus bias due to researcher's manipulation of events.
Physical artefacts	Insight into cultural features.	Selectivity, availability.

Table 4.2. Advantages and disadvantages of each source of evidence (adapted from Yin 1988: 86).

Case-study methodology in L2 settings

Case study was thought, at first, to be a less rigorous and "softer" method than other ways of conducting research. However, it presents other advantages, among them "the attention to context and the ability to track and document change (such as language development) over time" (Van Lier 2005: 195).

Linguists started to see that conducting a single case study (whether of a person or a group of people) could have a tremendous impact in the way we conceive language production, acquisition and performance. Among the first and most important case-study researchers, we can mention Michael Halliday's study of his son Nigel (Halliday 1975); the case of Alberto, studied by Schumann (1978); or Schmidt (1983), who studied a Japanese painter living in Hawaii named Wes. These authors made highly important contributions to linguistics, "these case studies helped to shape these researcher's theoretical positions and they have also helped to shape the entire field in quite substantial ways" (Van Lier 2005: 199).

There are many, and very important and relevant, case studies in the literature. Among the most famous ones, because of their findings, are the ones carried out by the European Science Foundation (ESF) and by Hakuta (1986). The first one deals with adult second language acquisition development, whereas the second one deals with infants.

A little more detail about both studies is provided so that the relevance of the case-study methodology can be conveniently perceived and appreciated.

A longitudinal study was carried out by the European Science Foundation (ESF) in five different countries (France, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) for over 10 years. Adult immigrants from these five countries speaking minority languages (e.g. Italian, Spanish, Turkish) were studied over that period of time. The most important finding of this study was that it “showed the need to study language development in its social context” (Van Lier 2005: 199). Adults were not isolated individuals: they were social beings living in a specific social context that could not be ignored when studying language development (Norton Peirce 1995).

In the case of the study carried out by Hakuta (1986) and Hakuta, Butler and Witt (2000), the authors focused on children. They wanted to measure something that, even today, is a matter of concern for parents, teachers and scholars in general, i.e. language proficiency. The main finding was that second language acquisition and proficiency takes much longer than is commonly assumed.

The problem was that the case studies at hand were too short in time to provide a full picture of the situation and, therefore, the reports ended up making generalizations. This example can serve to make us aware of the complexity of carrying out a case study. It has to be well-thought and structured, and the researcher has to be consistent throughout time.

Other studies that should be mentioned are Huebner’s (1983), Ioup, Boustagui, El Tigi and Moselle’s (1995) or Van Lier’s (1999). All of these authors consider the researcher a critical part of the research process. The next section deals with this important role in classroom contexts.

Observation in the L2 classroom

Widdowson (1990) stated that there are two approaches to L2 research; "theory-then-research" and "research-then-theory". In the former, from the theory, conclusions are drawn, in the latter, theoretical conclusions are deducted based on the research carried out.

Grotjahm (1987: 59–60) categorized, according to three basic criteria, the types of research that could be carried out inside the L2 classroom:

1. Quantitative or qualitative analysis.
2. Obtaining data: experimental vs. non-experimental.
3. Method of analysis: descriptive or statistical.

There is a clear distinction between the research carried out by the researcher as an observer, that is, when he is not a participant, and the type of research carried out by the researcher himself (Widdowson 1990). Selinger and Long (1983) labelled the first one "classroom-oriented research", the second one "classroom-centred research" this second term was coined by Allwright (1988).

Labov is among the first ones who conceived the role of the observer as key when conducting research in the classroom. When Labov (1970, 1972) started collecting data, the recordings were systematically planned and involved an interviewer.

> The aim of the linguistic research in the community must be to find out how people talk when they are not being systematically observed, yet only obtain these data by systematic observation.
>
> (Labov 1970: 47, also 1972: 209)

Other authors, such as Beebe (1988) or Els *et al.* (1984) followed this approach, too.

However, it was Van Lier (1988) who most clearly depicted the role of the observer in L2 research in classroom contexts. For Van Lier, in order to carry out research with the researcher in the classroom, a small sample size is needed, the data has to be perfectly organized, the researcher needs to have prior information about the subjects of the study (gender, age, social background, cultural background, nationality, access to the L1 and L2 outside the classroom, mother tongue), as well as the activity carried out during the class and the class 's distribution (by this he meant if the class was going to be organized into small groups of students, for example) (Van Lier 1988, Gaies 1983, Allwright 1988).

The following list, adapted from Flanagan (1954: 340), explains what an observer should take into account when conducting research:

1. Person to make the observations:
    a) Knowledge concerning the activity.
    b) Relation to those observed.
    c) Training requirements.
2. Groups to be observed:
    a) General description.
    b) Location.
    c) Persons.
    d) Times.
    e) Conditions.
3. Behaviours to be observed:
    a) General type of activity.
    b) Specific behaviours.
    c) Criteria of relevance to general aim.
    d) Criteria of importance to general aim (critical points).

The role of the researcher in an L2 setting is not random or unstructured. On the contrary, it is a highly-organized and structured task to be undertaken by a highly-qualified professional.

The role undertaken by the researcher-observator of this study are further detailed in subsection 4.3.5.7 (Structured observation participation).

4.3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY: THE *CORPUS*

This part of the chapter provides a description of *corpus* linguistics. The first section deals with the definition of "*corpus* linguistics" and the clear dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative techniques that can be applied to the analysis of *corpora*. The second section delves into learner *corpora* and provides examples of well-known *corpora* produced by L2 learners. Finally, the third and last section explains in detail the *corpus* used as a base for the present investigation, as well as several variables that were taken into account in the definition of the *subcorpus* that was eventually used for the research. Finally, the chapter provides the research questions and propositions of the study.

4.3.1 Corpus linguistics

In order to understand what *corpus* linguistics is, the first thing that needs to be done is to present a definition of *"corpus".*

> "The *corpus*" is a collection of texts (written, transcribed speech, or both) that is stored in electronic form and analyzed with the help of computer software programs.
>
> (Conrad 2005: 393)

The aforementioned definition emphasizes the computer-assisted aspect of *corpora*. In fact, one of the advantages of using *corpora* is that it enables the researcher to process large amounts of data with the help of several software programs. Using technology, researchers can replicate results, calculate frequencies or statistically measure patterns.

Among the most relevant authors in *corpus* linguistics it is a must to mention Hunston (2002), Kennedy (1998), McEnery and Wilson (1996), Meyer (2002), Partington (1998) or Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998). On the same wavelength, Romero-Trillo (2008) has tried (and succeeded) to combine the notions of *corpus* linguistics and pragmatics into the term "*corpus* pragmatics". The idea behind this concept is to make a "common cause against the voices that have derided and underestimated the utility of working with real data to elucidate the patterns of language use" (Romero-Trillo 2008: 1)

For all the authors mentioned above, using *corpora* for research is a great advantage, since texts occur naturally, they are not created *per se* to serve as a resource. Rather, texts are created by real users in real circumstances for a communicative purpose. This natural occurrence can serve the researcher in two ways. As Granger (1998) states, there is a difference between *corpus*-based studies and *corpus*-driven ones. The former are used to validate or check previously stated hypotheses. The latter, in turn, describe what is found in the data. In general terms, *corpus*-based studies are said to be of a more quantitative nature, whereas *corpus*-driven studies have a stronger qualitative component.

Whether quantitative or qualitative,

> work within *corpus* linguistics varies with respect to how much it emphasizes quantitative analysis and how much it provides description and interpretations without giving count of features.
>
> (Conrad 2005: 393)

This dichotomy or even controversy is discussed in Biber and Conrad (2001) or McCarthy and Carter (2001).

For the present study, the aim is to display the several possibilities that *corpus* linguistics can provide to the researcher. No options are discarded, as both of them are completely valid and plausible. In fact, many studies using *corpora* can be undertaken following a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. What is of importance is the intuition of the researcher when dealing with results. Authors such as Leech and Candlin (1986), Stubbs (1995) or Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998) discuss intuition as a main feature when dealing with *corpus* linguistics, since “final decisions were made by human beings exercising their judgment” (Francis and Sinclair 1994: 194). That is to say, intuition guides the researcher’s decisions. Consequently, using *corpora* represents a great advantage to any researcher and is a powerful tool, but it is the researcher’s judgment that guides the investigation and, therefore, determine what is included or excluded from the study.

The first *corpus* of spoken and written English was launched by Randolph Quirk in 1959 under the name of Survey of English Usage (SEU) at University College London. No less than sixteen years later, in 1975, the Survey of Spoken

English (SSE) was released at Lund University by Jan Svartvik. Almost as many years went by before both *corpora* were combined into the London-Lund *corpus,* which appeared in 1990. This *corpus* is a collection of spontaneous conversations between educated adult native speakers of British English and is a referent for any *corpus* linguist.

From here onwards, many *corpora* have been developed, and all of them serve a specific purpose. For example, the British National *Corpus* (BNC) is a balanced synchronic text *corpus* containing 100 million words annotated with parts of speech. The Cambridge and Nottingham *Corpus* of Discourse in English (CANCODE) is a collection of spoken English recorded at hundreds of locations across the British isles in a wide variety of situations. The Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen *Corpus* (LOB) contains one million words of present-day British English texts; its American counterpart, the Brown *Corpus,* contains 500 text samples. These two last *corpora* are often used to study the diachronic use of English.

4.3.2 Learner *corpora*

As has been previously mentioned, the variety of *corpora* is immense nowadays. For the purpose of the present investigation, what is of interest is learner *corpora*, that is, collections of language produced by L2 Learners.

These *corpora* can reproduce written samples of a given community. Examples include the HKUST Learner *Corpus,* which is a large *corpus* entailing the writing of Cantonese-speaking undergraduates at Hong Kong University (Milton and Chowdhury 1994) or the International *Corpus* of Learner English (ICLE) at the Centre for English *Corpus* Linguistics at the Université Catholique de Louvain in Belgium. The latter *corpus* is the result of over ten years of international collaboration between at university level and currently contains over 3 million words of writing produced by learners of English from 21 different mother-tongue backgrounds.

Learner *corpora* can also focus on spoken discourse, like the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES) *corpus* and the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI) *corpus*.

The CHILDES *corpus* (MacWhinney and Snow 1990) includes a rich variety of computerized transcripts from language learners. Most of these transcripts record spontaneous conversational interactions. The speakers involved are often young, monolingual, normally-developing children conversing with their parents or siblings. However, there are also transcripts from bilingual children, older school-aged children, adult second-language learners, children with various types of language disabilities, and aphasics who are trying to recover from language loss. The transcripts include data on the learning of 26 different languages.

The Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI) project was launched in 1995 to compile a *corpus* of spoken learner language (Granger 1998). This *corpus* deals with native and non-native varieties of English so that interlanguage can be identified, analyzed, and compared.

As stated above, learner *corpora* cover both written and spoken varieties of English in a wide variety of countries. Some learner *corpora*, like the LINDSEI *corpus,* are aimed at the study of interlanguage. With that same objective, plus the one of filling the gap in the existing *corpora* arena, a new *corpus* started to be compiled in 1998 at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid by Romero-Trillo and Llinares-García. The aim of this *corpus*, called UAM-Learner English Spoken *Corpus* (UAMLESC), was to provide the necessary data to research several aspects of L2 acquisition and production from a longitudinal perspective.

4.3.3 The UAMLESC *Corpus*

Corpora in general have provided the researcher with a powerful resource to study language.

> *Corpus* linguistics have reinstated observation to linguistics, resulting in more methodical and systematic observations and interpretations of language than we get by relying solely on intuition or anecdotal interpretation.
>
> (Conrad 2005: 401)

Having in mind the power of *corpora* as a research tool, the compilation of the UAMLESC *Corpus* started with the following goals:

- Analyzing interlanguage and how it relates to the degree of immersion in the L2.
- Comparing the different contexts in which L2 acquisition and production were taking place.
- Providing a longitudinal perspective regarding L2 processes.

In order to achieve these objectives, several variables were taken into account when designing the *corpus*. These variables are mentioned and described in Llinares-García (2002: 173) and Riesco-Bernier (2007: 125):

UAMLESC *CORPUS*	
LANGUAGE	Spoken English is the language under study
GENRE	Classroom Discourse
LEARNER	
Age	Learners were five years old in the first year of compilation of data in 1998. The *corpus* started in 1998 and it finished in 2006.
Gender	Male and female infants
Mother tongue	For most of the infants, Spanish was their mother tongue. Only in a few cases, the mother tongue was different from Spanish.
LOCATION	English as a foreign language with different degrees of immersion depending on the type of school.
LEARNING CONTEXT	Madrid, Spain
TYPES OF SCHOOL	Private and state schools.
TEACHER	Teachers were native speakers of English and native speakers of Spanish.

Table 4.3. General characteristics of the UAMLESC *Corpus*.

The group of researchers of the UAMLESC project looked into different aspects of English as a foreign language, from linguistic interaction and communication (Romero-Trillo and Llinares-García, 2001, Llinares-García 2002) to intonation patterns of information (Ramirez-Verdugo, 2003), transitivity analysis from a systemic-functional perspective (Maguire 2002), pragmatic discourse, pragmatic markers (Romero-Trillo, 2002; Riesco-Bernier, 2007) or meaning and context (Romero-Trillo and Maguire, 2011; Maguire and Romero-Trillo, in press). The *corpus* has been exploited from many angles and is currently a source for relevant international publications.

4.3.3.1. Definition of the data

The UAMLESC *Corpus* is a spoken *corpus* of children learning English as a foreign language in different types of schools (both private and state) in Madrid. In order for the *corpus* to be representative of the different school contexts of Madrid, data from six schools were gathered. A description of the six schools is provided below:

Type of school	Hours of English (daily)	Groups recorded	Number of students	Students' background	Teacher	Location
English school	Total immersion	2	Group 1: 18 Group 2: 17	Group 1 and 2: Diverse linguistic backgrounds	English native speaker	Privileged area
Bilingual school	Classes taught half a day in English, the other half in Spanish	1	18	16 Spanish; 2 bilinguals (English-Spanish)	English native speaker but understands Spanish	Privileged Area
Private school (native teacher)	1 hour English Daily	1	22 11 girls, 11 boys	All Spanish	English native speaker	Upper-class area
Private school (non- native teacher)	30 minutes exposure daily	2	35 10 girls, 25 boys	All Spanish	Non- native teacher	Lower class area but upper class infants from the area
State funded private schools	English taught since students were three years old	1	29 16 girls, 13 boys	All Spanish	English native speaker	Upper-middle class
State school	1-2 hours daily	1	20: 8 girls, 12 boys	All Spanish	English native speaker	Lower-class area

Table 4.4. Characteristics of the different groups that were studied for the UAMLESC *Corpus* (adapted from Riesco-Bernier 2007: 127-129)[3].

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[3] English school: Close to a total immersion school.

Students's backgrounds: Group 1: 9 Spanish, 1 Spanish-Hindi; 2 Anglo-Spanish; 6 native English speakers.
Group 2: 10 Spanish, 2 Anglo-Spanish, 3 English native speakers; 2 native speakers of French and Italian.

As described above, the data covered all the different types of schools that were present at the time in Madrid. From the most privileged, élite private schools, to private schools funded by the state (a religious school), to a state school that was part of a project ruled by the Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid and co-directed by the Spanish Ministry of Education and the British Council.

Researchers also tried to provide variety in terms of location. Therefore, the data try to cover all the areas present in Madrid. In five out of the six schools, the teacher was a native speaker of English. In the case of the state school, it was a requisite for the project the school was taking part in that the teacher be a native speaker of English. Most of the students were Spanish, but there was a remarkable linguistic background diversity in the bilingual school and, even more so, in the case of the English School.

4.3.3.2. Creation of the subcorpus

The UAMLESC *Corpus* has over two and a half million words. Data were gathered at the aforementioned six schools over a seven-year period of time. Such a vast *corpus* would have been of little use (if not a hindrance) for the goals of the study. Thus, in keeping with Gaies's (1977) recommendation that a smaller sample and more description be used for a qualitative analysis (see page 124 above), a *subcorpus* was defined. Only one school (the bilingual one) was selected. The main reason for choosing only one school was that the aim was not comparison in itself.

As Granger (2004) states, studies of computer learner *corpora* tend to involve comparison, either in terms of comparing native languages, or learner language (interlanguage), however, the aim of our research was neither to compare our *subcorpus* to native language *corpora* (focusing on the misuse of a particular feature in the language or the sequence of acquisition of certain phonemes, for example) nor to compare the data obtained in the different schools of the UAMLESC *Corpus* with one another.

But even if we had wished to compared the UAMLESC schools, the variables of each one of them were so diverse that it would have been impossible to draw any valid conclusion. For example, the exposure of the students to English was different in every school and not all the schools were recorded along the seven years. Some of the schools were only recorded for two years, while others started being recorded once the data collection had already started. In the light of the amount of uncontrolled variables which made it impossible to guarantee a rigorous descriptive analysis, the decision was to select only one school in which the variables were controlled, except for the mortality variable[4].

Thus, our *subcorpus* consisted in the data obtained at the bilingual school. The same informants were followed for six years, so field work was of utmost importance. Let it be said here that the researcher herself was actively involved in the UAMLESC project[5] as a researcher and observer, which is an added value in case studies.

According to the literature, there are few *subcorpora* which focus on a beginner-elementary level of English, like the one defined for the present study; while "with regard to learner's proficiency, most *corpora* focus on intermediate-advanced level" (Dong-Ju Lee 2008: 85). However, it is a must to mention the Korean Learner *Corpus* collected in Korean secondary schools in which the students had beginner/elementary level.

Another issue to take into account is that collecting raw data during six years is, indeed, a time-consuming activity and involves sacrifice on the part of the researcher, the teacher and the students. This is one of the main problems that researchers face when they try to carry out a longitudinal study:

> Another shortcoming is that since there are few longitudinal *corpora*, where data from the same informants are collected over a long period of time, it has not been easy to inquiry into interlanguage development.
>
> (Dong-Ju Lee 2008: 85)

---

[4] Over six years of compilation of data, there was some mortality in some schools. Some children left the school or others joined. I assume that for this descriptive study in which the subjects are clearly recognized, mortality, although taken into account, does not represent an impediment to carry out the present investigation.

[5] The author of this study joined the UAMLESC project as a researcher in October 2000 and was directly involved in the recording and transcribing of most of the sessions of this school for over four years, which adds an advantage to her role as researcher.

Two other critical elements that must be in the researcher's mind during the selection of a *corpus* or *subcorpus* are sample size and representativeness. Actually, the first critique to any case study is likely to be the size of the sample. "The first big obstacle that many writers feel they face is the charge of having too small a sample" (Siggelkow 2007: 20).

Related to sample size is the question of representativeness, or, rather, "non-representativeness". Some case-study researchers have been accused of basing their research on a biased sample of the *corpus.* What researchers in this field recommend is to select only one organization, school or institution as subject of the study:

> In fact, it is often desirable to choose a particular organization precisely because it is very special in the sense of allowing one to gain certain insights that other organizations would not be able to provide.
>
> (Siggelkow 2007: 20)

The *subcorpus* created contains 166,986 words. There are many examples in the literature of smaller *corpora*, like the Montclair Electronic Language Database (Fitzpatrick and Seegmiller 2004) containing only 100,000 words, or the already-mentioned Korean Learner *Corpus* (Lee 2007), which contains 20,000 words. These *corpora*, along with the one in this study, are, obviously, smaller than large commercial *corpora*, but they serve completely different purposes (cf. Vaughan and Clancy 2013). The *subcorpus* created reflects the interlanguage of these students of this bilingual school in an upper-class area in Madrid over a six year period. Consequently, it is a unique *corpus* in itself and absolutely unlike any other existing *corpus*.

The *subcorpus* created for the present study has a total of 166,986 words. It covers data compiled from 1999 to the end of 2005.

	Sessions analyzed	Number of words
Year 1	10	60,888
Year 2	5	35,431
Year 3	5	30,705
Year 4	1	1,234
Year 5	5	19,633
Year 6	4	19,095
TOTAL number of words		166,986

Table 4.5. Number of words recorded per year.

The number of sessions analyzed is greater in the first year of compilation of the data since students are five years old and it is at this stage that language is developing and children are becoming social beings. It was essential for the study to have a deep insight into what goes on during these first stages:

> The child's task is to construct the system of meanings that represents his own model of social reality. This process takes place inside his own head; it is a cognitive process. But it takes place in contexts of social interaction, and there is no way it can take place except in these contexts.
>
> (Halliday 1975: 139)

As Halliday states, the context of language acquisition is key, therefore, it is considered crucial to analyze classroom discourse when these infants are five years old (i.e. in the first stages of their L2 acquisition process) because they are learning English as an L2 in the classroom.

> Much of the speech a child hears around him is, typically, relatable to its context of situation in recognizable and systematic ways.
>
> (Halliday 1978: 74)

Once the classroom is considered as the normal context for English, the sessions analyzed are constant, ranging from four to five sessions per year spread along the whole academic year (autumn, winter and spring).

The students had five teachers during the six years of compilation of data. The teacher was the same in years 1 and 2. All the teachers were English native speakers with at least a working knowledge of the Spanish language.

4.3.3.3. Caveats in data gathering

Collecting data, however, is not such a simple task as it may appear, and it seems sensible at this point to warn the reader on the limitations that such a task was bound to during the data gathering of the *corpus* under study. A replication of Mintzberg's (1973) study is displayed below in order to establish a parallelism between the former study and the present one and to illustrate the difficulties that the researchers encountered when carrying out the gathering of data for the UAMLESC *Corpus*.

Mintzberg chose structured observation in order to develop theories inductively. The method itself required a restricted sample size, and "as a result, less quantitative data was generated" (Mintzberg 1973: 231).

He applied a three-stage process for data collection:

1. Collection of preliminary data. Including information about the organizations under study, about the sector and activity of the organizations, about the manager and about his environment.
2. Recording of the information. Two types of information are recorded: anecdotal information and structured data, which comprises patterns of activities. Every minute of the activity is recorded.
3. Coding of information. Raw field data is tabulated, coded and analyzed until meaningful conceptualizations and results are found.

Mintzberg found several problems with this method:

1. Problems in data collection. Certain data is difficult to collect due to uncertain hearing, activities carried out by the managers away from the organizations, confusing or missing parts in the recordings. On the side of the researcher, recording was a hectic, full-time job that was very time-consuming.
2. Effects of the presence of the researcher. The main problem for Mintzberg was to find out if his presence influenced the work of the managers. He found out that the manager got used to the presence of the researcher and this did not alter the managers' work at all.
3. Problems of coding. Mintzberg found difficulty in categorizing observations. An activity was clearly part of the data to be collected, but controlling social activities was outside the realm of his research. Another shortcoming Mintzberg had to face was the (in)appropriateness of recording private conversations. What to exclude and what to include was another issue, since Mintzberg was dealing with top managers and some of the conversations held were meant to be kept in secret.

For the UAMLESC *Corpus* an approximate replication of Mintzberg's method (i.e. structured observation) and the same three-stage approach were used. The problems encountered were basically the same ones he encountered. The UAMLESC *Corpus* includes language samples from native and non-native teachers and from bilingual and monolingual children learning English in six different schools in Madrid, which, of course, is different from dealing with managers and poses its own problems to researchers.

Below is a replicate of the three stages proposed by Mintzberg, as applied to the creation of the UAMLESC *Corpus*:

1. Collection of preliminary data. Before going to each school, the group of researchers had previous information on the school, the area where it was located, population in the area, social class of the students, and nationality of the students and the teacher.
2. Recording of the information. Recording was done in class and while the class was taking place. Each recording lasted a whole class. The activities carried out in each class were not predetermined by the researcher. On the contrary, the class followed its normal pace and syllabus. Recordings were done with a video camera (Sony Handycam Video Hi8 XR) in each of the schools three times each semester. Each researcher had one or two schools assigned and, whenever possible, it was always the same researcher who went to the same schools. Recordings started in 1998 and finished in 2006, covering from pre-school to nearly the end of primary school. In total, seven years of compilation of data which support the longitudinal approach of the present study.
3. Coding of information. Once each class was recorded, everything was transcribed according to fixed patterns of transcription. Then each researcher analyzed, coded and tagged the data depending on the area under study. Du Bois *et al.*'s (1992) system was followed, although with several changes introduced and approved by the directors of the *corpus*. The team agreed that a simplified transcription system was key for the *corpus* to be reusable in a multitude of studies. Eggins (2000) also agrees that simplified transcription patterns have an advantage in terms of reciprocity over more complex systems.

It is also worth mentioning the L1 and L2 constant code switching of both the children and the teacher. Following Llinares-García (2002),

> [w]e decided to classify as L1 those utterances in which the main function was used in Spanish even if the children used certain words in English and we classified as L2 those in which the main function was in English even if there were words in Spanish.
>
> (*ibid.:* 177; author's translation[6])

The researchers, indeed, faced some problems during those three stages:

1. Problems in data collection. When recording in a class, depending on the activity, there was some uncertain hearing. If all the students were engaged in the same activity as one big group with the teacher leading the class, the recording was easier. However, when students were divided in small groups, recording was more difficult and certain parts were missed. We also had to face extracurricular activities, over which the researcher had no control. As Mintzberg states, longitudinal studies are very time-consuming for all the researchers, and putting together the UAMLESC *Corpus* was no exception. However, the data were so rich that any effort or difficulty was overcome thanks to the firm commitment of all the researchers.
2. Effects of the presence of the researcher. This was a major concern when the recordings first started in a class with infants. We did not want to disrupt or disturb the class. Fortunately, students immediately forgot we were there. Through the years, they were used to us being in the class, so our presence did not have any positive or negative effect on them or the class. Quoting Ana Llinares-García, one of the directors of the *corpus:*

---

[6] Original text: "[d]ecidimos clasificar como L1 aquellos en los que la función principal se utilizaba en español aunque los niños usaran palabras en inglés y como L2 cuando la función principal se realizaba en inglés aunque algunas palabras estuvieran en español".

> The teachers stated that children behaved the same way as in any other class. It seemed that they had forgotten about the camera just a few minutes after recording had started in each session.
>
> (Llinares-García 2002: 175, author's translation[7])

3. Problems of coding. The researchers involved in the project were also in charge of transcribing the recordings. All followed the same transcription guidelines so that the coding of the information presented a coherent pattern regardless of what researcher had done the transcription.

* * * * * * * * * *

So far, the *subcorpus* used in the study has been explained, together with the shortcomings faced by the researchers during its compilation. The next sections deal with the annotation of *corpora*, in general, to guide the reader towards the proposed codification of the *subcorpus* in hand.

4.3.4 Annotated *corpora*

When dealing with *corpora* it is important to distinguish between the two main types. On the one hand, the so-called "raw *corpora*", which consist of the plain text without any computer or manual manipulation. On the other hand, the "tagged" or "annotated *corpora*". This section focuses on the latter type. First, a definition of what researchers understand by "annotated *corpus*" is provided; then, several pros and cons of this type of study are presented. Afterwards, the several types of annotations are presented. This section ends with the proposed tagging of the present dissertation.

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[7] Original text: "En el presente estudio, los mismos profesores, en todos los casos, afirmaron que los niños se comportaban igual que en el resto de las clases. Parecía, en nuestra opinión, que se habían olvidado de la cámara después de unos minutos, en la grabación de cada sesión".

4.3.4.1. Advantages and disadvantages of annotated corpora

There are two concepts that, although close in meaning, differ in its purpose and functionality within an annotated *corpus*: mark-ups and annotations. When a researcher refers to "*corpus* markups", he is referring to those bits of information that are purely objective and verifiable. For example, the gender of a given speaker is a *corpus* markup. By contrast, a *corpus* annotation is the interpretative linguistic information introduced by the researcher in a text. Annotations are interpretative because "annotation is, at least, in some degree, the product of the human mind's understanding of the text" (Leech 1997a: 2). An example would be the annotation of an expression as indicating a specific discourse function and not a different one.

Annotation is widely-used when dealing with either written or spoken *corpora*. Authors such as Leech (1997, 2005), McEnery (2003) or O'Donnell (1999) see several advantages in the use of *corpora* annotation. The following list (adapted from McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006: 30) summarises such advantages:

- It is easier to extract information and retrieve analysis.
- Annotated *corpora* are a reliable resource.
- They are, normally, multifunctional.
- Annotation records a linguistic analysis explicitly.

In spite of these advantages, annotated *corpora* have their detractors, too. Authors such as Hunston (2002) or Sinclair (2004) talk about the perils of *corpus* annotation, as the following list (adapted from McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006: 31-32) shows:

- *Corpus* annotation produces cluttered *corpora*.
- Annotation imposes a linguistic analysis upon a *corpus* user.
- Annotation may "overvalue" a *corpus*, making it less readily accessible, updateable and expandable (Hunston 2002: 92-93).
- Problems with the accuracy and consistency of annotation. There are three basic methods to annotate *corpora* (manual, computer-assisted and automatic annotation).

All of them are relevant from the point of view of *worthwhileness* of the efforts to compile the *corpus.* Nonetheless, the second and the fourth shortcomings seem to me the ones that would affect any given research the most. The lack of accuracy and consistency diminish credibility. Moreover, in Sinclair’s words, the imposition of a linguistic analysis implies that

> ... the description which produces the tags in the first place is not challenged – it is protected. The *corpus* data can only be observed through the tags; that is to say, anything the tags are not sensitive to will be missed .
>
> (Sinclair 2004: 191)

Hunston concurs with Sinclair and adds that annotation limits the kind of research questions asked, due to the annotation categories that are already predefined in tagged *corpora*:

> [T]he categories used to annotate a *corpus* are typically determined before any *corpus* analysis is carried out, which in turn tends to limit, not the kind of question that can be asked, but the kind of question that usually is asked.
>
> (Hunston 2002: 93)

Although I understand Sinclair and Hunston’s viewpoint about the risks that using annotated *corpora* might entail, I still consider them a powerful resource to extract relevant information for a wide variety and number of studies, particularly ours. After all,

> [i]t is clear [...] that all of the four criticisms of *corpus* annotation can be dismissed, with caveats, quite safely. Annotation only means undertaking and making explicit a linguistic analysis.
>
> (McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006: 32)

Although the *subcorpus* used in this study was tagged manually, without the help of any specific tool or software, it is important to devote a few lines to mentioning that, with large *corpus* or for quantitative or hybrid studies (not like this one, which is mostly qualitative), there are a number of applications which can help in the analysis of the texts and are very useful for the retrieval of exact information. Although very advanced software is increasingly available, for the purpose of providing a general overview, only three basic tools are mentioned below:

1. XML. An extensible mark-up language which provides mechanisms for documenting elements in one or several languages.
2. Annotation editors. Two examples of annotation editors are GATE (focused on quantitative analysis, it is a useful application for processing computer tasks such as extraction, dialogue and summarization) and WEBTRANSCRIBE (specific software for speech research and spoken language; it basically consists of an editor with editing buttons and a quality-assessment panel).
3. Wordsmith. A widely-known and -used software for lexical analysis which helps to find word patterns, concords, keywords, etc.

4.3.4.2. Types of annotations

Annotation of *corpora* can be done at various linguistic levels, from syllable to discourse level; therefore, we deem it essential to see the more basic types of *corpus* annotation first and to explain, later on, which type of annotation was followed and the reason for doing so.

The first type is the one called *part-of-speech* (POS) and deals with grammatical tagging and/or morphosyntactic annotation. It is the most widely-used type of annotation and consists in adding a certain type of tag to each and every word in a given *corpus*.

The second type is *lemmatization.* This particular type deals with the inflectional variants "of words to their respective lexemes (or lemmas) as they appear in dictionary entries" (McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006: 35).

The third type, called *parsing,* delves into pure grammatical sentences and constituents within the *corpus*.

At the semantic level we have the fourth type: *domain classifications.* This semantic annotation "assigns codes indicating the semantic feature or the semantic fields of the words in a text" (McEnery, Xiao and Tono 2006: 37).

The fifth type is called *coreference*. This type of annotation is applied at discourse level. It deals with how cohesion is achieved through the use of ellipsis, repetition, anaphors, etc…

Also, at discourse level there is *pragmatic annotation*, which deals specifically with speech acts. For an excellent and thorough discussion on this matter, see Leech (2005).

The seventh type is called *stylistic annotation.* It tags the stylistic features in literary texts.

The penultimate is *error tagging*, a widely-used method in learner *corpora*. One of its goals is to enhance learner pedagogy through the conclusions drawn from the studies that use this type of annotation.

The last type we are going to discuss is the one aimed (*ad hoc*) to solve certain research questions that cannot be solved using all the above mentioned types; this type is called *problem-oriented annotation.*

TYPES OF ANNOTATIONS
used in *corpora*

Part-of-speech (POS)
Lemmatization
Syntactical (parsing)
Semantic (domain classifications)
Coreference (discourse)
Pragmatic (speech acts – dialogue)
Stylistic
Error-tagging
Research specific *(ad hoc)*

Figure 4.3. Summary of types of annotations used in *corpora.*

Problem-oriented annotation was selected for the *subcorpus* analysed in the present dissertation. In this sort of annotation it is not necessary to tag the whole *corpus,* but only the parts or excerpts that deal with the specific research question that the researcher has in mind. As opposed to the other types, which deal with commonly-agreed categories and can cover and be useful for a wide variety of research questions, problem-oriented annotation is not meant to be broadly and generally accepted. Rather, the aim of this type of annotation is to make relevant a concrete research question. Researchers use this type of annotation when the already available and existing annotations cannot address the problem the researcher is investigating. Examples of this type are Gross (1993), Meyer and Tenny (1993) or Hunston (1999a).

The fact that the tags are directly associated with a specific research question implies, on the one hand, a big problem in terms of *reusability,* since any other research study that is not directly linked to the primary research question will not be able to reuse the tags. By contrast, since the tags are created on an *ad-hoc* basis and aim to provide an answer to a specific research question, it is easier to find useful data in *corpora* annotated with this system.

4.3.4.3. Proposed corpus *codification*

In the present study, several decisions were made regarding codification, annotation and tagging. The first thing was to decide what information had to be evaluated for the study. Canale and Swain (1980) mention a grammatical, a sociolinguistic and a strategic component which, together, allow the speaker to communicate. For our study, the focus was on the strategic component, since the object of study was not a grammatically correct utterance, but rather the strategies used by the speaker when trying to convey a message.

Following Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), it is necessary to define a unit of analysis when trying to annotate a *corpus*. In this case, the exchange of information between the teacher and the child was chosen as our unit of analysis. Edwards and Mercer (1994) state:

> The basic 'IRF' exchange structure – an initiation by a teacher, which elicits a response from a pupil, followed by an evaluative comment or feedback from the teacher – is, once seen, impossible to ignore in any classroom talk.
>
> (*ibid.*: 202)

As a consequence, every initiation was first transcribed and then analyzed following the *corpus* annotations that suited our research question.

A first codification of the *subcorpus* was carried out. As Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) point out, defining a taxonomy implies revising it several times so that, in the light of the data, several categories might be added and several might be eliminated. In fact, this is a problem that we faced when analyzing the data.

Firstly, data were analyzed using the Adaptive Management theory and its modified concept of the fourth context. Initially, there were seven tags, each corresponding to a different strategy used by the teacher to avoid or prevent miscommunication in classroom discourse.

Following Rose (2000) and Chaudron (1988), data were revised by an English philologist with ample linguistic background, and further revised by a professor of applied linguistics specialising in *corpora.*

> The simplest approach is to have several raters or coders apply the system to a predetermined segment of classroom interaction, and then calculate the ratio of items agreed upon to those in disagreement (in pairs or triplets of observers, for example).
>
> (Chaudron 1988: 24)

At first, a selection of the data was given to the first reviewer. She was given the tags with a brief explanation of their meaning and she re-tagged that selection. When she returned her annotation, six of the tags coincided fully with our coding. However, she also encountered the same problem as we did with one of the categories. After several meetings trying to adapt the existing taxonomy to our data, we realised that the problem could be solved by dividing the seventh category into five different categories, each with its own tag.

As a consequence, a re-codification was needed because there were many interactions that did not fall into any of the categories comprised in the Adaptive Management model. Those interactions dealt with communication problems that were not solved, or could not be solved, only through the adaptive management strategies.

After studying each of such communication problems, a pattern seemed to emerge: every time the problem had to do with a contextual problem (be it linguistic, private or situational), communication was unsuccessful. When the interlocutors did not share the same context (and therefore the same common ground) there was a linguistic problem or a cognitive misunderstanding (depicted in the private context and the situational context) which prevented the understanding between them.

In order to test the reliability of the new tags and re-test the previous categories, a new revision was made, this time comprising the whole *subcorpus.* Even if this second review was time-consuming, we considered it essential to reach an agreement and find a solid classification of tags in order to have a sound base on which to support our findings.

Out of these five new categories, two of them were discarded because they were irrelevant to the purpose of the study. Besides, one of the original seven categories was merged with another. At the end, the annotated *subcorpus* comprised eight tags as described below[8].

4.3.4.3.1. EXAMPLES OF TAGS

Adaptive Management: Operative (attitudinal)

Deals with the management of concepts and language comprehension to make a conversation flow without disruption. It helps the addressee's comprehension of the speaker's stance.

Turn or topic starter: %TOPST%

Year 1

TCH: Now, here´s the book. Here we go %TOPST%

And then, they start the new topic.

---

[8] Refer to Annex 1 for a more detailed description of each tag.

Attention-Getting Elements: %TOPAG%

Year 2

TCH: Listen everybody!.. %TOPAG%

Hesitation: %TOPH%

Year 1

TCH: So eh, eh... %TOPH%

Involvement adaptive management

It deals with the creation of cognitive orientation to understand the force and aim of the message in the mind of the speaker.

Rhetorical: %TINRH%

It serves to verify correct understanding but does not require a response from the listener. It may denote a subtle irony and implicitness that might or might not be understood by the listener.

Year 1

TCH: Excuse me, is your name Pablo? %TINRH% Did you turn into Pablo over night? %TINRH%

Year 1

TCH: were you born in a field, Palomi? %TINRH%

(Of course, the teacher is not, literally, asking her that!)

Question tags are often considered rhetoric.

Overt: %TINO%

Seeks to avoid miscommunication through metalinguistic verification.

Year 1

TCH: You understand it? %TINO%.. Jacobo. You understand it? %TINO%

When the listener had a problem with the message the speaker was trying to convey. The listener reported two things, either uncertain hearing or problems at the level of the linguistic context.

Linguistic context: %TINODL%

Year 1

TCH: You've got what? %TINODL%

CHI: Yes

TCH: You've got what at home? %TINODL%

CHI: <names>

TCH: <...>

CHI: Yes, my names and I put one on the back.

TCH: Oh, labels!

CHI: Yes...

Private context: %TINODP%

Misunderstandings at the cognitive level due to both interlocutors NOT sharing the same private context.

Please refer to Annex 1 (tag 7) for this example taken from year 1. It provides a good instance of a situation in which the teacher and the children are not sharing the same private context about permeability. As a result, a cognitive misunderstanding arises which the teacher solves by showing the children the whole process with real objects.

Situational context: %TINODS%

Misunderstandings at the cognitive level due to both interlocutors NOT sharing the same situational context.

Year 4

(Making sure ALL the students share the same situational context in order to follow the class task and routine. Cosme is having some problems. Strategy from the teacher's side is explanation, verification and questions).

TCH: What do you need Cosme? %TINODS%

Cosme: %x x%

TCH: It tells exactly what you need. It doesn't say you need this. It says …. Number one. What does it say? %TINODS%

CHILDREN: Follow the instructions of R M seven eight to construct a circle pattern.

TCH: Right... What do you need? %TINODS% ((Screams)) Don't tell me you need a circle!! You've got the instructions, in number one. Follow the instructions on-?

CHILDREN: R, M.

TCH: What do you need? %TINODS%

Once the annotation of the *subcorpus* is complete and consistent with the theoretical contribution put forward for this study, the proposed methodology is depicted in the next section.

4.3.5 Proposed methodology

This section deals with the research objectives, the research questions and the propositions that will guide the rest of the dissertation. This part is of utmost importance inasmuch as it comprises the questions that this study tries to find an answer to.

A typical case-study approach follows the sequence depicted below:

Theory
Conceptual contribution
Illustration

Figure 4.4. Sequence of a typical case study.

First, a theory or model from where to draw a conceptual contribution, followed by an illustration of such contribution.

The conceptual contribution of our research is explained in chapter 3. It deals with a modification and revision of the model proposed by Kecskes by adding a fourth element of context. Following the case-study methodology, examples from our data are used to explain each theoretical issue that is considered of importance.

> By seeing a concrete example of every construct that is employed in a conceptual argument, the reader has a much easier time imagining how the conceptual argument might actually be applied to one or more empirical settings.
>
> (Siggelkow 2007: 22)

A typical case-study approach illustrates the theory put forward by the authors. The novelty of the case-study methodology we applied to our research is twofold. Firstly, the case study is considered a dynamic and inductive (rather than purely deductive) entity. Secondly, the observer is conceived as a key success factor for the research.

4.3.5.1. Research objectives

To enrich the existing literature of the Dynamic Model of Meaning by proposing a revised theoretical contribution. The aim is to fill in the gap regarding the three contexts provided by the model (linguistic, situational and private) by creating a fourth element of context: the adaptive management context.

To examine the different contexts which take place in a foreign language classroom. The data are analyzed from the point of view of the aforementioned fourth context. A qualitative analysis is provided to explain the propositions that are detailed below.

In order to design and carry out a case study there are a number of components that are key to the successful development of this type of qualitative research. Yin (1988, 2003: 21) puts forward five basic components:

1. A study's question.
2. Its propositions, if any.
3. Its unit of analysis.
4. The logic linking the data to the propositions.
5. The criteria for interpreting the findings.

These five components are followed in order to provide a rigorous case-study approach that will help frame the rest of this dissertation.

4.3.5.2. Study question

Why?

To fill the gap in the existing literature regarding the three contexts provided by the DMM (private, situational and linguistic) in order to account for communication problems in teacher-infant interaction in classroom discourse by creating a fourth element of context: the adaptive management context.

How?

Stake (1995), Baxter and Jack (2008) or Yin (2003) clearly state that the main research question of a qualitative study should embody the "How?" concept. In this particular case, I have unfolded the research question into two subquestions, as the data showed that there are qualitative differences which have to be unravelled whether the misunderstanding is prevented or not.

4.3.5.3. Research questions

Main research question

How does teacher-infant interaction in classroom discourse work when the three above-mentioned contexts are not shared and communication is not successful?

Research subquestion 1

> Does the teacher use certain strategies to prevent a possible communication breakdown? If so, which ones?

Research subquestion 2

When the communication between teacher and child is not successful, which of the three primary contexts (linguistic, private or situational) is the one creating the misunderstanding? Which is the one not shared by both interlocutors?

4.3.5.4. Propositions

Proposition 1

Communication is altered due to the interlocutors' maturity when common ground is not shared.

Proposition 2

Following the adaptive management categorization of the remedial strategies used to make conversation flow without disruption, differences should be found regarding the two basic types of strategies: operative and involvement.

Proposition 3

Following the DMM, the three contexts (linguistic, situational and private) are analyzed. Qualitative differences should be found in terms of the communication problem or, in some cases, misunderstanding that each context deals with. These misunderstandings are linked to the cognitive development of the subjects.

Proposition 4

The longitudinal study shows the contrast and variation of the data as the study progresses, thereby further validating propositions 1, 2 and 3.

4.3.5.5. Unit of analysis[9]

The case is defined by Miles and Huberman (1994) as a "phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context". The case is "in effect your unit of analysis" (1994: 25).

The unit of analysis are 18 subjects in the bilingual school located in a privileged area of Madrid (see table 4.4 for further details on the group and the school). Data from this school were obtained by following the same subjects over a six-year period. It is important to highlight that these 18 subjects are treated as a group and no individual differences are made, even though all the subjects were perfectly identified by the author of this study, who was directly involved in the recording and transcribing of most of the sessions of this school for over four years.

4.3.5.6. Linking data to the propositions and the criteria to interpret the findings

Baxter and Jack (2008) state that reporting a case study can be a complicated task for both novice and experience researchers since it has to be done in a comprehensible way, therefore, turning a complex issue into an understandable study. Yin (2003) delves into complex methods to report case studies, such as *pattern matching* or *time series analysis,* when the researchers lack propositions.

It is important to mention that not every case study needs propositions, although they are highly advisable (Yin, 2003). Main authors in the field, such as Stake (1995), Guba (1981) or Forchuck and Roberts (1993), claim that the reporting should be done in a narrative way involving the reader and making him part of the case as if he had been there. The problem in this case could be a clear lack of focus. In order to avoid this, "addressing the propositions ensures that the report remains focused and deals with the research questions" (Baxter and Jack 2008: 555).

---

[9] I have used the concept of "unit of analysis" in two different ways in this dissertation, the first time to annotate the *subcorpus* (more grammatical-discourse level, this second time to depict the case study (group level). Although the name is the same, they apply to two different things.

The results derived from the qualitative approach are presented, explained and discussed in chapter 5 with examples of the *subcorpus,* with the goal of describing and supporting the findings of the study. Each of our propositions is tackled with and linked to the current literature in the field in chapter 6 in order to connect theory, methodology and results, and to summarize the main findings of this dissertation.

4.3.5.7. Structured observation participation

Observation is of utmost importance for this dissertation, in terms of collection of data and analysis. What is lacking from the previous methodology, i.e. case study, is to clearly state the role of the observer/participant and to provide a name to the type of observation that the researcher is carrying out.

The role of the observer is a recurrent and highly complex problem in qualitative research. Some authors state that the researcher gets too involved in the research, up to a point where he projects his own feelings into the research carried out, so "[t]he assumed separation between the data being analysed and the person who analyses them […] becomes questionable" (Spinelli 1989: 58).

Or, as Gill and Johnson (2002) put it:

> Inevitably the observer, explicitly or implicitly, projects prior beliefs and sentiments upon sense-data and thereby moulds them through this imposition of common sense or theoretical or paradigmatic or unconscious assumptions and background expectancies.
>
> (*Ibid*: 180)

Janesick (1994) claims that the researcher is an active participant with criteria to observe what is of interest and discard what is not, in her own words:

> Qualitative research requires the researcher to become the research instrument. This means the researcher must have the ability to observe behaviour and must sharpen the skills necessary for observation and face-to-face interview.
>
> (Janesick 1994: 212)

A definition of a researcher that I consider to be the most suitable one is the one provided by Miles and Huberman (1994). They clarify that the researcher is not an outsider, but rather and insider and who is well trained and has the necessary skills to successfully carry out a qualitative research:

> The researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of local actors "from the inside", through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding (*Verstehen*), and of suspending preconceptions about the topics under discussion.
>
> (Miles and Huberman 1994: 6)

Now that the definition of a researcher/observer has been defined, it is necessary to explain the types of observations that can be encountered in qualitative studies.

There are two basic types of observations; "unstructured observation" (to use the term coined by Sayles (1964) and backed by Dalton (1959) or Hodgson, Levinson and Zaleznik (1965)) and "structured observation", whose main contributors were Guest (1956), Jasinski (1950), Ponder (1957) or O'Neill and Kubany (1959).

By contrast, in unstructured observation,

> the researcher lives in the system, either as a participant or as an independent observer, and records all observations that interest him. The rich array of data that results is then taken from the scene, arranged, rearranged, and studied intensively.
>
> (Mintzberg; 1973: 226).

The fact that the researcher is in the system enables him to understand new dimensions and to study very complex aspects on a first-hand basis. Therefore, unstructured observation is the kind of observation that an ethnographer would favour.

Structured observation, on the contrary, does not require the researcher to be immersed in the system. This type of observation is less used by researchers because it is very time-consuming and the costs can be quite high. The positive aspect, however, is that it enables the researcher to study both content and characteristics of teachers, doctors, managers or any subject under analysis by using a small sample.

There is a famous study by Mintzberg (1973) where he applies structured observation to the work of five chief executives. The aims of the study were, first, to contribute to the literature with purely descriptive material focused on actual managers' work. The other aim was to compare the results to those obtained from other managers in similar circumstances. This study was a milestone for structured observation.

4.4. CONCLUSION

With this chapter I have tried to present some basic qualitative techniques, starting with the more general qualitative definitions in order to guide the reader to the methodology used in the present study.

Summarizing, the method used when conducting the present case study was structured observation, where the researcher is an observer and not a participant. Data were recorded and then transcribed. This research followed the case-study approach, but an innovative perspective was added which entailed adding the variable of dynamism to the prototypical case-study methodology. As has already been explained, conducting a case study implies a rather deductive approach (that is, moving from theory to data). By making the case study more dynamic, an inductive approach can also be considered to check data against theory whenever necessary before reverting to the deductive approach.

The present dissertation is based on a dynamic conception of case-study methodology. The figure below illustrates how a case study with our dynamic contribution can be contemplated as starting with an analysis of data and then deducing a series of principles that lead to a model, or vice versa (i.e. using a given model as a starting point and, using deduction, exemplify the theoretical model with the data in our *subcorpus).*

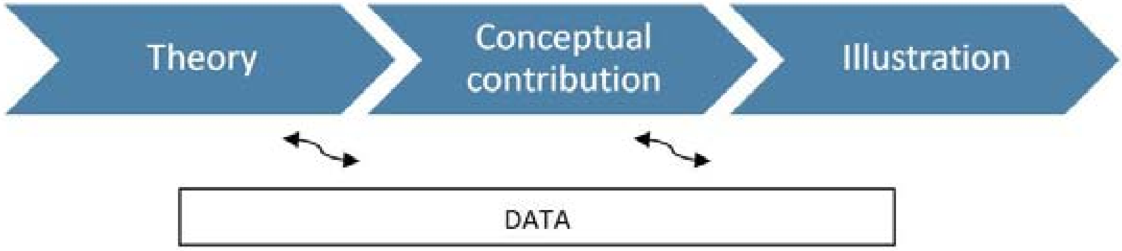

Figure 4.5. Sequence of a case study
(adapted from Burrell and Morgan 1993: 3).

* * * * * * * * * *

This chapter has provided the foundations for the methodology that was applied to gather and analyze the data in our *subcorpus.* A flexible qualitative approach was found to be the best option in view of the type of data gathered and the goals of our research.

Chapter 5 is entirely devoted to providing and thoroughly discussing the data, and to presenting my analysis thereof.

CHAPTER 5.

RESULTS ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

> *Case studies collectively reinforce the dynamic, complex view toward second language development. Language learning is a socially constructed process and language is socially situated and negotiated, and emerges through a coadaption of a complex social interplay among agents, elements, and environments that change with time.*
>
> (Taguchi 2012: 260)

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5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at providing a general overview of the results of the analyzed data together with a detailed discussion of the findings. The results are displayed and visually supported by graphics in section 5.2. The third and final section has the purpose of relating the findings to the existing literature in the field to draw the main conclusions of this dissertation.

As previously discussed in chapter 3, the Dynamic Model of Meaning failed to account for some communication problems, more specifically, those occasions in which the speakers had to adapt to unexpected outcomes in a given conversation. This is the reason why the adaptive management context was introduced: in order to supplement the existing trio of contexts (linguistic, situational and private). With these four contexts, the whole idea of adaption is covered. Moreover, the fourth context presented in this dissertation includes the ability to reach a new cognitive stage when the speakers, dynamically, adapt to succeed in the conversational act.

As stated in chapter 4, the UAMLESC *Corpus* was analyzed at two levels. The first level of analysis accounted for the instances of adaptive management found in the *subcorpus*. The second level identified when the contexts depicted in the DMM appeared and how they interacted with adaptive management to make communication successful.

The next section of this chapter is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the results in four steps:

- results related to the Adaptive Management elements;
- results related to the DMM contexts;
- integration of the results related to both the Adaptive Management elements and the DMM contexts.
- summary of the previous three subsections.

The third and final section of chapter 5, in turn, provides a thorough discussion of the findings of the research.

5.2. RESULTS

5.2.1 Adaptive Management

In this subsection, data are presented globally, emphasizing the qualitative differences found regarding the adaptive management. Afterwards, data are broken into the different elements and into the results obtained each year. The presentation of the data per element shows how each element develops, contrasts and compares with the other elements; while the display of the data per year highlights the evolution of the data through the research period.

Our *subcorpus* shows that there are differences in the type of strategies used by the subjects under study throughout the years and clear patterns arise if data are examined from a longitudinal perspective. More operative than involvement strategies are used, but there is a growing tendency towards the use of involvement strategies as the children grow.

5.2.1.1. Global presentation of results per element

Adaptive management is subdivided into operative adaptive management and involvement adaptive management. The operative one, basically, helps the addressee's comprehension of the speaker's stance.

This operative context entails three main attitudinal components:

- The start of a topic or the turn of topic by the teacher.
- Attention-getting elements on the teachers' side.
- Speaker's hesitation due to fear, caution, insecurity, etc.

By contrast, the involvement adaptive management deals with the more cognitive realm of the communication process. It helps to verify that the message that the speaker is trying to convey is actually getting to the head of the hearer.

This category is subdivided into:

- Rhetorical: Does not require a response from the listener.
- Overt: It is done through metalinguistic verification, such as: "Do you know what I mean?" or "Is it clear what I mean?"

In the following figure each element is presented with respect to the average instances recorded each year. The reason for using averages is, firstly, that each year had a different number of sessions recorded and transcribed, and, secondly, that each session had a different number of total words. It therefore seemed advisable to take the average of instances per year so as to create a common scale on which all the elements could be measured.

Figure 5.1. displays the global average use of the different adaptive management elements during the six years of recordings:

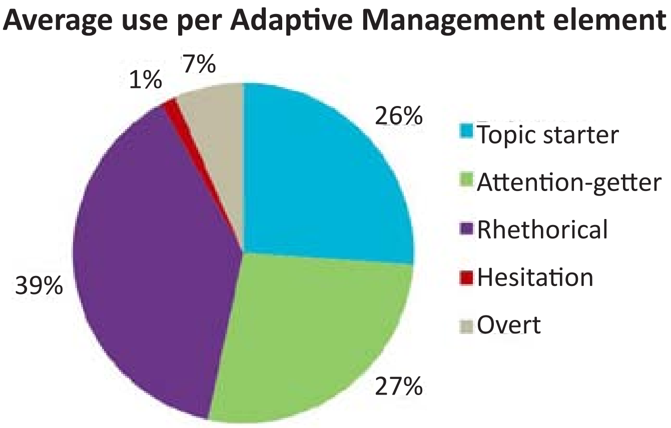


Figure 5.1. Average use per Adaptive Management element.

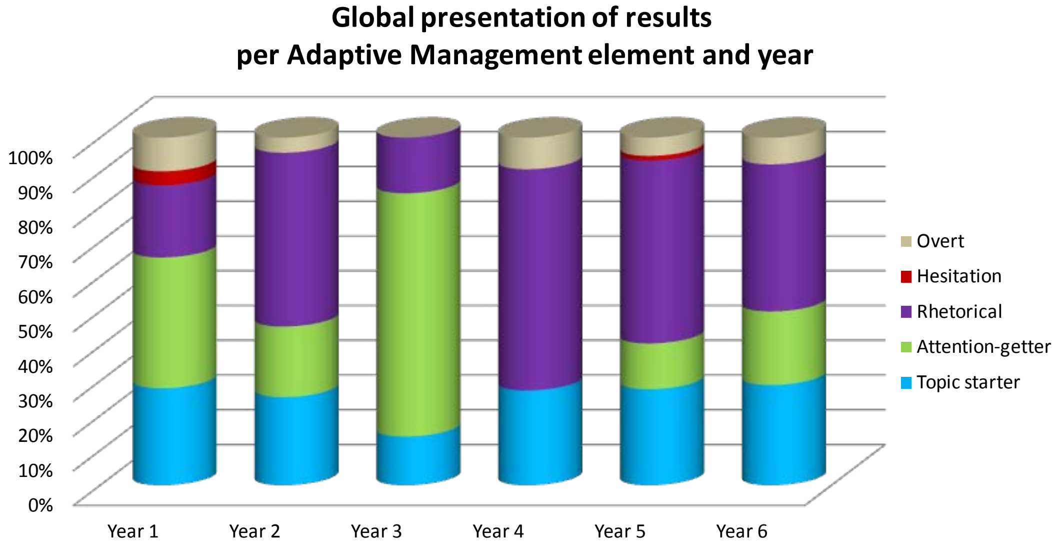


Figure 5.2. Global presentation of results per Adaptive Management element and year.

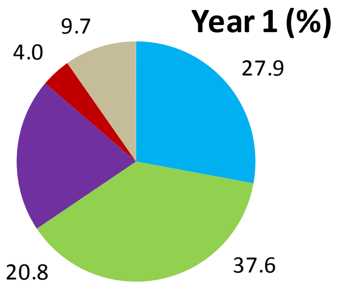
As already stated, operative adaptive management includes topic starter, attention-getting and hesitation elements. It is interesting to see that among these three micro-categories two are used very frequently, i.e. topic starter (26%) and attention-getting (27%) elements, whereas "hesitation" (1%) is virtually nonexistent.

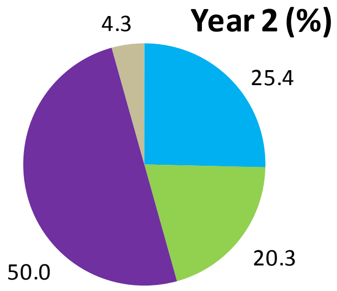
Regarding involvement adaptive management, the rhetorical micro-category is clearly the more common; actually, with a 39% it is the most-often used of all the adaptive management elements. By contrast, overt elements are scarcely present (7%).

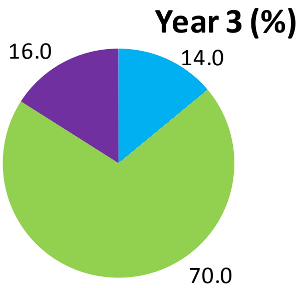
To summarize, the most salient elements of adaptive management, which is also the focus of attention of this dissertation, are topic starter, attention-getting and rhetorical elements.

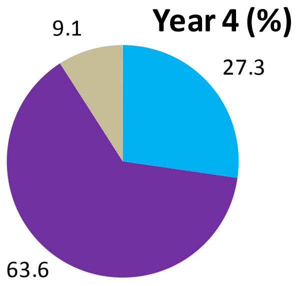
5.2.1.2. Global presentation of results per year

There is a consistent tendency across years with regard to the three most frequently used micro-categories. The graphic display of the six years of compilation of data shows that topic-starter, attention-getting and rhetorical elements are always present and salient, regardless of the children's age.









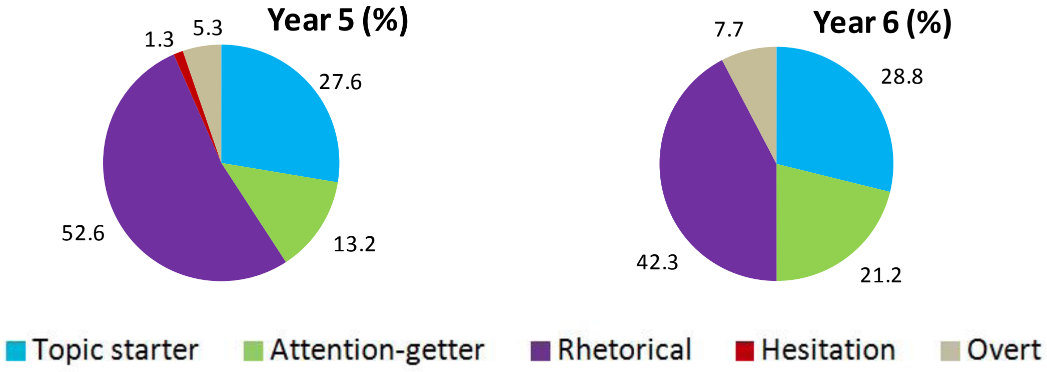


Figure 5.3. Distribution of Adaptive Management strategies per year.

Bearing in mind that the teacher needs to change, start or turn the topic of the lecture as well as to control that the students' span of attention does not diminish, it seems reasonable to expect abundant topic starter and attention-getting elements as part of classroom discourse, especially with infants. What is remarkable, however, is that, as years go by, these two micro-categories start being less salient. It is true that they are always present, due to the obvious situational context that we have, i.e. classroom activities, but it is important to mention that they have a less prominent role in years 3-6.

The rhetorical subcategory of the involvement adaptive management highlights a cognitive component that evolves throughout the years and which starts flourishing as the relevance of the operative categories starts to diminish. Clear examples of this are years 2, 5 and 6.

5.2.1.3. Results per Adaptive Management element

In this section, the results obtained for adaptive management are dissected. For this purpose, the data for each one of its elements are presented, first as a whole and then year by year. Graphics are used to provide a visualization of the tendencies shown by the data. The longitudinal evolution of the corresponding element is discussed.

5.2.1.3.1. TOPIC STARTER

The topic starter tag is used by the teacher to, either start a new topic in the class, or to turn to another one.

In order to portray the saliency and frequency of this element, the total number of instances of topic starter elements found in the six years of compilation of data (179 instances) is shown below:

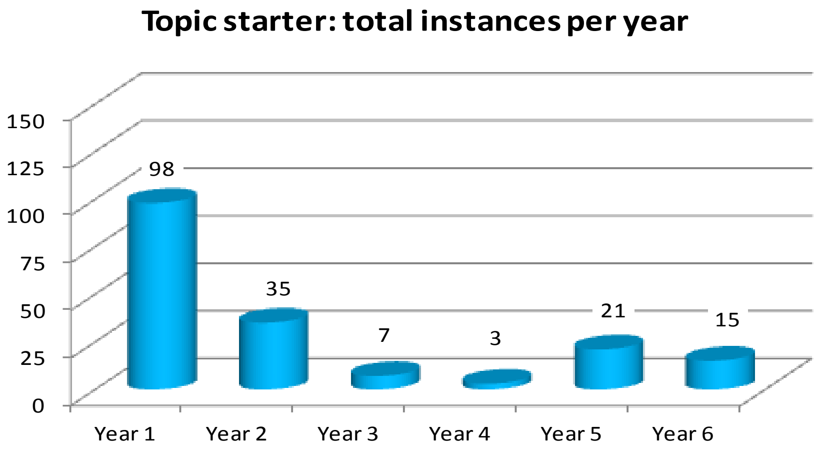


Figure 5.4. Total instances of topic starters per year.

The evolution of the adaptive management along each year is now displayed to see the evolution in detail.[10]

Topic starter: year 1

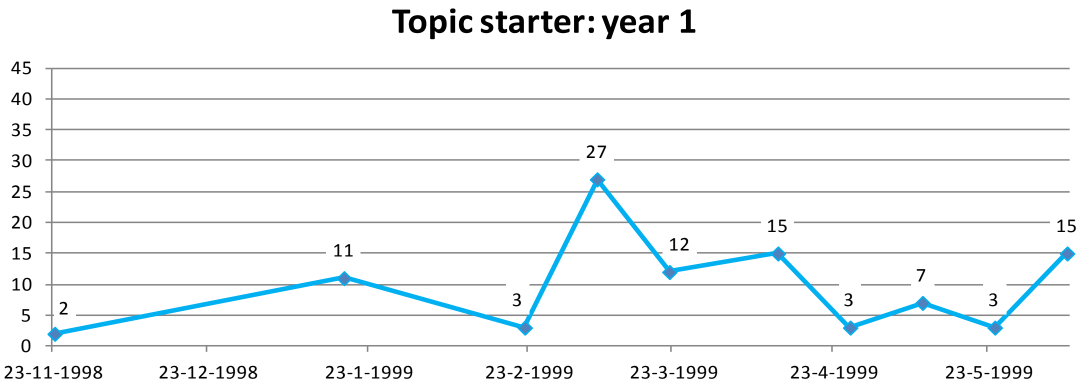


Figure 5.5. Evolution of topic starter instances during year 1.

---

[10] The author has decided to combine years 3 and 4 as they are transition years with respect to the data and show very similar figures which would add no particular value to the analysis.

Ten sessions were recorded during year 1. The total instances of topic starter elements per session are shown in the graph above. This is the first year of compilation of data and subjects are 5 years old. The total number of instances of topic starter elements in this year is 98, which is a very high number in comparison to other elements. These 98 instances are spread across sessions as shown in the graph.

Topic starter: year 2

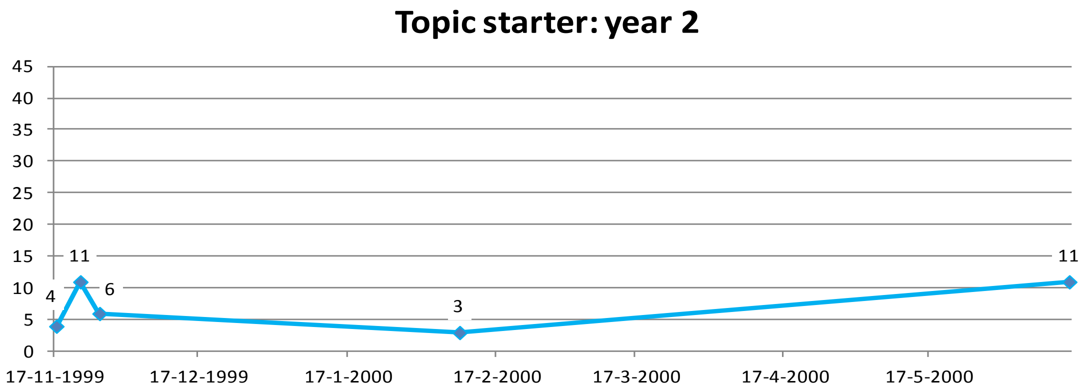


Figure 5.6. Evolution of topic starter instances during year 2.

Year 2 contains five sessions with a total number of 35 topic starter elements. The distribution of the 35 is shown in figure 5.6 above. There has been an interesting decrease from the 98 instances in year 1 to the 35 examples in year 2. This decreasing tendency will be even more salient in the next years.

Topic starter: years 3 and 4[11]

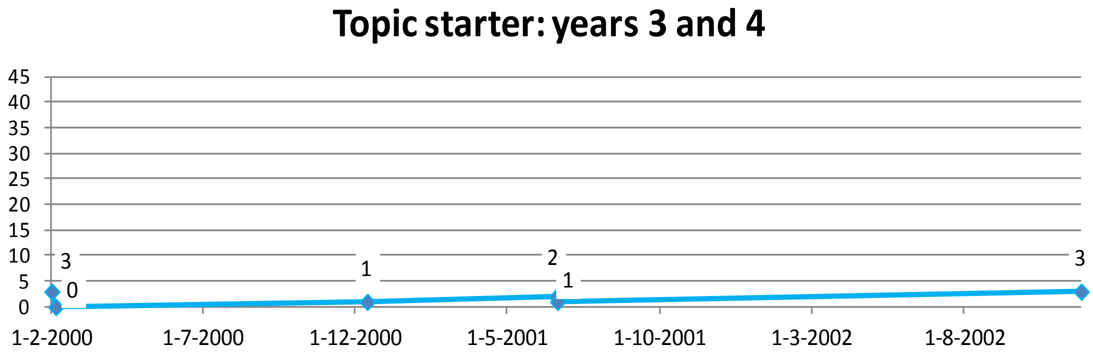


Figure 5.7. Evolution of topic starter instances during years 3 and 4.

---

[11] The author has decided to combine years 3 and 4 as they are considered transition years. There are no significant results if analyzed separately, so they will be combined in this section.

The total number of topic starter cases for years 3 and 4 is only 10. The first aspect that should be clarified is that it might be normal to have fewer instances, since the number of sessions has also decreased. In fact, whereas in year 1 we had 10 sessions, in years 3 and 4 there are 6 sessions altogether.

This is certainly a very logical answer to such a low number of instances. However, in year 2 there were 5 sessions and the total number of instances was 35 (i.e. an average of 7 instances per session), as opposed to the 10 instances found in the data for years 3 and 4 (less than 2 instances per session on average).

Another point worth mentioning is that, in the second session of year 3, there are zero instances of topic starter elements, which is strange indeed in classroom discourse. This could be caused by the limitation of recordings per year, but, in spite of all this, the decreasing tendency is already apparent and should not be ignored.

Topic starter: year 5

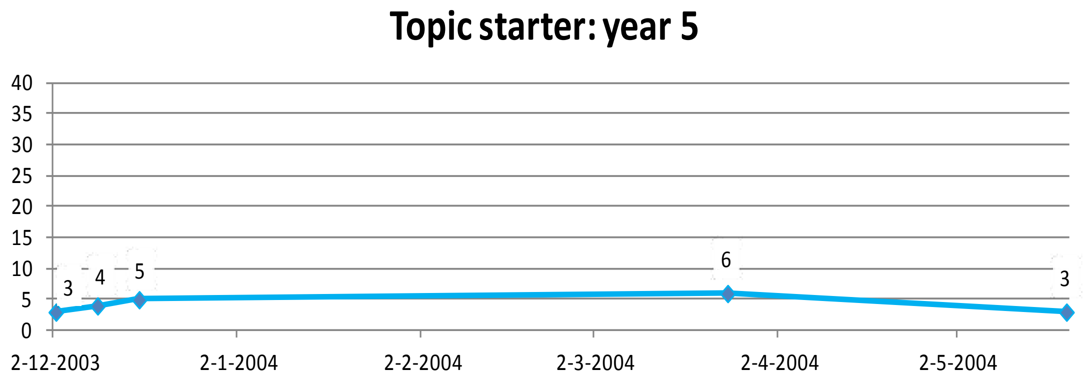


Figure 5.8. Evolution of topic starter instances during year 5.

Year 5 comprises five recorded sessions. The total number of topic starter elements is 21, distributed across the different sessions as shown in the graph above.

The decreasing tendency of years 1, 2, 3 and 4 is no longer sustained for year 5:

Year 1	98
Year 2	35
Years 3 and 4	10
Year 5	21

Table 5.1. Total instances per year in years 1 to 5.

In order to understand the change of tendency, looking only at the topic starter elements of the data will not suffice. A holistic view of year 5 is needed to better comprehend the reason for having an increase in the number of topic starter elements.

First of all, we must always bear in mind that these elements are always expected in classroom discourse, particularly with infant subjects. As seen previously when analyzing years 3 and 4, this does not guarantee their presence, though. Besides, a closer look at the data of year 5 hints that this increase is not particularly relevant, since the classroom dynamics in some sessions made it necessary for the teacher to change the topic more often than would have been normal had the activity carried out been of a different nature.

A second explanation has to do with year 5 as a whole. By this year, the fluency of the children has already increased exponentially, as have their maturity and their cognitive development. This, in turn, affects the dynamics of the classroom. As a result, year 5 is a very rich year in all the categories, not only topic starter elements. The increase in the topic starter category should not, therefore, be the main focus of attention, since the data for other categories are also particularly prominent during this year, as is further discussed in detail in the sections to follow and presented below:

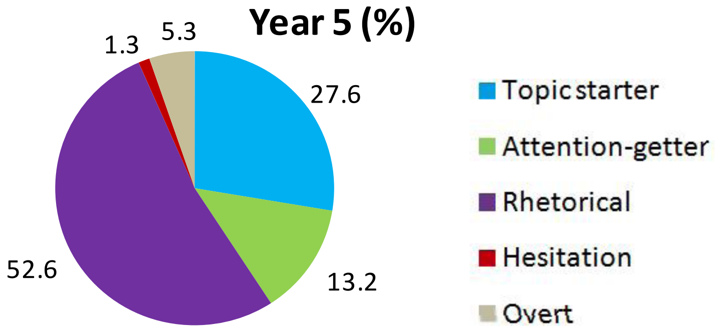


Figure 5.9. Distribution of the different adaptive management elements in year 5.

Topic starter: year 6

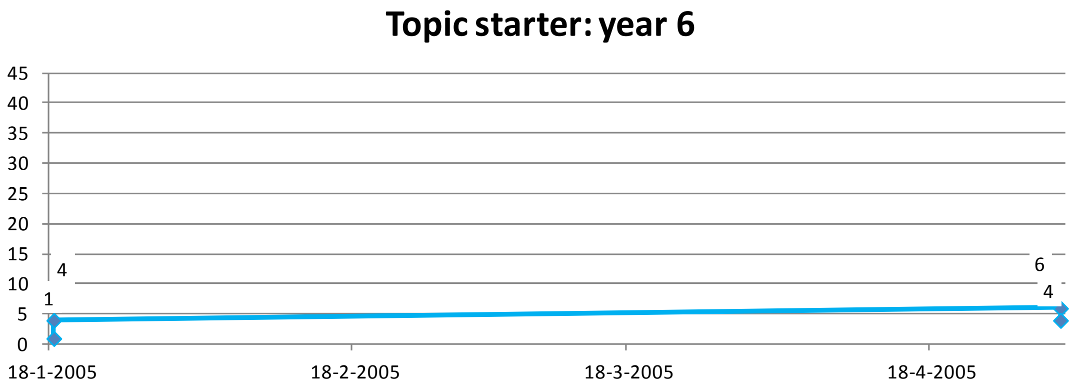


Figure 5.10. Evolution of topic starter instances during year 6.

During year 6 four sessions were recorded and analyzed. The total number of instances of topic starter elements is 15. This proves that the slight increase in year 5, was due to the richness of instances in all the categories, more than a significant factor of the topic starter elements *per se.*

Year 6 closes the decreasing trend of this attitudinal element. This proves, first of all, that this element is always present and needed in classroom settings. Also, its diminution poses an important question: why is the teacher using less attitudinal strategies? Data from our *subcorpus* show that, the less operative adaptive management elements are used by the teacher, the more involvement elements are used. The answer to that question, then, seems quite straightforward: the opposing tendencies in the evolution of operative and involvement elements points at the students' cognitive development. This is further looked into when dealing with the involvement adaptive management categories.

* * * * * * * * * *

To summarize, topic starter elements show a decreasing tendency. As has been illustrated, it reaches its peak during the first year of compilation of data and decreases with the pass of time. Figure 5.11 below illustrates this evolution.

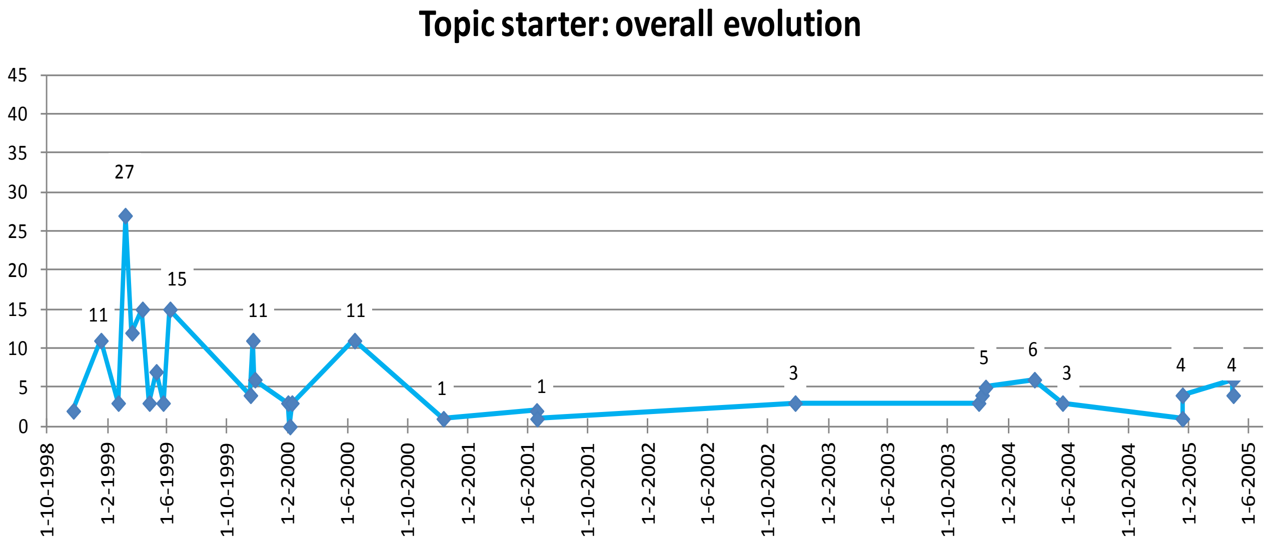


Figure 5.11. Overall evolution of topic starter instances during the study.

5.2.1.3.2. ATTENTION–GETTING ELEMENTS

Attention-getting elements are used by the teacher to signal the special importance of what follows in the conversation. They are, also, used to make children focus their attention on the task or activity that they are performing. This element also serves the purpose of catching the attention of the children to make them focus on what the teacher considers important at any given point in the class.

Over the six years of compilation of data, attention-getting elements are very frequently used in classroom discourse as their main objective is to prevent the children from distraction.

The graph below shows the total instances of attention-getting elements found in the data. The total number of these elements is 216. As can be appreciated in the graph, most of the occurrences happen during the first year of compilation of the data.

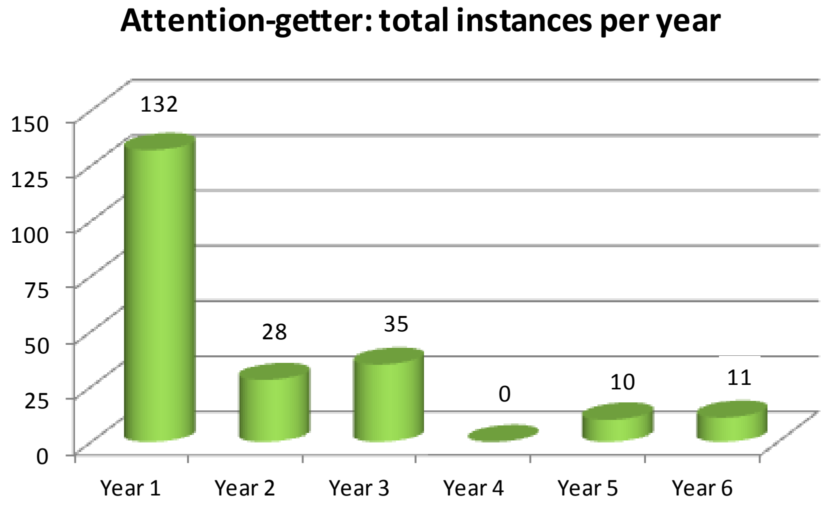


Figure 5.12. Total instances of attention-getting elements per year.

It is important to highlight the dramatic decreasing tendency of attention-getters in the classroom, which quite resembles the tendency of topic starter elements.

Attention-getting elements: year 1

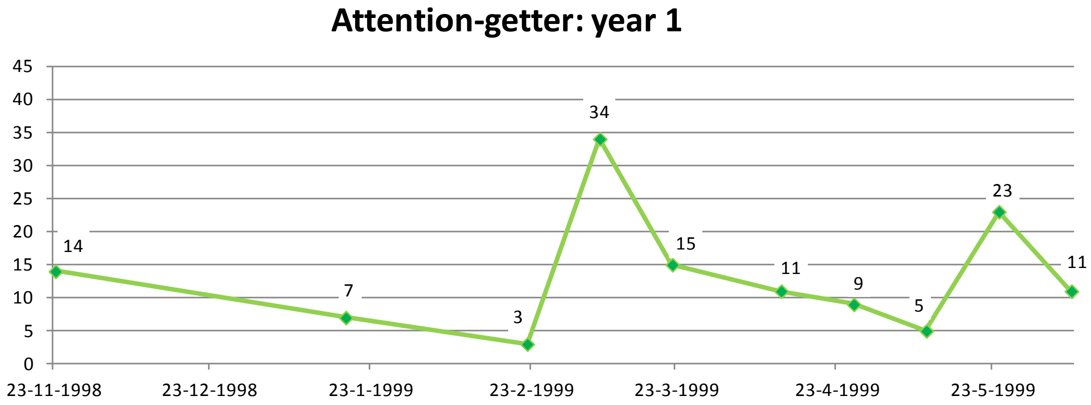


Figure 5.13. Evolution of attention-getting instances during year 1.

In year 1, attention-getting elements proliferate across all the sessions analyzed. Of particular relevance is the fourth session, where the highest number of occurrences of this type of element is reported for all the data analyzed for the present dissertation: 34 instances.

Attention-getting elements: year 2

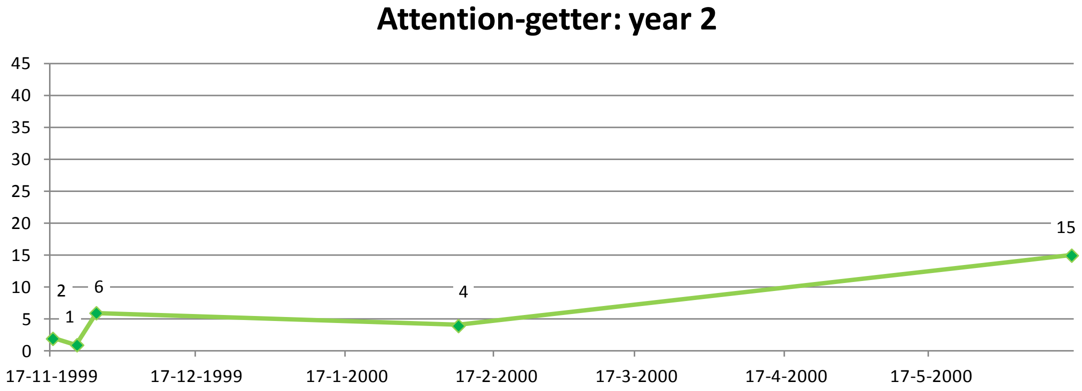


Figure 5.14. Evolution of attention-getting instances during year 2.

The most significant finding with regard to attention-getting elements in year 2 is their unpredicted increase in the last session. In the previous four sessions of the year, the decreasing tendency that started in year 1 is sustained, but the year ends with a rather significant increase of these elements. I am in the position to say that, although this should be noted, this increase is only temporary and that the expected decreasing tendency will continue in the coming years.

Attention-getting elements: years 3 and 4

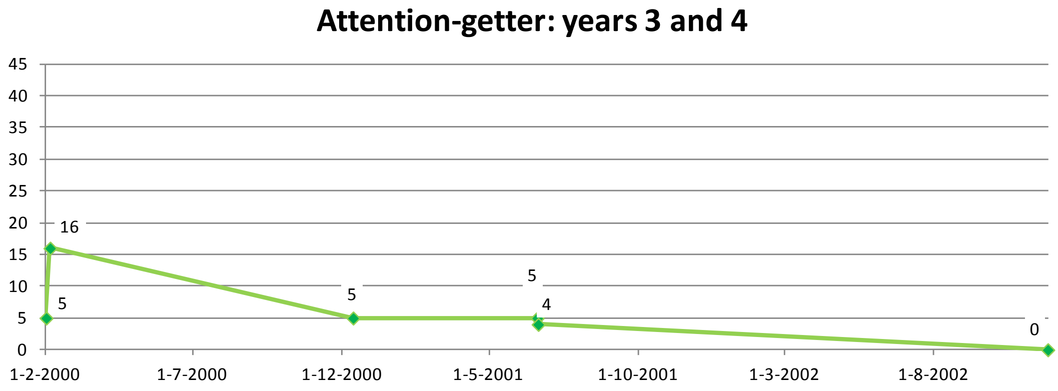


Figure 5.15. Evolution of attention-getting instances during years 3 and 4.

The combination of years 3 and 4 provides a preview of how the data will behave from then onwards. As mentioned earlier, the slight increase in the final session of year 2 (which continues with the 16 instances of the first session of year 3) is only temporary and does not obscure the clear decreasing pattern. Looking back at year 1, where the highest number found in the data was 34, data show that these elements are becoming less prominent. At this point, it seems safe to state that the tendency will remain constant to the end and no further increases in frequency will be found in the data for this particular element.

Attention-getting elements: year 5

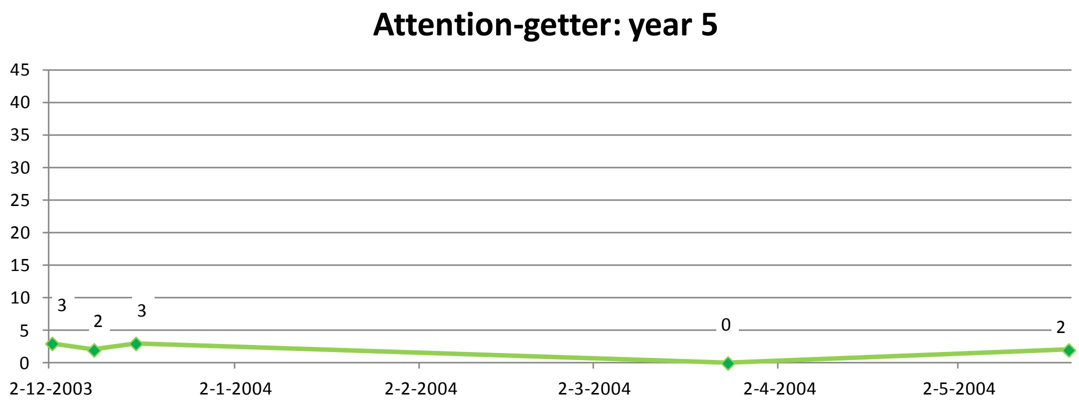


Figure 5.16. Evolution of attention-getting instances during year 5.

In the five sessions analyzed in year 5 the attention-getting elements found are clearly marginal, the average being 2 instances. As already pinpointed, the attitudinal components of the operative adaptive management (topic starter and attention-getting elements) have no saliency in the last years of the data analyzed.

Attention-getting elements: year 6

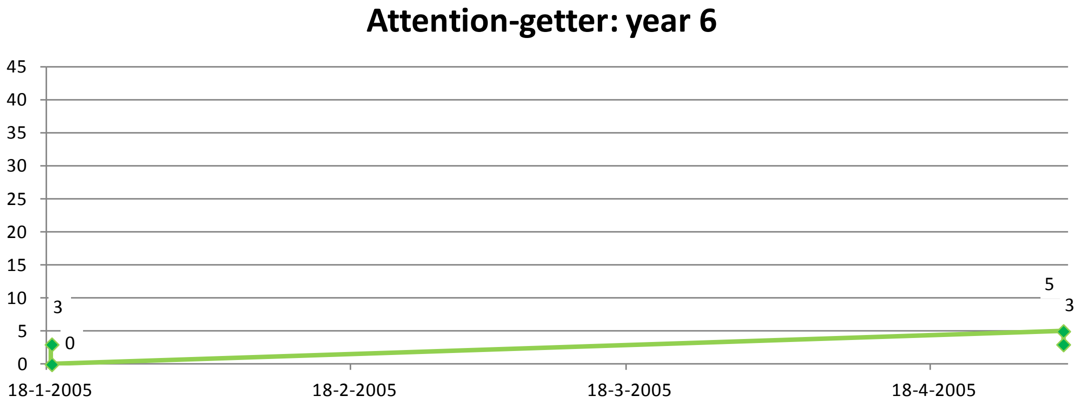


Figure 5.17. Evolution of attention-getting instances during year 6.

Year 6 is a closing year with regard to the decreasing tendency of this element. Data show that it is a very rich year with regard to other elements and components, as explained later on in this dissertation. But, as the graph above shows, year 6 remains constant and stable in the low levels of occurrence of attention-getting elements, which is consistent with my prediction.

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In a nutshell, the overall evolution of attention-getting elements is clearly marked by a very frequent use in the first year and a clear decreasing pattern the rest of the years. This tendency seems more evident with a visual presentation of the data:

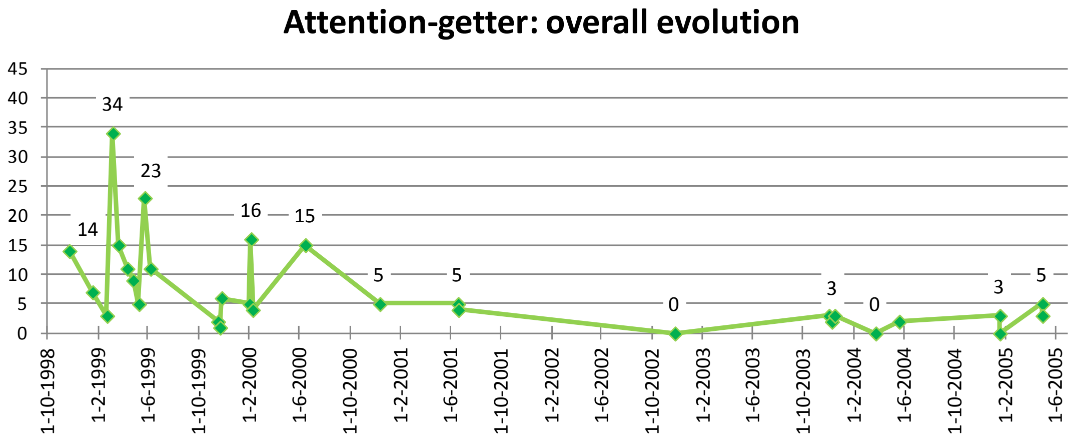

Figure 5.18. Overall evolution of attention-getting instances during the study.

It is also important to notice the similarity of trends between the topic-starter elements and the attention-getting elements. Data show that these two elements follow a very similar tendency. Moreover, the explicit comparison of these two elements should be considered to strengthen the statement that the operative adaptive elements are more frequently used at the beginning of the collection of data than at the end.

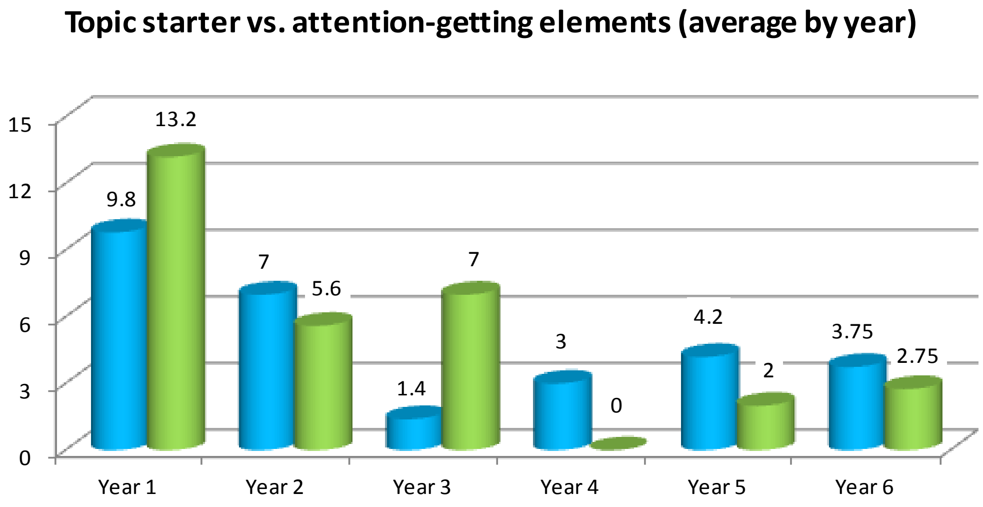

Figure 5.19. Comparison of topic starter and attention-getting elements by year.

5.2.1.3.3. HESITATION ELEMENTS

Hesitation elements are the third and last component of the operative adaptive management. They deal with the speaker's hesitation due to fear, caution, insecurity, etc. Let it be mentioned that these elements were very difficult to transcribe from the spoken *corpus*, so the amount of available data regarding hesitation elements is not as significant as it might have been had it been possible to identify and transcribe the occurrences more easily. Because of their scarcity, the data are not displayed year by year, but total instances are shown.

In spite of this shortage of data (which I accept as a limitation of the study,) if we look at figures 5.20 and 5.21 below, a similar pattern to the ones found in the cases of topic-starter and attention-getting elements seems to emerge (that is, a higher frequency in the first years and a later decline with the pass of time).

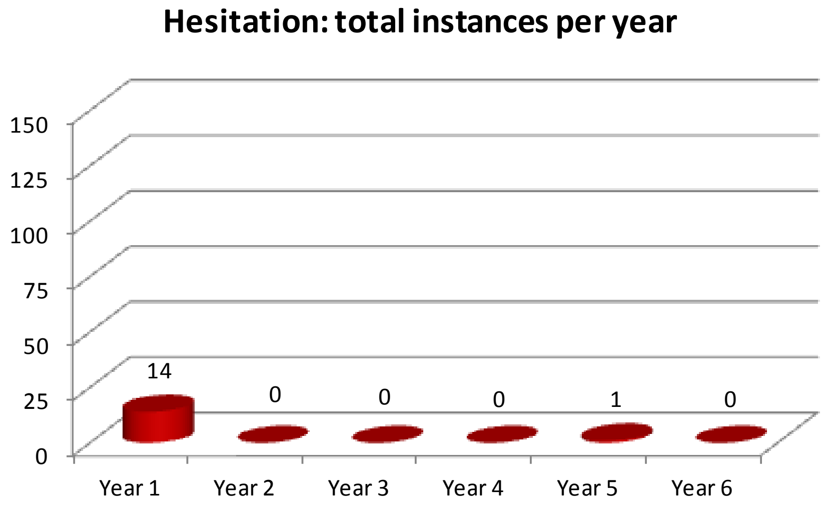

Figure 5.20. Total instances of hesitation elements per year.

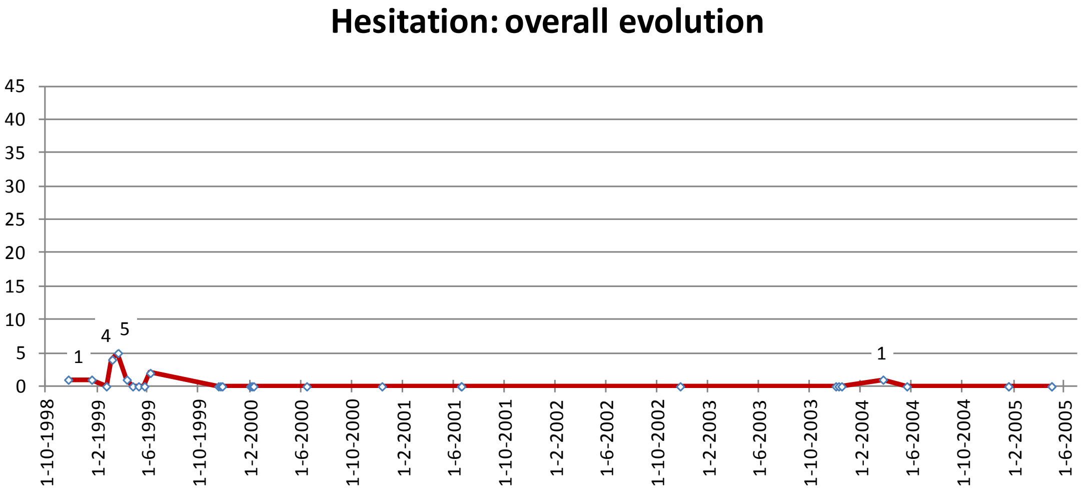

Figure 5.21. Overall evolution of hesitation instances during the study.

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A clear conclusion that can be deduced when looking at the three elements of the operative adaptive management as a whole is that year 1 is a very rich year for all these three elements (topic starter, attention-getting and hesitation). After that year, the operative adaptive management starts having a less prominent role.

Once the operative adaptive management elements have been displayed and analyzed in detail, the second part of the adaptive management, i.e. the involvement adaptive management, is detailed next. As the literature on the topic explains, the involvement adaptive management implies that the message uttered by the speaker has a certain cognitive burden in it.

5.2.1.3.4. RHETORICAL ELEMENTS

The involvement adaptive management is subdivided into two elements; rhetorical and overt. The main characteristic of the rhetorical elements is that they do not require a response from the listener when the speaker tries to verify correct understanding of the message conveyed.

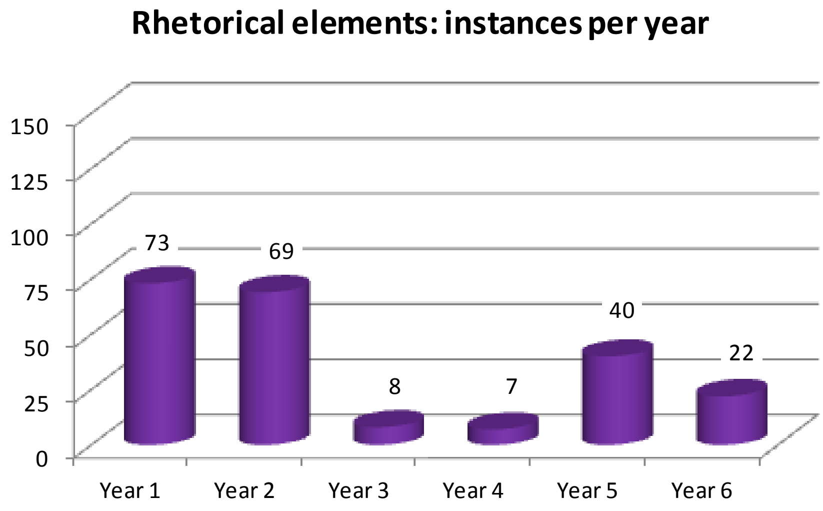


Figure 5.22. Total instances of rhetorical elements per year.

The total 219 instances of rhetorical elements recorded are distributed as shown above. The fact of having a very high and, therefore, frequent use of any element in the first year is now a recurrent trend. The rhetorical elements are no exception and, indeed, a very high number is found in the data for year 1 (73 instances) and year 2 (69 instances). However, it is essential to highlight two things. The first one is that rhetorical elements imply a cognitive aspect that was missing in the attitudinal components of the operative adaptive management.

Secondly, there is an increasing tendency in the later years which should not be overlooked. As opposed to the ever-decreasing tendency of the operative adaptive management elements, when analyzing the rhetorical element, the tendency is the opposite; the less operative, the more involvement. This means that cognition is now more present in the data. In fact, years 5 and 6 (which were not significant years for the operative elements) are important for the involvement elements.

As stated previously, involvement adaptive management strategies imply the development of the interlocutors' cognition, so these final results are to be considered as logical. Let us now look at the results gathered for each year.

Rhetorical elements: year 1

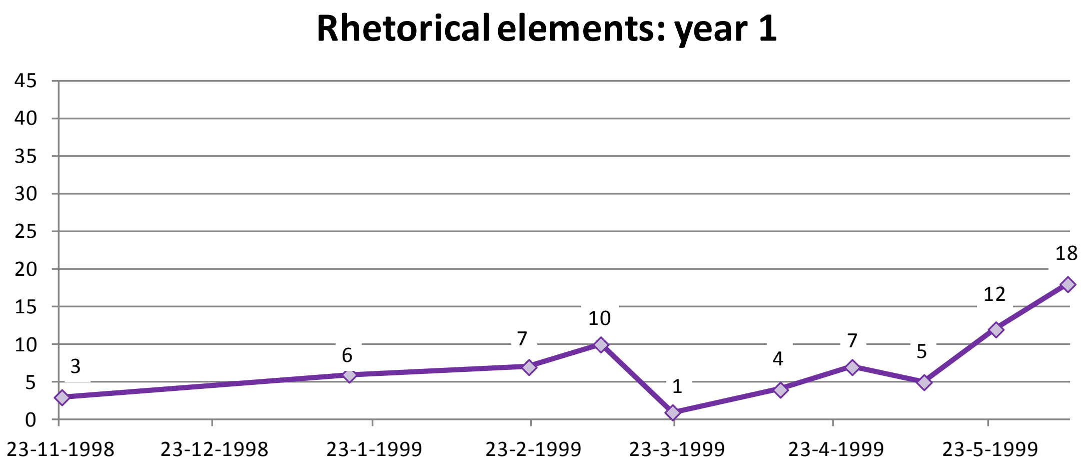


Figure 5.23. Evolution of rhetorical instances in year 1.

Year 1 is, again, a very fruitful year when analyzing the rhetorical element. It was, also, a key year, in terms of frequency, for all the operative adaptive management elements. When dealing with the rhetorical element, data show frequent verification of the teacher to make sure the students understand her message. The highest number of rhetorical elements is found in the last sessions of the first year with 18 instances uttered by the teacher.

Rhetorical elements: year 2

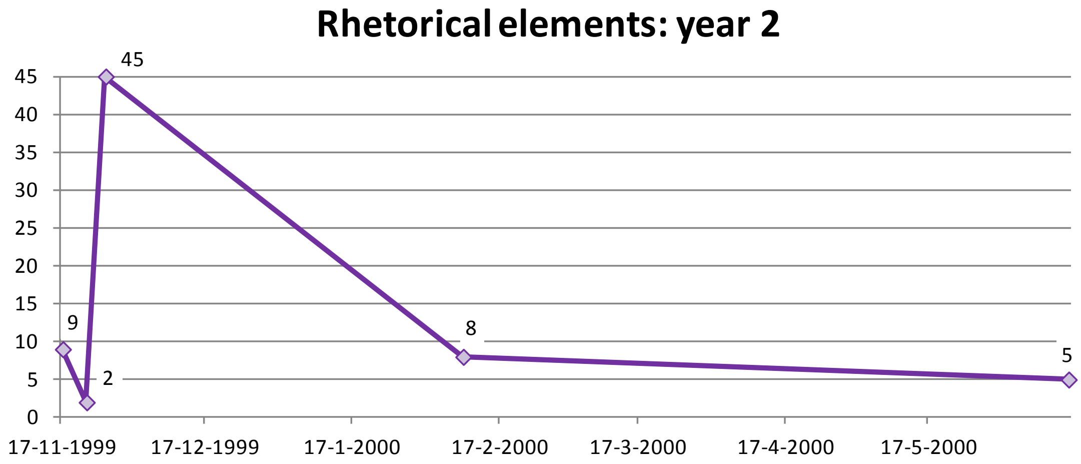


Figure 5.24. Evolution of rhetorical instances in year 2.

Year 2 is very significant for the rhetorical element as it is in this year where we find the peak use of this element for the whole research. It occurred in the third session of year 2, when the teacher tried to verify correct understanding on the side of the students by using a total of rhetorical elements.

The rest of the sessions, however, have a much lower number of occurrences, which is more logical if we take into account that the children's cognition is not yet developed enough for the use of rhetorical elements on a regular basis.

Rhetorical elements: years 3 and 4

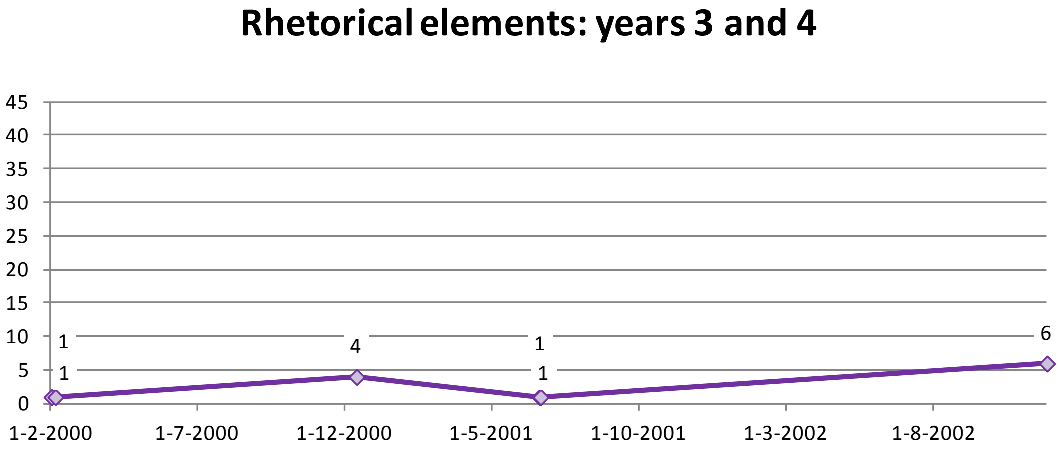


Figure 5.25. Evolution of rhetorical instances in years 3 and 4.

Years 3 and 4 are, again, combined into the same graph, as was previously done with the operative elements. These two years should be taken as transition years as they show a rather constant and stable distribution of few occurrences per session.

Rhetorical elements: year 5

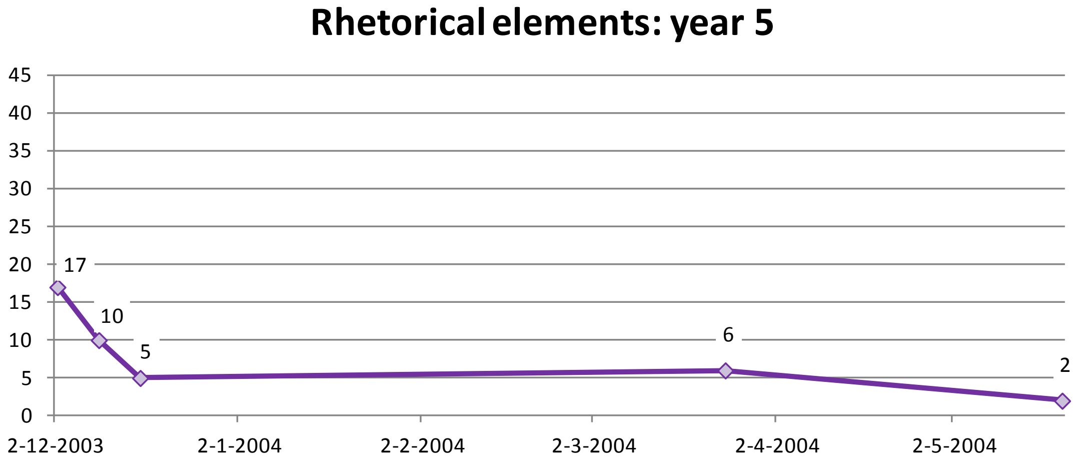
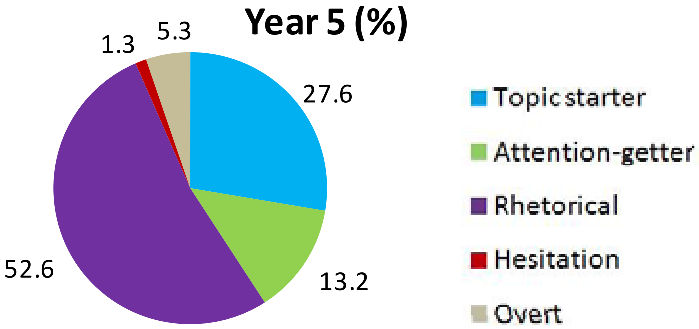


Figure 5.26. Evolution of rhetorical instances in year 5.

Interestingly enough, rhetorical elements in year 5 no longer portray a decreasing tendency as most of the operative adaptive management elements do this year. In this case, year 5 is relevant and shows a significant increase in the use of rhetorical elements. Moreover, year 5 is a turning point with regard to involvement elements, as it holds the highest percentage of use of all the five components of the adaptive management (topic starter, attention-getting, hesitation, rhetorical and overt). Below is a copy of figure 5.9, which shows the distribution of use of all the adaptive management elements in year 5:



The rhetorical component covers 52.6% of all the adaptive management elements. In other words, of all the interactions teacher-students analyzed for this fifth year of compilation of data, more than fifty percent is devoted to verifying correct understanding by means of rhetorical elements. Bearing in mind that this element carries *per se* a cognitive component that is missing in the operative elements, the data seem to depict the development of a higher cognitive stage in the children's minds. At this point, it is but an outline, but it will take a clearer shape once we have discussed the contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning.

Rhetorical elements: year 6

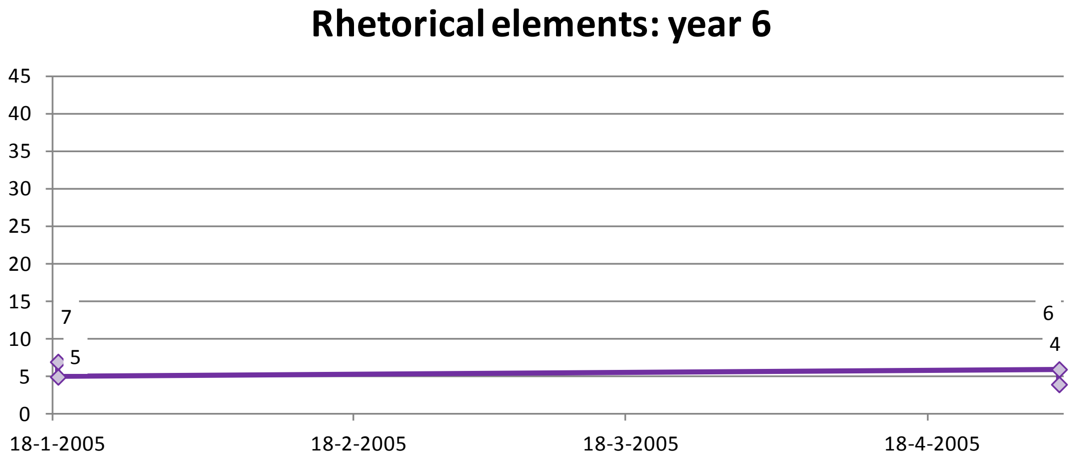


Figure 5.27. Evolution of rhetorical instances in year 6.

Year 6, shows that the rhetorical elements are still present in the data. Although they are less salient than in year 5, nonetheless, the total number of instances is 22 which is, in comparison to other elements already examined, quite high.

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To summarize, the rhetorical elements found in the data are very frequent in years 1 and 2 with a slight decrease in years 3 and 4. Particular interest has been devoted to year 5 where these elements were very present, not only in isolation, but, more interestingly, when compared and contrasted to the other five elements of the adaptive management. The cognitive nuance of this element has been noted and pointed for future reference in this chapter.

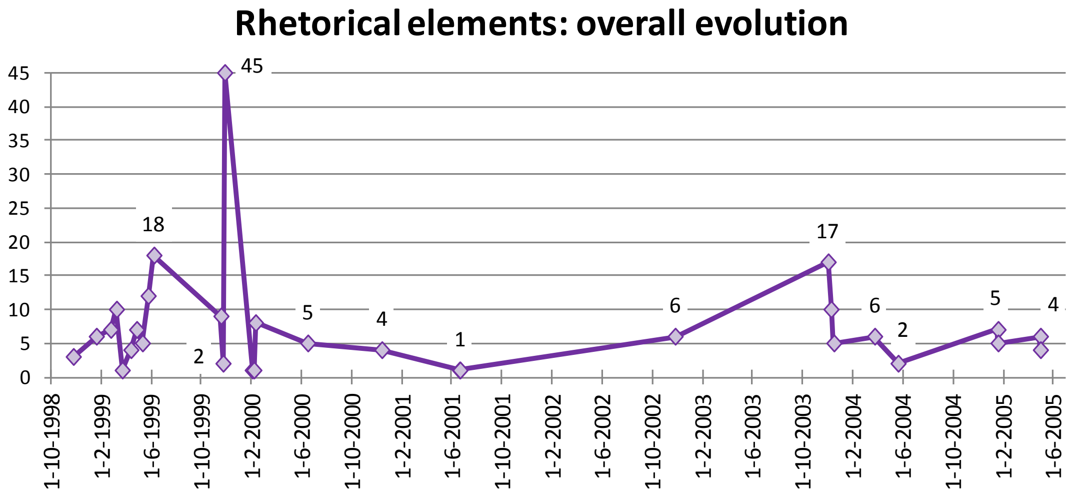


Figure 5.28. Overall evolution of rhetorical instances during the study.

5.2.1.3.5. OVERT ELEMENTS

Overt elements are associated to the second category of involvement adaptive management elements. Just like rhetorical elements, they also point out a cognitive burden in the metalinguistic verification made by the speaker. At this point it is important to mention that the literature on Adaptive Management clearly defines this element, which is always expressed with rather specific wordings, such as: “Do you know what I mean?” or “Is it clear what I mean?”

The amount of overt elements found is very scarce, probably due to the very limiting definition of this element, so they are not tackled year by year. Instead, a general overview is provided.

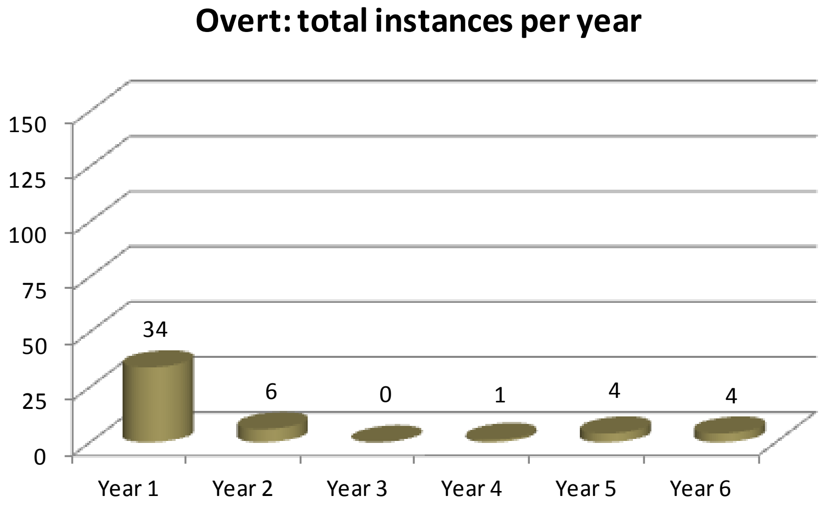


Figure 5.29. Total instances of overt elements per year.

As has been the case for the other elements already analyzed, year 1 comprises the maximum number of metalinguistic verification (34 instances). The rest of the years follow the normal decreasing pattern. The graph below shows the overall tendency of this last element of the involvement adaptive management.

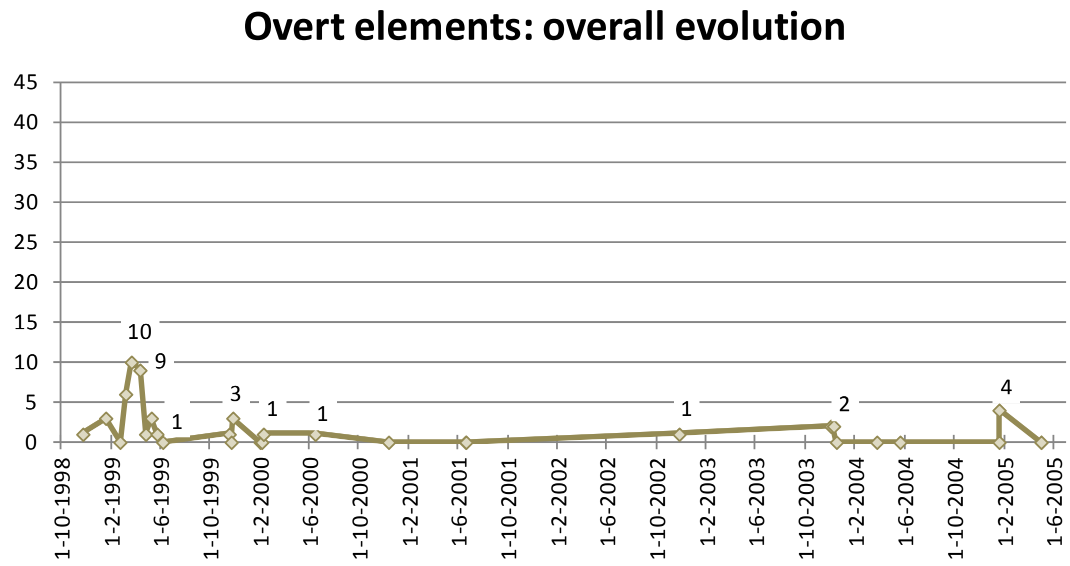


Figure 5.30. Overall evolution of overt instances during the study.

5.2.2 DMM contexts

In the previous section, the adaptive management elements were displayed and analyzed according to the available data of our *subcorpus*. In this section, the three contexts pertaining to the Dynamic Model of Meaning are subjected to a thorough analysis. Firstly, an average of the results found is portrayed; then, the total instances found in the data are shown; and finally, each element is analyzed year by year.

The three elements that comprise the Dynamic Model of Meaning are presented in order of cognitive development implied, from the lowest to the highest, that is:

- Linguistic context
- Situational context
- Private context

5.2.2.1. Global presentation of results per element

Data are first presented taking into account the average instances per year. The graph below shows that, across data, the private context is the most frequently-used by the subjects under study (51%), followed by the linguistic context (35%). The situational context, in turn, means 14% of all the occurrences of the DMM contexts recorded.

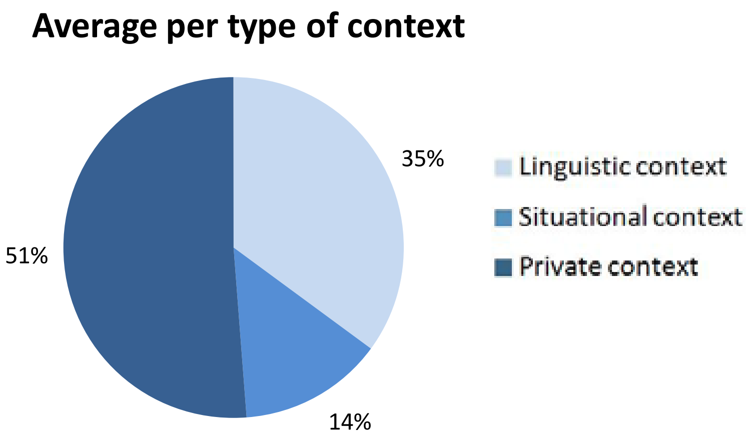


Figure 5.31. Average distribution of DMM contexts.

Although the percentages are quite self-explanatory, what is interesting is to see how the data progress and how the contexts vary in frequency and in complexity across the different years. For this reason a visual display of the data per year is shown below.

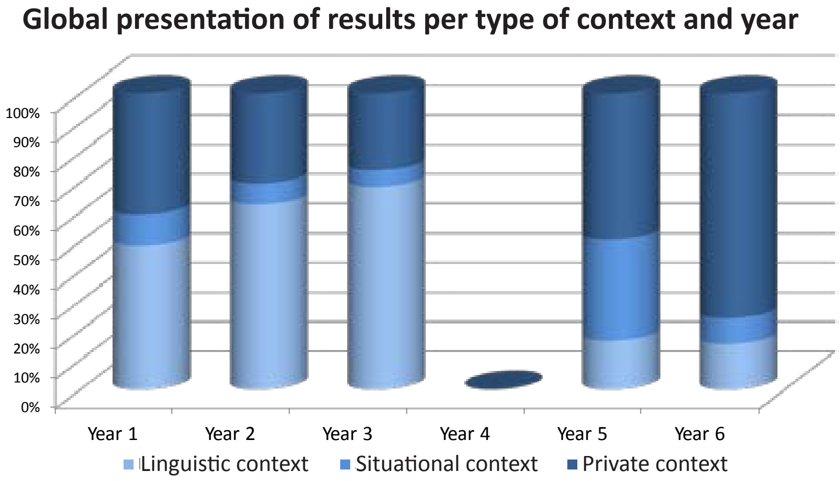
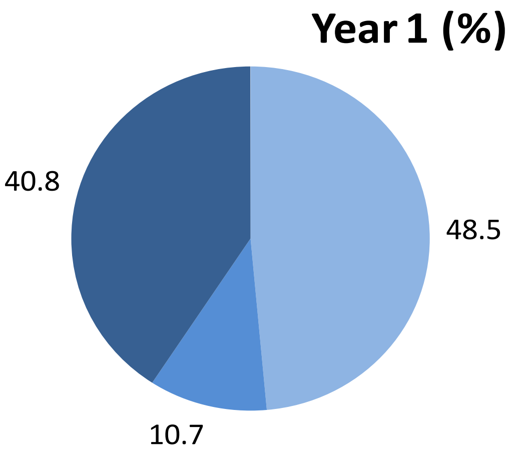


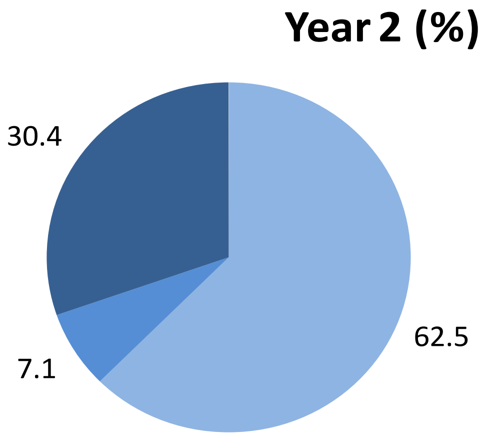
Figure 5.32. Global presentation of results per context type and year.

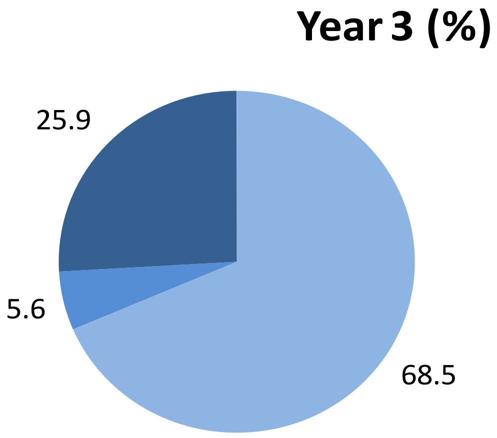
The general overview provided by this graph entails several key issues. To begin with, the linguistic context is very frequent in the first years but decreases in the last ones. The situational context is hardly ever used in the first four years, while clear prominence is found in years 5 and 6. The private context is one of the key findings of this study, particularly in years 5 and 6, when most of the tagged elements deal with the private context. A detailed discussion of the results follows in the next subsections.

5.2.2.2. Global presentation of results per year

Before delving into each year to explain in detail the tendencies found, it is enlightening to see the average percentages of each year in detail.[12]







No available data for year 4

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[12] There is no available data for year 4 for any of the three contexts, i.e. linguistic, situational and private

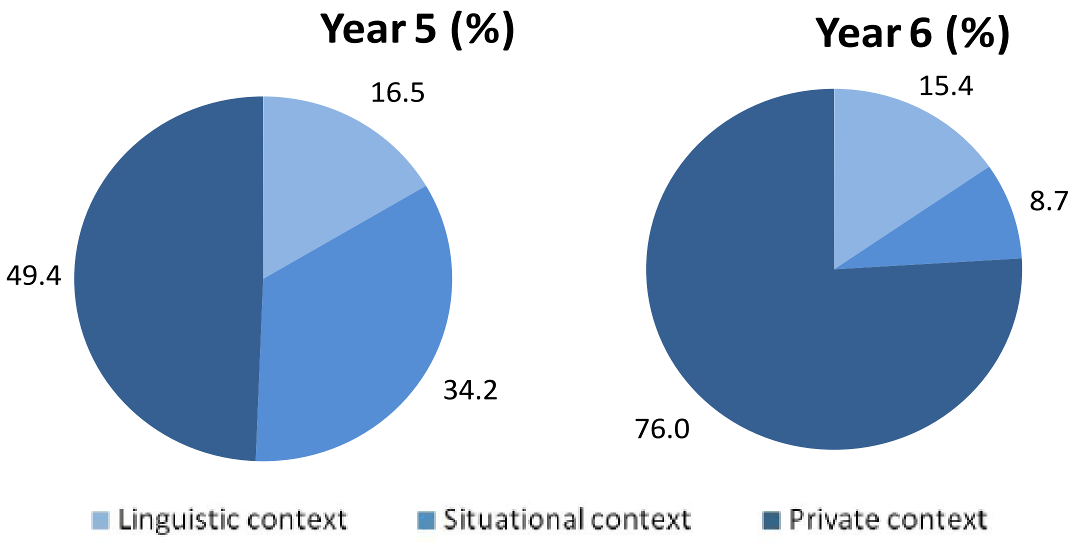

Figure 5.33. Distribution of the different types of contexts by year.

It is interesting to see that the linguistic context has its peak in year 3 (with 68.5% of all the instances of DMM contexts for that year) and then decreases to only 15.4% in year 6. By contrast, in those same years, the private context goes from 25.9% in year 3 to 76% in year 6. The difference found is very prominent and is discussed in more detail later on in this section.

5.2.2.3. Results per element

5.2.2.3.1. Linguistic context

According to the Dynamic Model of Meaning, the linguistic context pertains to the lexical level of what is being uttered or written by the interlocutors. In other words, it is the linguistic tool used by the speaker to convey the message. What is measured in our study is the frequency with which the interaction between the teacher and the children seems (or is about to) fail due to problems at the linguistic context level.

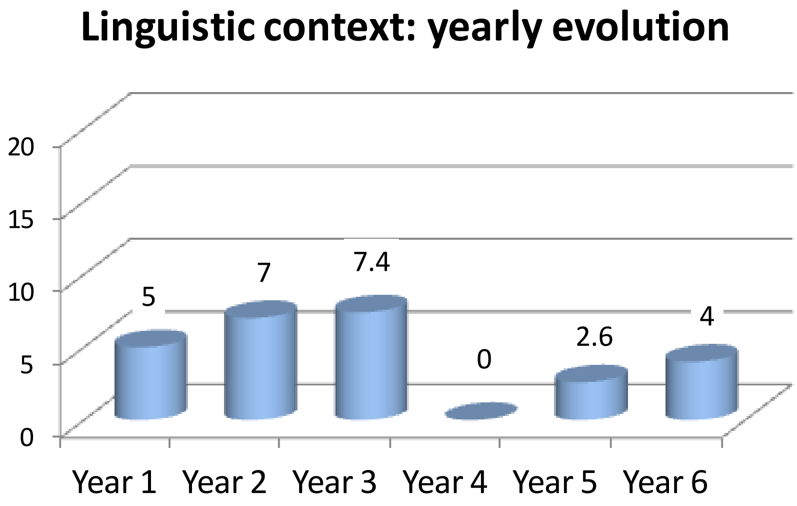

Figure 5.34. Average instances of linguistic context per year.

Figure 5.34 above depicts the evolution of the average occurrences of linguistic context problems per year. The peak is found in years 2 and 3, but it decreases afterwards.

Figure 5.35 below provides a different point of view to the analysis of this context.

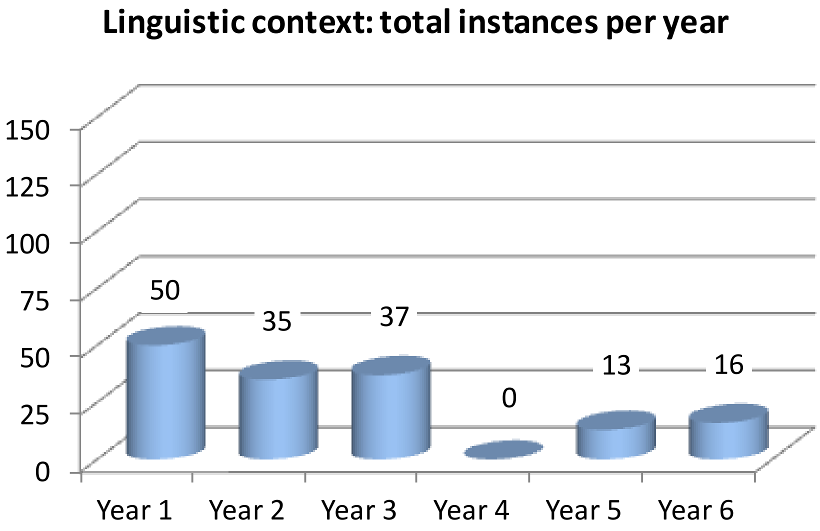

Figure 5.35. Total instances of linguistic context per year.

It is important to highlight that, so far, only the averages were shown in graphs. When using averages, years 2 and 3 were the most significant ones in terms of frequency of the linguistic context, but a look at the total occurrences reveals a slightly different picture, particularly for year 1. It is true that the total number of sessions analyzed in year 1 is much higher than in the rest of the years, and, as already explained, this is why I took the decision of showing average numbers for graphs depicting the overall evolution for each context. Bearing this in mind, it is important to notice the results for linguistic context elements in years 1, 2 and 3, which add to 132 out of the 151 found in the whole *subcorpus*).

Linguistic context: year 1

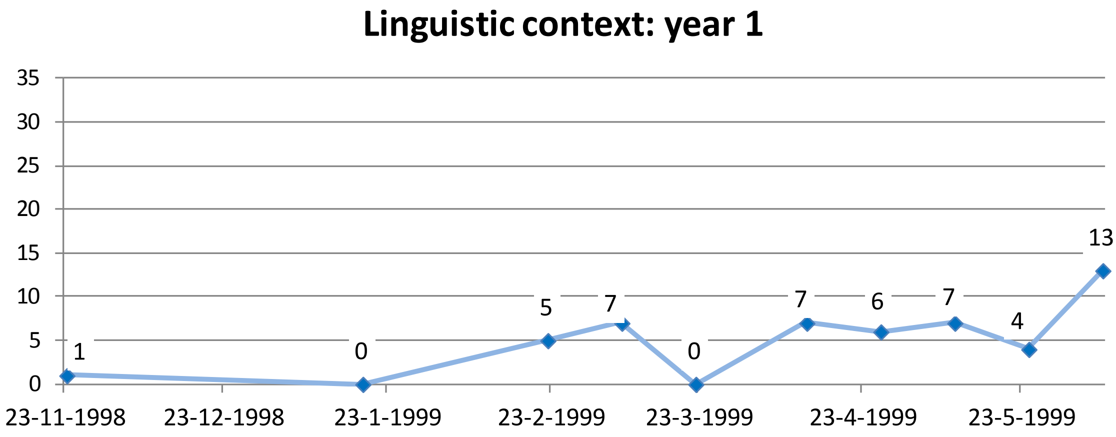

Figure 5.36. Evolution of linguistic context instances in year 1.

As mentioned earlier, the total number of instances of lingusitic contexts elements found in year 1 is 50. The peak is reached in the last session of the first year with 13 instances found. As year 2 continues, we will see that this remains constant.

Linguistic context: year 2

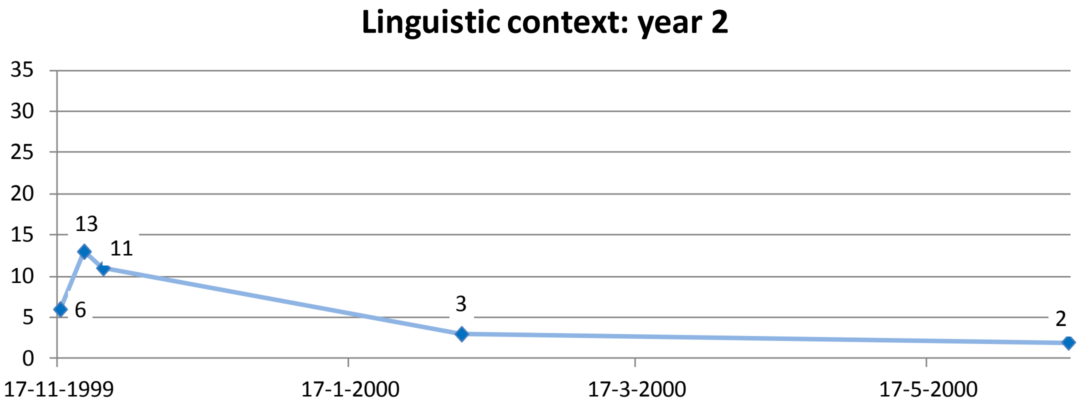

Figure 5.37. Evolution of linguistic context instances in year 2.

The first three sessions of year 2 depict the increasing tendency that was manifested at the end of year 1. Of all the 35 instances found in year 2, the first three sessions add to 30 cases (in other words, 85.7% of the total examples found). On the same wavelength, the last two sessions clearly mark a less frequent use of this element. At this point, it should be stated that this decrease is not significant as it will increase again in year 3.

Linguistic context: year 3

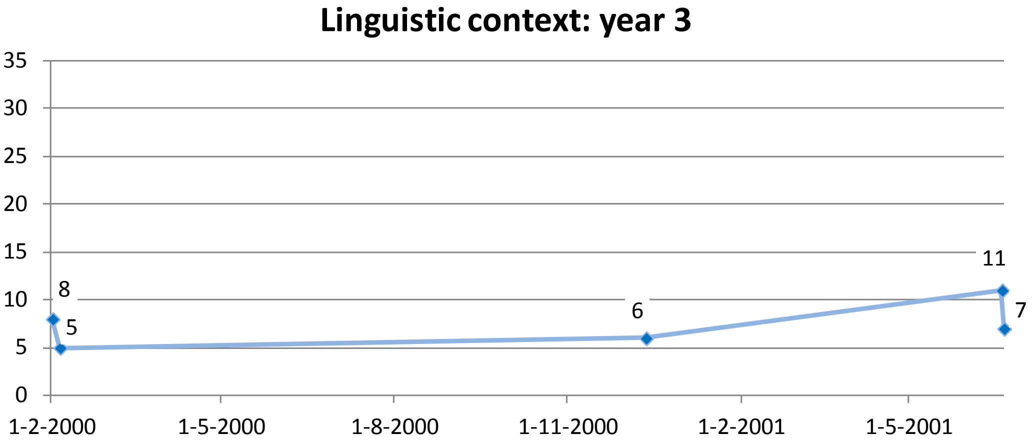

Figure 5.38. Evolution of linguistic context instances in year 3.

Year 3 is a rather a constant year. In my viewpoint, the first three years could be analyzed together as they portray a constant, increasing trend in the data. There has been a slight increase in the total number of instances (from 35 in year 2, to 37 in year 3), but I do not consider this as really noteworthy. What is of importance here is that the tendency is going to undergo important changes in the years to come.

Linguistic context: year 5

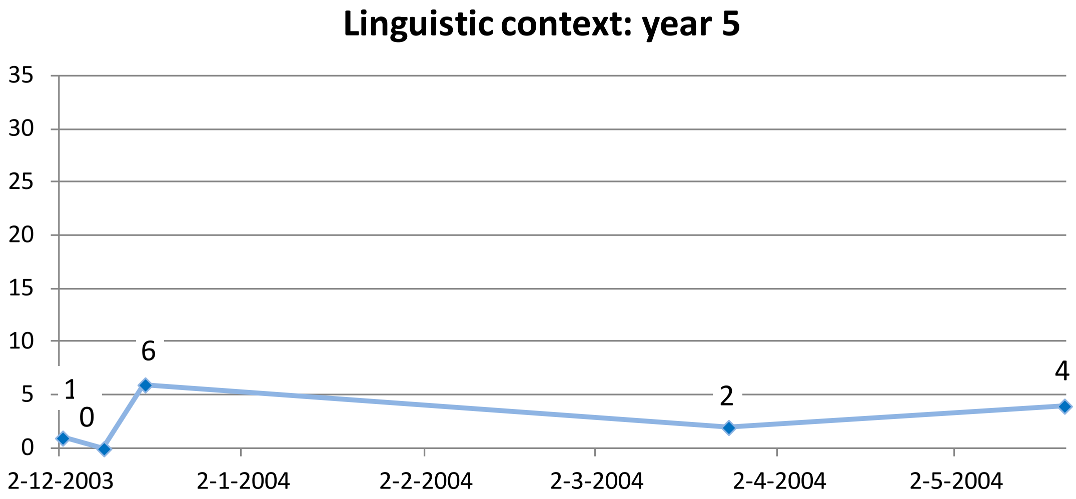

Figure 5.39. Evolution of linguistic context instances in year 5.

Years 1, 2 and 3 can be analyzed together, as they present a continuity. Years 5 and 6 (let us remember that not enough data were gathered for year 4) can also be analyzed together, but the pattern they display is quite different from the trend shown so far by years 1, 2 and 3. Year 5, for example, shows only 13 instances. Bearing in mind the 50 instances of year 1, there seems to be a clear correlation between the decrease of the linguistic context and the increase of the other two contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning, which are presented afterwards: the more the lingusitic context decreases, the more the number of private and situational context instances increases.

Linguistic context: year 6

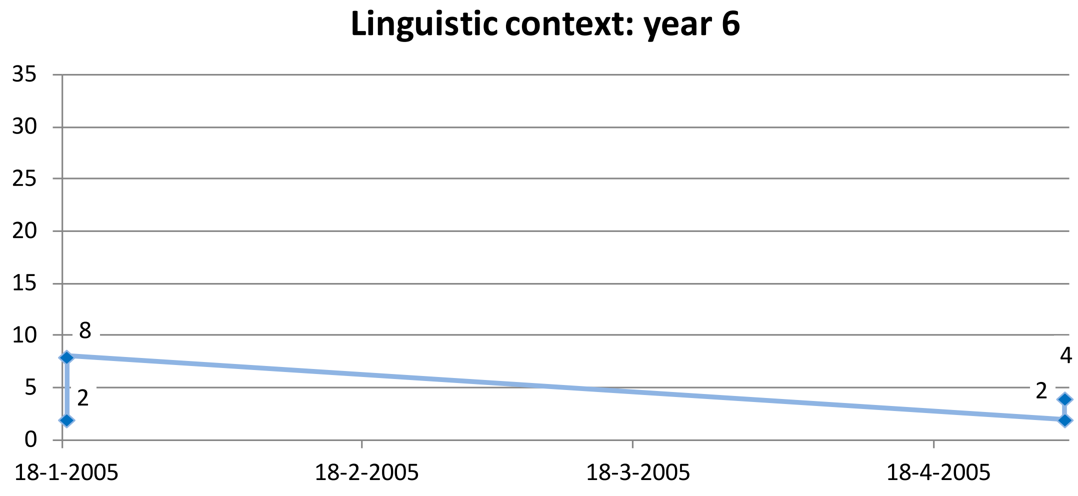

Figure 5.40. Evolution of linguistic context instances in year 6.

The final year confirms that the lingusitic context, although present throughout the data, has no primary role any more. The comparison of the data for the three contexts in years 5 and 6 is key to draw some of the conclusions for this study.

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Summarizing, the linguistic context has to be present, and indeed is, across the data, as it deals with how the speaker communicates the message and the possible problems associated with it. What is clear is that, although problems at the linguistic context level are present, it makes sense that they have a decreasing tendency as the children increase their level of fluency in the L2. This is supported by the data as shown in the graph below.

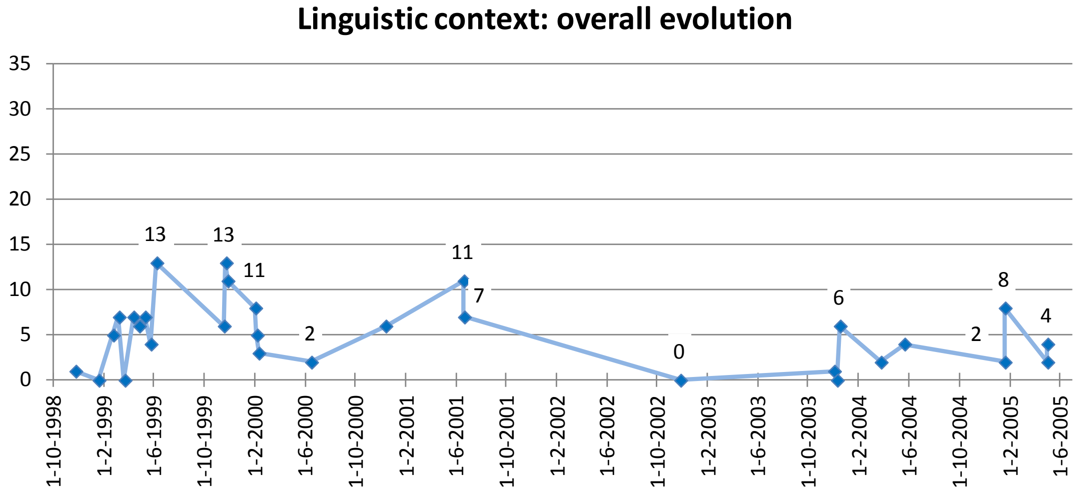

Figure 5.41. Overall evolution of linguistic context instances during the study.

5.2.2.3.2. SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

The situational context refers to the situation in which the message is uttered. Having a different situation or a different situational context may vary the meaning of the message. For this particular study, there is a very restricted situational context, i.e. teacher-student interaction in the classroom. In this context, what is of interest for my study are the problems that may arise when trying to succeed in the tasks and activities performed by the children and the teacher in this particular context.

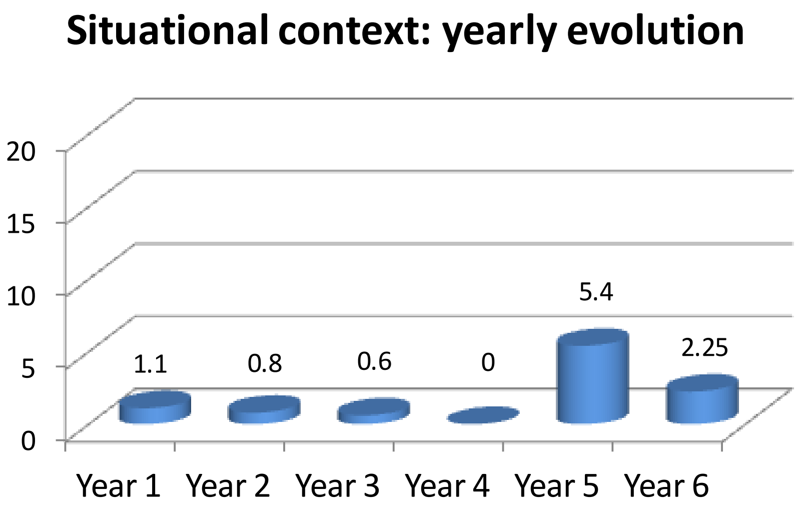

Figure 5.42. Average instances of situational context per year.

As seen in the previous subsection, linguistic-context problems presented an increasing pattern in he first three years and decreased in the latter two. Next, the results for situational context strategies are analyzed, first on a global basis and then on a year-by-year basis.

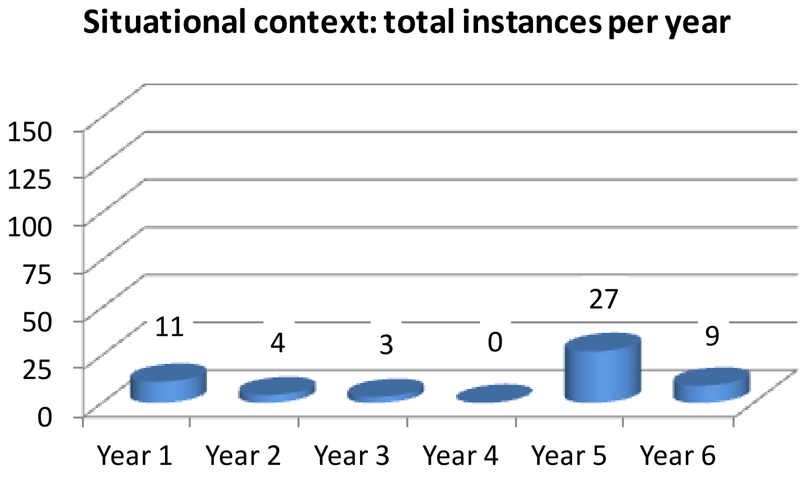

Figure 5.43. Total instances of situational context per year.

The fact that the linguistic context and the situational context have opposite trends is not a fortuitous result. In the case of the situational context, year 5 comprises by itself 50% of all the situational context cases (27 out of 54). As will be remembered, year 5 was also a key year for linguistic context strategies. A more detailed analysis of the data follows.

Situational context: year 1

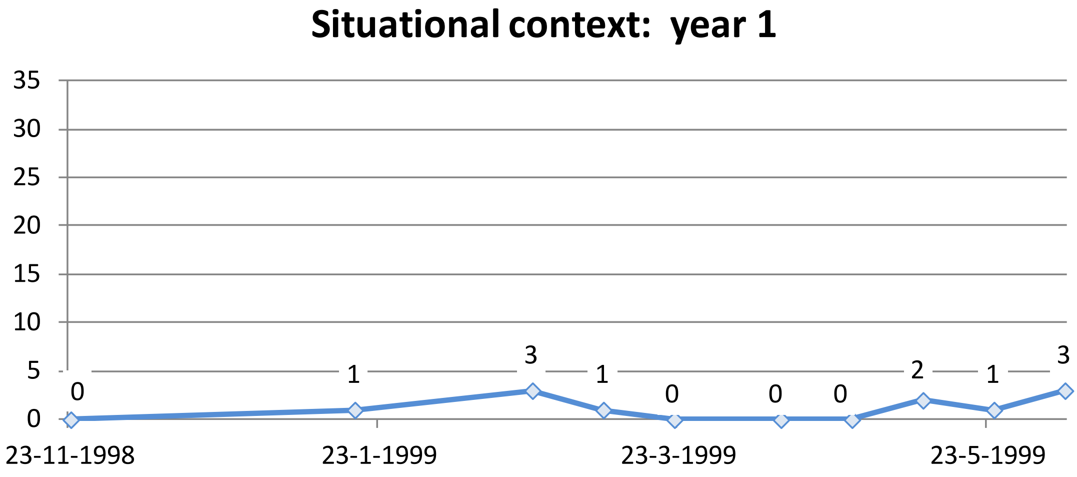

Figure 5.44. Evolution of situational context instances in year 1.

An overall perspective of year 1 shows that, although there are 11 instances tagged in our *subcorpus*, they are quite spread across the sessions and, as a consequence, no particular session stands out from the others.

From my point of view, the fact that there are not so many instances of situational context is important, as it may be indicating that the interlocutors are paying special attention to other contexts (i.e. the linguistic one) instead of to the situational one. In my opinion, the fact that in the first years we find either too few or too many instances of the different elements analyzed is particularly valuable for the purposes of the study, as either way data seem to be pointing at something important.

Situational context: year 2

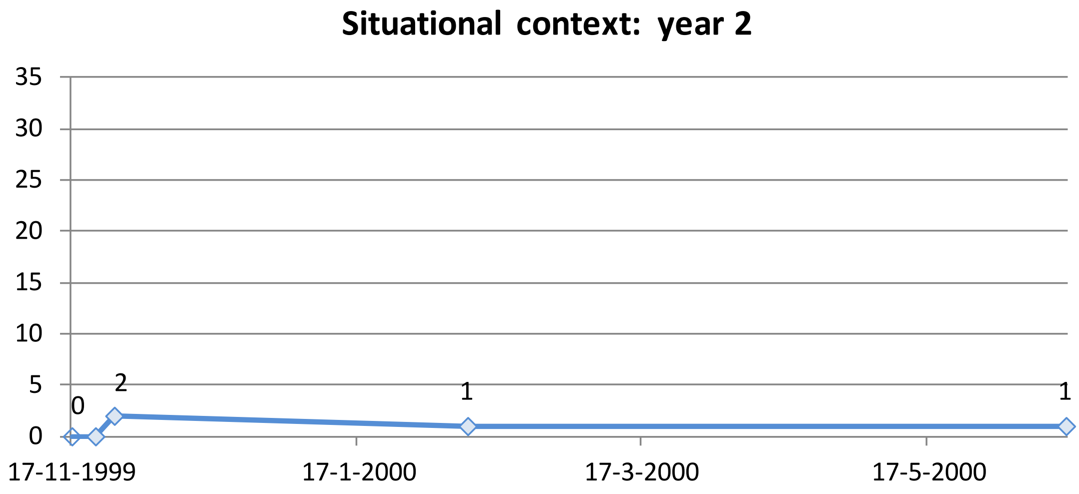

Figure 5.45. Evolution of situational context instances in year 2.

Year 2 presents only 4 instances of situational context elements, and one session with no cases at all. In other words, in a whole academic year, interlocutors only found problems in relation to the situational context in four occasions. I can firmly state that this is directly linked to the cognitive immaturity of the individuals and the fact that they were involved in solving problems at the linguistic level.

Situational context: year 3

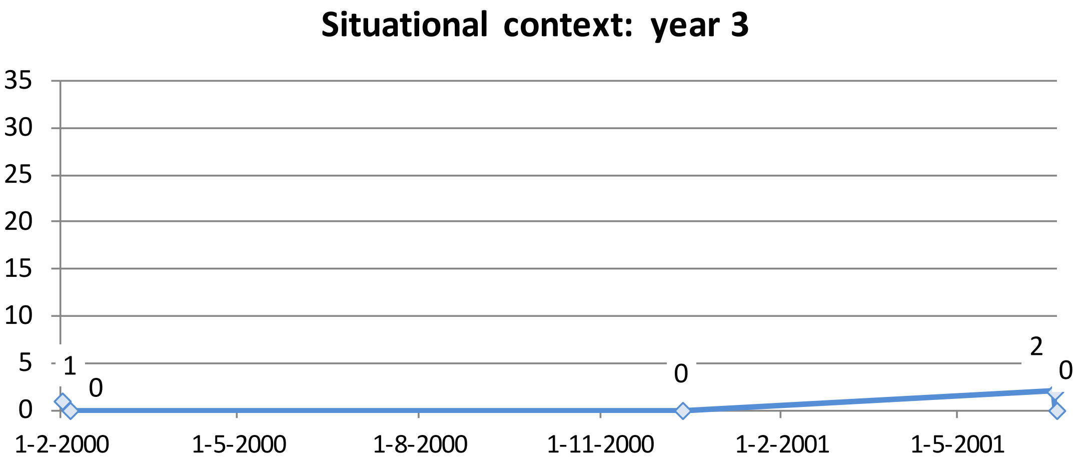

Figure 5.46. Evolution of situational context instances in year 3.

What has just been stated for year 2 can also be applied to year 3. Indeed, the decreasing tendency continues; just 3 occurrences distributed through the year. This year should be taken as a transition year in which subjects are still encountering and trying to solve problems at the lexical level.

Situational context: year 5

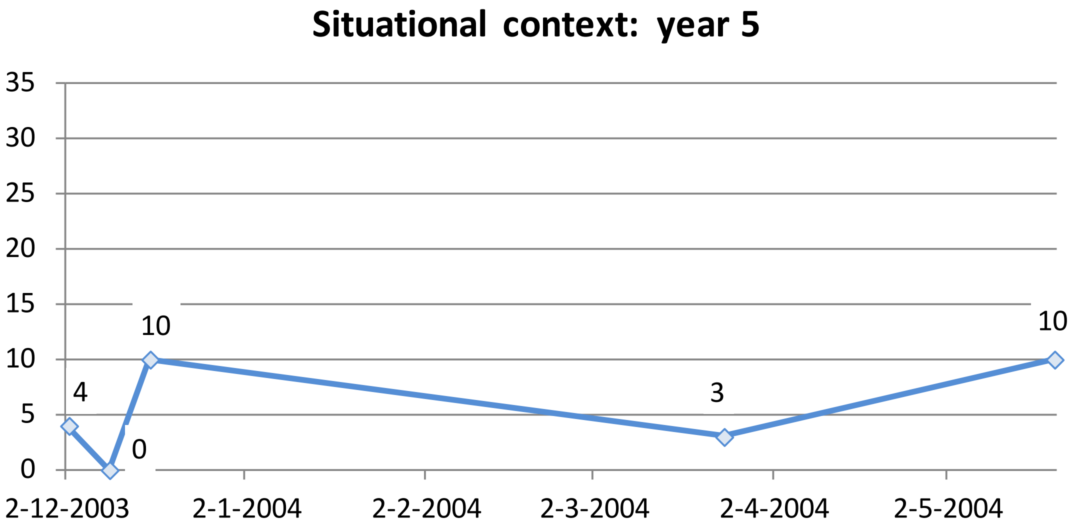

Figure 5.47. Evolution of situational context instances in year 5.

From the situational context perspective, year 5 is the most interesting year for several reasons. Firstly, it changes the decreasing tendency of the first three years. Secondly, the number of instances increases in a very significant way (27 instances). Thirdly, it is the year in which data reaches its highest number of situational context elements, not only in one session, but in two sessions (10 instances each in both the third and the fifth sessions).

This highlights a clear change in the problems tackled by the interlocutors. The lexical context, although still present, yields its primary role to the situational context. This pinpoints a slightly higher cognitive stage, as will be fully confirmed when dealing with the private context.

Situational context: year 6

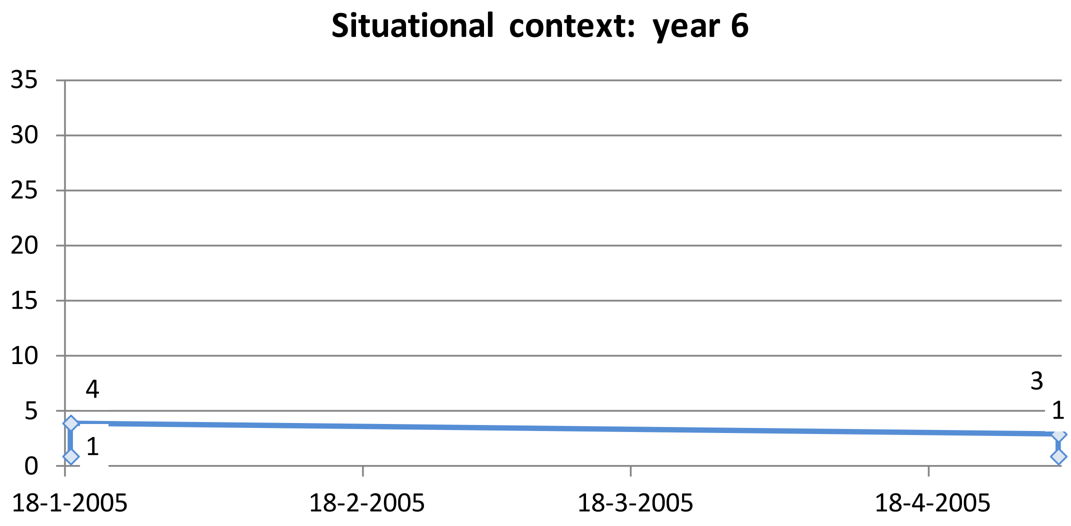

Figure 5.48. Evolution of situational context instances in year 6.

This final year does not continue with the tendency that started in year 5. The problems of the interlocutors do not seem to be focused on either the situational level or the linguistic level any more. At this point, it is important to remember that year 6 was not a siginificant year for the linguistic context element either. This seems to indicate that the problems encountered by the interlocutors are based elsewhere, and, as the data in the following pages demonstrate, this "elsewhere" is the private context.

* * * * * * * * * *

Once again, year 5 stands out from the rest of the years in the overall evolution of an element (see figure 5.48 below). From the situational context perspective, this year is aligned, firstly, with the decreasing trend of the linguistic context, and, secondly, with the increase of rhetorical elements of the involvement adaptive management. The fact that, in this year, two elements with a cognitive burden are particularly prominent makes it necessary to pay special attention to the same year as a whole and with respect to the last DMM context (i.e. private context), which is analyzed below.

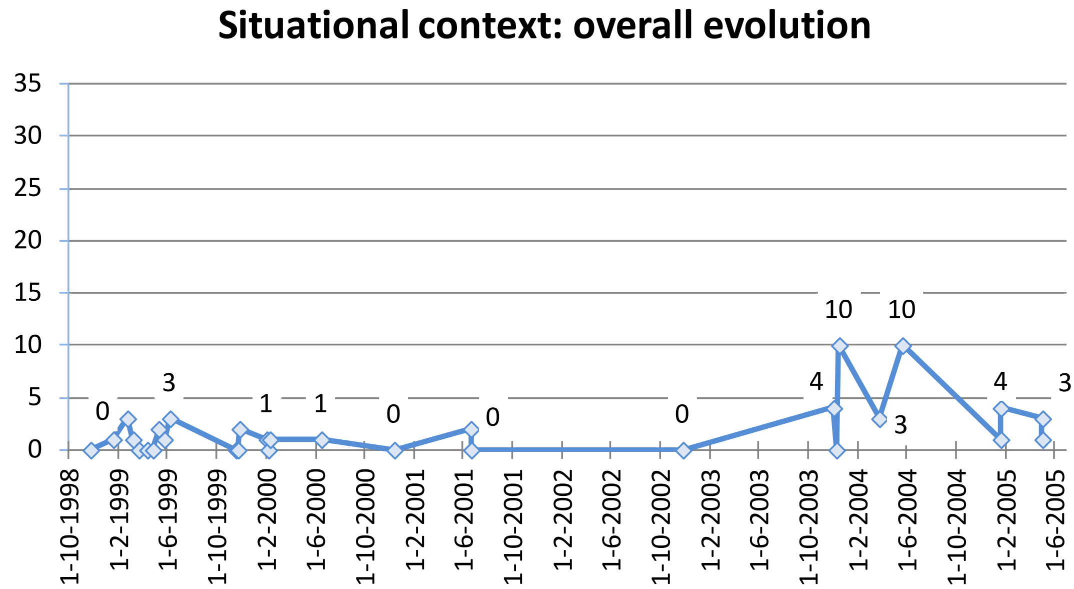

Figure 5.49. Overall evolution of situational context instances during the study.

5.2.2.3.3. PRIVATE CONTEXT

The term "private context" refers to the prior knowledge that is in the speakers' minds. For communication to take place effectively, this knowledge has to be shared by the interlocutors. If it is not shared, problems will arise. As with the situational context, problems at the private context level also imply a higher cognitive stage in the minds of the participants. What is measured, in this case, is the number of problems encountered by the teacher and the children at the private context level.

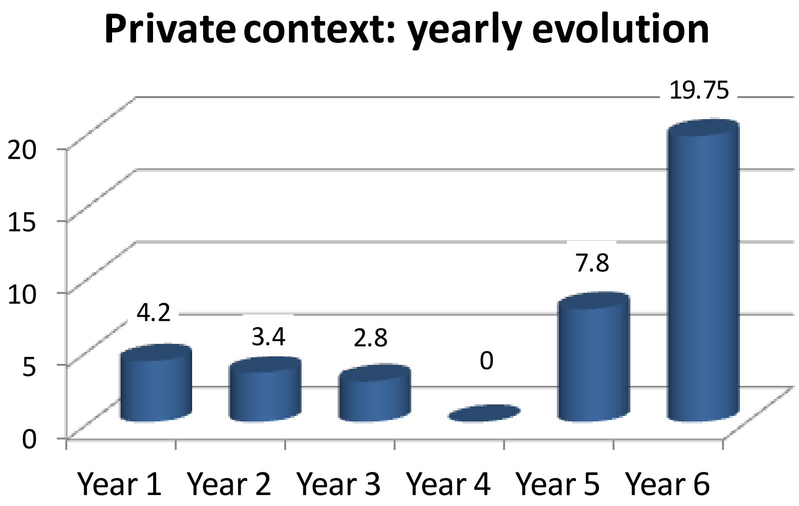

Figure 5.50. Average instances of private context per year.

In terms of averages per year, the private context trend is undoubtedly significant, especially in years 5 and 6. My intuition was that data would not show many instances of private context elements in the first year of compilation of data, but it is clear that there are cases of private context elements in all the first three years. Probably, numbers will be even more explicit when looking at the total instances.

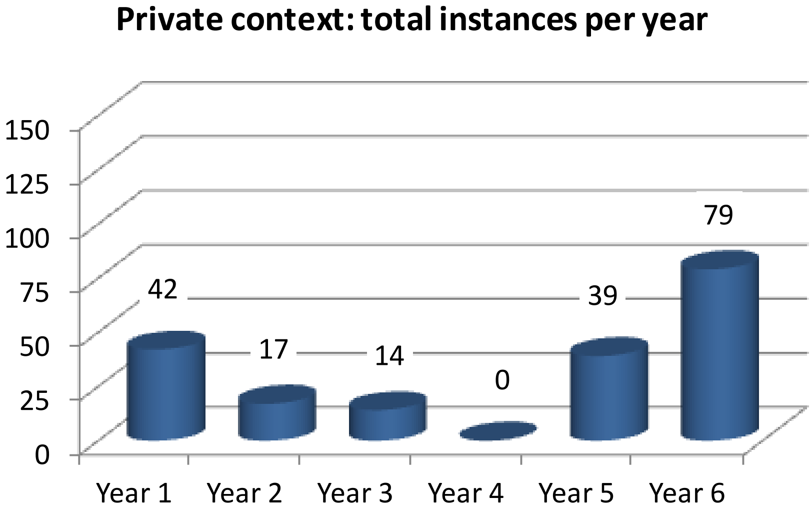

Figure 5.51. Total instances of private context per year.

Data show 191 instances of private context elements across data. This is the highest number found in all the elements analyzed in the data for the three contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning:

- Total linguistic context elements: 151
- Total situational context elements: 54
- Total private context elements: 191

The high number of cases and the specific distribution across years 5 and 6 are the main centre of attention in the detailed year-by-year analysis.

Private context: year 1

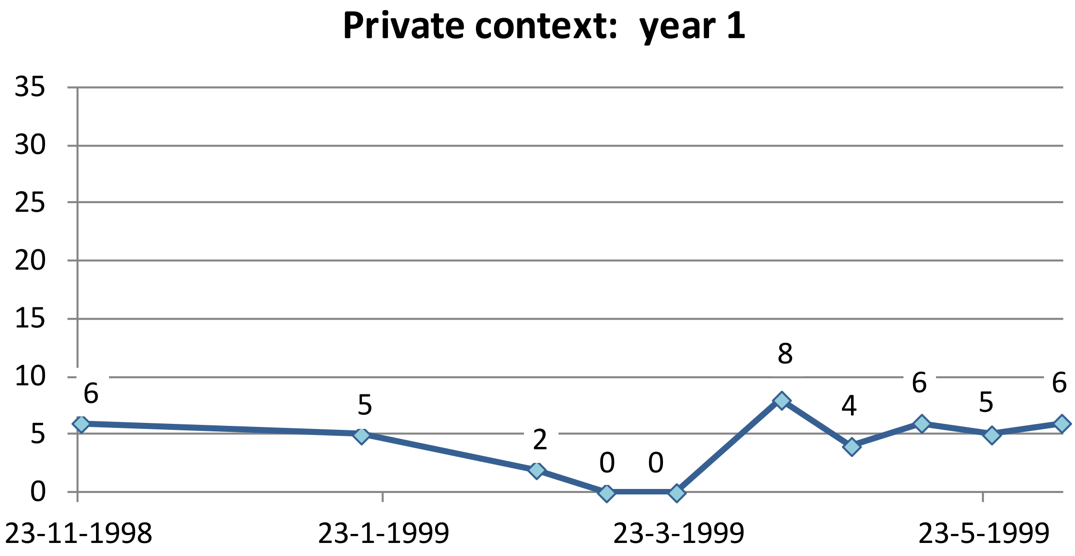

Figure 5.52. Evolution of private context instances in year 1.

Problems between interlocutors at the private context level imply a certain cognitive development, so they were not expected to occur in the first years of compliation of data. However, figure 5.51 above shows no less than 42 instances of these problems when children were but 5 years old. These unexpected results made me realize that the data relating to the private context level were going to be significant and relevant for the findings of the research.

Private context: year 2

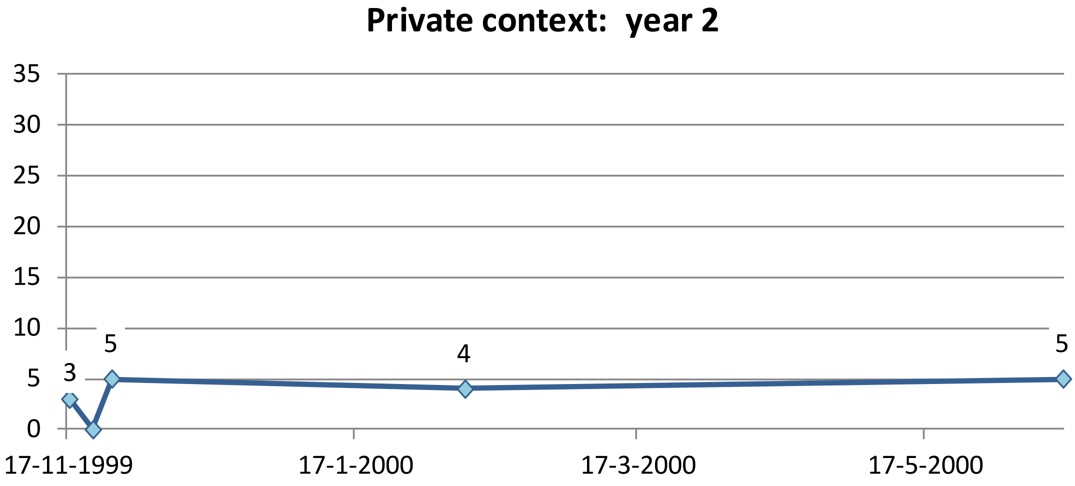

Figure 5.53. Evolution of private context instances in year 2.

As depicted in figure 5.52 above, problems at the private context level also occur in year 2. In fact, there is a total of 17 instances in the data corresponding to this year. However, data decrease slightly with respect to the data obtained for the previous year, as expected by the author. In the first years, problems at the linguistic context level were expected to be clearly predominant, and less problems at the situational and private context levels had been foreseen. Therefore, the data obtained for year 2 falls under the predictable results, given the subjects' characteristics and the situation in which the conversations recorded take place.

Private context: year 3

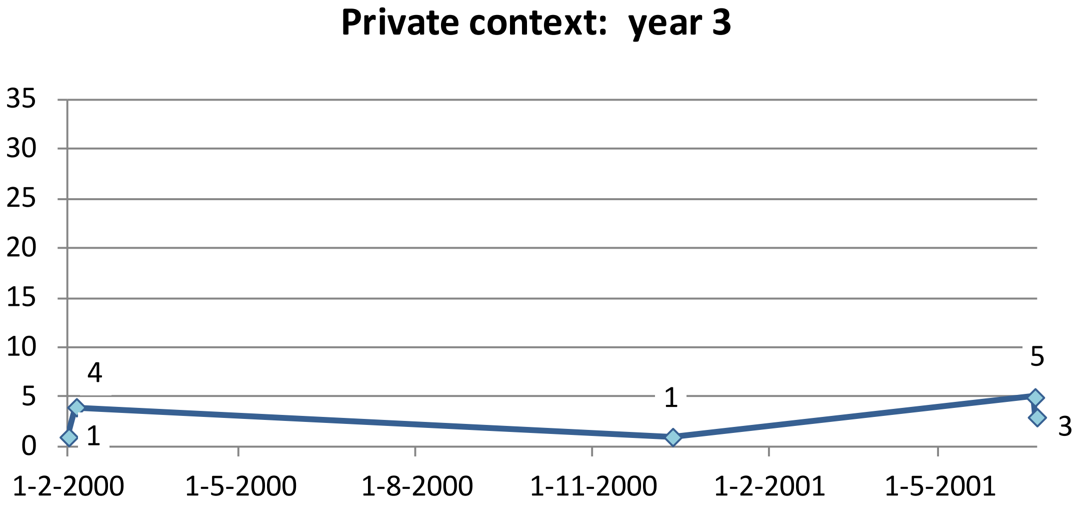

Figure 5.54. Evolution of private context instances in year 3.

Year 3 continues the trend of year 2, with a total of 14 instances, as opposed to the 17 occurrences registered the previous year. The author considers this trend normal and foreseeable, taking into account the evolution of the other two contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning. Given that the number of situational context elements for years 2 and 3 was also low, it seems sensible to expect a similar tendency in the private context elements.

Private context: year 5

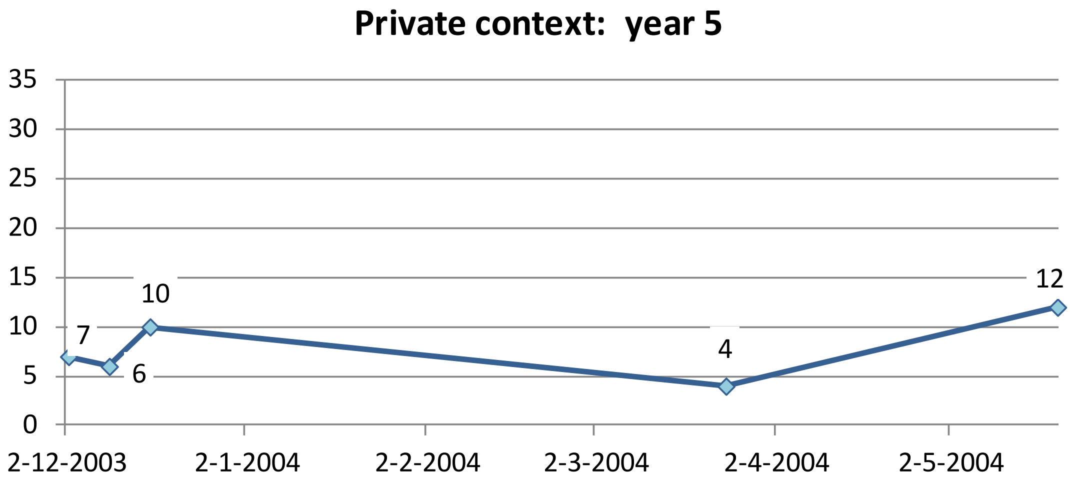

Figure 5.55. Evolution of private context instances in year 5.

Year 5 is a very significant year, not only with regard to the private context elements, but also in the comparision with the other two elements of the Dynamic Model of Meaning (i.e the linguistic and the situational contexts).

In terms of the private context elements, there are 39 instances found in the data. In fact, there has been a significant increase with respect to the two previous years. This indicates that the problems are encountered at the cognitive level of the interlocutors, which signals a higher stage in their development. This is even more salient when compared to the other two contexts. In year 5, there is a decrease of linguistic context problems and an increase of situational and private context problems. Therefore, the subjects under study are in the process of changing from purely linguistic difficulties to a higher cognitive stage.

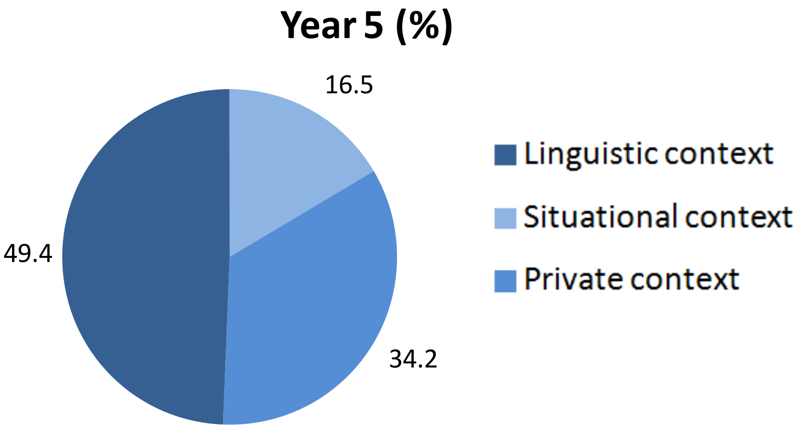

Figure 5.56. Distribution of the different types of context in year 5.

In year 5, the problems at the linguistic level represent only 16.5% of the total number of DMM context instances, while the other two contexts combined make up the remaining 83.6%. Previously, data showed, as expected, linguistic problems due to the subjects' low proficiency in the L2; now, data show fewer problems at the linguistic level, which points out a higher proficiency in the L2. In addition to this, data also show an increase in the problems at the private and situational context level (i.e. those contexts with higher cognitive requirements), an indication of the children's cognitive development.

Private context: year 6

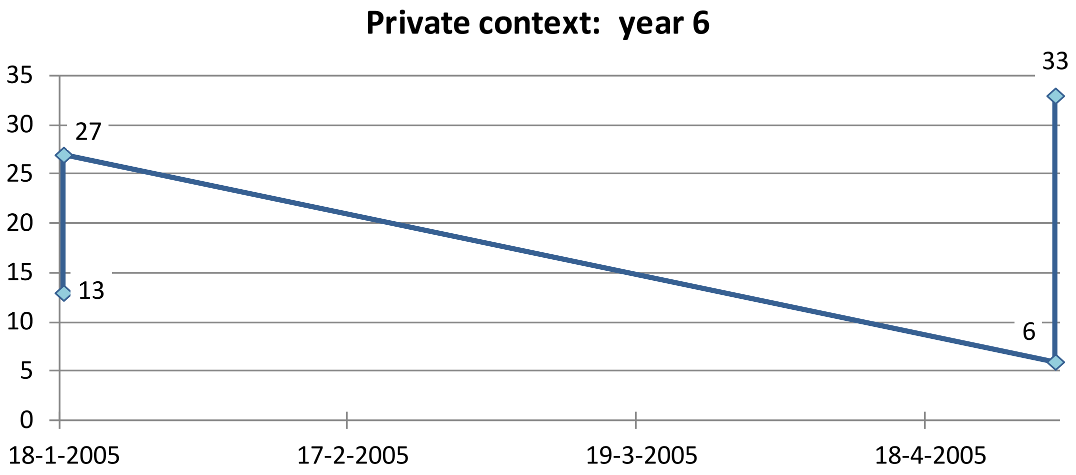

Figure 5.57. Evolution of private context instances in year 6.

Bearing in mind the results obtained for the three contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning, year 5 is the most interesting year for several reasons. Nonetheless, looking solely at the results regarding the private context level, it is year 6 that most calls attention, with a total of 79 instances in only four sessions. It therefore seems safe to say that, in the light of the results, the cognitive maturity of the children seems to have reached its peak (for the years under study, that is) in the last year.

* * * * * * * * * *

To summarize, data attest that problems at the private context level are found even in the early years. This was an unexpected result and it did not have continuity in years 2 and 3. On the contrary, during these years data show a decreasing tendency. What is relevant in year 5 is the comparison of the data obtained in relation to the private context and the data pertaining to the other two contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning, as it shows the synergy of the private and the situational context level (both of which imply a certain cognitive development). Year 6 is of particular interest from the point of view of the private context level. It is clear that data corroborate the author›s intuition that more private context elements would be found in the later years due to the higher cognitive of the subjects.

Figure 5.58 below presents a visual display of such evolution.

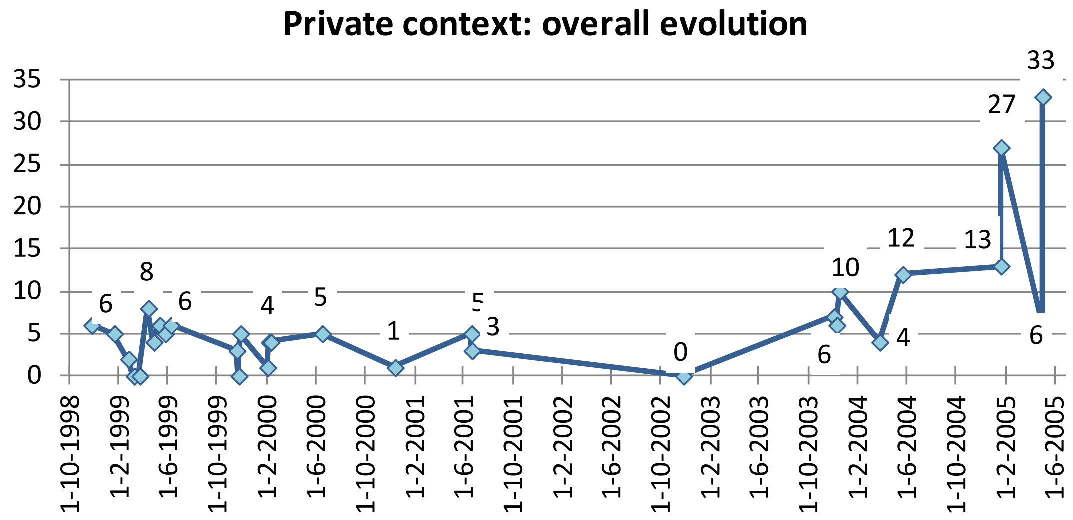

Figure 5.58. Overall evolution of private context instances during the study.

5.2.3 Integration of Adaptive Management and the Dynamic Model of Meaning

The aim of this section is to present a comparative overview of all the elements analyzed so far. On one side, the elements pertaining to the adaptive management context,; on the other side, the contexts belonging to the Dynamic Model of Meaning.

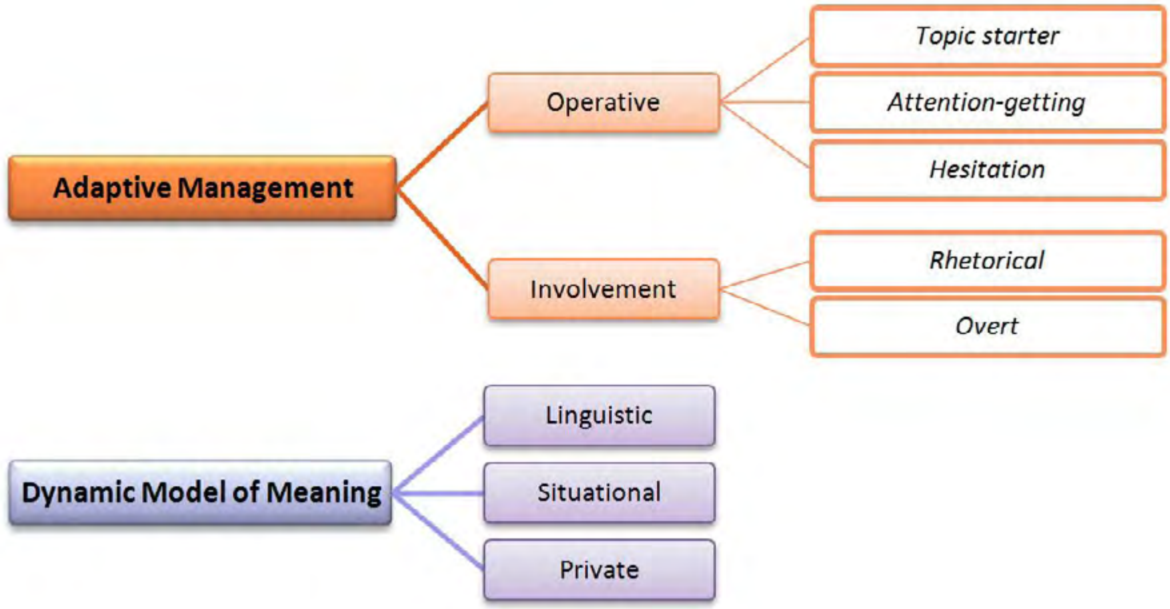
Adaptive Management
Operative
Involvement
Topic starter
Attention-getting
Hesitation
Rhetorical
Overt
Dynamic Model of Meaning
Linguistic
Situational
Private

Figure 5.59. Adaptive Management and Dynamic Model of Meaning elements.

Bearing in mind that the adaptive management context is used to prevent problems and misunderstandings from happening, a higher use of the adaptive management elements is expected in the early years, while it will decrease inasmuch as actual problems at the linguistic, situational or private context appear. This signals that the teacher uses merely attitudinal elements in years 1, 2 and 3, while turning to the contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning when the problem cannot be prevented anymore. The subjects have reached a level of maturity such that they can cope with difficult problems or misunderstandings in communication and not merely attitudinal conflicts.

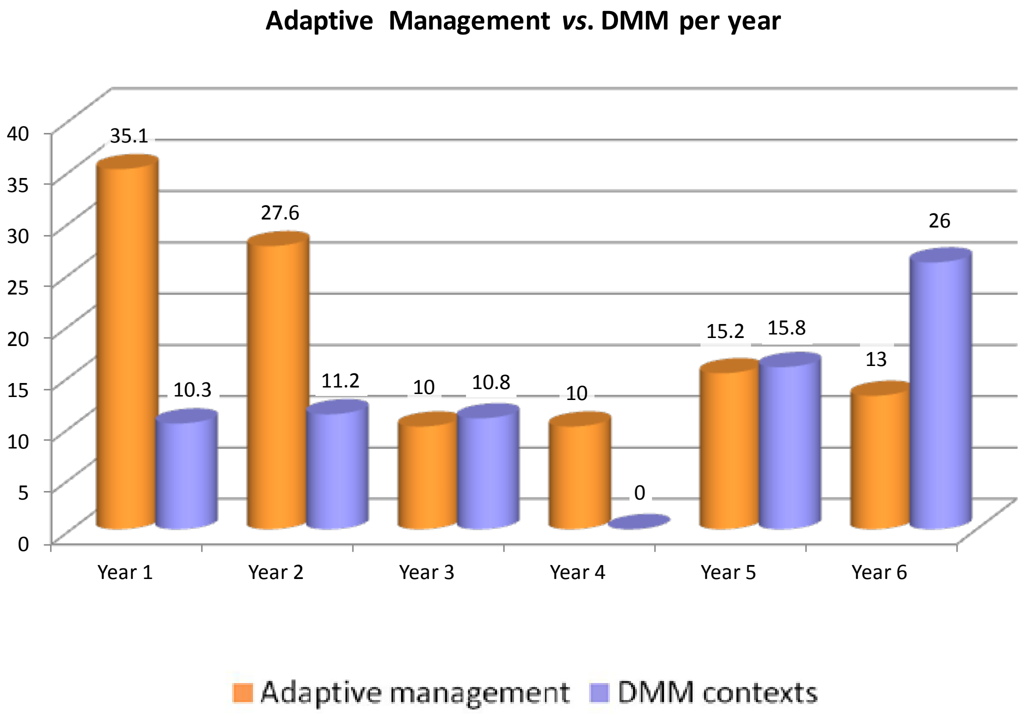

Figure 5.60. Comparison of the average number of adaptive management elements and DMM contexts per year.

This graph shows a complete overview of the use of the adaptive management context and the contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning. For the purpose of providing a holistic view, no emphasis is made on the individual components of each context since that has already been explained in detail in the previous sections.

What can be deduced from this comparison is that whereas more adaptive management elements are used by the teacher in the first years of compilation of data (i.e. years 1, 2 and 3), it is DMM contexts that are more prominent in the later years. Therefore, it seems clear that the clarification of meaning through supportive (i.e. adaptive management) strategies is more frequently used at the early stages, while the last years are dominated by problems pertaining to the Dynamic Model of Meaning contexts in general, but specially the situational and private contexts.

The main aim of the adaptive management is to present attitudinal comprehension and social rapport. Once the interactants have passed that phase and reached a higher cognitive stage in which they can finally deal with problems at the private or situational context level, the adaptive management goes on to be used as a tool to structure communication in order to help overcome the problems not only at the linguistic level (as would be expected) but at the situational and private level as well. This is the reason why data show adaptive management strategies present throughout the data.

A thorough display of each year provides further insights into what has been stated above:

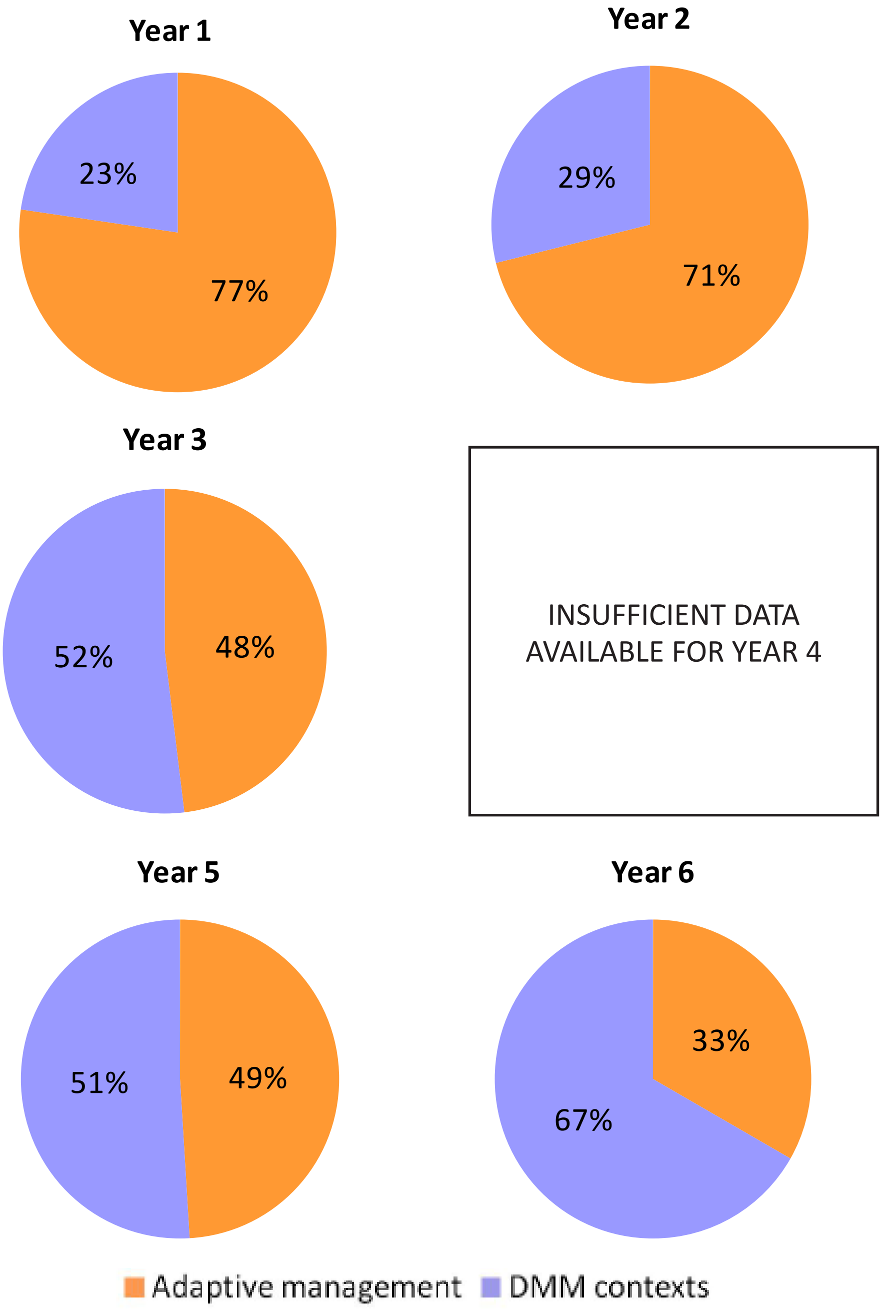

Figure 5.61. Contribution of adaptive management elements and DMM contexts per year.

A compared analysis of Adaptive Management and Dynamic Model of Meaning year by year leaves no room for doubt; there is a clear pattern in terms of when each context is used and when each of them plays a key role in the data.

The higher use of the DMM context towards the final years indicates that less emphasis is put on helping the children to comprehend the process of meaning from an attitudinal perspective, but more help is needed to help them understand problems related to the task or activity they are performing (situational context) or with the common and shared knowledge of previous experiences (private context) on the topic at hand between them and the teacher. In year 6, 67% of the total communication problems fall under the DMM domain, the remaining 33% (which corresponds to the adaptive management elements) are the occasions in which the teacher tries to prevent the problems from actually happening.

5.2.4 Summary of results

5.2.4.1. Summary of results regarding Adaptive Management

Special attention has been devoted to the differentiation of the operative elements and the involvement elements. Data have been displayed, first showing the average instances and then the total instances, so as to provide a general overview of the frequency of each element. The focus on each year has served to pinpoint certain essential differences, as well as to identify increasing or decreasing trends. Finally, each element was analyzed showing its overall evolution. In summary, the main findings deducted from the data have been:

1. When analyzing the operative adaptive management elements, topic starter and attention-getting elements followed a very similar trend; with their respective peaks in the first years and a continuous decrease towards the end of the research period.

2- When analyzing the involvement adaptive management elements, rhetorical elements displayed the opposite behaviour. Data show that, the less operative elements are used, the more involvement elements are found in the data. This hints at a certain cognitive development that cannot be ignored. Actually, this flourishing cognitive stage becomes the main focus of the next sections.

The graphic below shows the five elements of Adaptive Management with both the total instances of each element across all the data analyzed in our *subcorpus* and the percentage each one of them accounts for in the overall total.

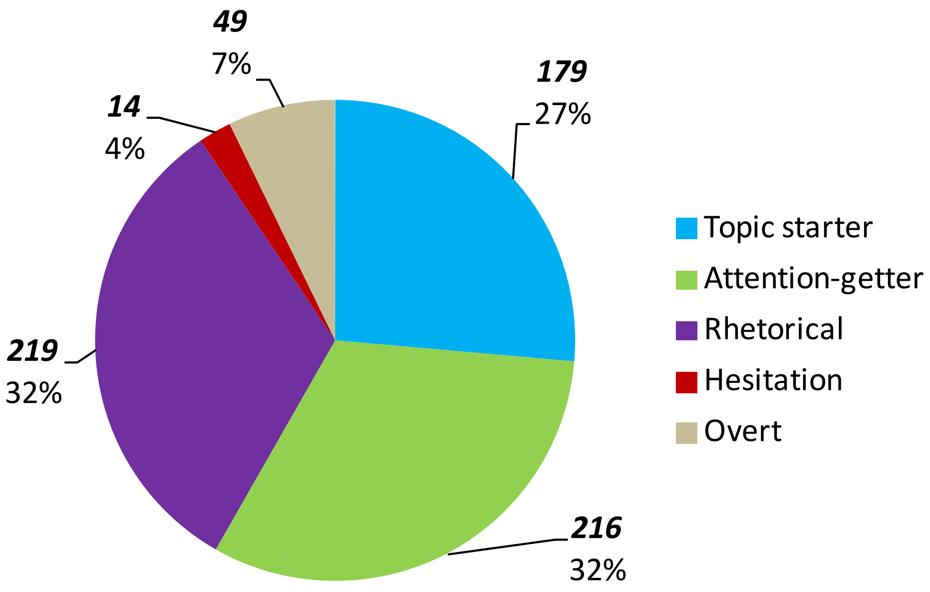

Figure 5.62. Overall distribution of each adaptive management element.

5.2.4.2. Summary of the DMM contexts

When dealing with the three contexts pertaining to the DMM, each context was analyzed separately and, when considered necessary, comparisons between contexts and tendencies were highlighted. In the light of the results, there are five main findings that can be extracted from the data:

1. The linguistic context is the source of most of the problems for the interlocutors in the early years, but its weigh diminishes in the later ones.
2. The situational context is the main origin of the problems for the interlocutors in years 5 and 6.
3. Just like the data related to the situational context, the data corresponding to the private context are highly prominent in the later years of compilation of data.

4. Year 5 seems to be the most significant year when dealing with DMM contexts and the problems originated by them. The linguistic context only represents 16.5% of the total of communication problems rooted in these contexts. The other two contexts, which deal with a higher cognitive complexity in the mind of the speakers, account for 83.6%.
5. In a nutshell, as the linguistic context decreases, the situational and private contexts increase. This can be explained by the fact that, the higher the proficiency in the L2 (i.e. less problems at the linguistic context level), the higher the cognitive maturity of the speakers is and, as a result, they are able to deal with more complex problems in communication (problems at the situational and private levels).

5.2.4.3. Summary of results: Integration of Adaptive Management and DMM

The integration of all the contexts analyzed (whether pertaining to the Adaptive Management or the Dynamic Model of Meaning) served two purposes. On the one hand, to clearly portray the pattern found in the data. On the other hand, to display a holistic overview of all the elements analyzed in our *subcorpus*. There are three main findings that should be taken into account when comparing and contrasting all the results found in the data.

1. The decrease in the linguistic context from year 3 onwards is directly linked to an increase in the situational and private contexts. Moreover, there is also a clear interconnection between this behaviour of data and the more frequent use of the rhetorical elements of the involvement adaptive management context.
2. While more adaptive management elements are used by the teacher in the early years, DMM contexts become the main source of problems for the speakers in the last years of compilation of data.
3. The teacher uses fewer attitudinal elements in the later years because children have fewer problems in understanding and comprehending the communication exchange. The interlocutors engage in more complex problems (the ones dealing with the situational and private contexts) in the later years of data due to a higher stage in the children's cognitive maturity.

5.3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section has the aim of discussing and interpreting the results that have been already presented. This is done from two different perspectives; a linguistic level and a conceptual level.

There are two claims that can be stated at this point. Firstly, the relationship between the adaptive management contexts and the DMM contexts is dynamic (Romero-Trillo, 2007; Romero-Trillo and Maguire, 2011), therefore, there is a constant interplay to make communication successful. Secondly, the results presented from a qualitative perspective were consistent regarding certain patterns of frequency and use by the interlocutors.

This part of the dissertation is divided into two sections in which the results are linked to the existing literature in the field and examples from our *subcorpus* are provided to illustrate the discussion13. Firstly, the L2 proficiency of the children is put forward as one of the main reasons why data reflect this change from the use of the adaptive management context to the DMM contexts. Secondly, the assumed shared experience of the interlocutors are discussed to prove that the Dynamic Model of Meaning and the theory of the Adaptive Management should be revised to account for certain differences rooted in the type of interactants involved in the communicative act.

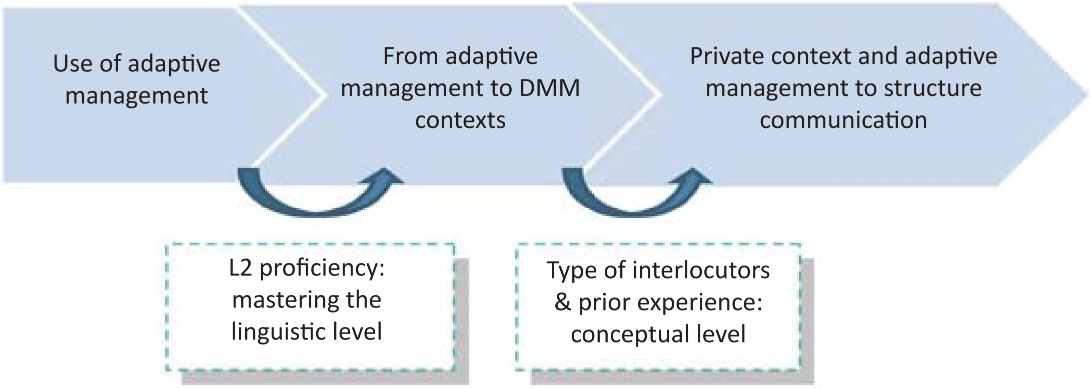
Use of adaptive management
From adaptive management to DMM contexts
Private context and adaptive management to structure communication
L2 proficiency: mastering the linguistic level
Type of interlocutors & prior experience: conceptual level

Figure 5.63. Progession of the data from adaptive management to DMM.

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13 A selection of examples are included in the body text of this chapter. Refer to the annexes section for further examples.

5.3.1 Proficiency in the L2: The linguistic level

Mastering the linguistic level is the first step towards becoming proficient at the conceptual level. My main claim is to support the idea of “progression” to show how data go from the adaptive management to the DMM contexts though proficiency in the L2. Once the interlocutors reach the conceptual level, the adaptive management context is used mainly as a means to structure communication.

Proficiency develops over time: Using the adaptive management to understand and be understood.

The fact of having infant, non-native speakers learning an L2 in an instructional context (where classroom discourse is the model) directly affects how these subjects develop, use, comprehend and produce language in the L2. Therefore, their proficiency in English is acquired and develops over time (Kecskes *et al.* 2005; Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993; Kasper 1996). Hence, it makes sense to assert that the interlocutors (in this case, the children and the teacher) will focus, first, on having a fluid communication interaction and once this is achieved, move on to more complex issues. Data support this claim. Indeed, this is the reason why results show a very frequent use of adaptive management context strategies in the early years but not in the later ones.

I can, thus, state that the teacher at this point mainly focuses on verifying that the learners are understanding very basic things and controlling and paying attention to the class routines.

This notion is aligned with the social rapport concept of the adaptive management, but transferred, in this particular case, to classroom discourse (Romero-Trillo, 2007).

The examples below portray instances from the data where the adaptive management is used by the teacher to organize class routines (i.e. mainly attitudinal).

Example 1

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Teacher: Let me explain what we´re going to do. %TOPST%	
Comment In this example of year 1 the teacher tries to turn to another topic by explicitly uttering the instructions so that the students can follow the class.	

Example 2

Year: 2	**Age:** 6–7
Teacher: We're going to start with these words over here now. %TOPST%	
Comment In year 2, the teacher continues using start topic elements to make sure the students are, correctly, following the class routines.	

Example 3

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Teacher: Listen very carefully! %TOPAG%	
Teacher: Excuse me! %TOPAG% Excuse me! %TOPAG% Everybody. Stop! %TOPAG%	
Teacher: right (Clapping) everybody sit down %TOPAG%	
Comment In these three examples, all of them from year 1, it is clear that the main focus is on trying to catch the students' attention, either by rising the tone or by clapping. These examples show that, at this point, only attitudinal elements are used by the teacher.	

One of the key findings of the adaptive management context is that speakers have to adapt to the hearers when successful communication is intended. In all the examples, it is clear that the teacher is trying to make students comprehend the classroom routines, so the interaction at this point is focused, solely, on attitudinal matters.

> When language is used, speakers both create context and situations (make things meaningful in certain ways and not others) and fit, adjust and adapt language to these ongoing contexts and situations.
>
> (Kecskes 2006a: 232)

In order for the adaptive management strategies to be successful, it is important to mention that the teacher has to cooperate in preventing misunderstandings from happening, given that the main aim should be to have a successful communicative act and to make conversation flow without disruption. Having so many instances of topic starter elements and attention-getting elements in the early years is a clear sign that the teacher's focal point is attitudinal, and that the L2 of the children is in a very low stage of development at this point.

> There are two reasons why people may not be confused. They use context for disambiguation, and they assume that the writer or speaker is a cooperative agent.
>
> (Keysar 2007: 71)

Mastering the lexical level: From the adaptive management context to the linguistic context.

Authors like Bierwisch (1997); Giora (1997) or Bibok and Németh (2001) support the idea of a hierarchy that speakers follow in order to interpret meaning, specifically, at the utterance level. Regardless of the theoretical background of these authors or the exact names they give to this concept (Giora frames this within her Graded Salience Hypothesis for example, whereas for Bierwisch, this is more related to Relevance Theory), what seems to be a common denominator is that, for an utterance to be understood by the speakers, it is essential that the lexical level be mastered first.

Data from our *subcorpus* show a consistent pattern in terms of hierarchy that seems to support this claim.

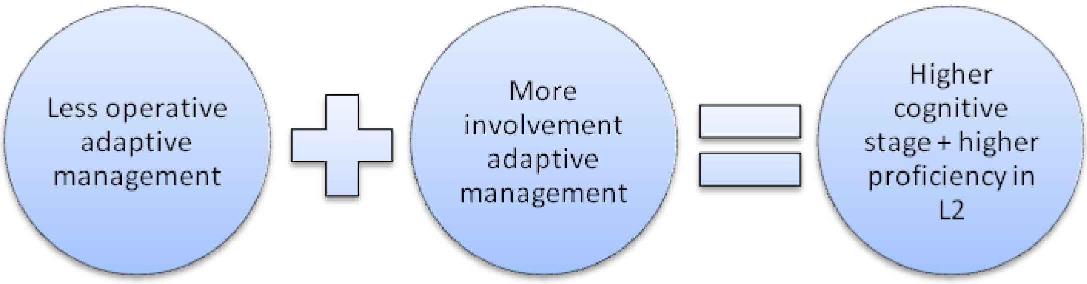
Less operative adaptive management
More involvement adaptive management
Higher cognitive stage + higher proficiency in L2

Figure 5.64. Progression from operative to involvement adaptive management elements.

While operative elements are very frequently used in the early years, involvement ones (especially the rhetorical ones) are, also very frequently used, but in the later years. This signals that the adaptive management strategies used by the teacher to help the learners understand the message and to prevent a breakdown in communication are succeeding, and learners are moving from attitudinal elements to a higher cognitive level where the use of rhetorical elements is recurrent.

The example below signals that the teacher has now moved on to verifying correct understanding on the side of the listener. She is not only focusing on class routines, although, of course, they will always be present due to the situational context shared by the interlocutors, but the teacher has moved a step forward and includes a certain cognitive nuance that requires the students to have reached a specific cognitive stage in order to interpret it correctly. The students' ability to interpret this extra nuance is directly related with their higher fluency in the L2.

<table>
<tr><td>Year: 2</td><td>Age: 6–7</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Teacher: Did I ask you Joaquín or would you like me to open the door … and show you the way out?.. %TINRH%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Comment
The example from year 2 depicts a very typical example of a child not behaving appropriately during the class. The teacher resorts to rhetorical elements to make the child see the possible consequences. The child understands perfectly the situation and modifies the behaviour.</td></tr>
</table>

This control of the lexical level allows the learners to move one step up the hierarchy of meaning.

> Utterance interpretation starts with the lexical meaning of the word or pragmatic unit. If it does not lead to the relevant interpretation, then the immediate context comes into play. If this does not result in a pragmatically appropriate interpretation either, the context should be extended.
>
> (Kecskes 2006a: 229–230)

In other words, for the message to be understood, the teacher first needs to be sure that the message has reached the hearers (using attitudinal elements of the operative adaptive management). Once this is confirmed, she can turn to verifying correct understanding on the side of the listener, either by inducing overt responses from the listeners or otherwise (using involvement adaptive elements).

Once this has been achieved, the students' lexical level comes into play to interpret the utterance appropriately.

Thus, I state that the results obtained from our *subcorpus* confirm that the subjects under study are following the expected pattern when it comes to utterance interpretation, understanding the lexical context and reaching higher levels of proficiency in the L2.

The process behind this evolution of second language acquisition in relation to the Dynamic Model of Meaning can be described as follows.

> The higher the fluency in L2, the less the learner has to rely on L1 word association because the growth of L2 proficiency brings about changes in the conceptual system.
>
> (Kecskes 2008a: 392)

The examples below show the students' progression from their lack of a common linguistic context and the subsequent misunderstandings to the stage where their cognitive development and their proficiency in the L2 allow them to focus on communication problems at the private level. The three examples are displayed following a chronological order. The first example is from year 1, the second one from year 4, the last one is taken from year 6.

Example 1

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6

Example A

Teacher: What do you want to say in Spanish? …

Example B

Teacher: If I ask you, I ask you it is sunny, is that putting the words in the right order? … you think it is?

Pupil: No

Teacher: What do you think it is?

Linguistic context	**Situational context**	**Private context**
In example A, the child cannot provide the right word in English. In example B, it is the word order in the sentence that causes the miscommunication	The children and the teacher focus on the same activity	--

Comment
These two examples from year 1 show how the learners need to rely on their L1 to understand the linguistic context of the L2. This shows a very low stage in the L2 proficiency. Subjects have not developed enough fluency in the L2, hence, the linguistic context is highly problematic and prevents communication from being successful.

Example 2

Year: 4	**Age:** 8–9

((The camera focuses on one of the groups, made up of four children.))

Juan: One man... catched.
Teresa: No it's not caught, it's were, were. %x… x%. (READING) One man were-
Juan: [Catched]
Teresa: Catched?
Juan: Were catched.
Reyes: One man were catched?
Juan: One man-.
Raúl: Was caught.
Teresa: Was caught.
Reyes: Was caught. Were catched %L1 no tiene sentido L1%. "(it makes no sense", my translation)
Juan: It is one man was caught.
Teresa: %L1 La primera es L1% were. ("the first one is", my translation)

Linguistic context	**Situational context**	**Private context**
Children argue and try to reach an agreement on the past tense of the verb "to catch".	The children focus on the same activity.	--

Comment
This example from year 4 in which only children are talking and the teacher is not present depicts an instance in which the linguistic context is not shared by the students due to a fair doubt about the past tense of the verb "to catch". If verbs such as "play", "paint" or "open" (probably, everyday verbs in an instructional environment) have an -ed past tense, so will a verb such as "catch". These learners still rely on their L1 to make sense of the linguistic context level misunderstanding: "*%L1 no tiene sentido L1%.*".

Example 3

<table>
<tr><td>Year: 6</td><td colspan="2">Age: 10–11</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teacher: Free tickets. Uh good. Yes Eva.
Pupil: Eva: Eh, that, when I went to the, to Sol, to Sol on Sunday, when we went in the metro, it was full to the top, you couldn’t, you couldn’t hardly, hardly breathe and some Americans were pushing back.
Teacher: Pushing back. That means somebody pushed them first.
Pupil: Eva: No they were-. They entered-.
Teacher: [If they were] pushing back. Somebody else pushed.
Pupil: Eva: No. They entered and they pu- started pushing people.
Teacher: Americans?
Pupil: Eva: Yes. They were Americans.
Teacher: Mm. OK. Yes. John.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguistic context
The incorrect use of <i>push back</i> by the pupil creates a conflict</td><td>Situational context
--</td><td>Private context
--</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Comment
The linguistic context creates an issue for the speaker (Eva) due to a wrong L1-L2 association. “Push back” in English can mean “postpone” or “move further away in time”, therefore, it makes no sense to say that “some Americans were pushing back”. On the contrary, the translation to Spanish is correct, “push+back” in Spanish will mean to push someone backwards (inside the metro for example). The L1 association of “push” was converted into L2 without success. The teacher understood the confusion, corrected the mistake and explained why it was wrong. The learner understood and incorporated the new meaning; in fact, it is interesting to notice how, at the end, she only uses “push” and not “push back”.</td></tr>
</table>

These three examples illustrate how the subjects need to share the same linguistic context in order to communicate successfully, failure to do so, results in communication problems that affect the normal flow of any communicative act. Indeed, the higher the fluency in L2, the less L1 word association. Still, data show that linguistic context problems will always be present since we are dealing with infant learners that, even in the last year of compilation of data (year 6) were still not fully proficient in the L2.

The dual language approach talks about two main periods in the development of the L1 and the L2. Firstly, the “additive period”, which is dominated by the influence of the L1; and the “synergic period” which is when the lexical or syntactic level is mastered and the speakers enter into the pragmatic and cognitive level (Kecskes 2008b).

In the light of the results, I can maintain the claim that the proficiency in the L2 of our subjects follows this path. Data show how the linguistic context creates problems to the learner, especially in the early years (lexical level), while it is the private and situational contexts (that is, the ones pertaining to the cognitive level) that are the main problematic contexts for the learners at later stages.

This can be summarized by the illustration below:

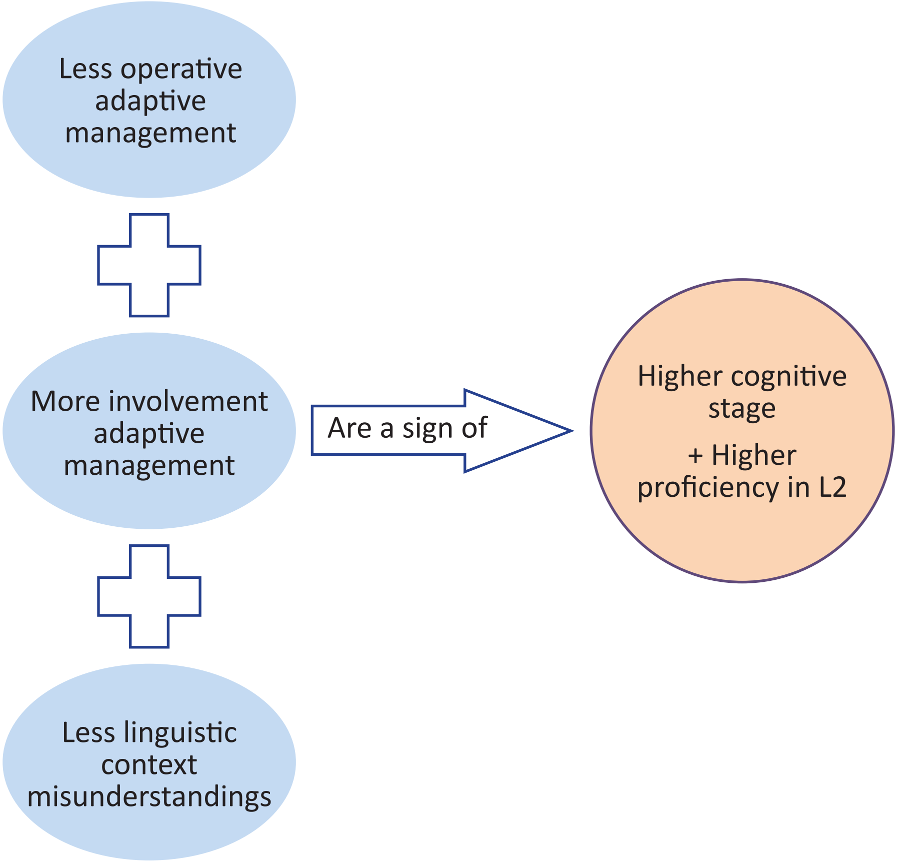
Less operative adaptive management
More involvement adaptive management
Less linguistic context misunderstandings
Are a sign of
Higher cognitive stage
+ Higher proficiency in L2

Figure 5.65. Evolution of adaptive management and linguistic context: influence on the cognitive stage of the interlocutors.

* * * * * * * * * *

In this first section of the discussion of findings, I have tried to develop the idea that proficiency in the L2 is a very significant element when trying to interpret the results of the study. Moreover, it is the driving force that makes the data go from the adaptive management to the DMM contexts (i.e. the linguistic context).

Several examples pertaining to the adaptive management context (both operative and involvement) have been displayed in order to provide real-life examples from our *corpus* to sustain the tendencies shown in the data. Additionally, emphasis has been put on how learners progress towards a higher fluency in L2 and, as a consequence, a higher cognitive stage. Ultimately, several examples related to problems of communication at the linguistic context level were used to demonstrate how the learners need to share the same linguistic context in order to communicate successfully, using, then, the adaptive management context as purely organizational strategies in the communication process.

As Kovács puts it, "persons who have started learning a second language early in their childhood achieve higher levels of proficiency" (Kovács 2007: 304). However, it is necessary to realize that proficiency in the L2 is not an isolated, synchronically-achieved or monolingual-specific matter, but rather an intercultural, dynamic and adaptable phenomenon in which interlocutors have problems, overcome them and move into the next level always basing the learning curve on the prior experience of their L1 and the L2.

5.3.2 Infant learners vs. adult learners: The conceptual level

Once the children overcome the problems at the linguistic level (i.e. problems associated with the linguistic context) and the teacher has a cooperative role in conversation using the adaptive management strategies to organize and structure communication in the classroom, results show a trend where more situational and private elements are the source of conflict between interlocutors in the later years.

Why do the data show this change from the adaptive management elements (which are mainly attitudinal) to conflicts at the private context (i.e. at the conceptual level)? The reason is the type of interlocutors under study: infant learners.

How do we know that this is correct? Due to the prior experience of the subjects analyzed in terms of salience and common ground. The maturity of the interlocutors plays a key role in the analysis of this transition from the linguistic level to the conceptual one.

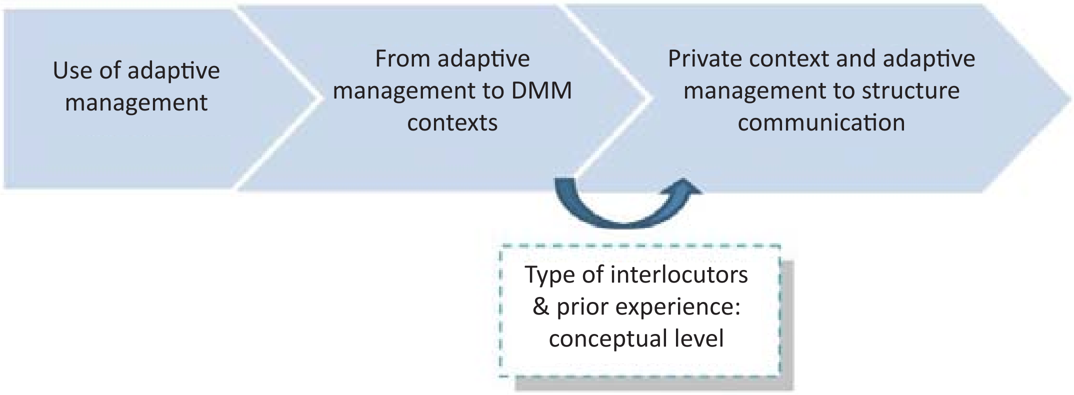
Use of adaptive management
From adaptive management to DMM contexts
Private context and adaptive management to structure communication
Type of interlocutors & prior experience: conceptual level

Figure 5.66. Progression of the data.

What is interesting here is that some of the problems arise at the conceptual level, and not at the lexical one. In other words, these conflicts do not derive solely from the interlocutors being learners, but from the interlocutors being "infant" learners. One can argue that if communication problems were mainly rooted at the linguistic level, the L2 proficiency would be the only factor explaining those problems. Data show that this is true, but only in part. If I took the linguistic problem as the only source of problems between the interlocutors under study, I would be making the mistake of focusing only on the linguistic level and leaving the conceptual level aside.

Therefore, I state that data depict a situation in which communication seems to be problematic due to the different experiences shared by the interlocutors. These differences in shared experience are, for the most part, due to the maturity of the individuals; that is, to the fact of having infant interlocutors rather than adult learners of an L2.

There are two main reasons and theoretical frames that support this idea. The first one deals with the relation between prior experience and salience; the second one with how the assumed common ground and the prior experience are directly related, and how this connection between them affects communication.

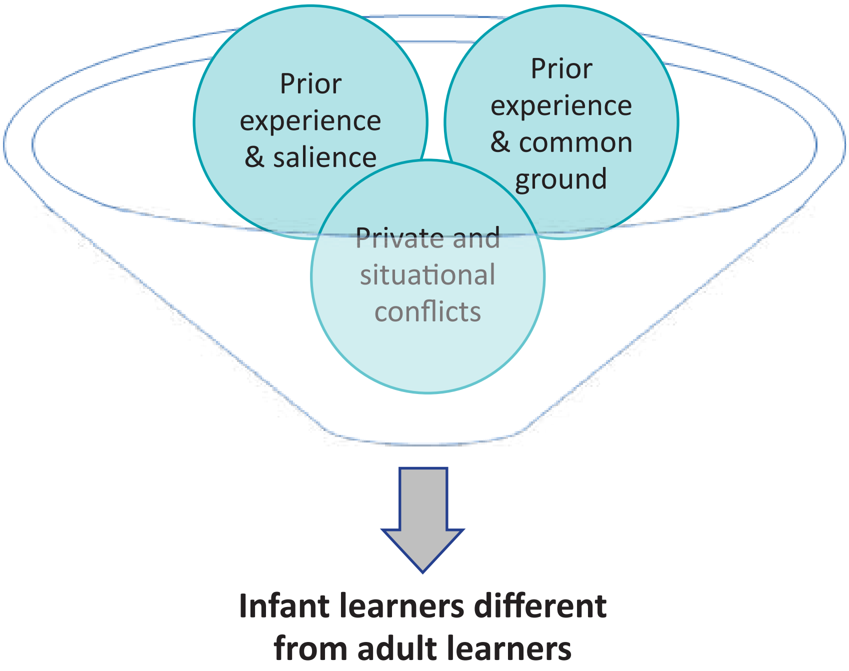
Prior experience & salience
Prior experience & common ground
Private and situational conflicts
Infant learners different from adult learners

Figure 5.67. Infant and adult learners: salience, common ground and private and situational conflicts.

5.3.2.1. Prior experience and salience

As already highlighted in chapter 3, when dealing with how context plays a very crucial role when interpreting meaning, the Graded Salience Hypothesis (GSH) (Giora 1997, 2003) was depicted as an attempt to provide a different approach to meaning involving context and salience. In other words, Giora tried to explain why some meanings are more salient than others and, therefore, are retrieved more easily by the speakers.

> What becomes salient in the mind depends on convention, familiarity and frequency of encounters.
>
> (Kecskes 2006a: 223)

The above statement about salience (and therefore, about the Graded Salience Hypothesis) implies that salience is closely linked to the private and situational contexts of the speakers. And this seems to be the case indeed, given that convention, familiarity, or even frequency rely on the prior experience and knowledge of the world that each speaker may have.

If we were dealing with adult speakers, salience would probably be, in most cases, shared by the adults. However, in this case, it is difficult to predict the amount of frequency of encounters that an infant might have of a given word. Not to mention the word "convention" itself, which can be conceived as being a rather abstract concept for any child. As a result, it seems fair to argue that we cannot expect infant learners to share the same prior experience of salience of the words used in a conversation. Therefore, it is also expected to find certain level of miscommunication in the interaction between the teacher and the children.

This is supported by the results, which show an increase of private and situational context level problems towards the end, which is when the subjects encounter problems at the conceptual level.

Giora herself talks about the most salient meanings of words that are accessible for the L2 learners and expects them to be different from those of native speakers. Giora links this to the prior experience of the learners (private context) and the situational context in which the communication is taking place.

> It is important to note that salience is not just a function of experience. It has cognitive components as well.
>
> (Giora 2004: 97)

Below is an example from our *subcorpus* that shows a communication problem due to the lack of experience and knowledge of the interlocutor, not because he is an L2 learner, but because he is a child.

Year: 3	**Age:** 7–8
Teacher: when I was a little girl and I went to church. I always had to put something on my head (she moves her hand as if she were putting a foulard on her head) Pupil: why? Teacher: because it was a custom to do that. I suppose it was a sort of respect	

Linguistic context	**Situational context**	**Private context**
Conversation flows with no misunderstandings or need for clarification regarding language	The pupil and the teacher focus on the same activity	Lack of shared experience about covering one's head at churches. Lack of shared knowledge on how women used to behave in the past in the Catholic Church when going to mass.
Comment It is very unlikely that any of our infant learners can share the conventional behaviour of women and church-going, especially at the time when the teacher was a child. This knowledge of the world (historic knowledge) can hardly be shared by infants. It is not a question of them being learners, it is a question of them being children, therefore, lacking prior experience and cognitive maturity to understand this phenomenon.		

As Kecskes puts it, "salient meaning encodes standard context in which the given lexical item repeatedly occurs" (Kecskes 2006a: 224). Thus, when interlocutors do not share, or do not have, the same standard contexts, problems are very likely to arise with respect to those salient meanings. **Data validate this assumption by means of the frequent appearance of problems concerning the mismatch between the speaker's and the hearer's prior experience (i.e. the private context).**

One can argue that, if salience is mastered once, then, the speaker increases the chances of succeeding in communication. Unfortunately, salience is not static; on the contrary, it varies, and speakers are expected to adapt and learn or re-learn the new salient meaning of a given word or context.

> It seems fair to say that in order for non-native speakers to use the target language appropriately they are expected not only to develop the same or similar salience for lexical items and expressions that native speakers have but also follow the changes in salience as the target language is adjusted to the socio-cultural changes in the given language community. Is this not too much to expect of the language learner? Yes, it is.
>
> (Kecskes 2006a: 222)

To summarize, salience entails many factors, amongst which, experience and cognitive components are the ones that directly affect infant learners. It has also been suggested that salience is not a static concept; rather, it changes and speakers are supposed to modify and adapt to the new socio cultural contextual meaning of a given item. Salience, hence, is dynamic and changes diachronically. As a result of this, when salience and prior experience are considered with regard to infant learners, extra caution is advisable when making generalizations. Native speakers differ from L2 learners in the salience they can retrieve, as the situation is even more critical in the second case. If dealing with learners who are infants (as is the case in this study), the complexity of the subjects' salience at the conceptual level is one of the key sources of problems in communication.

According to Boaz Keysar, "young children know how to speak before they know how to reason well" (2007: 73). If this is so, the lexical problems will come first and the cognitive ones will come later. The results of this study corroborate this statement and prove that salience and prior experience at the conceptual level should be considered as "different" when dealing with infant learners.

5.3.2.2. Prior experience and common ground

In the previous section, the relation between salience and prior experience has been put forward as a crucial factor that affects communication when dealing, specifically, with infant learners. The second factor that should be highlighted is that the assumed common ground that is expected for a native speaker differs greatly from that of a learner. More even so if the learner is an infant learner. Therefore, prior experience is linked to the common ground shared by the participants; failure to do so, will result in communication breakdown.

I affirm that the common ground of the teacher varies significantly compared to that of the infant learner due to lack of shared prior experience. As a consequence of this, results consistently show the high frequency of communication problems due to a mismatch at the private and situational context level.

> [W]orld knowledge is available to interlocutors in two forms: as encapsulated in lexical items based on prior encounters and experience and as provided by the actual situational context framed by the given situation.
>
> (Kecskes 2007: 38)

As Kecskes puts it, the world knowledge that interlocutors have belongs to two basic domains, the lexical level and the situational level in which the aforementioned knowledge took, or is taking, place. Both of them are based on the prior experience of the interlocutors. In other words, if speakers do not share the same linguistic level and the same situational level of a given world knowledge, it is very likely that there will be a clash between the speakers' private context and the hearer's private context. If this is so, problems in communication will arise.

Below is an example from our *subcorpus* in which the situational context and the private context are not shared, causing the teacher to use the adaptive management strategies (rhetorical elements) to verify correct understanding of the context by the learners.

Year: 6	**Age:** 10–11	
Teacher: and that's what I want you to look for. Which bits of it do you think seem to be accurate? Which bits of it do you think seem to be maybe put in for the sake of entertainment. Ok?		
Linguistic context The teacher uses the rhetorical adaptive strategy to verify correct understanding.	**Situational context** The activity is too complex from a cognitive point of view for the children, so the teacher needs to clarify it.	**Private context** Prior experience of the film industry. Accuracy in films. The Entertainment industry.
Comment In this particular example the situational context and the private context are not shared because the learners do not understand the concept of some scenes in a film being "accurate" and how, sometimes, the film industry needs to sacrifice "accuracy" for the sake of commercial revenue, i.e. entertainment.		

This example shows that these learners lack the same information, the same experience and the same world knowledge that the teacher has. There is room, though, for co-construction of information by the interlocutors, and this is why the teacher explains the context. If remedial strategies are not used by the teacher, students cannot learn this concept from the context and they will still lack this knowledge the next time they face the concept. Without this previous knowledge (private context) the students cannot proceed with the activity (situational context). This problem is at the conceptual level of meaning, not the lexical one.

The linguistic context represents no problems for the learners; it is the private and situational one that embody the problem. This mismatch at the private and situational level is rooted, once again, in the subjects being infants, not learners.

Any adult that masters the linguistic context will understand the concepts involved, while a child, as depicted in the example, does not.

This is a constant pattern throughout the analyzed data. When there is a communication problem, the speaker resorts to the adaptive management strategies to remedy the problem. Therefore, the adaptive management serves the purpose of helping the speaker to adapt to find the optimal meaning to continue with the communicative act.

The results of this study clearly mark that lack of shared or mutual experience and knowledge in general (common ground) are one of the main sources for problems between the teacher and the students. This is the reason why conflicts at the private and situational level are so abundant towards the late years of the data.

My argument is that lack of a common ground shared by the interlocutors explains these conflicts and accounts for the high frequency of both contexts. Furthermore, I state that this is so due to the learners being infants and not because they are L2 learners.

Example

Year: 6	**Age:** 10–11
Teacher: Very little buffaloes, what do you mean? You mean few? Pupil: Yes. And they were… and they were babies and they were easier to catch Teacher: It's not… I don't mean that. What I was saying is that it seems to be thousands at the beginning but then in the actual scene of the hunting they didn't seem to be that many. Reason why? Huh? Pupil: Because they were <x…x> in a buffalo ((the teacher interrupts her and the end of her sentence cannot be heard)) Teacher: They nearly were made extinct in North America because of basically the actions of white people in the nineteenth century, right? So how did they do the scene as if they were thousands? Pupil: Ah! With the computer! Teacher: With the computer!! (very excited). It's an excellent observation and the scene is with the computer they actually overlapped a number of them.	

Linguistic context/adaptive management element The teacher needs to use adaptive management strategies to verify correct understanding: *what do you mean? You mean few?*	**Situational context** There is no problem at this level.	**Private context** No shared experience about scenes in films being technically manipulated by a computer
Comment The lack of core common ground is due to the fact that they are children, with a prior experience that is different from that of the adults. Children are trying to link what they have been studying (buffaloes were extinct in the 19th century) to what happens in the film that was shot recently. If animals are extinct, they cannot appear in a recent film, unless they have been manipulated through computer aid (therefore, it is not real). Hence, we have two levels, reality (no buffaloes), and an imaginary meta level (many buffaloes in the film).		

This example clearly shows that these children do not share the prior experience or world knowledge of how the film industry plays with reality and fantasy, or with the technical resources that are available for that purpose.

This lack of core common ground makes them unfit to understand the situation and the teacher needs to resort to adaptive management strategies to guide them to the correct understanding of the meta level (i.e. the fantasy or imaginary one).

The teacher uses overt as well as rhetorical elements to verify that the students are following and understanding. The use of "*what do you mean? You mean few?*" (Overt) or" *Huh?"* (rhetorical) by the teacher together with the clear conflict depicted in the example show that when prior experience of the world knowledge is not shared, adaptive strategies need to be used by a cooperative speaker in order to succeed in communication.

It is important to mention that the problem does not lie at the linguistic level. The problem is not lack of fluency in the L2, the problem is at the conceptual level (the private context) due to the fact that the interlocutors are children, not because they are L2 learners. Any adult (even if he is an L2 learner) coming from the western world would understand the "meta level" imaginary world depicted in the example. One can argue that any adult learner can encounter problems at the linguistic level. Of course, this statement can be true, but it is not the case of these children. As already explained, they have mastered the linguistic level (they are 10-11 years old), the problem is at the conceptual level.

In the light of the results and examples from the data, my assumption is that common ground needs to be revised in relation to infants, since the amount of repertoire, exposition, and frequency of interactions cannot be the same as that of an adult.

5.3.3 Conclusions

According to Maguire and Romero-Trillo, "[b]y definition, a child cannot have, and can hardly share, the same private context as that of an adult" (Maguire and Romero-Trillo, in press). This last section has served to make a systematized compilation of the reasons why the results of this study show a significant increase of private context problems in the later years of the data. The difficulties that subjects face stem from the fact that they are infants (as opposed to adults) and, therefore, have strong constraints in terms of experience of the world and shared experience with the rest of the interlocutors that take part in the conversation.

The literature in the field is already taking into account that the private context may vary depending on the type of interlocutors. Although this is certainly true, differences account, mainly, for intercultural differences. Moreover, there are studies that compare L2 learners to native speakers with regard to the way they share the same private context and the difficulties that these interlocutors face (Kecskes 2008a: 399). However, to my knowledge, these studies focus on adult learners, not on child learners, so there is room to revise these concepts in relation to infant learners.

* * * * * * * * * *

This chapter was divided into two main sections, the first of which outlined the results obtained from the data and provided an explanation of each element analyzed, both in isolation and longitudinally, to depict and portray several interesting tendencies. The second main section explored and discussed the findings stemming from the results, and linked them to the literature in the field and to several examples of our *subcorpus* in order to validate and corroborate the qualitative results that were put forward earlier in the chapter.

Results have shown how the adaptive management context was used, merely, for meaning clarification and this was done through supportive strategies. These strategies were mostly attitudinal at the beginning, but a certain cognitive nuance is present across all the years in the frequent use of the rhetorical element across all the years. Once the children were able to deal with more complex problems than those that pertained solely to the basic attitudinal condition of classroom discourse, problems at the situational and private level (DMM contexts) started to be consistent and prominent. Adaptive Management was then used as a tool to structure communication and, therefore, it was used in all the years, contrary to my initial expectations.

Three main claims stem from this chapter:

1. Data prove that the adaptive management (the fourth element that supplements the trio of the DMM: linguistic, situational and private) is used as a remedial strategy when miscommunication arises.
2. Data show a clear progression of the four elements of meaning: first, the adaptive management elements are used, followed by problems at the linguistic level and culminating with problems at the situational and private level (conceptual level). Once the problems arise, the adaptive management is used to repair and remedy the problem.
3. The contexts of the Dynamic Model of Meaning, particularly the private context should be revised when dealing with infant interlocutors.

Part IV

CHAPTER 6.
CONCLUSIONS

> *The context-dependence of complex applied linguistic systems is three-fold: language is developed in context, as use in context shapes language resources; language is applied in context, as context selects the language action to be performed; language is adapted for context, as the experience of past language use is fitted to the here and now*
>
> (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron 2008: 69)

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6.1. INTRODUCTION

This last chapter has a threefold aim. First, to summarize the key findings of this work. Second, to clearly state the main contributions and to pinpoint some pedagogical implications that should be taken into account. Third, to provide some lines of thought for possible further research that could be derived from the contributions of this dissertation.

6.2. SUMMARY AND MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Due to the fact that this is a qualitative study, research credibility has been established following the guidelines of Davis (1992, 1995), Erikson (1986) or Savage and Whisenand (1993). As opposed to quantitative studies, which deal with the concept of internal validity of the data, in a qualitative study the research credibility stems from prolonged engagement of the observer, persistent observation and thick description of the data through frequency tables and graphs.

This work has been rooted in four main propositions that were detailed in chapters one and four. These propositions intend to cover the main points raised in this work and to link them to the main theories in the field. Below I summarize each of the propositions put forward, the assumption made when analyzing the data, the main theoretical framework derived from each proposition, and, finally, some general conclusions that can be drawn after the detailed analysis of the data.

Proposition 1	Assumption	Literature, theoretical framework	General conclusions
Communication is altered due to the interlocutors' maturity when common ground is not shared.	EFL learners in general, and Infants in particular, need to share the same private, situational and linguistic contexts, i.e. the same common ground, to achieve successful communication in the class.	Reference authors: Kecskes and Zhang (2009) Giora (1997, 2003) Kecskes (2008a)	Complementary approach to the Dynamic Model of Meaning in the creation of common ground when interlocutors are infants. Support by our data that the DMM should be revised depending on the type of interlocutors.

Table 6.1. Summary table for proposition 1.

Proposition 2	Assumption	Literature, theoretical framework	General conclusions
Following the Adaptive Management categorization, differences would be found regarding the two basic types: operative and involvement.	In order for the rhetorical and overt elements of the Adaptive Management to flourish in our data, certain maturity in the individuals is needed.	Reference Authors: Romero-Trillo (2001) Kecskes (2008a) Yus (1999) Coupland *et al.* (1991) Grosse *et al.* (2010) Romero-Trillo and Maguire (2011) Kecskes and Papp (2000)	Provided a clear link between the theoretical contribution of the dissertation (fourth context) and the data. Qualitative differences were found regarding the two macro-categories. Operative elements were more frequent in the early years. Involvement ones were more salient towards the end of the research period.

Table 6.2. Summary table for proposition 2.

Proposition 3	Assumption	Literature, theoretical framework	General conclusions
Following the Dynamic Model of Meaning, the three contexts will be analyzed. Qualitative differences will be found in the misunderstanding that each context deals with. These misunderstandings will be linked to the cognitive development of the subjects.	The higher the fluency in L2, the less L1 used . Misunderstandings at the situational context level will entail some cognitive development on the side of the children. Misunderstandings at the private context level involve a certain cognitive maturity, together with assumed shared prior experience among the interlocutors.	Reference Authors: Kecskes (2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2008a, 2008b) Jiang (2000) Kecskes and Cuenca (2005) Painter (1989a, 1989b) Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) Sinclair and Brazil (1982) Giora (2003, 2004)	Misunderstandings at the Linguistic level remaining constant throughout the data with a relevant decrease towards the final years. Misunderstandings at the Situational and Private context level become very salient in the last sessions analyzed. This is linked to the interlocutors being infants, not only learners.

Table 6.3. Summary table for proposition 3.

Proposition 4	Assumption	Literature, theoretical framework	General conclusions
The longitudinal study will show the contrast and variation of the data as the study progresses. Therefore, further validating propositions 1, 2 and 3.	Significant variation in frequency, patterns and relevance will be found in the data following a longitudinal approach.	Reference Authors: Yin (1988, 2003) Baxter and Jack (2008) Miles and Huberman (1994)	Propositions 1, 2 and 3 have been supported by a longitudinal annotation of the data.

Table 6.4. Summary table for proposition 4.

6.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The contributions of the present investigation are mainly two: the first derives from the theory, the second one from practice.

The main theoretical contribution of this dissertation has been the addition and application of a fourth context to the three (linguistic, situational and private) already established by Istvan Kecskes in his Dynamic Model of Meaning. As has been thoroughly explained, this model considers language as a dynamic entity which resorts to the abovementioned contexts, which together comprise the conceptual level of communication that interlocutors must share in order for any given communicative act to be successful.

The study has shown that, although Kecskes's model is very efficient when dealing with native or monolingual speakers, it fails to provide an answer to communication failures when the interlocutors are not adults. In fact, neither the Dynamic Model of Meaning, nor the Dual Language Model were able to provide a solution to communication breakdowns when the origin of the conflict was not in the language proficiency of the individuals, but rather in their cognitive maturity.

The theoretical contribution presented in this dissertation, in which I have shown that adaptive management is a necessary element, fills this gap in Kecskes's Dynamic Model of Meaning by accounting for communication problems arisen in situations in which the interlocutors are infants with a common L1 learning an L2 in an instructional environment. Therefore, I have put forward the adaptive management as a complement to the trio of DMM contexts (linguistic, situational and private) that allows the teacher to help infant interlocutors to obtain the optimal meaning out of a given lexical item, situation or experience.

The second contribution of this work entails an empirical orientation that emanated from the data analysis of our *subcorpus*. A qualitative approach was the preferred methodology to dissect the data through exhaustive coding and tagging. The approach was mainly inductive, but, due to the intrinsic dynamic characteristics of this study, a deductive approach was also considered and integrated. As a result, the analysis shifted from data to theory and from theory to data as the study progressed. The author's involvement as a researcher in this particular school over four years, as well as her personal experience while observing the children in the classroom, places her in a privileged situation to analyze the data and make of this dissertation a unique single-case study.

The main finding regarding the empirical contribution stems from the fact that data proved a clear progression from the lexical level to the conceptual level. Moreover, I was able to establish a clear chronology in the way the adaptive management served to supplement the DMM contexts by serving the speakers as remedial strategies when communication was disrupted.

The pedagogical implications that can be derived from this study can be very influential for future classroom research, although I am well aware that this is a single-case study and, as Miles and Huberman (1994) state, single-case studies can be difficult to generalize and extrapolate to other situations. Nevertheless, I am in the position to extract some valuable implications, precisely because of the longitudinal data that have been the source of my analysis.

The concept of "educational research" (Collins and Stevens 1991; McArthur *et al.* 1990) embraces the need for the teacher to satisfy a certain set of pedagogical goals and to revise them if necessary when problems are encountered on the side of the students. As depicted with several examples from the data, the students very frequently undergo communication problems. The obvious consequence is that the pedagogical needs that the teacher had intended to cover may not be accomplished in all the sessions due to the delayed understanding of the children. Teachers should be aware of this and adapt the goals to the actual needs and cognitive development of the interlocutors accordingly.

The study of our *subcorpus* shows the main problems that students face and can thus be used by teachers to become aware of the different interlocutors they may encounter, as well as of the different types of problems that the children might be facing. To put it another way, using learner's *corpora* in instructional settings to expose the teachers to real-life examples can raise awareness of the classroom reality. Therefore, using *corpora* to train teachers should be a general practice in schools, especially those with L2 learners.

I believe that this study can encourage teachers to pay special attention to the varying characteristics of the students they have in the classroom. Teachers will find differences in the linguistic level of each individual, but this will be an expected difficulty and, probably, dealt with *ex-ante* by proficient teachers. However, divergences at the cognitive level should not be ignored. On the contrary, they should be the main focal point of the teacher's strategy in the class. As has already been pinpointed several times during this dissertation, an adult learner is not the same as a young or infant learner and so the cognitive stage of the individual plays a key role in the communication breakdowns that take place in the classroom. By making teachers aware of this and showing them how to use the adaptive management strategies to avoid problems, we can prevent the abovementioned "educational research" issue and avoid (or at least lessen) the frustration on the side of the teacher due to the null advancement in the expected pedagogical goals.

6.4. FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has tried to provide the foundations for a wider and deeper insight into the intercultural pragmatics and foreign language fields of knowledge. However, there are certain areas that I intend to pursue in my future research.

Using a single-case study made this work unique, but there is a need to expand and extend the theoretical contribution of the present dissertation into a multiple-case-study approach. The UAMLESC *Corpus* comprises data from six schools with different characteristics with respect to aspects such as the students' linguistic background (monolinguals, bilinguals…), the average socio-economic level of the area where they are located (well-off areas, lower-class areas…) or state involvement in their management (private, semi-private…) . The rich data of the *corpus* can be used to expand the findings of the present dissertation.

On the same wavelength, the data from the whole *corpus* include teacher talk and child talk. Whereas the present dissertation has focused mainly on teacher talk and analyzed the type of interactions that caused problems to the children, more research is needed on child talk to further exploit the adaptive management strategies and to see whether these strategies are only a phenomenon specific to teacher talk or, on the other hand, they are used by children as well. If this is so, the next step would be to analyze whether data evolve in the same way as the data from teacher talk do.

Finally, further research can be carried out comparing infant learner *corpora* with infant native speaker *corpora*. This interesting research line can shed some light on the potential projection of the theoretical contribution of this study when compared to the use in a native-like environment.

To conclude, I would like to highlight that this work has contributed to develop the theory of the Dynamic Model of Meaning in two different ways. From a theoretical perspective, through the addition of a fourth context to the three existing ones; and from an empirical perspective, by showing with a unique *subcorpus* how the interactions between teachers and students have to adapt, adjust and modify due to the communication conflicts derived from the cognitive maturity of the interlocutors.

CAPÍTULO 6’.
CONCLUSIONES

> *La dependencia del contexto de los sistemas complejos de lingüística aplicada tiene tres ramificaciones: la lengua se desarrolla en el contexto, puesto que el uso en el contexto da forma a los recursos lingüísticos; la lengua se aplica en un contexto, puesto que es el contexto el que selecciona la acción lingüística que ha de llevarse a cabo; la lengua se adapta al contexto, puesto que la experiencia del uso anterior de la lengua se adecua al aquí y ahora.*
>
> (Larsen-Freeman y Cameron 2008: 69)

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6.1.' INTRODUCCIÓN

Este último capítulo de la tesis tiene un triple objetivo. En primer lugar, resumir las principales conclusiones de este trabajo. En segundo lugar, establecer claramente las principales aportaciones e identificar algunas implicaciones pedagógicas que deben tenerse en cuenta. En tercer lugar, proporcionar algunas líneas de reflexión para posibles investigaciones en el futuro que pudieran derivarse de las aportaciones de esta tesis.

6.2.' RESUMEN Y PRINCIPALES CONCLUSIONES

Debido a que se trata de un estudio cualitativo, la credibilidad de la investigación se ha establecido siguiendo las directrices de Davis (1992, 1995), Erikson (1986) o Savage y Whisenand (1993). A diferencia de los estudios cuantitativos, que se basan en la validez interna de los datos, en un estudio cualitativo la credibilidad de la investigación se debe a la participación prolongada del observador, la observación constante y la abundante descripción de los datos mediante tablas de frecuencias y gráficos.

Este trabajo se ha basado en cuatro proposiciones principales que se detallaron en los capítulos uno y cuatro. Dichas proposiciones tienen por objeto abarcar los principales puntos planteados en este trabajo y vincularlos a las principales teorías en este ámbito. A continuación resumo cada una de las proposiciones presentadas, la suposición realizada al analizar los datos, el principal marco teórico que se deriva de cada proposición y, por último, algunas conclusiones generales que pueden extraerse tras el análisis detallado de los datos.

Proposición 1	Suposición	Literatura, marco teórico	Conclusiones generales
La comunicación se ve afectada debido a la madurez cognitiva de los interlocutores cuando no se comparte un conocimiento o experiencia previa.	Los aprendientes de inglés como L2 en general y los niños en particular necesitan compartir los mismos contextos lingüísticos, situacionales y privados (es decir un conocimiento o experiencia previa) para lograr que la comunicación en el aula llegue a buen puerto.	Autores de referencia: Kecskes y Zhang (2009) Giora (1997, 2003) Kecskes (2008a)	Enfoque complementario al Modelo Dinámico del Significado en cuanto a la creación del conocimiento o experiencia previa cuando los interlocutores son niños. Nuestros datos hacen recomendable una revisión del DMM en función del tipo de interlocutores.

Tabla 6.1’. Tabla resumen para la proposición 1.

Proposición 2	Suposición	Literatura, marco teórico	Conclusiones generales
Siguiendo la categorización de la Gestión Adaptativa, se encontrarán diferencias con respecto a los dos tipos básicos de estrategias: las operativas y las de participación.	Para que los elementos retóricos y explícitos de la Gestión Adaptativa abunden en los datos, es necesaria cierta madurez cognitiva en los individuos.	Autores de referencia: Romero-Trillo (2001) Kecskes (2008a) Yus (1999) Coupland y otros (1991) Grosse y otros (2010) Romero-Trillo y Maguire (2011) Kecskes y Papp (2000)	Proporciona un vínculo claro entre la aportación teórica de la tesis (el cuarto contexto) y los datos. Se encontraron diferencias cualitativas respecto a las dos macro-categorías. Los elementos operativos fueron más frecuentes en los primeros años. Los de participación, hacia el final del período de investigación.

Tabla 6.2’. Tabla resumen para la proposición 2.

Proposición 3	Suposición	Literatura, marco teórico	Conclusiones generales
Siguiendo el Modelo Dinámico del Significado, se analizarán los tres contextos. Deberían hallarse diferencias cualitativas en cuanto a los malentendidos a los que afecta cada contexto. Estos malentendidos estarán vinculados al desarrollo cognitivo de los sujetos.	Cuanto mayor sea la fluidez en la L2, menor será el uso de la L1. Los malentendidos a nivel del contexto situacional suponen un cierto desarrollo cognitivo en los niños. Los malentendidos a nivel del contexto privado implican una cierta madurez cognitiva, junto con supuesta experiencia previa compartida entre los interlocutores.	Autores de referencia: Kecskes (2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2008a, 2008b) Jiang (2000) Kecskes y Cuenca (2005) Painter (1989a, 1989b) Sinclair y Coulthard (1975) Sinclair y Brazil (1982) Giora (2003, 2004)	Los malentendidos a nivel lingüístico permanecen constantes en los datos, pero con un descenso significativo en los años finales. Los malentendidos a nivel de los contextos situacional y privado se acentúan en las últimas sesiones analizadas. Esto está relacionado con el hecho de que los interlocutores son niños, no con que sean aprendientes.

Tabla 6.3’. Tabla resumen para la proposición 3.

Proposición 3	Suposición	Literatura, marco teórico	Conclusiones generales
El estudio longitudinal mostrará el contraste y la variación de los datos a medida que el estudio progresa, validando aún más las proposiciones 1, 2 y 3.	Al tratarse de un estudio longitudinal, se encontrará en los datos una variación significativa de la frecuencia, los patrones y la relevancia.	Autores de referencia: Yin (1988, 2003) Baxter y Jack (2008) Miles y Huberman (1994)	Las proposiciones 1, 2 y 3 se ven respaldadas por una anotación longitudinal de los datos.

Tabla 6.4’. Tabla resumen para la proposición 4.

6.3.' APORTACIONES DEL ESTUDIO E IMPLICACIONES PEDAGÓGICAS

Las contribuciones de la presente investigación son principalmente dos: una emana de la teoría y la otra, de la práctica.

La principal contribución teórica de esta tesis ha sido la adición de un cuarto contexto a los tres (lingüístico, situacional y privado) establecidos por Istvan Kecskes en su Modelo Dinámico del Significado. Como se ha explicado de manera pormenorizada, este modelo considera la lengua como una entidad dinámica que recurre a los contextos mencionados anteriormente, que, en conjunto, constituyen el nivel conceptual de la comunicación que los interlocutores deben compartir para que cualquier acto comunicativo tenga éxito.

El modelo de Kecskes resulta muy eficaz cuando los interlocutores son hablantes nativos o monolingües, pero no proporciona una respuesta a los errores de comunicación que se producen cuando los interlocutores no son adultos monolingües. Esto no significa, sin embargo, que el DMM no considere otros tipos de interlocutores. De hecho, Kecskes y Papp (2000) proponen el Modelo Lingüístico Dual con el fin de proporcionar una perspectiva bilingüe a la producción y comprensión lingüísticas. Sin embargo, ni el Modelo Dinámico del Significado ni el Modelo Lingüístico Dual lograron explicar los problemas de comunicación surgidos cuando el origen del conflicto no estaba en el dominio lingüístico de los participantes sino en su madurez cognitiva.

La aportación teórica presentada en esta tesis llena ese vacío al tener en cuenta los problemas de comunicación surgidos en situaciones en las que los interlocutores son niños con una L1 común que están aprendiendo una L2 en un entorno educativo. Para ello, se añadió al modelo un cuarto contexto, llamado «contexto de la gestión adaptativa», con el fin de explicar la capacidad de adaptación de los hablantes a través de estrategias reparadoras. Desde mi punto de vista, el DMM no puede considerarse completamente dinámico en términos de adaptación, ya que no aclara aquellos procesos comunicativos en los que es necesario estructurar, organizar u ordenar la información para guiar al oyente hacia un determinado mensaje.

Por lo tanto, he propuesto la gestión adaptativa como un complemento al trío de contextos del DMM (lingüístico, situacional y privado) que permiten al profesor ayudar a sus interlocutores infantiles a obtener el significado óptimo de un elemento léxico, una situación o una experiencia determinadas.

La segunda aportación de este trabajo consiste en una orientación empírica que emana del análisis de los datos de nuestro *subcorpus*. Se eligió un enfoque cualitativo a la hora de diseccionar los datos mediante la codificación y el etiquetado exhaustivos. La orientación del análisis de esos datos fue principalmente inductiva, pero, debido a las intrínsecas características dinámicas de este estudio, también se tomó en cuenta y se integró una vertiente deductiva. Como resultado de ello, el análisis pasó de los datos a la teoría y de la teoría a los datos a medida que progresaba el análisis. Su participación como investigadora en esa misma escuela durante cuatro años y su experiencia personal durante la observación de los niños en el aula hacen que la autora se encuentre en una situación privilegiada para analizar los datos y hacer de esta tesis un estudio de caso único verdaderamente especial.

El principal hallazgo en relación con la contribución empírica deriva del hecho de que los datos demostraron una clara progresión desde el nivel léxico al nivel conceptual. Además, logré establecer una cronología clara de la forma en que la gestión adaptativa complementa a los contextos del DMM al servir a los hablantes de estrategias reparadoras cuando aparecen problemas de comunicación.

Las implicaciones pedagógicas que se pueden derivar de este estudio deben tomarse con cierta cautela, ya que se trata de un estudio de caso único y, como Miles y Huberman (1994) afirman, los estudios de caso único pueden ser difíciles de generalizar y extrapolar a otras situaciones. Sin embargo, me hallo en condiciones de sacar algunas conclusiones valiosas precisamente por la singularidad del estudio.

El concepto de «investigación educativa» (Collins y Stevens 1991; McArthur *et al.* 1990) abarca la necesidad de que el maestro satisfaga un determinado conjunto de objetivos pedagógicos y los revise si fuera necesario cuando los alumnos tengan problemas para alcanzarlos. Como se ilustra con varios ejemplos de los datos, los estudiantes sufren a menudo problemas de comunicación. La consecuencia obvia es que las necesidades pedagógicas que el profesor tenía previsto cubrir no pueden lograrse en todas las sesiones por el retraso en la comprensión de los niños. Los profesores deben ser conscientes de ello y adaptar los objetivos a las necesidades reales y al desarrollo cognitivo de los interlocutores.

El estudio de nuestro *subcorpus* muestra los principales problemas a los que se enfrentan los estudiantes y, por lo tanto, pueden ser utilizados por los docentes para tomar conciencia de la variedad de interlocutores que pueden encontrarse, así como de los distintos tipos de problemas a que los niños podrían estar haciendo frente. En otras palabras, el uso de *corpora* de aprendices en entornos educativos para exponer a los maestros a ejemplos auténticos puede mejorar su concienciación de la realidad en el aula. Por lo tanto, el uso de *corpora* para capacitar a los maestros debe ser una práctica generalizada en las escuelas, especialmente aquellas con aprendientes de una L2.

En este estudio se anima a los profesores a prestar especial atención a las diferentes características de los alumnos que tienen en el aula. Los profesores hallarán diferencias en el nivel lingüístico de cada uno de ellos, pero se trata esta de una dificultad prevista y, probablemente, los profesores competentes le pondrán remedio por anticipado. Sin embargo, las divergencias a nivel cognitivo no deben ser ignoradas. Más bien al contrario, deben ser el punto de partida de la estrategia del profesor en el aula. Como ya se ha señalado en varias ocasiones durante esta tesis, un estudiante adulto no es lo mismo que uno joven o niño y, por lo tanto la etapa cognitiva del individuo desempeña una función clave en los problemas de comunicación que tienen lugar en el aula. Al hacer que los profesores sean conscientes de ello y mostrarles cómo utilizar las estrategias de gestión adaptativa para evitar ciertos problemas, podemos prevenir los problemas mencionados anteriormente con relación a la «investigación educativa» y evitar (o al menos disminuir) la frustración que produce en los maestros el nulo avance en los objetivos pedagógicos esperados.

6.4.' INVESTIGACIÓN ADICIONAL

Este estudio ha tratado de proporcionar las bases para un conocimiento más amplio y profundo sobre los ámbitos de la pragmática intercultural y las segundas lenguas. Sin embargo, hay ciertas áreas que requieren más investigación.

El uso de un estudio de caso único hace de esta una tesis peculiar, pero existe la necesidad de ampliar y extender su contribución teórica empleando un estudio de casos múltiples. El *corpus* UAMLESC incluye datos de seis escuelas con características diferentes con respecto a aspectos tales como antecedentes lingüísticos de los alumnos (monolingües, bilingües de inglés o de otro idioma…), el nivel socio-económico medio de la zona donde están ubicados (zonas acomodadas, de clase baja...) o la intervención del Estado en su gestión (privado, concertado...). Los abundantes datos recopilados en este *corpus* pueden utilizarse para generalizar las conclusiones principales de esta tesis.

Los datos de todo el *corpus* abarcan asimismo el lenguaje del profesor y el lenguaje infantil. Teniendo en cuenta que la tesis se ha centrado principalmente en la intervención del profesor y ha analizado el tipo de interacciones que causaron problemas a los niños, es necesario seguir investigando sobre el lenguaje infantil en relación con las estrategias de gestión adaptativa para ver si estas son un fenómeno específico del lenguaje del profesor o, por el contrario, también son utilizadas por los niños. De ser así, el siguiente paso sería analizar si los datos evolucionan de la misma manera que los datos relativos al lenguaje del profesor.

Por último, puede llevarse a cabo investigación adicional comparando los *corpora* de aprendices y los *corpora* de niños nativos. Esta interesante línea de investigación puede arrojar algo de luz sobre la posible proyección de la contribución teórica de esta tesis al compararlo con el uso en un entorno similar al nativo.

Para concluir, me gustaría destacar que, si bien algunas de las preguntas siguen sin respuesta y se necesita más investigación, este trabajo ha contribuido a la teoría del Modelo Dinámico del Significado de dos maneras diferentes: desde una perspectiva teórica, a través de la adición de un cuarto contexto a los tres ya existentes; desde una perspectiva empírica, mostrando con un único *subcorpus* cómo las interacciones entre los profesores y los alumnos tienen que adaptarse, ajustarse y modificarse debido a los conflictos de comunicación derivados de la madurez cognitiva de los interlocutores.

CHAPTER 7.
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The *corpus*:
UAM-LESC *Corpus,* compiled by Romero-Trillo, Jesús and Ana Llinares-García.

Part V

ANNEX I.

TRANSCRIPTION CODES AND TAGS

TCH: Teacher

CHI: Child

OP: Operative Adaptive context

TIN: Involvement Adaptive context

The codification comprised the 8 tags listed below:

1. %TOPST%: Operative Start Topic
2. %TOPAG%: Operative Attention-Getting
3. %TOPH%: Operative hesitation
4. %TINRH%: Involvement rhetorical
5. %TINO%: Involvement overt
6. %TINODL%: Linguistic context
7. %TINODP%: Private context
8. %TINODS%: Situational context

EXAMPLES OF TAGS

Adaptive Management: Operative (attitudinal)

Deals with the management of concepts and language comprehension to make a conversation flow without disruption. It helps the addressee's comprehension of the speaker's stance.

1. Turn or Topic Starter: %TOPST%

Year 1

TCH: Now, here´s the book. Here we go %TOPST%

And then, they start the new topic.

2. Attention-Getting Elements: %TOPAG%

Year 2

TCH: Listen everybody!.. %TOPAG%

3. Hesitation: %TOPH%

Year 1

TCH: So eh, eh... %TOPH%

Involvement adaptive management

It deals with the creation of cognitive orientation to understand the force and aim of the message in the mind of the speaker.

4. Rhetorical: %TINRH%

It serves to verify correct understanding but does not require a response from the listener. It may denote a subtle irony and implicitness that might or might not be understood by the listener.

Question tags are often considered rhetoric.

Year 1

TCH: Excuse me, is your name Pablo? %TINRH% Did you turn into Pablo over night? %TINRH%

Year 1

TCH: were you born in a field, Palomi? %TINRH%

(Of course, the teacher is not, literally, asking her that!)

5. Overt %TINO%

Seeks to avoid miscommunication through metalinguistic verification.

Year 1

TCH: You understand it? %TINO%.. Jacobo. You understand it? %TINO%

When the listener had a problem with the message the speaker was trying to convey. The listener reported two things, either uncertain hearing or problems at the level of the linguistic context.

Dynamic Model of Meaning contexts

6. Linguistic context: %TINODL%

Year 1

TCH: You've got what? %TINODL%

CHI: Yes

TCH: You've got what at home? %TINODL%

CHI: <names>

TCH: <...>

CHI: Yes, my names and I put one on the back.

TCH: Oh, labels!

CHI: Yes...

7. Private context %TINODP%

Misunderstandings at the cognitive level due to both interlocutors NOT sharing the same private context.

Year 1

TCH: Does plastic let the water come through?

CHI: No

((some children))

CHI: Yes, yes

((some children))

((The teacher goes away to get a plastic apron and a scarf made of wool))

***

TCH: Yes, if you had an apron made of, made of this wool … and you spill water on it . Will it stop your clothes [underneath getting wet?] %TINODP%

CHI: [No]

CHI: Yes

((Some of them))

***

((The teacher holds in one hand the scarf and in the other hand a glass of water))

TCH: Juan, hold that end of the scarf, at the end where the tassels are ….

((Juan holds the scarf))

TCH: And we spill the water on the scarf … Will it go through to the floor? %TINODP%

CHI: Yes

((All the children))

TCH: Will it stop at the scarf? %TINODP%

CHI: No

((All the children))

((The teacher spills the water on the scarf and the water goes to the floor))

CHI: To the floor

TCH: What about this one?, let´s look at this one

((The teacher takes the apron))

TCH: Hold that one, if I put water on here, Will it go through to the floor or will it stop [at the apron?] %TINODP%

CHI: [Stop, stop]

((All the children))

TCH: The apron will stop the water [going through?] %TINODP%

CHI: [Yes], yes

TCH: Aha! Let´s see ….

((The teacher spills the water on the apron))

TCH: Did it go through? %TINODP%

CHI: No

((Al the children))

TCH: Did it stop the water going through? %TINODP%

CHI: Yes ….

((All the children))

TCH: Why would an apron made of plastic be better than an apron made of wool? … Why? %TINODP%

CHI: Because <x it stops the water x>

TCH: Coming through and it protects your clothes

8. Situational context %TINODS%

Misunderstandings at the cognitive level due to both interlocutors NOT sharing the same situational context.

Year 4

(Making sure ALL the students share the same situational context in order to follow the class task and routine. Cosme is having some problems. Strategy from the teacher's side is explanation, verification and questions).

TCH: What do you need Cosme? %TINODS%

Cosme: %x x%

TCH: It tells exactly what you need. It doesn't say you need this. It says …. Number one. What does it say? %TINODS%

CHILDREN: Follow the instructions of R M seven eight to construct a circle pattern.

TCH: Right... What do you need? %TINODS% ((Screams)) Don't tell me you need a circle!! You've got the instructions, in number one. Follow the instructions on-?

CHILDREN: R, M.

TCH: What do you need? %TINODS%

Annex II.

Examples of Adaptive Management elements (sample)

1. Start or turn of a topic

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
TCH: So today is Monday. Now %TOPST% here comes a difficult bit	

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Right, what now? what now? %TOPST%	

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Let me explain what we´re going to do. %TOPST%	

Year: 2	**Age:** 6–7
We’re going to start with these words over here now. %TOPST%	

2. Attention-getting elements

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Listen very carefully! %TOPAG	

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Excuse me! %TOPAG% Excuse me! %TOPAG% Everybody. Stop! %TOPAG%	

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
right (Clapping) everybody sit down %TOPAG%	

3. Hesitation

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
TCH: uh! Eh! %TOPH% Palomi	

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Right. Mm .. %TOPH%	

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
So that means that there is more here... um? %TOPH%... than here...	

4. Rhetorical

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
you want to come and show us that you can behave properly? %TINRH%	

Year: 2	**Age:** 6–7
did I ask you Joaquín or would you like me to open the door .. and show you the way out?.. %TINRH%	

Year: 2	**Age:** 6–7
Is anybody talking to you?.. %TINRH%	

Year: 5	**Age:** 9–10
They're consecutive numbers, aren't they? %TINRHQT%	

Year: 5	**Age:** 9–10
On every Sunday in December I think all the shops are going to be open, aren't they? %TINRHQT% They usually are.	

5. Overt

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Do you understand? %TINO%	

Year: 2	**Age:** 6–7
Did you understand my question? %TINO%	

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6
Do you see what I mean? %TINO%	

ANNEX III.
EXAMPLES OF DYNAMIC MODEL OF MEANING CONTEXTS (SAMPLE)

Example 1

Linguistic, situational and private context shared. Successful communicative act. Shared common ground.

<table>
<tr><td>**Year:** 2</td><td colspan="2">**Age:** 6–7</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">**Pupil:** Eh, this, this, this Saturday I was in Madrid. I go, I was to Madrid. On Saturday I went to the Thyssen.
Teacher: Oh! Good.
Pupil: [And I saw] the portrait of Henry the Eighth.
Teacher: Uh! That famous one. Yes.
Pupil: [Yes]. And it’s like that ((Meaning very small)).
Teacher: Yes, Ana? We expect portraits, don’t we? To always be very big.
Children: Yes.
Teacher: I always thought the Mona Lisa, was very big, and it’s not. Yeah. Because most-. Have you seen the original?
Pupil: Yes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Linguistic context**
Conversation flows with no misunderstandings at this level.</td><td>**Situational context**
The children and the teacher focus on the same activity.</td><td>**Private context**
The children and the teacher share a knowledge of the Thyssen
The pupil and the teacher share knowledge of the portrait of Henry VIII.
The children and the teacher share the expectation that portraits ought to be big.
The children and the teacher share a knowledge of the “Mona Lisa”.</td></tr>
</table>

Example 2

Linguistic, situational and private context shared. Successful communicative act. Shared common ground.

Year: 5	**Age:** 9–10	
Pupil: Miguel: Eh, when I wanted to go to The Phantom of the Opera, it was in Callao, and we, the, the bus, was, was nearly going to ex- explode, and more people were in. **Teacher:** There were so many people. We need to have those pushers that they have in Japan to get them on the train. You know that? **Children:** Yes, yes.		
Linguistic context	**Situational context**	**Private context**
Conversation flows with no misunderstandings at this level.	The children and the teacher focus on the same activity.	The children and the teacher share the knowledge of the metro or bus being very busy at rush hours or at Christmas time in the city centre of Madrid.

Example 3

Linguistic, situational and private context shared. Successful communicative act. Shared common ground.

Year: 5	**Age:** 9–10	
Teacher: Pablo. Is that a letter for me? **Pupil:** Yes but- **Teacher:** Is that about the appointment? **Pupil:** Yes and- **Teacher:** Is that OK? **Pupil:** Yes		
Linguistic context	**Situational context**	**Private context**
Conversation flows with no misunderstandings or need for clarification regarding language.	The pupil and the teacher focus on the same activity.	The pupil and the teacher share the knowledge that letters are a common means of communication between parents and teachers. The pupil and the teacher share the knowledge that the pupil's parents are meeting the teacher at some point in the near future.

Example 4

Linguistic, situational and private context shared. Successful communicative act. Shared common ground.

Year: 5	**Age:** 9–10	
Pupil: Ignacio: %x… x%. **Teacher:** Thank you Ignacio. %x...x%. **Pupil: Ignacio:** %x I don't have a … x%. **Teacher:** (to the researchers) Ah, do you know why he's saying it? Cause usually on Tuesday he has to leave the games lesson early to go to a labour. Tomorrow he won't.		
Linguistic context Conversation flows with no misunderstandings at this level.	**Situational context** The children and the teacher focus on the same activity.	**Private context** The pupil and the teacher share the knowledge that the student usually leaves early on Tuesdays. The researchers do not share this knowledge with the teacher and the student.

Example 5

Teacher’s private context different from children’s

Year: 5 **Age:** 10–11

Pupil: Irene: On Saturday I went to the cinema to see %L1 Buscando a Nemo L1%.

Children: %L1Buscando a Nemo L1%. Finding Nemo.

Pupil: Pablo: I saw %L1 Buscando L1% Finding Nemo in my uncle’s house.

Teacher: Already?

Pupil: Eva: They got it from the Internet.

Teacher: Uh right.

Pupil: Pablo: And I nearly saw it in, on summer-

Teacher: [In the summer, in the summer]

Pupil: Pablo: but my dad and my uncle brought %x won’t read the computer x% and I couldn’t see it.

Teacher: On DVD.

Linguistic context	Situational context	Private context
Conversation flows with no misunderstandings at this level.	The children and the teacher focus on the same activity.	The children and the teacher share a knowledge of the film *Finding Nemo* The teacher’s private context is different from the children’s regarding the possibility to watch at home a film that has just been released in cinemas (“Already?”).

Example 6

Teacher's private context different from children's.

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6

Teacher: Does plastic let the water come through?

Pupil: No

((some children))

Pupil: Yes, yes

((some children))

((The teacher goes away to get a plastic apron and a scarf made of wool))

***

Teacher: Yes, if you had an apron made of, made of this wool … and you spill water on it . Will it stop your clothes [underneath getting wet?]

Pupil: [No]

Pupil: Yes

((Some of them))

***

((The teacher holds in one hand the scarf and in the other hand a glass of water))

Teacher: Juan, hold that end of the scarf, at the end where the tassels are ….

((Juan holds the scarf))

Teacher: And we spill the water on the scarf … Will it go through to the floor?

Pupil: Yes

((All the children))

Teacher: Will it stop at the scarf?

Pupil: No

((All the children))

((The teacher spills the water on the scarf and the water goes to the floor))

Pupil: To the floor

Teacher: What about this one?, let´s look at this one

((The teacher takes the apron))

Teacher: Hold that one, if I put water on here, Will it go through to the floor or will it stop [at the apron?]

Pupil: [Stop, stop]

((All the children))

Teacher: The apron will stop the water [going through?]

Pupil: [Yes], yes

Teacher: Aha! Let´s see ….

((The teacher spills the water on the apron))

Teacher: Did it go through?

Pupil: No

((Al the children))

Teacher: Did it stop the water going through?

Pupil: Yes ….

((All the children))

Teacher: Why would an apron made of plastic be better than an apron made of wool? … Why?

Pupil: Because <x it stops the water x>

Teacher: Coming through and it protects your clothes

Linguistic context	**Situational context**
Conversation flows with no misunderstandings at this level.	The children and the teacher focus on the same activity.

Example 7

Private context and situational context not shared by the interlocutors.

<table>
<tr><td>Year: 3</td><td colspan="2">Age: 7–8</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teacher: I love to watch scary films
Teacher: but what happens. When we go to bed?
Pupil: (some) nightmares
Teacher: nightmares. (she points to a child)
Pupil: <x ... x>
Teacher: you can hardly. Sleep. Any other times when you can… hardly. Sleep?. Jesús
Pupil: When I am reading a book <x ... x>
Teacher: Mmm…
Pupil: Yes. In the bed
Teacher: But that is a bit different. That’s because you are doing something else. Yes. But. You know when your tummy is excited or scared or…</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguistic context</td><td>Situational context</td><td>Private context</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conversation flows with no misunderstandings at this level.</td><td>The pupil who mentions reading a book does not share the same situational context with the teacher and the rest of the children.</td><td>The children and the teacher share knowledge about the consequences of watching scary films (nightmares).
The teacher does not share the same private context with the pupil who mentions reading a book.</td></tr>
</table>

Example 8

Linguistic context and private context not shared by the interlocutors.

Year: 1	**Age:** 5–6	
Teacher: You've got what? **Pupil**: Yes **Teacher:** You've got what at home? **Pupil**: <names> **Teacher:** <...> **Pupil:** Yes, my names and I put one on the back. **Teacher:** Oh, labels! **Pupil**: Yes…		
Linguistic context The teacher does not share the linguistic context with the pupil, who still lacks proficiency in the language.	**Situational context** The children and the teacher focus on the same activity.	**Private context** The teacher does not share the same private context as the pupil, which makes it more difficult for her to solve the miscommunication problem caused by the pupil's lack of proficiency.

Example 9

Situational context not shared by the interlocutors.

<table>
<tr><td>Year: 6</td><td colspan="2">Age: 10–11</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Teacher: The instructions say, source or sources. Now that automatically should tell you that some of them should have more than one letter and more than one source shows that thing.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Linguistic context
Conversation flows with no misunderstandings at this level.</td><td>Situational context
The teacher realizes that the children are only providing one source when the exercise requires them to provide two.</td><td>Private context</td></tr>
</table>

Example 10

Linguistic context not shared by the interlocutors.

Year: 3	**Age:** 7–8	
Teacher: wool?? **Pupil**: No **Teacher:** cross?. she??? bull? **Pupil:** No, no (shouting and angry)		
Linguistic context The phonetic realization of the pupil does not allow the teacher to recognize the word that is being uttered.	**Situational context** The children and the teacher focus on the same activity.	**Private context**