

CHAPTER 2

FOUNDATIONS OF THE SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

This study is influenced by a number of concepts in educational psychology, pedagogical studies, and language acquisition research. These areas of study will be described below.

Research in Focus on Form

Focus on Form studies have generally examined seven different ways teachers provide feedback or scaffolds to learners: *recasting* and *reformulation* are sometimes used interchangeably to describe when teachers correct and/or expand an ill-formed utterance in an unobtrusive way; *clarification requests* involve asking learners what they meant by an utterance; *metalinguistic feedback* is teacher feedback on the form of a learner's utterance, with the intention that learners will reflect on such feedback in order to make corrections later (Lyster & Ranta, 1997); *repetition* is where the teacher mimics, with modified intonation, the part of a learner's utterance that is ill-formed (Panova & Lyster, 2001); *explicit correction* is pointing out clearly to the learner that their utterance was ill-formed and then providing the standard form to the learner; *elicitation* involves various methods for hinting to the learners to notice and change their utterances (ibid.); *translation* is translating a learner's utterance in their native language to the target language.

Studies involving the effectiveness of these various forms of interactions have produced mixed results. Lyster and Ranta (1997) examined over 18 hours of data from 4th

grade French immersion classrooms where the learners studied in content areas. They found that neither recasts nor explicit corrections led to significant changes in learner language. On the other hand, they noticed that metalinguistic feedback, elicitations, clarification requests, and repetition were markedly more successful in leading to repair. A plausible explanation for these differing results is that the latter forms of feedback provide more opportunities for more active involvement for learners, demanding more investment of thought, reflection, and production.

Other researchers have found similar results showcasing the mixed effectiveness of recasts. Mackey and Philp (1998) investigated the effectiveness of recasts involving 35 adult learners of English from mixed L1 backgrounds. Importantly, they found that advanced learners benefited more from the use of recasts than either beginning or intermediate learners. Long, Inagaki, & Ortega (1998) investigated the effectiveness of recasts for learners of university level Spanish and Japanese. Interestingly, the learners of Japanese did not demonstrate as much improvement, when recasts were used, as the learners of Spanish did. One difference that could explain the results was that the learners of Japanese were second semester students whereas the learners of Spanish were third semester students. This would support Mackey and Philp's research findings mentioned earlier that advanced level students were able to benefit from the use of recasts more than lower level students. However, 20 of the learners of Japanese had studied Japanese between one and four years already in high school and half the learners had spent brief periods in Japan. Another possibility could be that the usefulness of recasts is structure dependent. The target structures for the Japanese learners were adjectival ordering and locatives. For the Spanish study, the target structures involved adverb placement and

topicalization of direct objects. Of these two structures, only adverb placement was shown to develop with learners who received recasts.

A later study by Panova and Lyster (2003) involved 4 weeks of observation of adult ESL students in a classroom in Montreal Canada. The students came from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Quebec, Guinea Conakry, and Portugal though the bulk of the students – 20 – were Haitian. Perhaps significantly, most of the students spoke French, so the context was more similar to EFL situations than ESL situations. But the study supported Lyster's earlier study, finding that clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition led to the highest level of uptake, whereas recasting, explicit correction, and translation led to lower rates of success. While a shortcoming of explicit correction is the lack of negotiation between teacher and learners, perhaps a problem with recasting is that the learners might not notice or understand that the teacher is using it as a device to correct the learners's utterances. "A learner might not be able to determine whether negative feedback is a model of the correct version or a different way of saying the same thing" (Long, cited in Mackey, 1999, p.561).

Philp (2003) found that learners *can* notice the gap between their language choices and that of the teacher but hypothesized and concluded that noticing was dependent on a few crucial features: *developmental readiness*, *length of recasts*, and *degree of difference* between the learner's utterance and the recast choice. Underscoring all these features is the implication that learners at a beginning level of learning might not be able to take in recasted information and therefore, recasts are better forms of feedback for intermediate to advanced learners.

However, some research has resulted in more promising results for recasts. Some researchers found that recasting led to successful repair when there was a consistent and limited focus to one linguistic feature. In other words, if the feedback used by the teacher is always given to the form targeted, if only one form is targeted, and the learner is made to repeat the corrected version one or more times then uptake will be successful. Doughty and Varela (1998) focused solely on the past tense in their study of students in a content-based science class. Their study included 'corrective recasts'. Student ill-formed utterances were repeated with rising intonation, and then if students did not correct the error, the teacher provided the correct form. Positive results were obtained from the treatment group while the control group failed to show progress.

A study by Han (2002) showed significant changes in learner language while only recasting and repetition were used. Her study pointed to four critical features for recasting to be effective: *individualized attention*, *consistent focus*, *developmental readiness*, and *intensity*. The subjects in her study were learners who used the past tense inconsistently. Simple past tense was the focus. The researcher consistently recasted only this form and had learners repeat the recast. This would suggest as well that students are not necessarily 'noticing' but being explicitly corrected, as prompts for repetition were added on to recasting. This leaves us with the question then, if repetition is removed from recasting and if all other features are present – consistent and limited focus, individual attention, and developmental readiness – is recasting enough for learners to notice input, which then will lead to uptake? If not, what other features, devices, or methods, aid the process of recasting? This in turn leads to an unresolved issue: simply because learners do not show signs of uptake – immediate or delayed – this does not prove that the input has not

been 'noticed,' has not been taken in. Learners might have noticed a form but for a variety of reasons fail to use it: developmental unreadiness, lack of time or the tools to process and produce the language they are hearing or seeing, lack of confidence, uncertainty over the meaning of the feedback, and lack of interest in accuracy. These can all be factors other than noticing that result in failure to produce the targeted form. Some of these questions are addressed in the next section involving an examination of some key studies of teacher student interactions.

Interaction Studies

Long (cited in Mackey, 1998, p. 558) developed 'The Interaction Hypothesis' from the earlier work of Krashen (*ibid.*) and Hatch (*ibid.*). Essentially his theory claimed that language acquisition was developed through the conversational and linguistic adjustments speakers made in their interactions with other speakers. Furthermore, these interactions lead to negotiations of incomprehensible input that provide further opportunities for acquisition. Swain's work on the Output Hypothesis suggests that in turn, the output that learners produce from these interactions leads to further opportunities for interaction and negotiation (*ibid.*).

Innovative studies based on this model of acquisition have been undertaken by Lynch (2001), Sun (2003), Burton and Daroon (2003), and Ritchie (2005). Lynch and Ritchie in particular found that a variety of interactions, even recasts, could be effective with the help of recording devices and the use of transcription. In Lynch's study, he had learners work on oral role playing tasks. Learners performed the tasks and the teacher videotaped the performances. Learners discussed their performances with their group and

then reviewed the video tape with the teacher. They had a chance to transcribe a portion of their dialogue and then present the finished product to the teacher. Lynch reported many changes in learner language through this method. Ritchie (2005) recorded and transcribed teacher/learner interactions that involved role plays of nurses giving treatment advice to patients being discharged from the hospital. He also found that allowing learners to record and then transcribe their work led to a number of changes in language. Importantly, he found that teacher recasts of learners' ill-formed utterances could lead to learner modifications of their language, even when the learners were at a low-intermediate level of second language development.

The work of Laufer and Hulstijn (cited in Smith, 2005) provides clues into the success of the studies performed by Lynch and Ritchie. They point to the importance of a high *involvement load* in processing new lexical information. The involvement load is comprised of three features: *need*, *search*, and *evaluation*. *Need* is similar to notions of external and internal motivation. *Search* involves using resources such as dictionaries, peers, teachers, to find meanings of unknown words. *Evaluation* is "comparing a given word with other words, comparing a specific meaning of the target word with its other meanings or combining the word with other words to determine if the word fits the context." (ibid., p.52). Lynch found that his learners were highly motivated as they saw the obvious rewards in improving their accuracy. Secondly, the time and thought involved in transcribing recordings necessarily leads to a high involvement load, so these tasks can be indexed to *search* and *evaluation*; students must stop the recording one or more times, sometimes many times, to make sure what they heard was correct. Hearing their own utterances, the utterances of other speakers, checking to make sure what they

heard was correct, writing what they heard down, and then seeing and evaluating the language used in the transcription increases the involvement load significantly. At the very least, the involvement load increases greatly from an in-class session where the feedback received from a teacher or peer might have been uttered only one time. Secondly, it increases the likelihood that the feedback will be noticed and interpreted as a move to make a change in the language. So even if the only feedback given in one particular interaction, or in all interactions, was recasting, the learners are hearing it at least more than once; they are then writing their structural or lexical choices down based on the recorded feedback of the teacher. This step adds the visual and psychomotor domains to what was previously just a reliance on the aural domain; then the learners read the material again and take notes if needed, which further increases the involvement load.

While the studies from Lynch and Ritchie provide valuable insights into how effective feedback can increase the involvement load of learners, leading to successful uptake, gaps remain in the research. The aim in Ritchie's study was to weigh options for development of materials; so even though significant changes to learner language were noted, an attempt to quantify the changes was not made, as this was outside the scope of the study. Lynch's study quantified the changes but there was no investigation into the reasons behind the changes made, nor was there any attempt to assess whether editing changes were taken up in later performances. Another avenue unexplored by these studies involves the role that the socially interactive process itself plays in successful repair; more specifically, how do the more detailed moves of the teacher and the learner

in social interaction lead to learner modifications of their language? The following sections of this review delve into these issues.

Scaffolding

Ellis (2003) describes scaffolding as “the interactive work participants engage in to accomplish a task collaboratively. Through scaffolding the participants construct zones of proximal development and thereby foster learning” (p.350). Elsewhere, Ellis describes scaffolding as “the dialogic process one speaker assists another in performing a function that he or she cannot perform alone” (pp. 180 – 181). Originally the term was used as a metaphor borrowed from the building trades by Wood, Bruner, and Ross (1976). Bruner (cited in Yu, 2004) suggests that the teacher provides a scaffold to support the learners’ fragile developmental processes and then “removes the scaffold part by part as the reciprocal structure can stand on its own” (p.5). These scaffolds involve six crucial tasks for the mentor: *Recruitment* – helping to motivate the student, *Reduction in Degrees of Freedom* – simplifying the task, *Direction Maintenance* – keeping the learner on target, *Marking Critical Features* – foregrounding features of the task that are relevant, *Frustration Control* – reducing frustration for the learner, and *Demonstration* – modeling, displaying idealized outcomes for which the learner can imitate (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Some of these features mirror features of task based learning, where learners are given a meaningful task to complete (recruitment), clear objectives to keep them focused (reduction in degrees of freedom, direction maintenance), ways to minimize stress or frustration through small group or pair work activities (frustration control) and salient

language features to notice (marking critical features, demonstration), especially in regards to the gap between their language and the language of the teacher.

In one interesting and illustrative example of scaffolding, Chen-ying li (2004) describes a teacher's use of scaffolding in the oral presentation of a picture story book to an elementary school class in Taiwan. Key aspects of scaffolding moves are noted in her commentaries and summary appendix. For example, the teacher recruits learner interest in asking what kind of food the characters will eat – food being a common topic of interest universally. The teacher also maintains direction when the learners find something humorous which distracts from the focus. For example, when the students begin laughing about something else, the teacher eventually redirects the students to the subject they had been discussing, 'the princess.' The teacher provides additional help in the areas of 'marking critical features', 'controlling frustration,' and 'demonstration' as well. One limiting aspect of the study, however, was that the learners and the teacher were both Taiwanese. Much of the dialogue was conducted in the native language. It would be illuminating to see a similar study conducted in an ESL class of mixed nationalities where the dialogic process was conducted in English alone.

De Guerrero and Villami (2000) describe another study involving scaffolding moves by adult speakers of Spanish who were working on writing skills in English. In this study, the learners were instructed to write narratives about an event or experience where they learned something about themselves. Readers commented on the drafts, illustrating specific examples of scaffolding processes. Scaffolding involved both grammar and mechanics. The results were illuminating in demonstrating the success of

scaffolding moves, which were co-constructed, but this study also involved learners who spoke the same native language.

An illustrative example of scaffolding where the learner and teacher spoke English exclusively in dialogue is provided by Ellis (2003, p.181). In the task set for this study, the goal for the learner was to find out what is wrong with a picture where no pedals appear on a bicycle. But this original goal is beyond the reach of the learner so the teacher and learner in collaboration simplify the task to control frustration. The learner is able to identify colors in the picture so he repeats one of the colors that had been learned previously when asked to describe something wrong with the bicycle. The teacher accepts this response but marks a critical feature by providing an ideal use of the term, "It's red" (previously, the learner had just used a one word utterance, 'red'). In the end, through the teacher's prompts, the learner is able to produce an outcome that he was unable to do in previous sessions – a two-word utterance to describe the tires: "black /taes/". A new target was reached that involved scaffolding moves and co-construction between the teacher and the learner.

These studies provide valuable insights and illumine the role of scaffolding in interaction. However, none of them sought to quantify the changes made by learners in response to scaffolding moves; additionally none of them recorded and rated degrees of self-regulation, an important component in the next section of this review.

The Sociocultural Perspective

Prior to research undertaken from a sociocultural perspective, the field of second language acquisition mostly attended to cognitive and individualistic models of input.

While the field owes much to researchers in these areas such as Krashen it was at the cost of neglecting the social or cultural factors involved in SLA. In response to this neglect, the sociocultural perspective was born.

As Wan Shun Lam and Claire Kramsch (2003) put it, sociocultural theory “makes the social activity primary, and views individual cognitive processes as an internalization on the psychological plane of processes that have first taken place on the social plane” (p.144). This is in sharp relief to Chomskian inspired cognitive models where the individual mind is seen as the primary place where learning and acquisition take place. Lev Vygotsky, widely acknowledged as the primary pioneer of sociocultural theory, illustrates a rebuttal to the individually oriented cognitive paradigm in his book *Mind in Society* (1978). A young child reaches his hand out for an object beyond his grasp. When his mother comes along to assist him, the child realizes that his grasping movement is an act of pointing *in relation to her*, not to the object alone (p. 56).

In an early and innovative study, Aljaahfreh & Lantolf (1994) describe how this relational feature distinguishes the sociocultural approach from previous cognitive models. Whereas cognitive input/output models had investigated the role and effect of implicit or explicit types of corrective feedback on learning, they were inspired by computational metaphors of mental processing. The sociocultural perspective investigates how the learner reacts and makes follow-up moves in response to socially situated feedback. Aljaahfreh & Lantolf claim that feedback “relevance must be negotiated between the novice learner and the expert knower of the language” (pp, 466,467). One innovation of this study was the creation of a five point regulatory scale (p.470) to measure more precisely learner growth in the ZPD. This scale has been described in the

introduction to this thesis, but to review it is a scale to measure learner movement towards independence or self-regulation based on the frequency and quality of help the learner needs in order to notice errors and make changes. This was an important innovation in interactive studies in that it offered a way to explicitly analyze and grade the degree to which the learners were moving towards self-regulation.

This work was followed by a study undertaken by Nassaji and Swain (2000) where the researchers compared the effect of random (not finely tuned) vs. negotiated help on the learning of English articles. The researchers utilized another scale created by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994, p.471) which measured 13 grades of assistance, in working with two learners. With one of the learners, the help was finely-tuned and graduated. With the other learner, help was offered, but at random points along the scale. They found that the learner who received the more finely-tuned, non-random help, made more progress than the learner who received random help. These results were promising though they cannot be generalized as the study involved only two learners. At best the results can be viewed as part of the larger story of the collective case study research in the sociocultural perspective. Another limitation is that the study involved written, not oral errors. More work is needed to see how well these scales can be applied to oral practice. One possible limitation in applying this particular 13 point scale to research on oral errors is that it could be a difficult task, especially for first time researchers, teachers, or tutors, to keep all 13 points in their heads while trying to attend to the on-line oral errors learners are making. "Clearly, the expert needs considerable skill to determine the appropriate level of scaffolding needed" (Ellis, 2003, 192). In another study by Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1995, cited in Ellis, 2003), "the tutor was not always successful

in tuning his assistance to the learner's level of development. Sometimes he offered more support than was required, thereby failing to push the learner towards greater autonomy" (p. 192). In other studies, the tutor does not provide enough support (ibid.). An additional limitation in this study was the fact that the errors involved only the use of English articles. We cannot, with unflinching confidence, extrapolate from the successful outcomes in this study on articles to success involving other parts of speech. Finally, Nassaji and Swain felt that it was unnatural trying to avoid entering into any negotiation with the learner receiving random prompts. They recommended that future studies examine "the relationship between the various degrees of negotiation and the amount of learning on the part of the learner" (p. 48).

To attend to that issue, Nassaji recently undertook a study to compare limited vs extended negotiation (Nassaji, in press) and found that feedback without negotiation as well as feedback with limited negotiation was less effective than feedback with extended negotiation. Again, the study was limited as it was just one ESL class of 14 students and the errors examined were only written ones. Additionally, concepts such as 'extended' and 'limited' are not binary. Decisions on where to draw the line between 'extended' and 'limited' are going to be somewhat arbitrary as these concepts flow on a continuum. However, these findings offer another, if tentative, piece of evidence to support the collective body of evidence that has been building in support of the sociocultural paradigm in language learning and teaching.

To investigate the correction of oral errors, Ohta (2000) undertook a study of two learners of Japanese working in collaboration. Since the parties involved were learners, and possibly considering the difficulty in training the learners in the use of a complex 13

point scale, Ohta only utilized Aljaahfreh and Lantolf's five point regulatory scale in her analysis. Ohta also found that the learners benefited from negotiated help, though she did not measure to what extent this degree of internalization was maintained in a delayed performance. However, it is significant that her study did not utilize trained tutors but peers working in collaboration. This is an important development in that as Vygotsky stated, scaffolding need not happen from adult guidance or, in SLA parlance, a native speaker tutor or teacher. It is also important in that it shifts the metaphor from the use of the term 'scaffolding' over to 'collaborative dialogue.' Where scaffolding suggests the help is unidirectional, with the tutor or more capable peer being solely responsible for the guidance of the language work under discussion, collaborative dialog suggests the learner is a co-creator and scaffolder. At the very least, in collaborative dialogue, a learner's contributions support those of a tutor and sometimes supersede them, when the learner is ready to initiate his or her own moves to take the work in a direction of his or her own choosing. In Swain's (2000) words, "Collaborative dialogue mediates joint problem solving and knowledge building" (p.102). Ohta's study makes an important contribution to the field of SLA and the recent shift in the use of metaphors, from scaffolding to collaborative dialog, to describe sociocultural perspectives. However, we need not assign elements of scaffolding (the finely tuned or progressively implicit form of feedback) to the dustbin of history, as elements of scaffolding are clearly still of use in collaborative dialogue. Therefore, it is more precise to say that the new metaphor of collaborative dialogue absorbs and digests the older metaphor of scaffolding, eschewing only the obsolete notions of unidirectional movement or assistance.

Emerging Directions in the Sociocultural Perspective

At this point, the inquisitive reader might ask, “Where is the ‘cultural’ in the ‘sociocultural’”? Many of these studies were inspired by Vygotskyian notions of psychological development. Knowledge starts on the social plane and then gradually it is internalized. This delineates the social aspect of Vygotskyian epistemology but some readers might wonder where or if specific cultural aspects come in. However, what Vygotsky meant by ‘culture’ was a bit more general and abstract. Lantolf (2000), paraphrasing Vygotsky, states it thusly: “The *sociocultural* (italics in original) domain, concerned with how the different types of symbolic tools developed by human cultures throughout the course of their respective histories affected the kinds of mediation favored, and with it the kinds of thinking valued, by these cultures” (p. 3). So, transposing this definition onto our sociocultural studies discussed this far, we can say that the scales constructed by Aljaahfreh and Lantolf, the forms of feedback, and other linguistic and paralinguistic signs that appear in dialogic processes, represent the cultural symbols and mediating devices that transform scaffolded dialogue into learning.

On the other hand, it is also worth asking, what more specific cultural dimensions could be sheltered under this umbrella. In the study, “Modeling the acquisition of speech in a ‘multilingual’ society” (Leather, 2002) we are introduced to a six year old Dominican boy, named Alvin, whose linguistic environment is “bilingual and diglossic” (pp. 47 – 48). In Alvin’s society, the Commonwealth of Dominica, English is the official and educational language though 90 percent of the population speaks Kweyol, a French based Creole vernacular (p.48). The window into Alvin’s sociolinguistic world is opened in this study as we are invited to witness the influence of specific sociocultural factors,

such as perceptions of class and educational level, on Alvin's phonological choices. Leather suggests that it is not enough to know the linguistic resources available to Alvin; we also need to know "the symbolic value of English to Dominican Kweyol speakers, and more specifically to Caribs" (p. 49) and how these sociocultural factors interface with the linguistic systems at Alvin's disposal. In other words, we need a full picture of the context.

Context according to Halliday & Hassan (1985) refers to the kinds of activities involved, who the actors are and the interactive roles assigned to them – their role relationships, how language functions in a particular situation, and the broader cultural background of the actors (pp. 45-47). Accordingly, some questions that need to be asked are: Why are the learners learning the target language? What goals have they set for themselves? What have been their experiences thus far in learning the target language? Is their motivation primarily intrinsic or extrinsic, instrumental, or acculturative? How do they view themselves in relation to the target culture and language they are attempting to learn? To what degree do they adopt another self or form a hybrid self when learning a target language? What role does 'Face' play in the respective cultures of interlocutors and in the acquisition of the target language? How is sense of confidence supported? How did the learners feel about the learning situation – did they have feelings of excitement, nervousness, anger, discouragement, etc.? What are the motivations and experiences of the tutors? What is their view and experience of language teaching to cultures other than their own? How did they support the learners' in their learning, their sense of face, and other related features? Moreover, how do these elements interface with each other, and with linguistic features, to inspire or retard acquisition?

Out of these questions, the concept of 'face' in particular stands out as it is embedded in some of the previous questions or can interact with them in the acquisition of a foreign language. Brown and Levinson (cited in Wardaugh, 1986, p.275) distinguish two different kinds of face: positive and negative face:

Positive face is the desire to gain the approval of others, the "positive consistent self image or "personality"....claimed by interactants' (p.61). *Negative face* is the desire to be unimpeded by others in one's actions, 'the action and freedom from imposition'(p.61). Positive face looks for solidarity; negative face, however, is more problematic for it requires interactants to recognize each other's negative face, i.e., the need to act without giving offense.

Rojjanaprapayon, R., Chiemprapha, P. and Kanchanakul (2004) state that face saving for Thais involves ways to "maintain personal harmony and social relations" (p.29), which incorporates tools to avoid or mitigate embarrassment. Smyth (2001) also mentions the importance of 'face' for Thai learners and describes the consequences of causing Thai learners to lose face. Learners "withdraw" (p.354), when a teacher shows impatience or anger, and sometimes become uncooperative.

Finally, a number of researchers hint that notions of the ZPD or of acquisition are not static but dynamic, "fluid," and "emergent" (Watston-Gegeo, 2004, p.341, Leather and Van Dam, 2003, p. 20) and so the feedback and responses of interlocutors will not necessarily follow pre-determined paths, but occasionally move into unexpected territories. These unexpected territories can lead to further opportunities for growth, which will in turn trigger new unforeseen events and movements. The image of learning

that unfolds is highly dynamic and emergent, with multiple variables influencing each other to produce “affordances” (Van Lier, 2000, p. 245-259) for new opportunities for learning and new forms of learning to emerge. All of this has inspired the creation of a new metaphor - *ecological* (ibid.) to describe the acquisition of language.

Summary

It is beyond the scope of this study to fully address all of the preceding issues and the new metaphor of ecology, as this is a study itself in the process of emergence. However, some relevant aspects of the preceding issues were addressed or at least lightly touched upon in this study: Face and sense of confidence and how these sociocultural factors interfaced with working towards self-regulation of the target linguistic structures; learner background and experience in learning English; the role relationships of the learners and the tutor involving degrees of equality and mutuality; current learner objectives/motivations; feelings of the learners; and the tutor’s background and experiences. These issues were given some attention in answer to the question, *What are some possible reasons for why learners progressed or regressed in self-regulation?* Some of the other questions relevant to sociocultural and ecologic metaphors, but not expounded upon in this study, should be considered for future studies, given they are bound to have an impact on the success or failure of the learners involved. In terms of methodology, to be able to fully understand all the phenomena that connect to these questions, we will need appropriate tools for analysis such as “thick explanation”

(Watson-Gegeo, 2004, p. 340). This will be discussed further in the chapter on methodology.

In summary, the articles under review covered important building blocks of the sociocultural perspective, starting with salient focus on form studies, followed by innovations in interaction studies, and concepts involving scaffolding with illustrative examples of how these concepts have been applied in select studies. Rounding it all out was a look at the more specific forms and paths that sociocultural studies have taken in recent years. Finally, we were left with some questions generated by the studies under review as well as general emerging issues in the field. These questions were in support of the more specific reasons why learners progressed or regressed under guidance from a tutor. An additional gap in the research involved the extent to which learner self-regulation was maintained after a one month period had elapsed between sessions. How these questions are to be analyzed and explained will also be discussed in the next section.