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MONITOR USE BY ADULT LEARNERS OF GERMAN
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Laura M Bowman

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Master's degree in German

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MONITOR USE BY ADULT LEARNERS OF GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

By

Laura Marie Bowman

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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ABSTRACT

MONITOR USE BY ADULT LEARNERS OF GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

By

Laura Marie Bowman

The following Master's Thesis investigates the ability of beginning learners of German as a foreign language to successfully monitor their writing in various communicative situations. The paper sets out to test the hypothesis posited by Krashen's Monitor Model that Sufficient Time, Focus on Grammar, and Knowledge of the Grammar Rule are necessary in order for monitoring to occur.

Thirty-six students of elementary German were asked to describe slides depicting everyday activities. They were also asked to complete a fill-in-the-blank grammar exercise and to fill in a verb-ending chart in order to assess their performance in more grammar-oriented situations. The language samples were then evaluated for subject-verb ending agreement.

The study found that there was not a significant difference in the performance across the various communicative situations. Possible reasons for these findings, as well as recommendations for future study, are then suggested.

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1. Introduction

This study is based partially on a pilot study in which I observed behavior contrary to that predicted by Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model and partially on a study done by Hulstijn (1982); also discussed in Hulstijn and Hulstijn (1984) which prompted Krashen to alter one of the hypotheses in his Monitor Model. More specifically, it examines the accuracy of the foreign language performance of beginning learners of German in several communicative situations to determine whether their behavior is consistent with that which is predicted by Krashen's theory.

2. Theory and Previous Research

Before examining Krashen's Monitor Model, I will look at some of the other research into second language acquisition conducted in the past few decades. The 1960's saw a shift in the way researchers and psychologists viewed the language acquisition process (both first and second language acquisition). Instead of accounting for the language acquisition process from a behaviorist standpoint, in which stimulus-response and habit formation play a major role, psychologists and linguists turned to a mentalist view of language acquisition. According to mentalist accounts, every language learner possesses an innate set of linguistic principles, sometimes referred to as the Universal Grammar, which determines the form which the sentences of a given language could take and guides the language learner in

relating the universal principles of language to the specific language to which he or she is exposed (Ellis 1986,43).

Several researchers developed similar theories about the nature of second language acquisition based on the mentalist views of the process of language acquisition and of language learners' unique language systems. Selinker's *interlanguage*, Corder's *idiosyncratic dialects* and *transitional competence*, and Nemser's *approximative systems* are all included here under the heading *interlanguage*. The term *interlanguage* refers to two phenomena. On the one hand, *interlanguage* refers to "a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a target language norm" (Selinker 1972, 117). This *interlanguage* is separate from the learner's first language (L1) and the second language (L2) he or she is attempting to learn, thus it represents an interim stage. On the other hand, *interlanguage* refers to a series or a continuum of these linguistic systems which gradually approach the target language (TL) norm. As Ellis (1986, 50-1) points out, subsequent investigation into the *interlanguage* theory looks at three key features. First, *interlanguage* is permeable, meaning that the knowledge which learners possess at any given time is open to revision and amendment. Second, *interlanguage* is continually changing but the changes evolve gradually. Third, *interlanguage* is systematic. Learners select from their store of

interlanguage rules systematically rather than haphazardly and their performance is based on their *existing* rule system.

The theories of interlanguage profoundly changed the way in which errors were viewed. Instead of being regarded as something to be avoided at all costs, errors became a means through which to study the development of a language learner's interlanguage and to gain insight into the language-learning process. This opened the door to numerous studies of language-learner interlanguage.

Several studies, collectively called "morpheme studies," attempted to discover whether there was an invariant order in which language learners acquire certain grammatical features, which would in turn suggest that there might be universal processing strategies at work in second language learners. Dulay and Burt used the Bilingual Syntax Measure (Burt, Dulay and Hernández 1973) to study the oral production of English of 55 Chinese and 60 Spanish-speaking children in order to determine whether children with dissimilar native languages would produce a similar sequence of acquisition of the 11 morphemes they tested. They found that "the sequences of acquisition of 11 functors obtained for Spanish and Chinese children are virtually the same" (Dulay and Burt 1974, 49). From this they concluded that there is "strong evidence that children exposed to natural L2 speech acquire certain structures in a universal order" and that it is the L2 system, not the L1 system, which is

responsible for guiding the L2 acquisition process (Dulay and Burt 1974, 50-52). This last conclusion implies that L1 interference plays a smaller role in the language learner's errors than was previously thought.

In a second study, Bailey, Madden and Krashen performed a similar experiment on adult second language learners. Their subjects were seventy-three adults (ages 17 to 55) from twelve different native language backgrounds. They also used the Bilingual Syntax Measure developed by Dulay and Burt to elicit data and set out to test the following two hypotheses:

(1) adults learning English as a second language will show agreement with each other in the relative difficulty of functors in English.

(2) the adult rankings will be similar to that of the child learning English as a second language, rather than to that of children learning English as a first language (Bailey, Madden and Krashen 1974, 237).

Both of these hypotheses were supported by the study and the results were very similar to the findings of the Dulay/Burt study. The researchers also found that "while casual observation affirms that errors due to mother tongue interference do occur in second language learning in adults, our data imply that a major source of errors is intra- rather than inter-lingual, and are due to the use of universal language processing strategies" (Bailey, Madden and Krashen 1974, 242). On the basis of their findings,

especially the similar difficulty orders, they suggested the use of a "natural syllabus" in formal (classroom) language instruction. This idea was later rejected by Krashen (1985).

A 1978 study done by Larsen-Freeman, however, brought the discovery of a natural sequence of acquisition into question. She used five different tasks--reading, writing, listening, imitating and speaking (using the Bilingual Syntax Measure)--to elicit data from twenty-four adult learners of English as a second language from four native-language backgrounds. She hoped to discover, among other things, if the same morpheme order would be found to exist if different data collection procedures were utilized.

The results of this experiment showed that, although native language background did not have a significant effect on the accuracy order of English morphemes, the morpheme sequence was not the same for all of the tasks. However, the oral production tasks (speaking and imitating) did produce morpheme sequences similar to that found by Dulay and Burt. This finding brings up the question of variability in interlanguage.

Anyone who has ever taught a second or foreign language has inevitably noticed that a given student's performance varies with different tasks. On a written examination, for example, a student might do very well on the multiple-choice grammar section, but lose many points on the essay portion. Or one might be a very poor speaker, but do very well on grammar exercises. Some of this variability in performance

is undoubtedly due to the difficulty of each of the tasks involved, but much of it is due to the language learning processes at work within the learner.

As Ellis (1986, 75) notes, at any given stage of development, a learner's interlanguage system contains a number of competing rules. One rule guides performance on one occasion, while another rule may guide performance on a different occasion. Variability which can be explained with reference to either the linguistic or the situational context of use is called *contextual variability*. Another type of variability, *individual variability*, has to do with individual learner differences such as age and motivation. Finally, *free variability* consists of the learner's haphazard use of two or more alternate forms which exist in his interlanguage. For the purposes of this study we will be primarily concerned with contextual variability.

Many theories of second language acquisition have attempted to account for and explain variability in interlanguage. The Monitor Model of second language acquisition, developed by Krashen (1982), is probably the most influential theory to be developed in the past decade. Krashen's theory, which encompasses many areas of the language acquisition process, has received both praise and criticism from other researchers in the field. Rather than examine the entire theory, we will deal only with the Monitor hypothesis, which offers an explanation for variability in interlanguage.

The Monitor Model posits two separate systems which learners use to gain and utilize knowledge of a second language. According to this theory, the process of *acquisition* is responsible for initiating utterances while the process of *learning* is responsible for modifying these utterances to make them more correct grammatically. In other words, learned features of a language are available to the learner only as a Monitor, which may or may not be employed by the learner depending on the communicative situation.

Krashen states that the Monitor Model attempts to account for discrepancies in oral and written second language performance and that:

"the model predicts that the nature of second language performance errors will depend on whether monitoring is in operation. Errors that result from performance based on the acquired system alone will be consistent across learners/acquirers, regardless of first language, as acquisition is guided by universal principles. Errors that result from situations in which monitoring is possible will be more idiosyncratic, as they will reflect each learner's conscious mental representation of linguistic regularities in the target language." (Krashen 1977,).

According to Krashen (1982, 16) three requirements are deemed necessary for Monitor use: (1) sufficient time to enact the Monitor, (2) explicit knowledge of the grammatical rule, and (3) focus on the form of the message rather than on the meaning. (Krashen (1985) retracts time as a necessary condition for Monitor use. See discussion below).

Krashen's theory makes intuitive sense when one applies it to a typical language learner. When learners are concentrating on expressing an idea, they are not as concerned with correct grammar and thus their performance contains more errors than it would if they were concentrating on grammatical form. Also, if learners are in a hurry or are not allowed much time to express an idea, they will not have time to concentrate on grammar and will therefore make more errors. If given sufficient time, one would expect their performance to improve. Finally, one would not expect language learners to be able to correct their errors if they have not yet learned the grammar rule in question. Studies have been done, however, which challenge these seemingly logical assumptions.

Grezel (1986) reports finding that in some instances subjects perform less accurately in certain linguistic areas, e.g. morphology, in situations which should be favorable for monitoring, e.g. a written proficiency exercise, than they do in situations which should not be conducive to monitoring, e.g. a dialog. He attempts to explain this phenomenon, which he calls "negative monitoring," in terms of cognitive development as well as in terms of Krashen's hypothesis of individual variation in Monitor use.

Hulstijn (1982) investigates the effect of sufficient time and focus on form on the correct use of two Dutch word-order rules. He also examines the relationship between explicit

rule knowledge and correct rule application. Since the present study is, in part, modeled after the Hulstijn and Hulstijn study, we will examine this study in more detail. The experiment by Hulstijn and Hulstijn involved 32 adult learners of Dutch as a second language from nine native language backgrounds. The two rules which they focused upon were inversion of subject and finite verb in main clauses (INV) and the placement of the finite verb in final position in subordinate clauses (VF).

In the first part of the study, the subjects were asked to perform an oral story-retelling exercise under four different conditions. In the IF condition (Information/Fast) they were asked to pay attention to the information which they had to reproduce and at the same time they were instructed to speak as fast as they could. In the IS condition (Information/Slow) they could take as much time as they wished, still concentrating on information. In the GF and GS conditions (Grammar/Fast and Grammar/Slow) subjects were instructed to pay as much attention as possible to grammatical correctness with and without the time constraint.

The subjects listened to stimulus texts (in Dutch) through headsets. They were then required to retell the content of the texts in Dutch. They were also shown a phrase which would force the use of the required type of sentence structure (either INV or VF) and were told to begin their response with this phrase. For the two fast conditions, the

experimenter told the subjects to respond as quickly as possible and used a stopwatch to measure the amount of time taken. In the slow conditions, no stopwatch was used and the subjects were advised to take as much time as they needed. In the two information conditions, the subjects were told to concentrate on the contents of the stimulus texts and the experimenter informed them that their responses would be scored on the basis of information only. In the grammar conditions, the subjects were told to pay attention to their grammar and were informed that their responses would be scored for grammatical errors but not for information errors.

From this experiment the researchers found that concentration on grammatical correctness improved both INV and VF performance, but the presence of time pressure had no effect at all. They concluded that "Focus of Attention on grammar resulted in better performance, which is indicative of increased monitoring, irrespective of the Time Pressure" (Hulstijn and Hulstijn 1984, 34).

The second part of the study investigated the relationship between explicit or nonexplicit knowledge of a grammar rule and the successful application of this rule under different circumstances. Immediately following the first part of the experiment, the subjects were interviewed in order to assess their ability to *explicitly* verbalize the two word-order rules as well as their ability to judge whether a sentence with the corresponding grammatical structure was correct or

incorrect and why. The latter was done in order to test the subjects' nonexplicit knowledge of the rule. The results of this interview were then compared with the results from the first part of the experiment, specifically with the differences in correct scores between the I/F condition (presumably the condition under which the subjects would have the greatest difficulty producing correct forms) and the G/S condition (the condition under which the subjects would probably have the least difficulty producing correct forms).

The researchers found that only a few of the subjects had explicit knowledge of the INV rule and even fewer had explicit knowledge of the VF rule. In general, the subjects with explicit rule knowledge outperformed the subjects without such knowledge. However, when rule knowledge was compared with the percent difference between the I/F and G/S conditions, they found that *improvement* in performance for learners with explicit rule knowledge was generally not greater than for learners without this knowledge. In terms of grammatical accuracy the researchers concluded that "the learners lacking explicit knowledge did not profit less than the learners with explicit knowledge from the absence of time pressure and from a focus on grammar" (Hulstijn and Hulstijn 1984, 39). This finding is contrary to Krashen's claim that knowledge of the grammar rule is necessary for successful Monitoring to occur.

In a pilot study which I completed in March, 1989, I also

noticed performance which runs contrary to that predicted by Krashen's Monitor Model, specifically the predictions concerning the effect of concentration on grammar, the presence of time pressure and knowledge of the grammatical rule on learners' grammatical accuracy. The study compared the grammatical accuracy of the performance of eighteen first-year students of German at Michigan State University in three communicative situations. My hypothesis was that they would perform best in the situation which was most conducive to monitoring, and worst in the situation which was least conducive to monitoring.

The experiment, which focused upon seven verb-ending and verb-placement rules in German, consisted of four parts. The subjects participated in an oral interview in which they were first asked several questions dealing with everyday topics (e.g. school, holidays, leisure activities, etc.) and were then asked to describe two pictures from a magazine. This activity was termed "casual speech" (CS) since the focus was on communicating information and no mention was made of grammar, with the exception that the subjects were asked to use complete sentences when possible. Immediately following the interview, the subjects were asked to write responses to similar questions as well as to write a description of two more pictures. This activity was termed "casual writing" (CW). Again, no mention was made of using correct forms, but the subjects were asked to use complete sentences. The final two parts of the experiment were

conducted a few days later. For this task, the subjects were given a series of sentences to translate. The sentences were grouped according to the grammar feature being tested, and following each section the subjects were asked to state the rule for that grammar feature in their own words. These two activities were called "formal writing" (FW) and "knowledge of rule" (KR) respectively.

The interviews were then transcribed and all of the data were analyzed and scored for the following grammatical features: conversational past, modals, placement of the verb following subordinating conjunctions, placement of the verb following coordinating conjunctions, future tense, general conjugation of verbs in the present tense, and placement of the verb in second position. The subjects' renditions of the rules involved were then assessed as to their correctness and completeness. The expanded hypothesis was that: 1) the subjects would perform most accurately in the translation exercise, 2) they would perform least accurately in the interview, and 3) the subjects would perform "somewhere in between" in the casual writing exercise. It was also hypothesized that subjects without explicit knowledge of the rule involved would not perform significantly better in the tasks which were more conducive to monitoring than they did in the CS task, while the subjects who knew the rule would perform better in these situations.

In many cases the results of the experiment confirmed the

hypotheses. There were some interesting exceptions, however. In the cases of verb placement after coordinating conjunctions and present tense verb conjugation, the subjects performed most accurately in the CS condition. In cases of future and verb-second placement, they performed most accurately in the CW condition. In addition, there were several cases of subjects who could not articulate a certain rule, but who produced this grammar feature more accurately in conditions conducive to monitoring, as well as subjects who did articulate a rule, but produced the corresponding grammar feature most accurately in the CS situation.

3. Objective and Hypothesis

The Monitor Model has been the focus of much debate in recent years, but little testing has been done to determine whether the hypotheses of the Monitor Model can be supported by empirical evidence. Although the findings of the 1989 pilot study are interesting, it would be premature to draw any conclusions from them. Because the subjects produced very few examples (either correct and incorrect) of some of the grammatical features, it is difficult to predict how they would perform if they were to produce more examples of these features. Also, pronunciation was not scored in the CS condition. Even if it had been scored it would be difficult to determine whether the variations in pronunciation reflected errors in the grammatical system of

the subjects' interlanguages. For these and other reasons, it was advisable to conduct a follow-up study done in order to make the results of the pilot study more valuable and significant.

There is also a need for a follow-up to the study done by Hulstijn (1982). The findings of Hulstijn's study were significant enough to prompt Krashen to alter his Monitor Model. Krashen (1985) no longer includes time as a necessary condition for Monitor use. A willingness to modify one's theory on the basis of new information is commendable, but Krashen's reaction to the Hulstijn study is a bit surprising simply because it is based solely on the work of these two researchers. It seems that more investigation into the relationship between time pressure and Monitor use would be necessary for the theory to be altered. The purpose of the present study is, therefore, to provide some additional research in the area of Monitor use in the presence of time pressure and in the relationship between explicit rule knowledge and Monitor use in various communicative situations. More specifically, this study examines the written performance of beginning German students in situations which should be conducive to monitoring with situations in which monitoring should be difficult. The goal is to determine the degree to which they are indeed able to monitor their speech. It also compares the results of this experiment with Hulstijn's (1982) findings.

The hypotheses which will be tested in this thesis are:

- (1) Subjects' grammatical accuracy will be similar in the presence of time pressure and when time pressure is removed,
- (2) Subjects' grammatical accuracy will be greater when they are told to concentrate on grammar than when they are told to concentrate on information,
- (3) The grammatical accuracy of subjects who know the grammatical rule will improve more when the focus is on grammar than will the grammatical accuracy of subjects who do not know the rule.

4. Methodology

For this study I decided to use written data in order to compare the results obtained from different modes of speech (Hulstijn and Hulstijn used oral data) as well as to avoid ambiguities as to the accurateness of responses due to pronunciation errors. The grammatical rule focused upon in this experiment is subject-verb ending agreement in German. This grammar feature was chosen because, in a pilot study performed in 1989, I found that accuracy for verb conjugation (including both subject-verb ending agreement and correct verb-stem formation) was actually higher in situations which should not be conducive to monitoring than in situations which should favor monitoring.

The subjects for the present study were thirty-six first-year students of German at Michigan State University. The study aims to answer the following four questions: 1) Do the subjects perform differently in the presence of time

pressure than in the absence of time pressure? 2) Do the subjects perform differently when concentrating on information than when concentrating on grammar? 3) What is the relationship between explicit knowledge of the rule and successful monitoring? 4) What is the relationship between knowledge of the rule and performance on a discrete-point grammar exercise?

The study was conducted as follows: The subjects were collectively shown slides depicting scenes from everyday life in Germany such as shopping, eating, studying, etc. A total of twelve slides were shown, three slides for each of Tasks 1- 4. A brief description of each of the slides is given in Appendix A, page 30. For Task 1, before each slide was shown, the subjects were told to describe the slide, trying to write as much about the picture as they could. They were also told that they had only one minute to complete this task. For Task 2, the subjects were asked to describe each slide, again trying to write as much about the picture as they could. This time they were told that they could take as much time as they needed, and that the experimenter would call time when it looked as though everyone had written a sufficient amount. The purpose of Tasks 1 and 2 was to get the subjects to concentrate on information in the presence and in the absence, respectively, of time pressure.

For Task 3, the subjects were asked to describe each slide in writing, and to make their descriptions as

grammatically correct as possible. They were also told that they only had one minute to complete this task. For Task 4, the subjects were asked to describe each slide in writing and to make their descriptions as grammatically correct as possible. This time, they were told that they could take as much time as they needed, and that the experimenter would call time when it appeared that everyone had written a sufficient amount. The purpose of Tasks 3 and 4 was to get the subjects to concentrate on grammar in the presence and in the absence, respectively, of time pressure.

Following this part of the experiment the subjects were given a fill-in-the-blank exercise in which they were asked to correctly complete twenty German sentences by filling in the correct form of a German verb using English cues (Task 5). This was done to satisfy Krashen's (1982) notion that it might take an activity as focused on grammar as a discrete-point grammar exercise to activate the Monitor. Finally, the subjects were asked to fill out several verb-endings charts in order to assess their explicit knowledge of the verb-ending rule (Task 6). A duplicate of the forms and instructions used in the experiment described above is given in Appendix B, pages 31-40.

Summary of Tasks:

- Task 1--time pressure present, focus on information
- Task 2--time pressure absent, focus on information
- Task 3--time pressure present, focus on grammar
- Task 4--time pressure absent, focus on grammar
- Task 5--discrete-point grammar exercise
- Task 6--verb-ending chart

5. Scoring

The responses were then scored in the following manner: Only subject-verb ending agreement was scored and only verb endings were evaluated for accuracy. If the stem of a verb was misspelled, or if the wrong verb was used, it was not counted as wrong as long as the ending was correct. A verb was not scored if the subject could not be determined. The number of correct verbs for each task was divided by the total number of verbs (both correct and incorrect) for that task in order to get a "percent correct" for each task. This procedure was also used for the fill-in-the-blank exercise and the verb-ending charts. If a word was not filled in for the fill-in-the-blank exercise, it was not scored, because it was possible that the subject simply did not know the correct German equivalent of the English cue. If a blank was left empty for the verb-ending charts, however, it was counted as incorrect, since the German verb was provided. After the scores for each individual subject were calculated, mean scores for the group were calculated. A table of the raw scores for each subject is given in Appendix C, page 41.

6. Results

The scores were then organized in order to compare performance under time pressure with performance without time pressure, and performance when concentrating on

information with performance when concentrating on grammar. The scores for Tasks 1 and 3 were averaged and compared with the average of the scores for Tasks 2 and 4 to examine the effect of time pressure on grammatical accuracy. The scores for Tasks 1 and 2 were averaged and compared with the average of the scores for Tasks 3 and 4 to examine the effect of focus on information and focus on grammar on grammatical accuracy. While Hulstijn (1982) used only group mean scores for his comparisons, I will use both group mean scores and individual scores in order to get a more detailed look at how the subjects performed on the various tasks.

First the subjects' performance with time pressure and without time pressure will be examined (Table 1). Hulstijn (1982) found that the presence of time pressure had no effect on grammatical accuracy. In my study, this was partially confirmed, as well. The mean of the scores for Tasks 1 and 3 combined was 86.7. The mean of the scores for Tasks 2 and 4 was 87.4, meaning that, the presence of time pressure had no effect on the subjects' levels of grammatical accuracy when viewed collectively. However, if individual scores are examined, one finds that most of the subjects performed differently in the presence of time pressure than they did when time pressure was removed. The difference is not uniform, however, in that some subjects performed better (had greater grammatical accuracy) when time pressure was removed, some performed worse when time pressure was removed, and some performed essentially the

same under both conditions. Thirteen subjects scored five or more percentage points higher in the absence of time pressure than they did in the presence of time pressure. Twelve subjects scored five or more percentage points lower in the absence of time pressure than they did in the presence of time pressure. Eleven subjects had scores which varied by fewer than five percentage points in the two categories. Thus, for roughly one-third of the subjects the presence of time pressure had a positive effect on grammatical accuracy, for one-third of the subjects it had a negative effect on grammatical accuracy, and for roughly one-third of the subjects it had no significant effect on grammatical accuracy.

Table I: Summary of findings for Tasks 1-4:

Group Means			
	Focus On Info.	Focus on Grammar	
	Task 1	Task 3	Mean
With Pressure	87.4	86.0	86.7
	Task 2	Task 4	Mean
Without pressure	86.0	88.7	87.4
Mean	86.7	87.4	0.7=diff.

The results for the difference in the subjects'

performance when concentrating on information and when concentrating on grammar were similar to the results for the difference in performance when under time pressure and when time pressure was removed. Again, the mean of the scores for Tasks 1 and 2 was 86.7 and the mean of the scores for Tasks 3 and 4 was 87.4, suggesting that concentration on grammar had no effect on grammatical accuracy. Out of the thirty-six subjects, twelve scored at least five percentage points higher when concentrating on grammar as opposed to concentrating on information. Twelve subjects scored at least five percentage points lower when concentrating on grammar and the scores of twelve subjects varied by fewer than five percentage points in the two categories. Thus, for one-third of the subjects, concentration on grammar had a positive effect on grammatical accuracy, for one-third it had a negative effect, and for one-third it had no significant effect on grammatical accuracy. These results are different from the findings of Hulstijn, who concluded that focus on grammar had a positive effect on grammatical accuracy. However, Hulstijn notes that subjects whose scores tended to be higher (and who also tended to have more explicit knowledge of the grammar rule) improved less than those subjects whose scores tended to be lower, and states that this may be due to the fact that there is less room for improvement for these subjects. This phenomenon could play a role in the present study, too, as the group means are already quite high. If one examines individual scores one

notes that as the subjects' explicit knowledge of the grammar rule increased, their scores when focusing on information and grammar tended to be more consistent (Figure I). Figure I shows the difference between the mean of the scores on Tasks 3 and 4, in which subjects were concentrating on grammar, and the mean of the scores on Tasks 1 and 2, in which subjects were concentrating on information, plotted against their knowledge of the grammar rule.

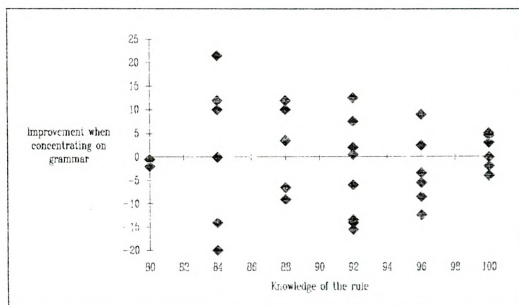


Figure I: Scatter Plot showing improvement when concentrating on grammar versus knowledge of the rule.

The next item considered was the relationship between the subjects' explicit knowledge of the grammar rule and their ability to successfully monitor their writing. To

accomplish this the scores for Task 1, in which time pressure was present and the focus was on information, were compared with the scores for Task 4, in which time pressure was absent and the focus was on grammar. The percentage difference between these two scores was compared with the subjects' explicit knowledge of the rule using the Pearson Product Moment correlation. (Ellis (1986, 125) summarizes the Pearson Product Moment Correlation as being a statistical procedure used to establish the the degree of fit, or correlation, between two sets of measurements relating to two separate variables. It helps the researcher to establish whether changes in the measurements of one of the variables is related to changes in the measurements of the other variable. It is important to note that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation is used to describe the relationship (or lack thereof) between two variables, but does not in any way suggest that a change in one of the variables causes a change in the other variable.) The correlation coefficient for Tasks 1 and 4 was $-.113$, which suggests almost no relationship between knowledge of the grammar rule and successful monitoring under monitor-conductive situations (Figure II). Hulstijn's study produced similar results in this comparison.

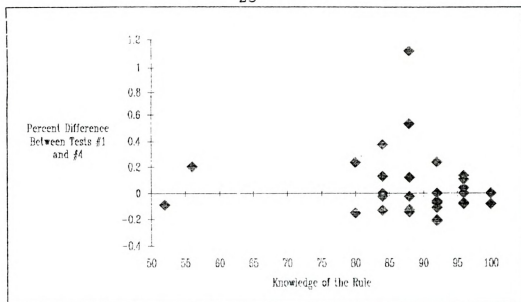


Figure II: Scatter Plot for the percent difference between Tasks 1 and 4, versus knowledge of the rule.

The final relationship which was examined was the relationship between knowledge of the grammar rule and performance on the discrete-point grammar exercise (Task 5). This was done to test Krashen's notion that it might take an exercise as focused on grammar as a discrete-point grammar exercise to activate the Monitor. Using the Pearson Product Moment formula the correlation coefficient for this comparison is .545, which suggests a modest, positive relationship between these two variables (Figure III).

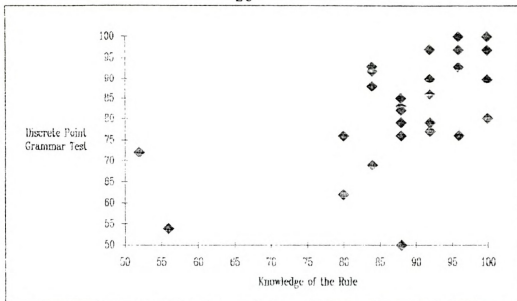


Figure III: Scatter Plot for performance on discrete point grammar test versus knowledge of the rule.

7. Conclusions

From these data the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) As Table 1 and Appendix C show, both collectively and on an individual basis, there is no correlation between the presence or absence of time pressure and grammatical accuracy. 2) As Table 1 and Appendix C show, both collectively and on an individual basis, there is no relationship between grammatical accuracy and concentration on grammar versus concentration on information. 3) As Figure II shows, there is no correlation between explicit knowledge of the grammar rule and successful monitoring when other conditions favor monitoring. In other words, the performance of subjects with explicit knowledge of the rule

does not improve more under monitor-conductive conditions than that of subjects without explicit knowledge of the grammar rule. 4) As Figure III shows, there is a moderate, positive correlation between explicit knowledge of the rule and performance on the discrete-point grammar exercise. The first conclusion agrees with the findings of Hulstijn, who found that the presence of time pressure had no effect on grammatical accuracy. This study also found no correlation between the presence of time pressure and grammatical accuracy. The second conclusion, however, does not agree with the findings of Hulstijn. Whereas he concluded that concentration on grammar results in higher grammatical accuracy than does concentration on information, our data show that there is no correlation between concentration on grammar versus information and grammatical accuracy. The third conclusion also agrees with Hulstijn's findings, since in both studies explicit knowledge of the grammar rule did not result in increased improvement when conditions favored monitoring. Finally, the fourth conclusion implies that, since there seems to be a moderate, positive correlation between knowledge of the grammar rule and performance on the discrete-point grammar exercise, it might indeed take a task as focused on form as a discrete-point grammar exercise to activate the Monitor.

8. Discussion

Before examining the implications of the results of this

study, some of the weaknesses of the study shall be examined. These weaknesses could have skewed the results of the study, causing them to be incongruent with the results of the Hulstijn and Hulstijn study and with the hypotheses of the Monitor Model.

One of the weaknesses of this study was the fact that the mean percentage correct for all of the tasks was quite high (86% or higher). This left very little room for improvement as the tasks became more and more conducive to monitoring. The high percentage of correct verb endings suggests that the subjects had nearly mastered this grammar feature within the framework of these types of writing exercises. Oral data or data utilizing listening or reading comprehension might produce entirely different results. For follow-up studies one might use a different, more advanced grammatical feature which would allow more room for improvement when monitoring. Another possibility would be to screen the subjects for the study, as Hulstijn and Hulstijn (1984) did, in order to test only those who had not mastered the specific grammar feature being studied.

Another weakness of this study (and others like it) is that one has no way of knowing whether the Monitor was indeed activated in the conditions which were monitor-conducive. Given the high percentages of correct verb endings, it is also possible that the subjects in this study monitored their speech in all of the conditions, even those in which monitoring would be more difficult. We must be

careful that our conclusions reflect this uncertainty as to whether the Monitor is activated in the various communicative situations.

A third, and perhaps the most important weakness of the study is the fact that the study was conducted with a very small sample of students who were at a beginning level of language proficiency. In addition, since the first-year German courses at MSU are all taught using a communicative-based teaching style in a natural approach, the subjects may have had a disproportionate amount of practice in speaking skills. In order for any far-reaching conclusions to be drawn, more studies on subjects with varying levels of proficiency and from various teaching-methodology backgrounds must be performed.

Finally, as with any study, if more data had been obtained from each of the subjects, a greater difference in performance on each of the tasks might have been produced by the subjects. Perhaps a larger-scale study or a more in-depth study on fewer subjects would have produced results different from ours.

Despite these weaknesses, there are some important implications of this study. The fact that there was such a low correlation between the subjects' knowledge of the grammatical rule and their improvement when conditions favored monitoring could give language teachers some insight into the performance and progress of their students. Quite often teachers assume that once a student has learned a

rule, his or her performance concerning that particular rule should be almost error-free, especially on tasks in which they are allowed as much time as they need and are told to be careful about grammar errors. If the students make errors even though they know the rule, many teachers conclude that they simply were not being careful. The results of this study suggest that this kind of thinking may be flawed, at least when it comes to beginning learners of a foreign language. Students at this level of foreign language proficiency may not yet be capable of applying the grammatical knowledge that they have to communicative situations.

9. Further Study

As stated earlier, although much debate has surrounded Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model, very little empirical testing has been done to determine its validity. The Hulstijn and Hulstijn (1984) study, the Grezel (1986) study and the present study represent just a fraction of the research possibilities concerning the subject of monitoring and the Monitor Model. In addition to the suggestions posed when discussing the weaknesses of this study, further research directly related to the present study would include a similar study of more advanced subjects to see whether their monitoring skills were more advanced than those of beginning students. Or one could test the subjects' ability to monitor their own written performance in a written self-



correction exercise. This type of study would shed some light on students' ability to find and correct their own errors on a longer writing passage based on their knowledge of the grammatical rule being tested. Or one could look at subjects' monitoring ability when discussing or writing about different topics or to different audiences to determine the role that inhibition plays in the ability to monitor speech.

10. Conclusion

The present study was conducted in order to discover whether the hypotheses of Krashen's (1982) Monitor Model would be supported by research. Although the results of our study did not directly support the notion that sufficient time, knowledge of the grammatical rule and focus on grammar are necessary in order for language students to monitor their speech, they also by no means proved this notion to be false. Krashen's Monitor Model is a difficult theory to test because it deals with processes occurring deep within the human brain and fails to consider such factors as individual learning style and learners' previous exposure to the target language within the context of various teaching methods. Nonetheless it is still a valuable theory which has dramatically changed the field of foreign and second language acquisition as well as the majority of foreign (second) language classrooms in this country. To fail to test this theory further before abandoning or building upon



it would be a disservice to the field of foreign and second language acquisition.

Appendix A

Following is a description of each of the slides used in Tasks 1 through 4.

Task 1

Slide 1: Two women standing in front of an outdoor concession stand. A sign reading "Pommes frites" hangs near the window.

Slide 2: A classroom with several college-aged students sitting at their desks. The instructor is not visible.

Slide 3: Two men sitting at a table at an outdoor cafe. A waitress is standing there, waiting to take their order.

Task 2

Slide 1: Two women standing outside a fruit market. They are looking at a display of fresh fruit outside the market.

Slide 2: A man and a woman walking down the street conversing. A child 5 or 6 years old walks with them.

Slide 3: A family at the dinner table.

Task 3

Slide 1: A meat market. Several customers are waiting to be served.

Slide 2: A young person (gender unclear) in the kitchen loading a dishwasher.

Slide 3: A man and woman sitting at the table about to eat. The man is asian and they appear to be eating asian food.

Task 4

Slide 1: Two women standing outside a fish market. A sign saying "Fische" hangs outside the door.

Slide 2: A man and two children standing outdoors next to a car. The man is about to pick up one of the children.

Slide 3: Four people sitting at an outdoor restaurant, talking and laughing.

Appendix B

PICTURE DESCRIPTION

Task One: Write as much as you can about the picture. One minute time limit.

1.

2.

3.

Appendix B

Task Two: Write as much as you can about the picture. No time limit.

1.

2.

3.

Appendix B

Task Three: Concentrate on correct grammar. One minute time limit.

1.

2.

3.

Appendix B

Task Four: Concentrate on correct grammar. No time limit.

1.

2.

3.

Appendix B

Task Five

Please fill in the blanks with the appropriate form of the German equivalent of the English verb provided.

Ein Geschäft

1. Zwei Männer _____ (come) in das Geschäft.
2. Sie _____ (want) neue Kleider.
3. Ein Mann _____ (finds) ein blaues Hemd.
4. Das Hemd _____ (is) nicht sehr teuer (expensive).
5. Er _____ (buys) das Hemd.

Ein Restaurant

1. Eine Frau und ihr Mann _____ (go) ins Restaurant.
2. Sie _____ (have) einen großen Hunger.
3. Die Frau _____ (sees) den Kellner.
4. Die Frau _____ (speaks) mit dem Kellner.
5. Der Mann und die Frau _____ (wait) auf das Essen.

Auf der Straße

1. Viele Autos _____ (are) auf der Straße.
2. Ein Junge _____ (stands) an der Ecke (corner).
3. Ich _____ (think), er _____ (waits) auf den Bus.
4. In fünf Minuten _____ (is) der Bus da.



Appendix B

Mein Geburtstag

1. Heute _____ (is) mein Geburtstag.
2. Meine Mutter _____ (makes) einen Schokoladekuchen.
3. Mein Bruder und meine Schwester _____ (have) Geschenke für mich.
4. Mein Vater _____ (brings) ein großes Paket nach Hause.
5. Ich _____ (eat) ein wunderbares Abendessen.

In der Kneipe

Karl: "Ich _____ (would like) ein Bier."

Lotte: "Du _____ (can) kein Bier haben, du _____ (are) noch nicht 21."

Karl: "Ja, aber ich _____ (have) das Ausweis (I.D.) von meinem Bruder. Er _____ (is) schon 23."

Lotte: "Ach, gut. Wieviel _____ (costs) ein Bier? Ich _____ (want) auch eins."

Karl: "Ich _____ (pay for) das. Du _____ (have) nicht so viel Geld."

Appendix B

Task Six

Please complete the following verb charts:

sagen	finden	wollen
-------	--------	--------

ich sag____ _____	ich find____	ich
----------------------	--------------	-----

du sag____ _____	du find____	du
---------------------	-------------	----

er sag____ _____	er find____	er
---------------------	-------------	----

wir sag____ _____	wir find____	wir
----------------------	--------------	-----

ihr sag____ _____	ihr find____	ihr
----------------------	--------------	-----

Sie sag____ _____	Sie find____	Sie
----------------------	--------------	-----

sein	haben
------	-------

ich _____	ich _____
-----------	-----------

du _____	du _____
----------	----------

er _____	er _____
----------	----------

wir _____	wir _____
-----------	-----------

ihr _____	ihr _____
-----------	-----------

Sie _____	Sie _____
-----------	-----------

Vielen Dank!

Appendix B

Bowman Experiment--Instruction Sheet

Please read the following instructions aloud before administering the experiment.

For this experiment you will be asked to describe a number of slides. Before you are shown each slide, you will be told what you are to concentrate on when writing your descriptions. For some of the slides you will be given a specific time limit in which to write your descriptions. For the other slides, there will be no time limit. The instructor will stop you when it appears that each student has written a sufficient amount. For each slide, please try to keep writing until the instructor tells you to stop. You may be as creative or factual in your descriptions as you like. All of your descriptions should be in German.

An example of a creative description might sound like this: Here is a bakery. Mrs. Jones is in the bakery. She wants to buy an apple strudel and a loaf of bread. The clerk says they don't have any more strudel today. Mrs. Jones becomes very angry and says she will not come to this bakery any more.

An example of a factual description might sound like this: Here is a bakery. There are three people in the bakery. One woman is about 35 years old. She is wearing a yellow shirt and blue jeans. She has her son with her. He is wearing green pants and a red shirt. The other person is an old man. He is fat.

In some instances you will be asked to describe the scene from the point of view of one of the people in the slide. For this task you may want to write a conversation. Your description may sound like this: I am in the bakery. I see a man with a white shirt and blue pants. I think he needs help with his package. I ask him: "do you need help?" He says: "Yes, please."

Don't worry if you have trouble with vocabulary or if you think your German isn't good enough. This exercise was meant to assess the performance of students at your level of competence. Your descriptions don't have to be very elaborate. Just do your best. Don't forget to write in German! Thank you!

Appendix B

Bowman Experiment
Instructor's Sheet

Please read the following instructions before showing the respective slide. You may repeat the instructions if necessary.

Slide #1

Try to say as many things about this picture as you can. You will have only one minute to write this description.

Slide #2

Try to say as many things about this picture as you can. You will have only one minute to write this description.

Slide #3

Try to say as many things about this picture as you can. This time, describe the picture from the point of view of the man in the dark blue jacket, in other words, you are the man in the dark blue jacket. You will have only one minute to write this description.

Slide #4

Try to say as many things about this picture as you can. This time, you will have no specific time limit. The instructor will call time when it appears that most of the students have written a sufficient amount.

Slide #5

Try to say as many things about this picture as you can. You will have no specific time limit.

Slide #6

Try to say as many things as you can about this picture. This time, describe the picture from the point of view of the woman in the black-and-white striped shirt. You will have no specific time limit.

Appendix B

Slide #7

As you describe the following slide, please pay attention to your grammar. Try to make your sentences as grammatically correct as you can. You will have only one minute to write your descriptions.

Slide #8

Again, please pay attention to your grammar. You will have only one minute to write your descriptions.

Slide #9

Again, please pay attention to your grammar. This time, describe the picture from the point of view of either the man or the woman in the picture. You will have only one minute to write your descriptions.

Slide #10

Again, please pay attention to your grammar. This time you will have no specific time limit. The instructor will call time when it appears that most of the students have written a sufficient amount.

Slide #11

Again, please pay attention to your grammar. You will have no specific time limit.

Slide #12

Please pay attention to your grammar. This time, describe the picture from the point of view of the man with the beard. You will have no specific time limit.

Appendix C

	Info/ Fast Task 1	Info/ Slow Task 2	Gram/ Fast Task3	Gram/ Slow Task 4	Dis. pt Test Task 5	Ending Chart Task 6
1	75	50	60	64	62	80
2	83	91	71	92	97	96
3	67	89	88	83	79	92
4	80	33	86	73	72	52
5	100	100	83	100	76	96
6	67	87	67	83	76	80
7	100	89	100	93	86	92
8	88	83	67	86	85	88
9	91	86	100	95	93	96
10	100	93	100	94	97	92
11	100	100	100	100	93	84
12	60	90	78	92	79	88
13	100	75	100	100	97	92
14	75	77	54	67	90	92
15	82	89	63	80	93	84
16	100	94	88	79	90	92
17	100	83	75	80	90	92
18	100	82	100	92	90	100
19	43	91	67	91	76	88
20	82	89	86	92	83	88
21	100	100	88	100	77	92
22	86	85	56	75	92	84
23	100	94	90	100	97	100
24	100	100	100	92	100	100
25	75	90	100	85	88	84
26	100	91	100	100	100	100
27	100	100	83	92	100	96
28	67	82	100	92	69	84
29	83	55	100	100	54	56
30	100	76	100	100	69	84
31	82	95	89	93	93	96
32	88	64	57	77	50	88
33	89	100	100	89	80	100
34	92	100	100	79	82	88
35	93	94	100	93	100	100
36	100	100	100	93	93	96

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