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**Informal Language Learning
A Case Study on English and German
Informal Learning in a Middle School on the
Mainland of Venice**

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ABSTRACT

Despite informal learning being a topical issue, little research on it seems to have been done. A research gap appears to exist in the field of applied linguistics regarding *middle school* students' informal language learning as far as the *two* different foreign languages they are taught at school are concerned. This case study attempted to explore the general aspects of the issue. A group of 45 third-year students from a middle school on the mainland of Venice were administered two questionnaires. Inspired by the triangulation design, we also interviewed 4 foreign language teachers from the same school. Following an *exploratory-QUAL+quant-(mostly) interpretative* paradigm, the study mainly revealed that the students: (a) engaged much more in English informal activities; (b) did informal activities related to technology for both languages; (c) were continuously exposed to English music; (d) seemed more aware of their English informal learning than of their German one. We finally put forth that the discrepancies between teachers' and students' viewpoints, albeit relatively few, might exist because none of the teachers would employ the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in class. As also recommended by the Common European Framework for Languages, we suggest that ELP be employed by teachers in order not only for students' informal language learning awareness to be increased, but also for plurilingual competences and lifelong learning strategies to be enabled.

Keywords: informal language learning, middle school students, English informal learning, German informal learning

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*Ad Aljoska e Zoi,
Fratelli di linfa
In questo viaggio
Che è la Vita,
Per aver visto di me
Tutto ciò
Che io non vedevo più
Affinché io fossi
Tutto ciò
Che io sono*

INTRODUCTION

Informal learning has increased in importance over the last few years. The European Commission has recommended the member states to arrange its formal validation no later than 2018. However, little research seems to have been conducted on informal learning, especially when it combines with language learning. In the field of applied linguistics, a research gap appears to have remained for long unfilled, i.e. *middle school* students' informal language learning as far as the *two* foreign languages they are taught at school are concerned. The present study attempts to explore the general aspects of the issue in the hope that further and more extensive research will consider it. Being an exploratory case study involving mixed methods, the present research project focused on a group of 45 third-year students from a middle school on the mainland of Venice, who studied English and German. They were administered two questionnaires, of which one concentrated on English informal learning and the other on German informal learning. Inspired by the triangulation design, we also interviewed a group of 4 foreign language teachers from the same school. Our research questions were: 1) What type of informal learning activities do third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice engage in, as far as English and German are concerned?; 2) What language skills do they use outside school for both languages?; 3) Is there a difference between English and German in the type of informal learning activities, in their frequencies, and in the skills used?; 4) What are students' perceptions of informal language learning?; 5) What do teachers think of students' informal language learning?. Following an *exploratory-QUAL+quant-(mostly) interpretative* paradigm, the study respectively revealed the following main results: 1) for both languages, the students engaged in activities related to technology, especially those entailing Google and online dictionaries – they also did informal activities connected to social networks, the linguistic landscape where they lived and the journeys they went on; 2) the students primarily used reading for both languages in informal language learning contexts, except for English which also involved listening; 3) the students engaged much more in English informal learning activities than in German ones – a very

large majority of the sample did not use to engage in German informal learning activities *tout court* – and, in any case, their English informal learning was much more varied since it included informal activities related also to music, videogames, interactive oral activities, activities related to tourists, activities related to printed readings, and activities involving face-to-face communities of practice – in particular, English music appeared to play a prominent role in students’ lives; 4) the students seemed to be more aware of their English informal learning than of their German one and perceived the former as fun, interesting, and cool and the latter as useful but boring; 5) the teachers interviewed largely confirmed what their students claimed. Nevertheless, not all the teachers had an effective communication with their students while none of the them employed the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in class in order to make their students systematically reflect on their informal language learning and to become personally acquainted with it. Some discrepancies between the two viewpoints emerged in the end. Providing a possible interpretation for this, we finally arrived at the conclusion that such discrepancies, albeit relatively few, might exist precisely because none of the teachers employed the European Language Portfolio (ELP) – or any other similar approved tool – in class. As also recommended by the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR), the evidence from this study suggests that ELP should be employed by teachers in order not only for students’ informal language learning awareness to be increased, but also for plurilingual competences and lifelong learning strategies to be enabled – identifying CEFR plurilingualism and lifelong learning as concepts intimately connected to the notion of informal language learning. In spite of its limitations, the present study therefore somehow extends our knowledge of an issue, i.e. informal language learning, on which little appears to have been empirically proved and speculated among scholars.

I decided to conduct this research because I have been wondering over the last few years about what informal (language) learning actually meant to me. As an Erasmus student in Canterbury nearly three years ago, I discovered that learning a foreign language was more than studying it on books, on which I had been

spending most of my life. Paradoxically, I had always been an ardent supporter of *formal* learning. Nevertheless, life experiences and people I have met have taught me that life – just like languages – is more than books. The reason why I decided to deal with informal learning must be intimately connected to the definition I give it, i.e.

a process, a challenge, something not imposed by a teacher or anyone else in any way, something no one can judge with a mark, something potentially occurring whenever and wherever we want, something that happens if we let it happen by following our deepest and truest instincts, a self-discovery leading to self-awareness... something which is still in progress for me and will certainly be for my whole life.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Informal Learning: a General Overview

In the current section, a general overview of informal learning will be provided. Informal learning is an increasingly important research topic in applied linguistics and in educational sciences. Firstly, the issue of defining informal learning has received considerable critical attention (see 1.1.1). Secondly, several attempts have been made to define a theoretical framework of informal learning (see 1.1.2). Thirdly, a primary concern of informal learning is its validation, which the European Commission recommends the member states to arrange by 2018 (see 1.1.3). Fourthly, a considerable amount of literature has been published on the topic and has analysed it from different perspectives (see 1.1.4). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of informal workplace learning (see 1.1.4.1). Others have shown the usefulness of informal science learning (see 1.1.4.2). In addition, recent trends in considering digital media a useful tool for learning have led to a proliferation of studies on the use of technology in informal learning environments (see 1.1.4.3). Recently, researchers have also shown an increased interest in informal language learning (see 1.1.4.4).

1.1.1 Defining Informal Learning

One major theoretical issue that has dominated the field for many years concerns the definition of informal learning, which in the past three decades a number of researchers have often sought to strictly define by contrasting it with non-formal and, above all, with formal learning. Van Marsenille (2015) proposes that ‘in order to understand informal learning, it is necessary to contrast it with formal and non-formal learning’ (p.21) and quotes the definitions of the Official Journal of the European Union (European Commission, 2012), which will be the definitions for the present study:

Formal learning means learning which takes place in an organised and structured environment, specifically dedicated to learning, and typically leads to the award of a qualification, usually in the form of a certificate or a diploma; it includes systems of general education, initial vocational training and higher education.

Non-formal learning means learning which takes place through planned activities (in terms of learning objectives, learning time) where some form of learning support is present (e.g. student-teacher relationships); it may cover programmes to impart work skills, adult literacy and basic education for early school leavers; very common cases of non-formal learning include in-company training, through which companies update and improve the skills of their workers such as ICT [i.e. Information and Communication Technologies] skills, structured on-line learning (e.g. by making use of open educational resources¹), and courses organised by civil society organisations for their members, their target group or the general public.

Informal learning means learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support; it may be unintentional from the learner’s perspective; examples of learning outcomes acquired through informal learning are skills acquired through life and work experiences, project management skills or ICT skills acquired at work, languages learned and intercultural skills acquired during a stay in another country, ICT skills acquired outside work, skills acquired through volunteering, cultural activities, sports, youth work and through activities at home (e.g. taking care of a child).’ (p.5)

Making a slightly more detailed comparison, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) also emphasises how intentional each of the three types of learning is. While formal learning and non-formal learning are equally claimed to be ‘intentional from the learner’s point of view’ (Cedefop, 2008, pp.85,133), informal learning ‘may be intentional but in most cases it is non-intentional (or incidental/random).’ (Cedefop, 2007, p.15) Dealing with informal science learning, Hofstein & Rosenfeld (1996) report that, if we interpret informal learning as opposed to formal learning, the following table may be drawn:

Table 1 illustrating the features of formal and informal learning (p.89)

Informal learning	Formal learning
Voluntary	Compulsory
Unstructured	Structured
Unsequenced	Sequenced
Non-assessed	Assessed
Unevaluated	Evaluated
Open-ended	Close-ended
Learner-led	Teacher-led
Learner-centred	Teacher-centred

¹ *Open educational resources* (OER) are ‘digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research; it includes learning content, software tools to develop, use and distribute content, and implementation resources such as open licenses; OER also refers to accumulated digital assets that can be adjusted and which provide benefits without restricting the possibilities for others to enjoy them.’ (European Commission, 2012, p.5)

Out-of-school context	Classroom context
Non-curriculum based	Curriculum-based
Many unintended outcomes	Fewer unintended outcomes
Less directly measurable outcomes	Empirically measured outcomes
Social intercourse	Solitary work
Non-directed or learner directed	Teacher directed

Golding, Brown & Foley (2009) report a table which Colley, Hodkinson & Malcolm (2002) have designed to show the differences between formal and informal learning. The former scholars reinforce the idea that the two types of learning may be viewed as polar opposites:

Table 2 illustrating the possible ideal types of formal and informal learning (Colley, Hodkinson & Malcolm, 2002 as cited by Golding, Brown & Foley, 2009, p.38)

Formal	Informal
Teacher as authority	No teacher involved
Educational premises	Non-education premises
Teacher control	Learner control
Planned and structured	Organic and evolving
Summative assessment/accreditation	No assessment
Externally determined objectives/outcomes	Internally determined objectives
Interests of powerful and dominant groups	Interests of oppressed groups
Open to all groups, according to published criteria	Preserves inequality and sponsorship
Propositional knowledge	Practical and process knowledge
High status	Low status
Education	Not education
Measured outcomes	Outcomes imprecise, unmeasurable
Learning predominantly individual	Learning predominantly communal
Learning to preserve status quo	Learning for resistance and empowerment
Pedagogy of transmission and control	Learner-centred, negotiated pedagogy
Learning mediated through agents of authority	Learning mediated through leader democracy
Fixed and mediated timeframe	Open-ended engagement
Learning is the main, explicit purpose	Learning is either of secondary significance or is implicit
Learning is applicable on a range of contexts	Learning is context specific

Unlike other studies on the issue, Eshach (2007) suggests that a better distinction between the three kinds of learning comprise many other factors, such as motivation, social context, assessment, and interest and summarises such differences in the following table:

Table 3 illustrating the differences between formal, non-formal and informal learning (p.174)

Formal	Non-formal	Informal
Usually at school	At institution out of school	Everywhere
May be repressive	Usually supportive	Supportive

Structured	Structured	Unstructured
Usually prearranged	Usually prearranged	Spontaneous
Motivation is typically extrinsic	Motivation may be extrinsic but it is typically more intrinsic	Motivation is mainly intrinsic
Compulsory	Usually voluntary	Voluntary
Teacher-led	May be guide or teacher-led	Usually learner-led
Learning is evaluated	Learning is usually not evaluated	Learning is not evaluated
Sequential	Typically non-sequential	Non-sequential

Nonetheless, several studies have suggested that a more comprehensive and hybrid definition of informal learning should be preferred. In his discourse, Eshach (2007) specifies that sharp distinctions have indeed to be rejected as far as informal learning is concerned. He therefore confutes Gerber et al. (2001), who come to the simplistic conclusion that

‘in essence, the informal learning can be defined as the sum of activities that comprise the time individuals are not in the formal classroom in the presence of a teacher.’ (p.570)

Nearly two decades ago, McGivney (1999), as cited by Van Marsenille (2015), advocates that ‘the concepts of formal and informal learning can cross boundaries.’ (p.25) According to McGivney (1999), informal learning can also take place in a formal learning environment, for example when students work collaboratively in class and share ideas and experiences. Similarly, formal learning can occur in an informal learning environment if learners structure their own learning. This can happen if they carefully plan their learning, so as to achieve their own objectives in the learning process. Bailly (2011) distinguishes the out-of-school activities of a group of English language learners between *serious* activities entailing conventional learning strategies learnt in class, such as studying grammar and vocabulary, and *lighter* activities that directly link to their lives. Previous studies argue that informal learning can be understood either as contrasted with formal learning (in which case it cannot take place in formal learning environments) or as a hybrid concept (in which case it may also take place within formal environments) (Hofstein & Rosenfeld, 1996). Hofstein & Rosenfeld (1996) reach the conclusion that ‘the problem with [the former] approach is that it is overly simplistic.’ (p.89) By contrast, the hybrid definition is

claimed to allow informal learning to encompass formal learning on some occasions. A hybrid definition of informal learning conveys the idea that ‘informal learning experiences can occur in formal learning environments (e.g. school) as well as informal learning environments (e.g. museums, zoos).’ (p.90) Indeed, Crane, Nicholson & Chen (1994) argue that ‘informal learning activities also may serve as a supplement to formal learning or even be used in schools or by teachers.’ (p.3) Similarly, recent studies report that the simplistic formal-informal dichotomy is to be questioned. According to Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011),

‘as the field of informal learning research has developed, scholars have increasingly questioned the utility of the dichotomy between formal and informal, and many researchers and theorists interested in informal learning have struggled with definitions that move beyond a simple dichotomy.’ (p.647)

Instead of comparing informal learning with formal learning, Rogoff et al. (2003), as cited by Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011), suggest that, among the many multifaceted learning traditions, there are two which should be compared, i.e. intent-community participation and assembly-line instruction, in order to understand the nature of informal learning. Far from thinking of such traditions as a dichotomy, Rogoff et al. (2003) propose that informal learning is ascribable to the former, while formal learning is ascribable to the latter. If, on the one hand, the intent-community participation learning tradition reflects a more collaborative and holistic way of learning, on the other, the assembly-line instruction learning tradition coincides with a more analytical and sequential way of learning, which is thought to have been deliberately chosen as the basis for formal instruction. In other words, Rogoff et al. (2003) argue that formal learning and informal learning come from two different learning traditions that are inherently combinable, in that learning traditions are generally ‘neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive.’ (Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis, 2011, p.648) As a result, all these considerations have led us to thinking of informal learning as concealing a hybrid nature.

The issue has grown in importance in the light of recent studies which argue that a hybrid definition of informal learning is possible when the major distinction between formal learning and informal learning, i.e. the location factor,

is abandoned in favour of a more holistic interpretation of the concept. Among others, Ellenbogen (2002) claims that it is the extent to which social participation is structured that draws a key distinction between the two types of learning. If, on the one hand, informal learning is depicted as lacking an organised structure, on the other, formal learning is described as highly structured. Umphress et al. (2006) take into account the structure, context, and motivation factors. Acknowledging the fuzzy nature of such categories, they come to the conclusion that the key distinction between the two types of learning concerns the students' worry about whether there are consequences for their failure or success to learn. Resnick (1987), as cited by Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011), takes into consideration the role of choice to engage in activities, the role of organisation, and the extent to which social participation is structured. Mahoney (2001) highlights that the location should not be the main focus to define informal learning. Informal learning is claimed to take place at many different locations (at home, at school, at the café, at the theatre, etc.). Lafraya (2012) states that learners could even learn, as cited by Van Marsenille (2015), 'thanks to work programmes, in associations and clubs, in cultural centres, through voluntary and social activities and in international exchanges and mobility programmes.' (p.27). Rather than opposing informal learning to formal learning and directing their attention on the place where learning occurs, Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011) propose five dimensions ascribable to previous research which identify the peculiarity of informal learning. The five dimensions are reported in the following table:

Table 4 illustrating the five major dimensions identifying informal learning (p.647)

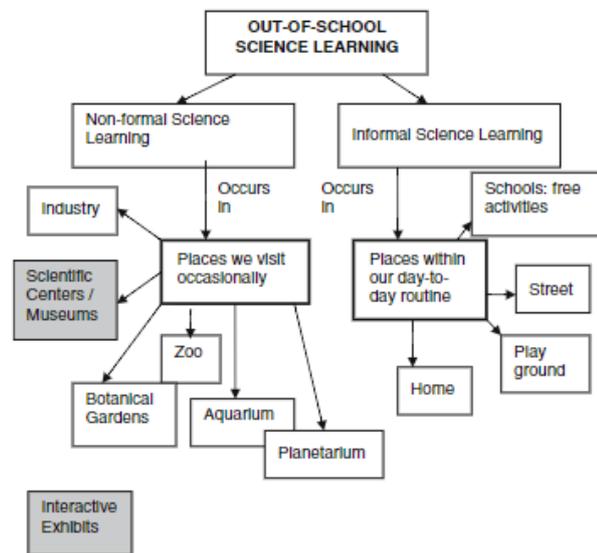
(1) The extent to which learning is the result of didactic teaching
(2) The extent to which learning is socially collaborative
(3) Its embeddedness in meaningful activities
(4) Whether it is initiated by the learner's interest or choice
(5) The relative presence or absence of external assessment with important consequences

Taking into account these dimensions, the scholars therefore underline that some out-of-school activities may be somewhat formal (see the above-described *serious* out-of-school activities proposed by Bailly 2011), while some in-school ones may paradoxically be very informal (see the above-described out-of-school *lighter* activities proposed by the same author). Moving beyond the location dimension,

they claim that it is not the location which determines informal learning. For instance, formal learning activities can occur at home or in an aquarium. Informal learning can take place in class.

So far, however, little seems to have been investigated in the literature as far as the relationship between informal learning and non-formal learning is concerned, which seems to have led to ambiguity between the two terms. Dealing with informal science learning, Eshach (2007) shows the distinction between the two terms in the following figure:

Table 5 illustrating the distinction between informal and non-formal learning (p.174)



The figure shows that out-of-school learning can be conceived as including both non-formal learning and informal learning. The former occurs in locations we visit on specific occasions (e.g. at the industry, at the museum, at the zoo, at the aquarium, etc.). The latter occurs in locations within our daily routine (e.g. at school, in the street, at home, in the playground, etc.). If the location factor seems to rigidly define the two terms at first glance, it should be noticed instead that informal learning is thought to also occur at school. In fact, it is the frequency factor the dimension that it is considered to define informal learning. Eshach (2007) remarks that:

‘the terms out-of-school learning and informal learning in the literature are usually

Interchangeable [...] defining informal learning as learning which occurs out of school is too simplistic. A better distinction, which captures the characteristics of out-of-school learning, is between informal and non-formal learning [...] Another distinction which might provide insight as to the nature of out-of-school learning is based on the frequency to which we attend the place where the learning occurs. In my view, since informal learning occurs spontaneously, it is more likely to occur in places within our day-to-day routine, such as homes, yard, parks or streets, and even at school – especially at break times. Since we only visit places such as museums, zoos, planetariums, or aquariums occasionally, it is more likely that non-formal learning will happen there – it is more likely that these visits are prepared to some extent.’ (p.174)

To our current knowledge, Eshach (2007) appears to be one of the few scholars, along with Garnett & Ecclesfield (2015) (see 1.1.2.7), who has attempted to contrast informal learning with non-formal learning, in order to unambiguously define such terms. In any case, much uncertainty still exists about the relation between non-formal and informal learning. Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011) remark that several science museums, for instance, are called ‘informal science institutions’ or ‘informals’. Ogawa et al. (2008) claim that there are scholars who think of science museums as *formal* organisations, in that they reflect structured learning. Nearly one decade before, the same ambiguity in terminology already seems to exist. Crane, Nicholson & Chen (1994) describes informal learning experiences as experiences that ‘may be *structured* to meet a stated set of objectives and may influence attitudes, convey information, and/or change behavior.’ (p.3) Moreover, Mathewson-Mitchell (2007) describes the learning which occurs in art museums as *informal* and he clearly emphasises in his conference paper that he is dealing with *informal* settings when referring to art museums as a place for learning. To top it all, an abrupt misuse in terminology seems to occur towards the end of the study conducted by Eshach (2007). This occurs when he deals with the cognitive and affective dimensions of non-formal learning. In a recapitulating table which he labels ‘*Factors influencing out-of-school learning containing cognitive and affective domains*’ (p.181), he seems to abruptly transfer the typical features of non-formal learning so far described to a more general ‘out-of-school learning’, which he previously theorised to comprise both non-formal and informal learning (see table 5). However, when he referred to the table, he cited such factors as exclusively belonging to non-formal learning. (p.181) Except for the intervention of the European Commission, which has attempted to unambiguously define the three types of learning, and some of the

above-presented contributions, research on non-formal learning appears to have been mostly restricted to empirical research and a much deeper theoretical insight into the issue of defining non-formal learning is yet to be provided. However, being informal learning the focus of the present study, non-formal learning will not be dealt with any further.

Furthermore, the hybrid nature of informal learning appears to have induced scholars to interpret such learning in many different ways, which seems to have led to non-uniformity in defining informal learning within the field. According to Van Marsenille (2015), other terms have been used to define informal learning. For instance, it has been referred to as ‘self-instructed’, which highlights its learner-centred nature. It has also been referred to as ‘non-instructed’, which specifies its non-curricular and *ecological* nature. (van Lier, 2004; see 1.2.3) However, both definitions contrast with ‘instructed’ learning, i.e. formal learning, where notions are learnt through explicit explanation at school. (Benson, 2011) Furthermore, informal learning has been referred to as ‘incidental’, which underlines its random nature. (Doyle, 2001) It has also been called ‘intentional learning’, which shows a bias towards its deliberate nature. (Van Marsenille, 2015) Furthermore, it has also been labelled, to some extent, as ‘experiential learning’. (Kolb, 1984) Two years before the European Commission (2001) elaborated a first proposal of conceptualisation and definition of the term, McGivney (1999) assured that:

‘there is no single definition of informal learning. It is a broad and loose concept that incorporates very diverse kinds of learning, learning styles and learning arrangements. Informal learning can be unpremeditated, self-directed, intentional and planned. It can be initiated by individuals (for example, in the workplace); it can be a collective process (arising from grassroots community action or social protest), or it can be initiated by outside agencies responding to perceived or expressed needs, interests or problems. These may include educational providers who wish to offer previously excluded groups learning experiences in their own environment.’ (p.1)

For the same reason, Hager & Halliday (2006) argue that, as cited by Golding, Brown & Foley (2009), ‘a key feature of informal learning is that it is indeterminate.’ (p.42) Being aware of the multitude of different ways of interpreting the notion of informal learning as well as of the non-uniformity in using such a term within the field, UNEVOC (2008), as cited by Golding, Brown

& Foley (2009), attempts to raise the issue on the numerous contradictions in the use of the term and presents a longitudinal overview of what it considers the main different conceptions of informal learning that have developed over time. In doing so, it contrasts informal learning with the other two types of learning, as follows:

Table 6 illustrating an overview of different conceptions of formal, non-formal, and informal learning, as applied to education and learning (UNEVOC, 2008 as cited by Golding, Brown & Foley, 2009, p.39)

	Formal education	Non-formal education	Informal education
Green, Oketch & Preston (2004)	“‘organised” and “intentional” learning whose outcomes are accredited’	‘results from organised activities within or outside the workplace which involve significant learning which is not accredited’	‘that which occurs “unintentionally” or as a by-product of other activities OECD (2003). New classifications of learning activities are currently being developed for the EU Adult Education Survey and these will form a good companion to ISCED definitions for informal and non-formal learning, especially for the developed world.’ (see below)
Tight (2002)	‘Formal education is that provided by the education and training system set up or sponsored by the state for those express purposes’ (Groombridge, 1983, p.6)	‘any organised, systematic, educational activity, carried on outside the framework of the formal system, to provide selected types of learning to particular subgroups in the population, adults as well as children. Thus defined, non-formal education includes, for example, agricultural extension and farmer training programmes, adult literacy programmes, occupational skill training given outside the formal system, youth clubs with substantial	‘The life-long process by which every individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes and insights from daily experiences and exposure to the environment – at home, at work, at play: from the example and attitudes of family and friends; from travel, reading newspapers and books; or by listening to the radio or viewing films or television. Generally, informal education is unorganised, unsystematic and

		educational purposes, and various community programmes of instruction in health, nutrition, family planning, cooperatives, and the like.’ (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p.8) ‘education for which none of the learners is enrolled or registered’ (OECD, 1977, p.11)	even unintentional at times, yet it accounts for the great bulk of any person’s total lifetime learning – including that of even a highly “schooled” person.’ (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974, p.8)
Eurostat (2004)	‘education provided in the system of schools, colleges, universities and other formal educational institutions that normally constitutes a continuous “ladder” of full-time education for children and young people, generally beginning at age of five to seven and continuing up to 20 or 25 years old. In some countries, the upper parts of this “ladder” are organised programmes of joint part-time employment and part-time participation in the regular school and university system: such programmes have come to be known as the “dual system” or equivalent terms in these countries.’	‘any organised and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the above definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions, and cater to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out of school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the “ladder” system, and may have a differing duration.’	“‘intentional, but it is less organised and less structured [...] and may include for example learning events (activities) that occur in the family, in the workplace, and in the daily life of every person, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially directed basis.” As defined in the report of the Eurostat TF/MLLL (paragraph 32, p.12). The UNESCO manual for statistics on non-formal education (p.6) reads: ‘Informal learning is generally intentional, but unorganised and unstructured learning events that occur in the family, the workplace, and in the daily life of every person, on a self-directed, family-directed or socially-directed basis.’

The above-presented table might be considered a good attempt to raise the problem of univocally defining informal learning within the field, as it is attested by Colley, Hodkinson & Malcolm (2002), as cited by Golding, Brown & Foley

(2009), that ‘very few authors feel the need to explicitly define [formal and informal learning], nor view them as problematic.’ (p.37)

1.1.2 Selected Theoretical Frameworks of Informal Learning

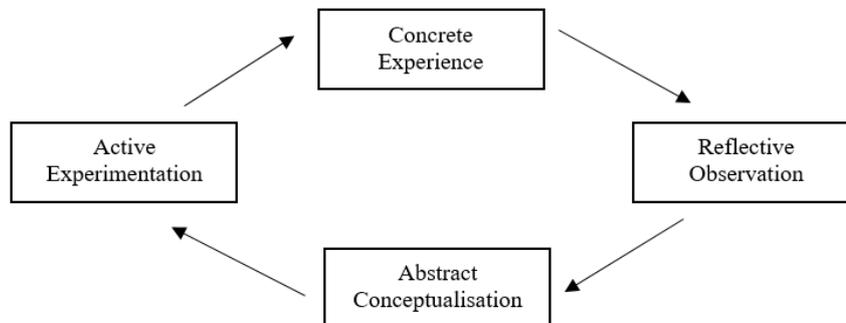
The issue of defining a theoretical framework of what we *now* call ‘informal learning’ has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the fields of applied linguistics and of educational sciences. It has been shown that in the literature a more comprehensive definition of informal learning is preferred. However, owing to its hybrid nature, informal learning may remain an inherently vague and subjective concept. In order to provide a rigorous definition of the concept, a theoretical framework of informal learning needs to be developed. In the past four decades, a number of scholars have sought to provide a theoretical framework of informal learning. Recent studies on the issue seem to have drawn on the theoretical frameworks of eminent scholars of the past. The present study has therefore selected some of the past theoretical frameworks of what is *now* called ‘informal learning’, along with the most recent studies on the issue. The present selection does not mean to be exhaustive, but it intends to show a broad development of the controversial issue of and the general non-uniformity in defining a unique theoretical framework of informal learning in the literature.

1.1.2.1 The Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984)

Emphasising the experiential nature of what we *now* call informal learning, Kolb (1984) describes the experiential learning process in four stages, i.e. concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. The experiential learning cycle starts with an experience, which might be any event occurring in our daily life. Kolb (1984) describes this as a *concrete experience*. The concrete experience is followed by a period of reflection when we reflect upon the experience we have had (*reflective observation*). We then link the experiences we have had to the ideas we have in our mind and build more general theories about our experiences (*abstract*

conceptualisation). Finally, we verify our new theories and put them into practice (*active experimentation*).

Table 7 illustrating Kolb's experiential learning cycle that we drew referring to some primary and secondary sources (Kolb, 1984; Blacker, 2001)



Placing the model within our discourse, we notice that the hybrid nature of informal learning is not taken into account. Indeed, the model is inherently restricted to the experiential nature of informal learning. Therefore, Kolb's experiential learning model (1984) may not probably account for all the possible situations in which informal learning may occur, for example when *serious* activities (Bailly, 2011) not involving real experience, such as studying grammar and vocabulary, take place or when reflection does not occur. In fact, the model has been criticised because it does not take into consideration the non-reflective side of learning (Van Marsenille, 2015). However, Blacker (2001) supports the model and argues that learning from our experiences necessarily implies reflecting upon them. Van Marsenille (2015) also considers the reflective observation stage in Kolb's experiential learning model of paramount importance despite the limitations it presents. She notices that

'it is true that learning is not always reflective but learners could be helped to make it reflective, so that they would understand how the language works. A lot of learning occurs automatically through the use of the language but it could be argued that students are more interested in learning when they are reflective. If learners notice some aspects of the language and reflect on how the whole language is organised, the structure of the foreign language is clearer and they are encouraged to learn more.' (p.29)

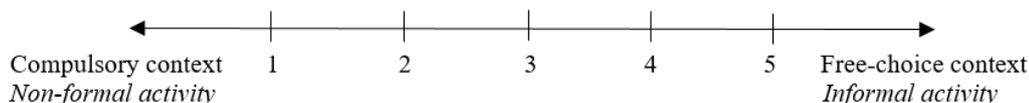
1.1.2.2 The Hybrid Definition Continuum Model (Hofstein & Rosenfeld, 1996)

More than a decade later, Hofstein & Rosenfeld (1996) propose a more comprehensive conceptualisation of informal learning, which *we* will call ‘the hybrid definition continuum model’ for convenience. As previously discussed, they claim that a more hybrid definition of informal learning should be preferred instead of a rigid dichotomy between formal and informal learning. (see 1.1.1) Firstly, in order to build their theoretical framework, they make a distinction between two opposite kinds of learning contexts, i.e. the compulsory context and the free-choice context. Secondly, they see the two contexts as lying on a continuum, which is in line with their hybrid interpretation of informal learning. Thirdly, they state that five learning modes lie on the continuum. The two polar opposites are the compulsory context and the free-choice one. The five learning modes go from the most compulsory one to the most voluntary one. Fourthly, they list the five learning modes, which are:

- 1) the school-based field trips;
- 2) student projects;
- 3) community-based science youth programmes;
- 4) casual visits to museums and zoos;
- 5) the press and electronic media.

A possible visual representation of the model might be as follows:

Table 8 illustrating the hybrid definition continuum model by Hofstein & Rosenfeld (1996) as *we* visualise it



What we notice is that the closer a learning mode is to the compulsory context, the more it looks like a *non-formal* activity. By contrast, the closer a learning mode is to the free-choice context, the more it looks like an *informal* activity. However, no explicit contrast has been made between the two kinds of learning.

Masthoff (2004) draw the above-presented table, in which the concepts of education and learning are visualised on a continuum. Formal learning is reported to be ‘provided by an educational institution, structured in terms of learning objectives, time and support and leading to certification.’ (Eraut, 2000, as cited by Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff, 2004, p.28) By contrast, informal learning is reported to be ‘all that incidental, unstructured, unpurposeful but the most extensive and most important part of all the learning that all of us do every day of our lives.’ (Rogers, 2004, as cited by Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff, 2004, p.28) As a result, the two underlying polar opposites of the continuum might be inferred to be education and learning. While the former is defined as being the exclusive objective of an institution, the latter is defined as being the inherent peculiar characteristic of out-of-school life. We suggest that this conceptualisation of informal learning place some limits, in that informal learning seems to be restricted only to the out-of-school location. Furthermore, if participatory education is broadly defined as a socially and mediated learning occurring in a community of practice (Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff, 2004), then we put forth that there seems to be no reason to limit it to ‘education’, i.e. exclusively “institution-driven”. In fact, social learning occurring in communities of practice does not only take place in the form of classroom communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Apart from acknowledging the educational side of communities of practice, in that

‘a language class can form a community of practice when the teacher and the students share the common purpose of acquiring the language; they present mutual engagement when the teacher has objectives so that students reach a certain level in the foreign language and the students share these goals’ (Van Marsenille, p.40)

Van Marsenille (2015) also argues that

‘for acquisition to take place, students need to practise informally once they have learnt the language in the classroom [...] They have to be exposed to the input in the target language in order to produce output, for which they have too little time in the classroom. Interpersonal interaction can occur between the students and the teacher but it is also necessary beyond the language classroom as the amount of hours of language class is limited in the formal learning curriculum. Learners can choose to participate in a community of practice, be it face-to-face or virtual, in order to improve their English outside class.’ (p.48)

As for the theory of language learning and the learning *affordances* that the i-TV provides (van Lier, 2004), the scholars have proposed the following table:

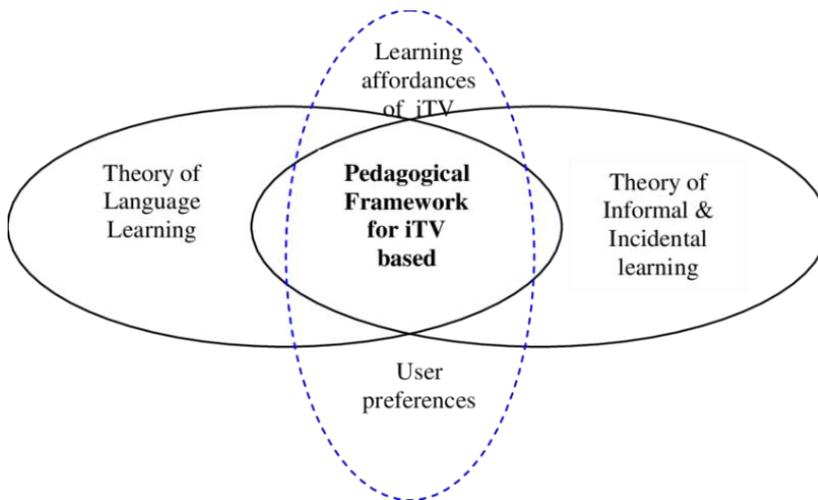
Table 10 illustrating the learning theories and i-Tv applications (Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff, 2004, p.31)

Learning theories and approaches	Learning through:	iTV applications
Behaviourist	Repetition and drill	Not suitable
Cognitive	Practice, learning grammar, cloze-exercises	Not suitable
Constructionist	Acquisition of comprehensible input	Scaffolding understanding by supplying word meanings and labelling objects in scenes. Electronic dictionary via iTV. Supports learner's autonomy and flexibility.
Constructivist	Construction of new knowledge based upon current and past and through the negotiation of meaning through dialogue	iTV based personal learning space, e.g. "My language learning" to store and retrieve learning content.
Socio-cultural	Language play and social interaction	iTV based. discussion fora and chat-rooms to supports social interactions through
Discovery and Experiential	Reflection on your experience and by living in environments	Language learning games, Authentic material from television itself is useful for learning to occur

In short, a learning theory is inevitably involved in the process of learning informally via i-TV (left column). Each kind of learning theory entails a series of specific learning strategies, which learners may unconsciously adopt while using their i-TV (central column). All the possibilities that the i-TV offers learners to acquire the language, i.e. *affordances* in van Lier (2004)'s terms, are provided in the table and they are subdivided according to the types of learning theory they are more likely to belong to (right column). For instance, if the socio-cultural learning theory is involved, that means that learners are going to adopt socially interactive strategies. The i-TV may then be a useful tool for such learners as it provides the possibility of interacting in chatrooms. However, learners involved in an informal activity are extremely unlikely to consciously choose the type of learning theory they want to be informed by as well as the strategies they mean to adopt to improve a foreign language, *provided that* they mean to improve it. This is why Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff (2004) suggest a user-preferences category in their model. (see table 11) They probably mean to convey the idea that it is not the learning theory which shapes informal learning, but that it is the users'

preferences, along with their undeclared intentions – if there are any –, which actually make it. In fact, users may even combine many different kinds of strategies unknowingly. Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff (2004), thus propose the following visual representation of the model:

Table 11 illustrating a pedagogical framework for i-TV based language learning (Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff, 2004, p.31)



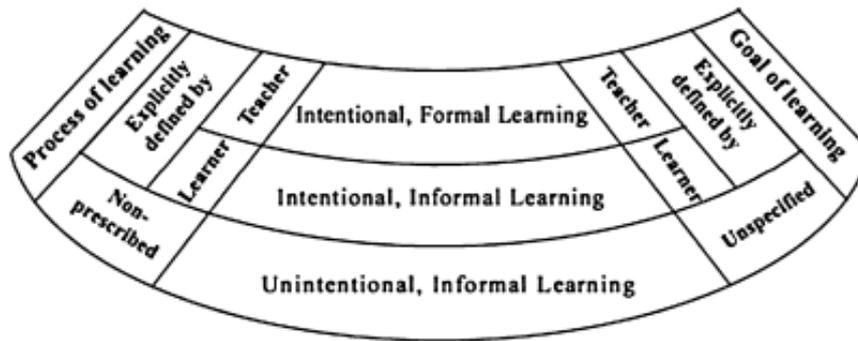
In conclusion, informal language learning via i-TV is only one of the many possibilities to learn (a foreign language) informally. The present theoretical framework cannot obviously account for all the situations in which informal learning may occur. However, it might be considered a successive and peculiar stage of development of informal (language) learning. It is a good example of the deep-rooted, albeit new, tradition of interpreting informal learning in relation to digital media. In fact, recent trends in considering digital media a useful tool for learning have led to a proliferation of studies on the use of technology in informal learning environments, which makes the present model broadly contemporary despite its specificity (see 1.1.4.3 and 1.1.4.4)

1.1.2.4 The Typological Informal Learning Model (Vavoula et al., 2005)

Unlike the previous model, Vavoula et al. (2005) seem to have elaborated a more comprehensive model of informal learning. The model, which *we* have

labelled ‘the typological informal learning model’ for convenience, is represented as follows:

Table 12 illustrating the typology of informal learning (Vavoula et al., 2005 as cited by Clough et al., 2007, p.360)



Vavoula et al. (2005) propose a typology of learning. According to this typology, learning is classified in relation to whether and by whom learning processes and goals are established. Learning processes and goals may be either explicitly defined or non-prescribed/unspecified. They may be established by either the teacher or the learner. Furthermore, this typology classifies the intentionality in learning activities into two loci of control. The control may be over either learning processes (i.e. the methods and the materials employed to learn) or learning goals (i.e. the expected learning results, if there are any). In doing so, not only does the typology draw the distinction between formal learning and informal learning, but it also adds a new category, i.e. unintentional (or tacit) informal learning. In other words, formal learning is defined as an intentional type of learning while informal learning may be defined as either an intentional or an unintentional type of learning according to circumstances. Although Vavoula’s typological informal learning model seems to be a more comprehensive theoretical framework, Clough et al. (2007) highlight that it imposes some limits. They argue that, in fact, the model

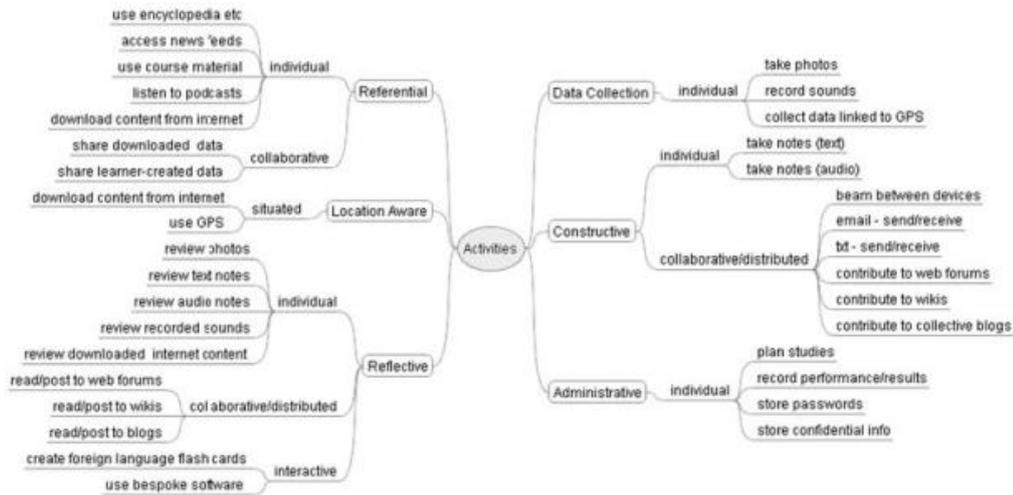
‘does not distinguish between different types of learning process choices a learner or teacher may make. These choices include not only whether and how to deploy the various learning tools

available, but also how to engage with both the social and the physical contexts of the learning they are undertaking. Additionally, learners decide whether and how to collaborate with other learners, to pool and share resources, or simply engage in individual reflection.’ (p.361)

1.1.2.5 The Informal Mobile Learning Functional Framework (Clough et al., 2007)

Drawing on Patten et al. (2006)’s mobile learning functional framework for classifying formal mobile learning applications, Clough et al. (2007) have established an informal mobile learning framework. Similar to the pedagogical framework for i-TV based informal language learning (Pemberton, Fallahkhair & Masthoff, 2004) discussed above, the present taxonomy may also be considered a good example of the deep-rooted, albeit new, tradition of interpreting informal learning in relation to digital media. (see 1.1.4.3 and 1.1.4.4) What is specific to this taxonomy is that informal learning is conceptualised as being informed by a wide range of mobile activities. The framework is represented as follows:

Table 13 illustrating the informal mobile learning framework (Clough et al., 2007, p.364)



Seven main categories representing the pedagogical functions of mobile activities inform informal mobile learning. They are referential, location aware, reflective, data collection, constructive, and administrative. The main categories may be subdivided into other five qualifiers, i.e. individual, collaborative, distributed, interactive, and situated. Referential activities are about ‘the portability and

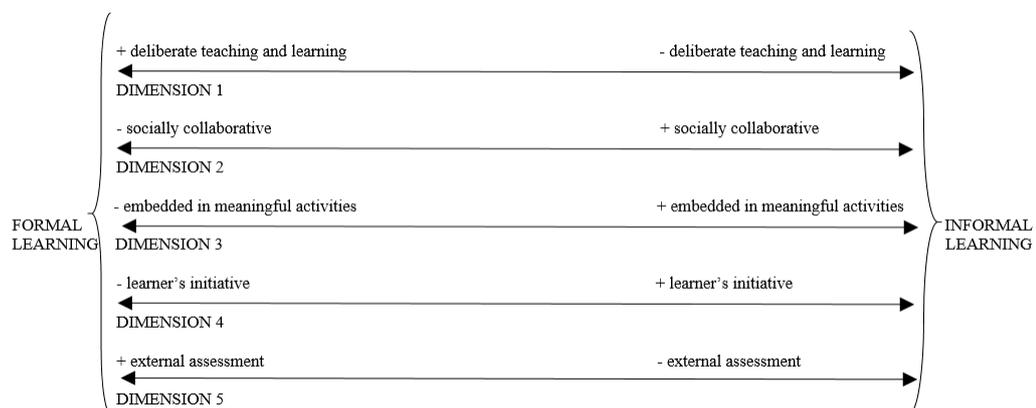
mobility of handheld devices to provide access to content where learning activities occur.’ (p.364). They may be either individual or collaborative. Location aware activities provide ‘appropriate referential information or encourage device users to explore their environment.’ (p.365) Clough et al. (2007) describe them as situated activities which may be either individual or collaborative. Reflective activities stimulate reflection. They can be individual, collaborative/distributed, or interactive. Data collection activities generally concern ‘the use of mobile for recording data and information’ (p.367). They are claimed to generally regard individual activities. Constructive activities are classified into individual and collaborative/distributed. They have to do with ‘activities in which learners create or construct knowledge’. (p.367) Finally, administrative activities refer to organisational arrangement. Generally, they are thought of as individual activities. Furthermore, it should be noticed that the scholars claim that their model is adaptable because ‘the range of features available with mobile devices increases’ (p.369). Thus, it may be ‘extended to accommodate new mobile learning activities’. (p.369) After all, the past decade is known to have seen the rapid development of electronic devices and, as a result, the increased interest in the use of technology in informal learning settings deserves assiduous attention. (see 1.1.4.3 and 1.1.4.4)

1.1.2.6 The Five Dimension Continuum Model (Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis, 2011)

As discussed in 1.1.1, Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011) propose five dimensions ascribable to previous research which identify the peculiarity of informal learning. For convenience, *we* have called this theoretical framework of informal learning ‘the five dimension continuum model’. Being the model exhaustively discussed in 1.1.1, the present paragraph is not going to deal with it in detail. What is going to be dealt with here is *our* own interpretation of the model in the light of the so far shown development of the controversial issue of defining a theoretical framework of informal learning. If we look at table 4 illustrating the five major dimensions identifying informal learning in 1.1.1 (Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis, 2011, p.647), it might be inferred that implicit in the scholars’

discourse is the idea of a continuum for representing informal learning. In fact, when ‘the extent to which’ (p.647) and the ‘how/how much’ (p.648) formulas are used, a *range* of options collocated between two polar opposites might immediately come to mind. It goes without saying that continuums might be a good way to represent the degree to which each of the five dimensions may tend towards one of the polar opposites. As seen so far, the theoretical frameworks of informal learning have not infrequently been represented through a continuum on which formal and informal learning are the two polar opposites. As a result, it might be suggested that, in the light of previous research, each of the five dimensions in table 4 could also be represented as a continuum:

Table 14 illustrating the five dimension continuum model as we visualise it (Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis, 2011)



In other words, informal learning may be defined as being informed by five dimensions which represent five different variables of learning. Therefore, informal learning may be thought of as the result of five different tendencies:

- 1) the less teaching and learning are deliberate,
 - 2) the more learning is socially collaborative,
 - 3) the more learning is embedded in meaningful activities,
 - 4) the more learning is shaped by learners' initiative,
 - 5) the less external assessment occurs,
- then the more likely it is that learning tends to be informal.

1.1.2.7 The Emergent Learning Model (Garnett & Ecclesfield, 2015)

Garnett & Ecclesfield (2015)'s emergent learning model (ELM) may be considered one of the latest theoretical frameworks of informal learning. By contrasting informal learning with non-formal and formal learning, they propose a model of the relationship between the three types of learning. Originally developed in Garnett & Ecclesfield (2009), the emergent learning model was further illustrated at the 11th International Scientific Conference on E-Learning and Software for Education which took place in Bucharest in 2015. Drawing primarily on the most recent considerations on the model (Garnett & Ecclesfield, 2015), this paragraph is going to discuss it in detail. First of all, what the scholars intend to do with ELM is

‘to take the current notion of formal learning as being a process of accreditation [...] that occurs within an institutionally constrained and hierarchical system, and replace it with a series of processes that better matches how people actually learn, follow their interests, collaborating freely and finding resources that meet those interests, or learning needs [...] ELM also tries to take account of, and respond to, much of the new thinking about learning and much else, done by many in the last twenty years.’ (p.4)

In fact, by calling it ‘emergent’, they highlight the underpinning idea of the model which is that

‘we should start with the social processes of everyday life, and design a system that enables learning to *emerge* naturally, rather than to respond to the hierarchical structures of large academic organisations.’ (p.5)

Secondly, ELM was designed as a result of the requirements of 2020 lifelong learning policy (European Commission, 2012), which asked countries to integrate formal, non-formal and informal learning and to find a solution to validate the latter by 2018. (see 1.2.1) Thirdly, ELM intends to also face ‘the problem of resource abundance’ as described by Garnett & Ecclesfield (2015, p.2). By ‘resource abundance’ they mean the large amount of new *affordances* provided by the current digital age, which they call the ‘Web 2.0’ era. (p.2) In this context, van Lier (2004)'s concept of *affordances* concerns all the possible resources that new technologies may represent for learners. Resource abundance is reported to

be a problem because institutions do not seem to have promoted new educational practices for Web 2.0 learners, who generally employ the new technologies only in out-of-school contexts. Therefore, ELM was also set ‘to design *new* educational practices for a world of *resource abundance*’ (p.2) in ‘Web 2.0 emergent learning.’ (p.3) Fourthly, EML is described. The notions of education and learning are both included in the model. They are presented as opposite concepts, in that

‘*education* is a process organised by institutions who offer qualifications based on set texts to be used by learning groups in classes to meet accreditation criteria. Teachers provide resources and broker these educational processes to students at those institutions’ (p.5)

while

‘*learning* is a process of problem-solving carried out by people individually or collaboratively by finding resources and discussing the issues that emerge with people who are trusted intermediaries.’ (p.5)

In addition, the two notions conceive the learner differently. In an *education* system, learners are claimed to generally lack motivation and they are seen as requiring extrinsic motivations. Instead, in a *learning* process, learners are claimed to generally be intrinsically motivated. As Garnett & Ecclesfield (2015) put it, ‘extrinsic motivations may be needed [in an *education* system] to create an engagement in learning that is not initially interesting, and which trusted intermediaries, or friends, [that are more likely to be present in a *learning* process] are capable of addressing.’ (p.5) In the model, which is represented as follows,

Table 15 illustrating the emergent learning model (Garnett & Ecclesfield, 2015, p.5)

INFORMAL	INFORMAL	NON-FORMAL	NON-FORMAL	FORMAL	FORMAL
PEOPLE	PEOPLE	RESOURCES	RESOURCES	INSTITUTIONS	INSTITUTIONS
Individual	Social	Created	Provided	Adaptive	Accredited
Groups	Audiences	Learning Sequences	Learning Resources	Home	Classes
Aggregations	Groups	Web 2.0 Tools	Set texts	Library	Units
Individuals	Channels	Media Templates	TV Programmes	Community	Qualifications
«ADMIN	ACCESS»			«SCAFFOLDING	ADMIN»
LEARNING	>			<	EDUCATION
	Learners learning skills should be a) organising people and b) accessing resources Supported by; Trusted Intermediaries		Teachers teachers skills a) structuring resources b) brokering accreditation Supported by; Tools & Skills		
People are how we scaffold organisation		Resources are how we scaffold learners		Institutions are how we scaffold accreditation	

education and *learning* are, however, represented as deeply linked. The table should be read from right to left to comprehend the *formal education system* and from left to right to comprehend the *informal learning process*. As for the three types of learning, informal learning is defined as ‘the *social* processes that support *self-organised* learning in any context.’ (p.3) Learners’ own interests are claimed to be the motivation to learn informally. However, learners may express an interest and learn cooperatively also at school. Thus, the hallmark of formal learning does not seem to concern interests and cooperation. Garnett & Ecclesfield (2015) argue that formal learning ‘is the process of administering and quality assuring the *accreditation* of learning with associated qualifications.’ (p.4) Accreditation is then seen as the hallmark of formal learning. Moreover, far from being conceived as a dichotomy, formal and informal learning are interpreted as intimately connected. On the one hand, formal learning can improve if: 1) *teachers* stimulate learners’ real interests; 2) *teachers* do not only require individual work in class; 3) *learners* are allowed to autonomously organise their work. On the other hand, informal learning can become relevant if validation criteria are found. In the middle of the table is non-formal learning, which is defined as ‘structured learning opportunities without formal learning outcomes.’ (p.4) It is a mix of formal and informal learning; in non-formal learning, learners’ real interests are stimulated (i.e. the ‘access’ category) and learning is at least partly structured (i.e. the ‘scaffolding’ category). More specifically, informal learning is primarily informed by *people* either as individuals or social groups (i.e. the right-hand ‘admin’ category). Formal learning is primarily informed by *institutions* (i.e. the left-hand ‘admin’ category). Non-formal learning is conceived as being primarily informed by *resources*. Therefore, it might be claimed that

‘1. In an era of social networks where users have both the tools and the experience to self-organise, and with learning being a social process, the *informal* dimension of learning is better defined as that domain within the learning process where people organise themselves, either to meet self-determined goals or to meet the pre-determined goals of an institution; *people are how we scaffold the organisation of learning*;

2. In an era where an ever greater amount of learning content is on offer and new ways of providing learning resources, as objects, tools, templates, are made available then the *non-formal* dimension of learning could be defined as the resources used for learning; *resources are how we scaffold the process of learning*;

3. In an era where traditional learning is being subverted by new forms of collaboration and knowledge construction; crowd-sourcing Wikipedia, participatory science, *formal* learning could provide a reliable source of accreditation; *institutions are how we scaffold the accreditation of learning.*' (Garnett, 2009, pp.1-2)

Therefore, it should be noticed that the more we move to the left in the table, the more learning is accreditable while the more we move to the right, the less it is. Similarly, the more we move to the left, the more learning is structured while the more we move to the right, the more learning is unstructured. Between the first two bold lines in the table are the (digital) tools which may be used for the different kinds of learning (e.g. web 2.0 tools, media templates, etc.), the locations where they may occur (e.g. home, library, etc.), and the ways in which they may materialise (e.g. in the form of audiences or as a community, etc.). To summarise, ELM may be claimed to fully consider the new directions that informal learning is taking, in that it considers informal learning in the light of the European requirement of finding a way to validate it by 2018 (see 1.1.3) as well as of the new *resource abundance* of the Web 2.0 digital age (see 1.1.4.3).

To conclude, it might be claimed that defining a theoretical framework of what we *now* call 'informal learning' has been a controversial subject within the fields of applied linguistics and of educational sciences. A broad development of such a controversial issue and the general non-uniformity in defining a unique theoretical framework have been shown. Considering the above selected models, it might be thus inferred that:

- it is difficult to establish a *universal* theoretical framework of informal learning accounting for all the situations in which it may occur (e.g. informal learning through digital media, informal language learning, informal science learning, etc.) given its vast, varied and evolving nature;
- a more *holistic* conceptualisation of informal learning is to be preferred;
- a tradition of representing informal learning on a *continuum* seems to have established itself throughout the past four decades;
- informal learning is more and more considered in relation to *digital media* and a deep-rooted, albeit relatively new, tradition of considering it from this angle seems to have established itself in the literature (see 1.1.4.3);

- informal learning needs a solid theoretical framework which can help European countries to find a solution to *validate* it by 2018, as required by the European Commission (2012). (see 1.1.3)

1.1.3 The European Commission and the Validation of Informal Learning

A brief overview of the work commenced by the European Commission to find a way to validate informal learning, alongside non-formal learning, by 2018 will be presented in this paragraph. Firstly, by ‘validation’ the European Commission means

‘[the] *confirmation* by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.’ (Cedefop, 2008, p.199)

But it can also mean

‘[the] *process of confirmation* by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases:

1. identification through dialogue of particular experiences of an individual;
2. documentation to make visible the individual’s experiences;
3. formal assessment of these experiences; and
4. certification of the results of the assessment which may lead to a partial or full qualification.’ (European Commission, 2012, p.5)

Secondly, the Council Recommendation of 20th December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning may be considered the starting point for such a project, in that it clearly recommends that

‘the member states should, with a view to offering individuals the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned outside formal education and training – including through mobility experiences – and to make use of that learning for their careers and further learning, and with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity:

1. have in place, no later than 2018, in accordance with national circumstances and specificities, and as they deem appropriate, arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning which enable individuals to:
 - (a) have knowledge, skills and competences which have been acquired through non-formal and informal learning validated, including, where applicable, through open educational resources;
 - (b) obtain a full qualification, or, where applicable, part qualification, on the basis of validated non-formal and informal learning experiences, without prejudice to other applicable Union law,

in particular Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications³.’ (European Commission, 2012, p.3)

Thirdly, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) has done a considerable amount of work so far to help European countries arrange the validation of non-formal and informal learning as well as to monitor the situation. (Among others, Cedefop, 2014; 2015; 2016a; 2016b; 2016c; 2016d; 2017a; 2017b) For instance, it has provided the European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. (Cedefop, 2015) Furthermore a European database on validation of non-formal and informal learning (Cedefop, 2017a; 2017b) has been published. The database shows how countries are arranging validation and how the situation has developed in each country from 2010 to 2014 according to the data collected. Moreover, a glossary on the topic has been put online and translated in six different European languages. (Cedefop, 2014)

Fourthly, one year before the official deadline for the validation project, the European Commission has made some final considerations. In the Official Journal of 25th February 2017, it claims that

‘inclusive education addresses and responds to different needs of all learners in formal, non-formal and informal settings with the objective of encouraging participation of all in high quality education.’ (2017a, p.3)

Moreover, it highlights that

‘education and training systems should cater for the diverse needs, abilities and capacities of all learners and offer learning opportunities to all in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings.’ (2017a, p.4)

Then, it reiterates its call to

‘encourage the provision of opportunities for all learners to engage in flexible pathways, including the development of vocational skills and qualifications, combining formal programmes, in-company training, digital and distance learning, validation of non-formal and informal learning, based on strong partnerships between vocational institutions, business, social partners and other relevant stakeholders.’ (2017a, p.4)

³ The directive can be consulted online: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32005L0036&from=EN>.

Similarly, in the Official Journal of 15th June 2017, it claims that

‘life skills are positive, affirming and problem solving behaviours used appropriately and responsibly in everyday life — in the home, on-line, in the community, in education/training and in the workplace. They are a set of personal and social skills acquired through education and training, youth work and non-formal and informal learning that can be used to address issues, questions and problems commonly encountered in the course of daily human life.’ (2017b, p.31)

Finally, in line with the Council Recommendation of 20th December 2012, it recommends member states to

‘consider which and how life skills acquired by young people through youth work can be identified, and documented, in order to facilitate assessment and certification through mechanisms for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.’ (2017b, p.32)

1.1.4 The State of the Art in Applied Linguistics and in Educational Sciences

A considerable amount of literature has been published on informal learning and has dealt with it from different perspectives. In this paragraph, four main areas of research in informal learning will be briefly outlined, i.e. informal workplace learning, informal science learning, informal learning through digital media, and informal language learning. Particular emphasis will be placed on informal language learning as it is the focus of our study. Therefore, research which is missing in informal language learning will be finally illustrated.

1.1.4.1 Informal Workplace Learning

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of informal workplace learning. Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011) consider informal workplace learning one of the main areas of research in informal learning as it takes place in adults’ everyday life. Carliner (2013) describes it as one of the first types of informal learning that has enhanced adults’ motivation to learn. Wihak et al. (2008) equate informal learning with informal workplace learning and, thus, provide a definition of the former in which it is the worker who determines the process of learning. Sandwall (2010) acknowledges that informal workplace

settings provide authentic materials to learn and make the learning process meaningful. Sparr, Knipfer & Willems (2016) argue that informal workplace settings can help learners to transfer the competences acquired in formal settings into real life. According to Noe, Tews & Michel (2016), informal workplace learning makes learners more goal-oriented, autonomous, and responsible in the work environment. Janssens et al. (2016) claim that informal workplace learning is of paramount importance in today's knowledge society and arranging suitable learning conditions to boost it concerns research agendas. Schei & Nerbø (2015) recognise that informal workplace learning can be an effective way to develop new competencies although little is still known about it.

1.1.4.2 Informal Science Learning

Other studies have shown the usefulness of informal science learning. Some show that young children spontaneously acquire science topics in everyday life, when they communicate with their parents, visit museums, watch television programmes, or make everyday observations. (Bell et al., 2009; Duschl, Schweingruber & Shouse, 2007) Callanan (2011) claims that young children regularly acquire science topics in a non-didactic way. It is estimated that most of the time informal science learning is socially collaborative. For instance, families often visit museums but do not take part in institution-driven tours. Formal assessment does not occur and collaborative competences are spontaneously developed. The fact that informal science learning is generally spontaneous, unstructured, and fun may generate intrinsic motivation for learning. Eshach (2007) acknowledges that informal science learning is useful because it is generally learner-led and it produces intrinsic motivation. Science can be learnt everywhere, e.g. in playgrounds, in streets, at home, etc. and it is not restricted to school. Zimmerman & McClain (2015) suggest that trail-based designed learning environments where families may make outdoor explorations be useful to learn about science. Rahm (2014) notices that many previous studies have conceived informal science learning as strictly linked to museums and fieldtrips. However, it can be argued that it is everyday activities, and not locations, that are central to

science learning. Activities are useful if they involve engagement with science and they are socially collaborative regardless of the locations where they occur. Locations are argued to play a secondary role.

1.1.4.3 Informal Learning through Digital Media

Recent trends in considering digital media a useful tool for learning have led to a proliferation of studies on the use of technology in informal learning environments. Manca & Ranieri (2016) claim that Facebook may be a useful learning environment. Song & Lee (2014) argue that Web 2.0, i.e. the latest version of the Web, has enabled learners to improve the quality of their informal learning. Clough et al. (2007) reach the conclusion that mobiles have made learners more motivated in learning informally. Ziegler, Paulus & Woodside (2013) underline that informal learning can also take place in online communities and not only individually. Za, Spagnoletti & North-Samardzic (2014) argue that online informal learning settings may even be more useful to learn than formal learning ones. Lai, Khaddage & Knezek (2013) suggest that informal learning be useful as long as it is integrated with formal learning. Ravenscroft et al. (2012) describe digital media as supporting the quality of informal learning. Peeters & Fourie (2016) prove that Facebook may help learners acquire a new language. Alm (2015) argues that Facebook may prove to be helpful, in particular, to language learners. Dettori & Torsani (2013) show that online social spaces such as Yahoo may be considered valuable informal settings to learn a new language. Menegale (2013) shows that digital media play an important role in informal language learning. Ogata et al. (2008) claim that mobiles may improve the quality of informal language learning. Naghdipour (2017) argues that Facebook may increase students' learning motivation and develop collaborative skills. Nee Nee (2016) highlights that informal mobile learning has enormous potential for language learners.

1.1.4.4 Informal Language Learning and Missing Research

Recently, researchers have also shown an increased interest in informal language learning. Menegale (2013) argues that secondary school learners can become more autonomous and improve their language skills if they use the foreign language outside the classroom. Lai, Zhu & Gong (2015) remark that informal learning is fundamental in learning a new language. Kashiwa & Benson (2017) show that students need to be aware of the fact that the foreign language taught at school is used for real communicative purposes in real life and it is not only a school subject. Otherwise, they will not be able to make the most of any period of study abroad and, thus, they will not improve the foreign language. Lifanova et al. (2016) claim that mobile applications can help refugees improve German as their second language. Charitonos & Kukulska-Hulme (2017) confirm that immigrants may develop their second language skills through mobile applications. Kurata (2014) claims that social networks generally proved to be a good tool for a group of Australian foreign language majors to improve their language skills during their first year of university. Casanave (2012) suggests that informal language learning should be considered from a more ecological perspective, i.e. a more holistic interpretation of informal learning. In other words, a foreign language is acquired only if the psychological aspects of language education are also taken into account. An ecological perspective also implies the following: if informal language learning occurs in an out-of-school context as a deliberate activity, it then might also occur in the form of intentional out-of-school self-study. Anne Van Marsenille (2015) comes to the conclusion that university students can make the most of informal environments only if they later reflect upon the activities they have engaged in. To conclude, although some research has been conducted on informal language learning, to our knowledge no previous study exists which has collected data exclusively from *middle school* pupils in order to understand what activities they do outside school – if there are any – and which has considered the *two* different foreign languages they are taught at school. Therefore, our study attempts to fill this research gap.

1.1.5 Conclusion

To summarise, a general overview of informal learning has been provided. Firstly, the issue of defining informal learning has been dealt with. In the past three decades, a number of researchers have often sought to strictly define it by contrasting it with non-formal and, above all, with formal learning. Nonetheless, several studies have suggested that a more comprehensive and hybrid definition of informal learning should be preferred. The issue has grown in importance in the light of recent studies which argue that a hybrid definition of informal learning is possible when the major distinction between formal and informal learning, i.e. the location factor, is abandoned in favour of a more holistic interpretation of the concept. So far, however, little seems to have been investigated in the literature as far as the relationship between informal learning and non-formal learning is concerned, which seems to have led to ambiguity between the two terms. Furthermore, the hybrid nature of informal learning appears to have induced scholars to interpret such learning in many different ways, which seems to have led to non-uniformity in defining informal learning within the field. Secondly, it has been shown that several attempts have been made to define a theoretical framework of informal learning. The issue of defining a theoretical framework of what we *now* call ‘informal learning’ has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the fields of applied linguistics and of educational sciences. Seven selected theoretical frameworks of informal learning have been illustrated. We have come to the following conclusions: a more holistic conceptualisation of informal learning is to be preferred; a tradition of representing informal learning on a continuum seems to have established itself throughout the past four decades; informal learning is more and more considered in relation to digital media and a deep-rooted, albeit relatively new, tradition of considering it from this angle seems to have established itself in the literature; informal learning needs a solid theoretical framework which can help European countries to find a solution to validate it by 2018, as required by the European Commission (2012). Thirdly, a primary concern of informal learning has been its validation, which the European Commission recommends the member states to arrange by 2018. Therefore, a

brief overview of the work commenced by the European Commission to find a way to validate informal learning, alongside non-formal learning, by 2018 has been presented. Fourthly, it has been illustrated that a considerable amount of literature has been published on informal learning and has analysed it from different perspectives. While some studies have highlighted the importance of informal workplace learning, others have shown the usefulness of informal science learning. Moreover, recent trends in considering digital media a useful tool for learning have led to a proliferation of studies on the use of technology in informal learning environments. Researchers have also shown an increased interest in informal language learning, which is the focus of our study.

1.2 Informal Language Learning: a General Overview

In this section, a general overview of informal language learning will be outlined. Firstly, informal language learning will be analysed with reference to what the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages reports about it. (see 1.2.1) Secondly, informal language learning will be treated in relation to some selected theories concerning intrapersonal interaction within the psychology of learning. (see 1.2.2) Thirdly, informal language learning will be considered with reference to some selected notions on interpersonal interaction within the sociology of learning. (see 1.2.3) Furthermore, it should be noticed that the present section will be structured by making reference to the literature review in Van Marsenille (2015)'s study, which is one of the most recent and extensive studies on informal language learning and which has inspired our research project, together with Menegale (2011; 2013). Motivation in informal learning is another crucial aspect within the psychology of learning. Although we are aware of the intimate connection between motivation and informal language learning, motivation is not the focus of our study. Therefore, it will not be dealt with as a principal topic. Moreover, it might be argued that 1.2 does not deal with informal *language* learning, which is the focus of our study, as deeply as 1.1 does with *general* informal learning. However, embedded in 1.1 are many references to informal *language* learning. We have decided to anticipate them in 1.1 to show

that it is hard to conceive informal learning as a purely abstract notion. We are indeed convinced that dealing with informal learning as a purely abstract concept might become meaningless if it is not situated in a real learning context. In fact, informal *language* learning appears as a major issue in 1.1, being it not only one of the possible concrete manifestations of informal learning but also the focus of our study. Informal learning must necessarily manifest itself in a certain type of learning to concretely take place (e.g. informal science learning, informal language learning, etc.) and, in our discourse, language learning obviously represents the best type of learning in which informal learning could have been inscribed.

1.2.1 Informal Language Learning and the Common European Framework for Languages

In the Common European Framework for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), informal learning is dealt with in relation to plurilingualism, lifelong learning, and the European language portfolio (ELP). Firstly, it is claimed that plurilingual and intercultural competences can also be learnt out of school. They can be learnt even before and after compulsory schooling in informal environments. (Council of Europe, 2001) In fact, plurilingualism is embedded in real life. Therefore, the school curriculum, which aims at promoting plurilingualism, should not be merely restricted to school. It might be claimed that plurilingual and intercultural competences are mostly developed through informal learning; compulsory schooling lasts much less in a lifetime than informal lifelong learning does. However, formal instruction does not seem to have taken the issue into much consideration. (Council of Europe, 2001) Therefore, it is suggested that the school should consider the curriculum as part of a much broader learning process and not only as a mere formal procedure. The school curriculum should make learners aware of the resources they can take advantage of not only inside but also outside school. In this way, they will fully exploit all the situations they encounter and develop the plurilingual and intercultural competences required in real life.

Secondly, informal language learning may be inferred to be viewed as a lifelong learning process; moreover, learners are claimed to become more motivated, self-confident, and efficient when they become aware of the potentialities of informal learning. (Council of Europe, 2001) Talking about motivation, it is informal learning that can make them aware of the fact that the languages they study at school are far more than a mere subject. In fact, informal learning environments are the places where languages are used for real communicative purposes. Coming in contact with the places where languages are authentically employed is of vital importance for learners' motivation. If it is true that it is in informal learning settings that languages are used for real communicative purposes, then it must be true that learners can understand how necessary it is to learn languages primarily in this kind of settings, which inherently encircle real life. As a result, informal learning settings lead them to feeling more motivated in language learning. Dealing with language learning, it is considered a lifelong learning process. It might be stated that, as such, *lifelong* language learning must be situated in *lifelong* learning environments, which are mostly informal (see previous paragraph). Therefore, informal language learning should be viewed as a lifelong learning process. Moreover, in these settings, learners become aware of the gap in their knowledge when trying to say something they cannot explain. They may ask for help and fill the gap. (Swain, 1993) They may also decide not to ask for help and autonomously develop new strategies to cope with their knowledge gaps. In any case, they produce oral language, which leads them to feeling they are mastering the language. (Swain, 1993) As a result, they become more self-confident and efficient. (see 1.2.2)

Thirdly, informal learning is mentioned with reference to the European language portfolio (ELP). The portfolio is a didactic tool in which not only formal learning activities but also out-of-school experiences of any kind may be recorded in order to be formally recognised. (Council of Europe, 2001) As a result, it might be considered as a first attempt to validate informal learning and to bridge the gap between informal and formal learning. (Van Marsenille, 2015) It is thought of as promoting plurilingualism (Council of Europe, 2001), in that plurilingual and intercultural experiences, which are mostly informal, are encouraged to be

recorded in it. It may be considered a useful tool to make learners reflect upon their informal learning experiences. (Van Marsenille, 2015) As a result, it can be seen as leading learners to increasing their autonomy in and their awareness of the informal language learning process.

1.2.2 Informal Language Learning and the Psychology of Learning: Intrapersonal Interaction

In this paragraph, intrapersonal interaction, i.e. how the mind interacts with new input to create meaning, will be taken into account and special emphasis will be placed on the cognitive processes occurring in informal language learning. According to Krashen (1981), a distinction should be made between *acquisition* and *learning*. While the former indicates a subconscious process affecting interlanguage, the latter describes a conscious process not affecting interlanguage. With reference to informal linguistic environments, it is claimed that ‘when they promote real language use (communication) [they] are conducive to acquisition, while the formal environment has the potential for encouraging both acquisition and learning.’ (Krashen, 1981, p.6) Krashen (1981) also highlights that

‘it is not simply the case that informal environments provide the necessary input for *acquisition* while the classroom aids in increasing *learned* competence. [...] informal environments must be intensive and involve the learner directly in order to be effective. [...] it seems plausible that the classroom can accomplish both *learning* and *acquisition* simultaneously. While classwork is directly aimed at increasing conscious linguistic knowledge of the target language, to the extent that the target language is used realistically, to that extent will *acquisition* occur.’ (p.47)

According to Anderson (1983; 1995), three stages inform the learning process, i.e. the cognitive stage, the associative stage, and the autonomous stage. During the first stage, learners come in contact with new input. During the second stage, mistakes are corrected and new mental connections are established. During the third stage, new competences are gained. In order to acquire the foreign language, learners must go through all the three stages. According to Van Marsenille (2015), the stages can be found in informal learning, for instance, when students attend a conference during which they are exposed to new words

(cognitive stage). Later at the conference, they may ask questions in the foreign language and make use of the new words they were exposed to beforehand. Mother tongue speakers may correct them when they talk and new mental connections may be made (associative stage). After the conference, learners will probably master the new words and use them in future conversations (autonomous stage).

According to Swain (1993), language production also contributes to language learning. To summarise, learners acquire a language when they perceive a gap in their knowledge. While producing language, they notice this gap, which Swain (1998) calls 'hole'. They become aware of it and try to improve their productive skills. Interlocutors may help them, so that learners find a way to fill the gap. This theory is called 'the output hypothesis theory' and Van Marsenille (2015) claims that it can be traced when students do informal learning activities. For example, when talking to mother tongue speakers, learners may become aware of what they cannot say in the target language, i.e. holes in their interlanguage. They may notice that they do not know the words they need. Interlocutors may teach them these words and learners will probably employ them in future conversations.

According to Schumann (1997; 2004), emotions play a fundamental role in language learning. The brain receives a stimulus, i.e. new input, and appraises it. According to appraisal theory, the brain decides whether to accept the stimulus or not. Stimuli are appraised according to five dimensions: 1) novelty; 2) pleasantness; 3) need significance; 4) feasibility; 5) self and social compatibility. (Schumann, 1998) Schumann's stimulus-appraisal theory can be traced in informal learning, for example, when learners go to study abroad. They may find the foreign country a totally new environment. They may also like most aspects of it. They may perceive that language is used for real communicative purposes, which makes the environment a significant place to learn the language in. However, in order for *acquisition* to occur, the input, i.e. the stimulus, must immediately follow the already *acquired* input according to a predetermined natural order in learning (Balboni, 2012; Krashen, 1981). Finally, they must also

feel psychologically and socially safe. Otherwise, the affective filter becomes activated and *acquisition* does not occur. (Balboni, 2012; Krashen, 1981).

1.2.3 Informal Language Learning and the Sociology of Learning: Interpersonal Interaction

In this paragraph, interpersonal interaction, i.e. how the learner interacts with people and the environment to *acquire* language, will be dealt with in relation to informal language learning. Firstly, as far as the relationship between the learner and people is concerned, Lave & Wenger (1991) propose the notion of situated learning. According to situated learning, knowledge is the result of the interactions between the learner and the people around him or her. Far from being a set of formally learnt theoretical notions, knowledge is a dynamic process occurring in a real context in which the learner is actively engaged. Knowledge is seen as a social process which the learner constructs with other people. Learning is situated in communities of practice, which Wenger-Trayner (2015) defines as

‘formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour: a tribe learning to survive, a band of artists seeking new forms of expression, a group of engineers working on similar problems, a clique of pupils defining their identity in the school, a network of surgeons exploring novel techniques, a gathering of first-time managers helping each other cope. In a nutshell: communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.’ (p.1)

With reference to informal language learning, communities of practice may be either face-to-face or virtual. While face-to-face communities of practice entail face-to-face communication, virtual ones are media based and can be found, for instance, on social networks. These communities give learners the possibility to communicate in the foreign language without reflecting upon it. Learners share an interest. They are fully immersed in talking about it. They exchange ideas with and receive feedback from other people of the community. While face-to-face communities of practice enable them to produce oral language, virtual ones are more likely to enable them to produce written language.

Secondly, as far as the relationship between the learner and the environment is concerned, the notion of ecology learning has been proposed (van Lier, 2004). Ecology learning is about the environment where learners go through experiences. Learning is viewed as a process which can take place anywhere. According to van Lier (2004), every situation represents an occasion to learn. Any situation potentially offers a certain amount of possibilities for learning. These potential offerings that a situation provides are called *affordances*. Affordances beyond the school can be many, but not all the situations may provide the same amount of affordances. Learners should be aware of these in order to fully exploit them. For example, somebody walking in the city of another country may be listening to music on their iPod all the time because they think nothing special deserves their attention at that moment. Nonetheless, if they were aware, for instance, of the linguistic landscape in the city, they would spend their time reading billboards and listening to other people talking in the street, which represent some of the affordances available in that place. In short, ecology learning crosses the boundaries between formal and informal learning. The amount of affordances available and the degree to which people are aware of these make learning significant. It is not the place in itself which makes learning meaningful. Instead, learning is viewed as a holistic process that may potentially happen everywhere at any time. (Menegale, 2013; van Lier, 2004) Furthermore, different situations entail different language skills, which may be improved. According to van Marsenille (2015), for example, watching films involves listening while online communities may entail reviewing them and, thus, writing. Therefore, not all the skills might be developed outside the school. However, if learners become aware of what skills the situations they encounter may provide, they can have control over them and improve them all. In van Lier (2004)'s terms, learners should become aware of the quality, and not only of the quantity, of affordances which a situation may present.

1.2.4 Conclusion

In this section, a general overview of informal *language* learning has been provided. Firstly, informal language learning has been analysed with reference to what the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages reports about it (Council of Europe, 2001). In this, informal learning is dealt with in relation to plurilingualism, lifelong learning, and the European language portfolio (ELP). It has been highlighted that: 1) plurilingual and intercultural competences can also be learnt out of school; 2) informal language learning may be inferred to be viewed as a lifelong learning process; moreover, learners are claimed to become more motivated, self-confident, and efficient when they become aware of the potentialities of informal learning; 3) informal learning is mentioned with reference to the European language portfolio (ELP). Secondly, informal language learning has been dealt with in relation to some selected theories concerning intrapersonal interaction within the psychology of learning. It has been remarked that: 1) according to Krashen (1981), a distinction should be made between *learning* and *acquisition*; 2) according to Anderson (1983; 1995), three stages inform the learning process, i.e. the cognitive stage, the associative stage, and the autonomous stage; 3) according to Swain (1993), language production also contributes to language learning; 4) according to Schumann (1997; 2004), emotions play a fundamental role in language learning. Thirdly, informal language learning has been considered with reference to some selected notions on interpersonal interaction within the sociology of learning. It has been underlined that: 1) as far as the relationship between the learner and people is concerned, Lave & Wenger (1991) propose the notion of situated learning; 2) as far as the relationship between the learner and the environment is concerned, it has been proposed the notion of ecology learning (van Lier, 2004).

2. RESEARCH PROJECT

2.1 The Research Hypotheses and the Research Questions

In this paragraph, the research hypotheses and the research questions of our research project will be outlined. Although some research has been conducted on informal language learning (see 1.1.4.4), to our knowledge no previous study exists which has collected data exclusively from *middle school* pupils in order to understand what activities they do outside school – if there are any – and which has considered the *two* different foreign languages they are taught at school. Therefore, our study attempts to fill this research gap. The general research hypothesis of our research project is that third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice engage more in English informal activities than in German ones due to their stronger perception of English as a real life tool. Teachers' point of view will also be explored and compared with students' one in the discussion in order to have a broader overview of the issue. (see 4.2) Our research questions are:

- 1) What type of informal learning activities do third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice engage in, as far as English and German are concerned?;
- 2) What language skills do they use outside school for both languages?;
- 3) Is there a difference between English and German in the type of informal learning activities, in their frequencies, and in the skills used?;
- 4) What are students' perceptions of informal language learning?;
- 5) What do teachers think of students' informal language learning?.

The specific research hypotheses for each of our research questions are respectively the following:

- 1) Third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice mostly engage in informal activities linked to technology for both languages;

- 2) They mostly use reading and listening skills for both languages;
- 3) There is a considerable difference between English and German in the frequency of informal learning activities. The students engage more in English informal activities than in German ones. There is not a big difference between the two languages in the type of informal learning activities and in the skills used;
- 4) The students generally perceive more English as a real life tool than German, which they perceive as a school subject. For both languages, they do not engage in informal activities in order to acquire the language and they are unaware of their informal learning;
- 5) Teachers confirm that the students do not engage in informal activities in order to acquire the language and that they are generally unaware of their informal learning. Teachers think that the students see both languages as a mere school subject. However, they do not know about students' informal activities very much and do not make the students reflect upon their informal learning.

2.2 Subjects of the Study

In this paragraph, the subjects of the study will be described. Participants were recruited in the middle school where the researcher served his mandatory university internship, which lasted from September 2017 to January 2018.

2.2.1 The Students

Forty-five third-year students from the above-mentioned middle school completed the questionnaires. They were recruited from the three third-year classes studying German. They had been studying English and German for two years in the middle school. When the research was conducted, they had been learning English and German for a further four months since the beginning of their third school year. The students studied English three hours a week and German two hours a week. All the students shared the same German Teacher, who was interviewed. (see 2.2.2) However, they had different English teachers. The students who attended classes A and B had English Teacher B while those who attended class C had

English Teacher A.⁴ As for their level of English and German, third-year students are generally expected to master an A2/B1 level in both languages by the end of the school year. As this does not seem to always occur, we asked students whether they *thought* they mastered this level or not in the section ‘Alcune Generalità’ in the questionnaires. Together with their level of English and German, we asked them for other information in this section. It emerges that:

- of the 45 students, 16 attended class A, 15 class B, and 14 class C;
- of the 45 students, 34 were 13 years old, 7 were 14 years old, and 4 were 15 years old;
- of the 45 students, 26 were Italian, 6 were Bengali, 3 were Macedonian, 3 were Moldovan, 2 were Albanian, 1 was Romanian, 1 was Ukrainian, 1 had dual Italian and Portuguese nationality, 1 had dual Italian and Ukrainian nationality, and 1 had dual Bengali and Indian nationality (in total, 28 were therefore Italian and 17 were foreigners);
- of the 45 students, 27 spoke Italian as their mother tongue, 7 Bengali, 2 Albanian, 2 Moldovan, 2 Macedonian, 1 Romanian, 1 Turkish, 1 was bilingual in Italian and Arabic, 1 was bilingual in Italian and Moldovan, and 1 was bilingual in Italian and Portuguese;
- of the 45 students, 28 spoke Italian at home, 3 Italian and Bengali, 2 Italian and English, 2 Bengali, 1 Romanian, 1 Macedonian, 1 Moldovan, 1 Italian and Arabic, 1 Italian and Turkish, 1 Italian and Moldovan, 1 Italian and Macedonian, 1 Italian and Albanian, 1 Italian and Portuguese, and 1 Italian and Ukrainian;
- of the 45 students, 34 spoke Italian with their friends, 2 Italian and English, 2 Bengali, 1 Italian and German, 1 Italian and Turkish, 1 Italian and Moldovan, 1 Italian and Macedonian, 1 Italian and Ukrainian, 1 Italian, Bengali and English, and 1 Italian, English, and German;
- of the 17 students whose nationality was not Italian, 3 thought they spoke little Italian, 3 thought they spoke Italian well, 6 thought they spoke Italian very well, and 5 thought they spoke Italian as native speakers;

⁴ In order to protect students’ privacy, classes are categorised regardless of the actual categorisation given by the school. In the present research project, they are alphabetically categorised as A, B, and C. As for teachers’ labels, please consult the next paragraph.

- of the 45 students, apart from the languages previously claimed, 13 thought they mastered at least an A2 level also in English, 13 in English and German, 7 in German, 1 in English and Hindi, 1 in English and Spanish, 1 in German and Spanish, and 1 in English, German, and Russian, while 8 students thought they did not master an A2 level in any other foreign language.

Furthermore, when the research project was conducted, the best students in the three classes had taken part in an intercultural exchange which had given them the possibility to go to Germany with their German Teacher and live in the family of a German peer for about a week. Then, the German peers had later come to Italy and lived in the family of their Italian partner for about a week. The principal aims of this project were: 1) to allow Italian students to get to know more about the German culture and German people, and 2) to let them use German for real life purposes. Moreover, some of the students involved in the present research project would soon attend an extra class given by a native English speaker in order to be able to sit the KET exam in the next months. Finally, some of them attended two-hour-a-week extra classes on how to play a musical instrument. They could choose between the guitar, the piano, the violin, the flute, the clarinet, and the violoncello. Therefore, at least for some of the students involved in the present research project, music played a central role in their lives.

2.2.2 The Teachers

All the teachers who took part in the interviews had collaborated with the researcher during the whole internship. When asked to be interviewed for the present research project, they willingly accepted. They were four teachers, i.e. three English teachers and one German Teacher. From now onwards, we will call them ‘English Teacher A’ (who was a woman), ‘English Teacher B’ (who was a woman), ‘English Teacher C’ (who was a man), and ‘the German Teacher’ (who was a woman) in order to protect their privacy. English Teacher A taught English to one class of the students involved in the research project and English Teacher B to the other two classes of the students involved in the research project. The German Teacher taught German to all the three classes of students involved in the

research project. English Teacher C did not teach English to any class of the students involved in the research project. While English Teachers were monolingual in Italian, the German Teacher was bilingual in Italian and German. English Teachers A and B and the German Teacher had long experience in teaching their foreign language to middle school pupils. English Teacher C was the youngest, but already had relevant experience in teaching. While English Teachers A and B and the German Teacher had been teaching for several years in the school where the research project was conducted, English Teacher C had just begun to teach there. Before coming to this public middle school, Teacher C used to teach in private middle schools, which were said to be smaller and perhaps more elitist realities. All the teachers' academic background was in foreign languages and literature.

2.3 Methodology of the Research

In this paragraph, the methodology of the research will be presented. The present research project might be defined as an *exploratory case study involving mixed methods*. Firstly, it may be defined as an *exploratory case study*⁵ (Heigham & Croker, 2009) because:

- the conclusions it arrives at are not easily generalisable to other contexts;
- the qualitative research method tends to prevail over the quantitative one (see below);

⁵ Our inferences are based on Heigham & Croker (2009)'s definition of *exploratory case study*, which claims that 'when little is known about a case, the researcher can use an exploratory case study. This helps to define the boundaries and the main aspects of the case and lays the groundwork for subsequent, possibly more quantitative studies by helping define questions and hypotheses.' (p.313) '[...] Qualitative research is a very useful research methodology because it is exploratory – its purpose is to discover new ideas and insights, or even generate new theories. This research is not necessarily done to predict what may happen in the future or in another setting – what is learned about the phenomenon, participants, or events in the setting can be an end in itself. That is, qualitative research mostly focuses on understanding the particular and the distinctive, and does not necessarily seek or claim to generalise findings to other contexts. Some qualitative researchers do consider the extent to which their findings may be generalisable, but many leave it up to the readers to decide to what degree the features of the research setting are relevant to their own context.' (Croker, 2009, p.9) The focus of the case study is 'to provide an in-depth description and analysis of a case (or cases), using multiple data sources.' (Croker, 2009, p.16) Its unit(s) of analysis may be 'an individual learner or teacher, a class, school, education area, or country; a class activity or language programme.' (Croker, 2009, p.16)

- it explores new insights into a topic on which little research seems to have been done in the field (see 2.1);
- it identifies the general aspects of the case;
- it paves the way for further research possibly adopting a more quantitative research method.

Secondly, it may be labelled as a *case study* (Heigham & Croker, 2009) because:

- it provides ‘an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system’ (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p.307);
- it depicts a particular type of learning employing multiple data collection methods;
- the unit of analysis is represented by three classes of students who are not required to necessarily have the same cultural background (i.e. ethnography) and who are not the researcher’s students (i.e. action research) (Heigham & Croker, 2009) (see footnote 10);

Thirdly, it involves *mixed methods* because:

- both qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed in order to ‘understand a research problem more completely’ (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p.137);
- both the interpretative analysis⁶ and the statistical analysis are employed to respectively analyse teachers’ interviews and students’ questionnaires;
- ‘mixed method research, with its focus on the meaningful integration of both quantitative and qualitative data, can provide a depth and breadth that a single approach may lack by itself’ (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p.136).

However, the qualitative research method tends to prevail over the quantitative one because:

- the researcher’s subjectivity is deeply involved especially in the (interpretative) analysis of teachers’ interviews and in the discussion (see 4.3);
- the constructivist paradigm⁷ underlies the entire research project, in that the *triangulation process* is used to obtain ‘different perspectives on a phenomenon

⁶ Interpretative analysis may be defined as emphasising ‘the role of the researcher as an interpreter of the data, and the self-reflective nature of qualitative research.’ (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p.315)

⁷ Not only does the constructivist paradigm underlie this research project, but it also represents the researcher’s personal worldview and he defines himself as a constructivist. ‘In contrast to positivists, constructivists believe that there is no universally agreed upon reality or universal ‘truth’ [...] each

[i.e. students' informal language learning] by gathering data from different participants' (Croker, 2009, p.11) and by employing multiple data collection methods (i.e. teachers' interviews and students' questionnaires) (see below);

- the interpretative paradigm tends to prevail in the end⁸ and statistical analysis is only descriptive and not inferential at all;

- 'the aim is to *explore* and then describe in rich detail the phenomenon that is being investigated' (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p.137), which makes the study not purely *experimental* (Nunan, 1992);

Nonetheless, the study is not completely qualitative because:

- it involves statistical analysis for the questionnaires although it is only descriptive;

- 'the emergent nature of the qualitative research process'⁹ (Croker, 2009, p.10) did not entirely characterise our research process, which mostly followed 'a set of prescribed research steps' (Croker, 2009, p.10), thus resembling more a quantitative study for this aspect;

- while in qualitative research 'the goal is not to try to prove or disprove something' (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p.137), in our research project we intended to prove or disprove our research hypotheses.

As Heigham & Croker (2009) put it¹⁰, while the approaches used for this study are the *case study* and *the mixed methods*, which often combine together (Heigham & Croker, 2009), the methods are teachers' interviews and students' questionnaires. In detail, the mixed method research is characterised by three

individual creates his or her own unique understandings of the world, so there are multiple constructions and multiple interpretations of reality. And these constructions and interpretations change, depending upon time and circumstances, so reality is not universally but person-, context, and time-bound.' (Croker, 2009, p.6)

⁸ Interpretation may be conceived as 'the researcher's explanation of why participants behave or think in the way that they do. In qualitative research, this is usually based on the data, and is developed through inductive thinking'. (Heigham & Croker, 2009, p.314)

⁹ i.e. 'understanding emerges as the research proceeds [...] [given that] qualitative research is more simultaneous, nonlinear and iterative [than quantitative one]' (Croker, 2009, p.10)

¹⁰ While Heigham & Croker (2009) define a *research approach* as 'a tradition such as narrative inquiry, case study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and action research, which employs generally accepted research methods' (p.321), they define a *research method* as 'a systematic and rigorous way of collecting and analysing information [which] in qualitative [...] includes observation, interviews, open-responses items in questionnaires, verbal reports, diary studies, and discourse analysis.' (p.321) It must be noticed that, despite 'mixed methods' incorporating the word 'method', the authors identify it as an approach.

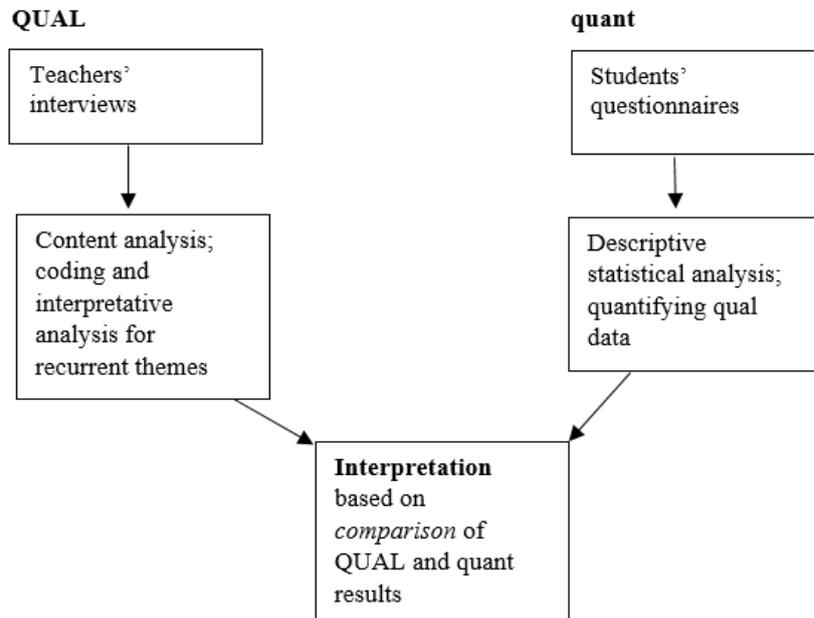
variables, i.e. timing, weighting, and mixing (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009). These respectively represent the order in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected, the importance attributed to each of the two research methods, and the way these integrate in the study. As for *timing*, students' questionnaires and teachers' interviews did not depend on each other in the analysis. The former did not have to be analysed in the light of the latter, and vice versa. Therefore, they did not have to be sequentially collected. In the discussion (i.e. chapter 4), we attempted to *compare*¹¹ the two research methods. As for *weighting*, the qualitative research method tends to prevail over the quantitative one. (see above) As for *mixing*, qualitative data integrate with quantitative ones in the discussion (i.e. chapter 4). (see footnote 11) According to Ivankova & Creswell (2009)'s subdivision of mixed method designs, our study seems to belong to the *triangulation design*, in which

'the weight [...] can be given to either the quantitative or qualitative data, or equally to both. The mixing of the two methods occurs either at the data analysis stage or during the interpretation of the results from the two components of the study. As for data analysis, there are a lot of options. The most popular approach is to compare the quantitative results and qualitative findings to confirm or cross-validate the findings from the entire study [...] [As for the reporting structure of the triangulation design] a researcher presents the quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in separate sections, but combines the interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative findings into the same section, to discuss whether the results from both study components converge or show divergence.' (p.142-143)

To sum up, with reference to table 7.3 in Ivankova & Creswell (2009, p.143), our triangulation design might be represented as such (see next page):

¹¹ 'If the purpose of the study is to *compare* the quantitative and qualitative results, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed separately. Mixing here occurs at the data interpretation stage, when the results from two data sets are compared.' (Ivankova & Creswell, 2009, p.139)

Table 16 illustrating the triangulation design procedures in the present research project



To conclude, our research project may be claimed to follow an *exploratory-QUAL+quant*¹²-(mostly) *interpretative* paradigm. (Nunan, 1992)¹³

2.4 Materials

In this paragraph, the materials used for the present research project will be illustrated: students' questionnaires (see appendixes A and B) and the interview guide (see appendix E).

¹² Capital letters indicate that the qualitative research method has a heavier weight in the study, while the plus shows that the two research methods are not necessarily sequential.

¹³ According to Grotjahn (1987), as cited by Nunan (1992), '[...] in analysing actual research studies, it is necessary to take into consideration the method of data collection (whether the data have been collected experimentally or non-experimentally); the type of data yielded by the investigation (qualitative or quantitative); the type of analysis conducted on the data (whether statistical or interpretative).' (p.4) As for the first of these, our study may be considered 'exploratory' and not 'experimental', in Nunan (1992)'s terms. As for the second, it may be labelled as 'QUAL+quant'. As for the third, it may be seen as '(mostly) interpretative'.

2.4.1 Students' Questionnaires

Students' questionnaires (see appendixes A and B) were written in Italian by the researcher. They are anonymous and consist of 25 questions each. Questionnaire 1 is about English informal learning while Questionnaire 2 is about German informal learning. The questionnaires are equally subdivided into four sections:

- 1) 'Prima di cominciare';
- 2) 'Percezione dell'apprendimento informale dell'inglese' (Questionnaire 1) or 'Percezione dell'apprendimento informale del tedesco' (Questionnaire 2);
- 3) 'L'apprendimento informale dell'inglese' (Questionnaire 1) or 'L'apprendimento informale del tedesco' (Questionnaire 2);
- 4) 'Alcune Generalità'.

In detail,

- given that the two questionnaires were administered *at two different times*, the first section gave the researcher the possibility to identify students' single profiles *between the two questionnaires*. This is why we asked them to invent a nickname in Questionnaire 1 and they had to later write it also in Questionnaire 2 with no variations. In this way, we were able to know what a single student thought about English and German informal learning and we protected students' privacy at the same time. In both questionnaires, also the class they attended was asked in order to facilitate the search of students' single profiles (see above) during the analysis of data, if needed. Furthermore, it was done in order to identify the students in case they had given back the questionnaire(s) mostly uncompleted and, thus, to come back to them and make them do the questionnaire(s) again. Therefore, question 1 in both questionnaires asked what class the students attended while question 2 asked to write down the very same invented nickname in both questionnaires.

- The second section intends to answer our fourth research question, i.e. '*What are students' perceptions of informal language learning?*'. It goes from question 3 to

question 16. It explores students' awareness in informal learning (question 3), students' intentionality in informal learning (question 4), students' reflection upon the informal activities they do (question 5), student's knowledge about the European language portfolio (question 6), its use in class (question 7), students' perception of the usefulness of informal learning (questions 8, 9, 13), students' perception of the foreign language (questions 10, 11, 12), students' perception of lifelong informal learning (questions 14, 15) and students' actual perception of informal learning (question 16).

- The third section means to answer research questions 1, 2, and 3.¹⁴

Question 17 presents a list of 56 informal activities that students could do and they might be considered sub-questions. For each activity, they are asked to choose one of the following options: '*Mai*', '*1 volta alla settimana*', '*2/3 volte alla settimana*', '*Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana*', or '*Più di 6 volte alla settimana*'. Questions 1-12 concern informal activities linked to listening. Questions 13-28 regard informal activities related to writing. Questions 29-44 are about informal activities connected to reading. Questions 45-53 concern informal activities which involve speaking. Questions 54-56 are informal activities which resemble formal learning.¹⁵ Question 18 asks students to add at most other four informal activities they do which were not mentioned in the list in question 17. Like in question 17, they also have to choose the frequency of these activities. The frequency options are the same as in question 17.

- The fourth section provides the researcher with some information mostly about students' language background. This helped the researcher understand what kind of participants were involved in the research project. Moreover, they helped the researcher speculate, in the discussion, on the possible connections between students' language background and the results obtained in the analysis. Question

¹⁴ They respectively are: 1) '*What type of informal learning activities do third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice engage in, as far as English and German are concerned?*'; 2) '*What language skills do they use outside school for both languages?*'; 3) '*Is there a difference between English and German in the type of informal learning activities, in their frequencies, and in the skills used?*'.

¹⁵ Activities 54-56 represent the specific category of informal activities resembling formal learning. They were inserted to answer research question 1 on the *types* of informal activities done by the students. They were not inserted to be considered as far as the skills were concerned – we considered activities 1-53 as a whole in order to calculate the mean of each skill used. After all, activities 54-56 might involve more than one skill and including them when calculating the mean of each skill used would be misleading (see 2.6.1)

19 is about students' age, question 20 about their nationality, question 21 about their mother-tongue, question 22 about the language used at home, question 23 about the language used with friends, question 24 about foreign students' level of Italian, and question 25 about the foreign languages mastered at least at a A2 level.

The questionnaires were laid out in this way for specific reasons:

- the first section was fundamental in order to identify students' single profiles between the questionnaires and to know what class students attended (see above) and, therefore, had to be at the beginning of the questionnaire for practical reasons;
- the second section was considered the most tiring and effortful because students had to deeply think about the issues proposed and this is why we decided to put it first (see below);
- the third section appears to be long; however, it required quick ticks in order to be completed and, thus, less effort;
- despite its importance, the final section did not respond to a research question of ours and this is why it was not considered a priority.

The underlying idea about the questionnaire layout was that students become tired very soon. This was confirmed also by teachers when we asked them for suggestions during the creation of the questionnaires. Therefore, we decided that the questionnaires should present first mentally effortful questions, then less tiring questions, and finally less important questions as far as our research questions were concerned. The questions in the questionnaires are of five types:

- questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17 (i.e. the list of activities 1-56), 20, and 24 are multiple choice questions where only one option can be chosen;
- question 18 is in part an open question (i.e. students write down the type of activity they wish) and in part a multiple choice question where only one option can be chosen (i.e. they tick the frequency for each activity written down);
- questions 21, 22, 23, and 25 are multiple choice questions where more than one option can be chosen;
- questions 1, 2, 12, 15, 16, and 19 are open questions.

Moreover, it must be noted that:

- questions 7, 12, and 15 must be done only if the previous question is answered affirmatively;
- question 18 is optional;
- question 24 must be answered only if the student is not Italian;
- question 25 may remain unanswered if the student does not feel good at any other foreign language;
- questions 20, 21, 22, 23, and 25 can optionally become open questions;
- question 20 might become a multiple choice question where more than one option can be chosen if the student has dual citizenship.

It must also be noted that the questionnaires were partially inspired by Van Marsenille's doctoral dissertation (2015) and by Clough et al. (2007)'s informal mobile learning framework. (see table 13) However, due to the knowledge gap in the field of study (see 2.1), the questionnaires were designed by the researcher by making reference to his personal experience as a student, as an intern, and as a would-be teacher.

2.4.2 The Interview Guide

In order to conduct teachers' interviews, an interview guide was used. (see appendix E) In the interview guide, thirteen topics were identified which had to be covered by the end of each interview. The underlying idea was that we were dealing with topics and not with specific questions. As shown by the interview guide, topics could be expressed through many possible questions. The topics to be covered in the interview were the following:

- 1) Awareness of students' informal opportunities to learn English/German;*
- 2) Acquaintance with the activities done by their own students;*
- 3) Perception of students' awareness of learning when doing them;*

- 4) *Relationship between formal and informal learning;*
- 5) *School responsibility in promoting which kind of learning;*
- 6) *ELP: Known? Used? Useful?;*
- 7) *Benefit from using English/German out of school in order to learn it;*
- 8) *Perception of the language taught: as a mere school subject or as a real life tool?;*
- 9) *Coherence between how language is conceived and the type of learning promoted in class;*
- 10) *Ideal learning to learn a language;*
- 11) *Personal definition of 'lifelong learning';*
- 12) *Perception of informal learning;*
- 13) *Perception of formal learning.*

In the course of the analysis of teachers' interviews, we substituted the above-mentioned topics with the corresponding questions. We thought that questions were more easily accessible to the reader. After all, *questions* were made during the interviews. Despite topics being our original tool for conducting the interviews, *questions* were therefore considered in the course of the analysis at the expense of the original list of topics. In order to conduct *semi-structured* interviews (see 2.5.2),

‘the researcher [...] knows what topics need to be covered and to a large extent what questions need to be asked (though this does vary) [...] but is prepared to allow the interview to develop in unexpected directions where these open up important new areas.’ (Richards, 2009, pp.185-186)

With reference to the above-illustrated topics, the questions respectively are:

- 1) *‘Si è mai reso/a conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l’inglese?’*
- 2) *‘Lei è a conoscenza delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontanea volontà?’*

- 3) *'Secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività?'*
- 4) *'Qual è la relazione tra questi due tipi di apprendimento (formale e informale) per apprendere al meglio una lingua?'*
- 5) *'Qual è il ruolo della scuola: deve prediligere un tipo di apprendimento rispetto all'altro?'*
- 6) *'Il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola. Conosce questo strumento? Se sì, ha mai fatto usare questo strumento ai suoi studenti per farli riflettere sul loro apprendimento?'*
- 7) *'Secondo lei, quanto è utile usare l'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?'*
- 8) *'Come concepisce la lingua che insegna: più come una materia scolastica da fare apprendere fine a se stessa o come qualcosa di vivo a cui gli studenti possono essere esposti oltre la scuola o persino per tutta la loro vita?'*
- 9) *'Pensa che la visione che ha della lingua che insegna (materia scolastica/strumento di vita reale) sia coerente con il tipo di apprendimento che predilige in classe (formale/informale)?'*
- 10) *'Scelga l'affermazione con cui più è in sintonia e la giustifichi:*
- *L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi.*
 - *L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale.*
 - *Serve una integrazione dei due punti precedenti per imparare il tedesco perché nessuno dei due da solo basta.'*
- 11) *'Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese/il tedesco, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare?'*

12) *‘Come trova l’apprendimento dell’inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?’*

13) *‘Come trova l’apprendimento dell’inglese in classe al fine di impararlo?’*

Interview questions mostly coincide with questions 3-16 in students’ questionnaires. This was made in order to later compare students’ responses with teachers’ responses. (see 2.3)

2.5 Data Collection Procedures

In this paragraph, data collection procedures will be outlined as far as students’ questionnaires and teachers’ interviews are concerned.

2.5.1 Students’ Questionnaires

Students’ questionnaires were administered in the third week of January 2018. Fortunately, we managed to make each class of students complete both questionnaires on the same day. Class B completed them on 16th January, class A on 17th January, and class C on 18th January. The students who were present on the day that the questionnaires were regularly administered had twenty minutes available to complete questionnaire 1 and other twenty to complete questionnaire 2. We were lucky because if a class of students had had to complete the questionnaires on two different days, some of the students who had completed questionnaire 1 might have been absent on a later day when they had to complete questionnaire 2. Instead, all the students who completed questionnaire 1 had also completed questionnaire 2. However, some of the students who intended to take part in our research project were absent on the day that we administered both questionnaires in their class. For example, when we administered the questionnaires in class B, some students were absent. These students were gathered the day after and completed both questionnaires in class A when we

administered them in class A.¹⁶ They had forty minutes to complete both questionnaires. In any case, the questionnaires were administered under our supervision and students were encouraged to ask us for clarifications if they did not understand something. When we administered questionnaire 1 in the three classes, we also gave students questionnaire 2 for a while. We wanted them to copy the invented nickname in questionnaire B apart from writing the class they belonged to also in this questionnaire. In this way, it was more likely that they wrote the very same nickname in both questionnaires. We feared that they could have modified or forgotten it if they had had to write it again much later. This was done in order to identify the students in case they had given back the questionnaire(s) mostly uncompleted and, thus, to come back to them and make them do the questionnaire(s) again. Although we told them to complete everything in the questionnaires, some students left something blank or gave two answers when only one was permitted. On the following days, we therefore came back to school and made most of these students fill the gaps. Some were still absent and some of the students who were given the possibility to fill the gaps left some other gaps blank again. However, we did not mean to go back to school on the next days. Our aim was to reduce unacceptable answers as much as possible. Nonetheless, we did not intend to inadvertently influence the sample by going back to school over and over and forcing these students to fill the gaps. We thought that, perhaps, even the gaps could mean something in the end. Moreover, some weeks before the questionnaire administration we had asked teachers to tell us if there were some students in the three classes who did not understand Italian very well and we had been informed about one student in class C. With the teacher's consent, we brought this student out of class during this week and we illustrated him the questionnaires in such a way that he could complete them. It took him forty minutes to complete both questionnaires with our help. When

¹⁶ On the day that class A completed the questionnaires, the teacher that they should have had in that hour was missing. Another teacher came instead and gave us the permission to administer both questionnaires in that hour. She was a special aid teacher and had no class to teach. This is why the students from class B could freely remain and complete both questionnaires in class A. However, all the students had twenty minutes available to complete questionnaire 1 and other twenty to complete questionnaire B. In classes B and C, the questionnaires were administered with different teachers in two different hours. In any case, all the students who were involved in our research project completed both questionnaires on the same day and had twenty minutes available for each questionnaire.

administering the questionnaires in class A, we realised that another foreign student did not understand Italian very well, but teachers had probably forgotten to tell us about him. Everything was already rigidly organised and we did not manage to help him complete the questionnaires as we did with the other foreign student from class C. Before administering the questionnaires, we had calculated that our sample had to be of 47 participants. However, it became of 45 participants because of the above-mentioned foreign student who did not complete the questionnaires and because of a student from class B who remained absent for the whole week that we administered them.

2.5.2 Teachers' Interviews

Teachers' interviews were conducted in a single day in December 2017. Fortunately, the teachers were all free at school because on that day a janitors' strike was on and pupils were not made to enter the school for security reasons. One by one, teachers were individually interviewed. The interviews were conducted in Italian and were audio-recorded with the teachers' consent. When interviewed, teachers were brought to an empty classroom where they could quietly talk. In order for the interview to occur, an interview guide was employed as a reference point for the interview. (see 2.4.2 and appendix E) The semi-structured interview was the type of interview chosen for data collection. Teachers could freely express their ideas and, to some extent, dominate the conversation as far as all the interview questions were answered. Therefore, the researcher's role was that of a guide making sure that all the topics of the interview were dealt with in the end. The interviews were later transcribed. (see appendix C)

2.6 Method of Data Analysis

In this paragraph, the method of data analysis will be presented. Both students' questionnaires and teachers' interviews were analysed *according to the five research questions*, which represented our major analysis criterion (see 2.1).

2.6.1 Students' Questionnaires

The questionnaires were analysed in the following steps:

- data were tabulated in Excel;
- calculations were later made through Excel;
- graphs were then created through Excel except for rectangular tables, which were made through Word;
- the actual analysis was finally conducted and written down.

It must be noticed that some stringent criteria were established before making calculations:

1) In the course of the analysis, '*mai*' and '*1 volta alla settimana*' were considered negative frequencies while '*2/3 volte alla settimana*', '*Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana*', and '*Più di 6 volte alla settimana*' were considered positive frequencies. It might be argued that '*mai*' and '*1 volta alla settimana*' should be taken as negative frequencies, '*Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana*', and '*Più di 6 volte alla settimana*' as positive frequencies and '*2/3 volte alla settimana*' as a neutral frequency. However, we thought that viewing '*2/3 volte alla settimana*' as a neutral frequency would be limiting in order to later interpret the data collected. We thought that if a student, for example, listens to English music twice/three times a week, he/she shows a somewhat lively interest in this activity. For this reason, it could not be considered neutral *tout court*. In other words, despite '*2/3 volte alla settimana*', '*Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana*', and '*Più di 6 volte alla settimana*' being *quantitatively* different, they might be viewed as *qualitatively* similar. Therefore, we decided to also consider '*2/3 volte alla settimana*' when we did the sum of the percentages with positive frequency in order to have an overall idea of the positive frequency. It should also be noticed that each (quantified) frequency has a qualitative correspondence (apart from '*mai*' which is already qualitatively expressed):

- '*1 volta alla settimana*' corresponds to *rarely*;
- '*2/3 volte alla settimana*' corresponds to *sometimes*;
- '*Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana*' corresponds to *often*;
- '*Più di 6 volte alla settimana*' corresponds to *always*.

2) We made a distinction between *relevant* and *irrelevant* activities as far as activities 1-56 in item 17 of both questionnaires were concerned. *Irrelevant* activities were not analysed for three reasons: 1) they were mathematically stuck in a limbo in that they represented an uncertain situation which was neither positive enough to be labelled as such nor an extremely negative one; 2) they did not satisfy any of the *criteria* which determined what the relevant activities were (see below); 3) for space issues in the present dissertation. Therefore, we decided to analyse only *relevant* activities. These satisfied one or more of the following sub-criteria, which we established in the light of the following table:

Table 17 illustrating how many students as a percentage engage in each of the 56 activities proposed in item 17 of both questionnaires *at least* twice/three times a week

Sum of the Percentages with Positive Frequency	English Informal Activities	German Informal Activities
0%-10%	11; 15; 16; 22; 23; 45	1; 3; 4; 8; 9; 11; 13; 14; 15; 16; 18; 19; 21; 22; 23; 36; 37; 38; 41; 42; 45; 47; 52; 53
10.1%-20%	4; 8; 21; 41; 53	2; 5; 6; 10; 17; 20; 27; 28; 32; 33; 34; 39; 40; 46; 48; 54
20.1%-30%	3; 14; 20; 24; 28; 47; 54; 56	7; 24; 25; 31; 43; 44; 50; 51; 56
30.1%-40%	7; 13; 18; 25; 35; 36; 42; 44; 50; 51	30
40.1%-50%	5; 10; 17; 19; 27; 37; 39; 48	49
50.1%-60%	2; 9; 32; 33; 38; 40; 43; 49; 52	12; 29; 35; 55
60.1%-70%	6; 12; 31; 34; 46; 55	26
70.1%-80%	26; 30	
80.1%-90%	29	
90.1%-100%	1	

Table 17 shows how many students as a percentage engage in each of the 56 activities proposed in item 17 of both questionnaires *at least* twice/three times a week. *Relevant* activities had to satisfy one or more of the following sub-criteria:

- 1st criterion (most done activities): relevant activities can be those which are done by *at least* 30,1% of the whole sample *at least* twice/three times a week (i.e. $30,1\% \leq x \leq 100\%$, where x is the sum of the percentages with positive frequency for a given activity, as shown in table 17);
- 2nd criterion (activities most done in one language but not in the other): relevant activities can be those which are done by *at least* 50,1% of the whole sample in one language *at least* twice/three times a week *and* which

are done *at most* by 10% of the whole sample in the other language *at least* twice/three times a week (i.e. $50,1\% \leq x \leq 100\%$ in language A *and* $0\% \leq x \leq 10\%$ in language B);

- 3rd criterion (least done activities): relevant activities can be those which are done *at most* by 10% of the whole sample *at least* twice/three times a week (i.e. $0\% \leq x \leq 10\%$).

Therefore, the activities which could be considered as *relevant* and which were in fact analysed were the following:

- for the 1st criterion: English activities 7; 13; 18; 25; 35; 36; 42; 44; 50; 51; 5; 10; 17; 19; 27; 37; 39; 48; 2; 9; 32; 33; 38; 40; 43; 49; 52; 6; 12; 31; 34; 46; 55; 26; 30; 29; 1 and German activities 30; 49; 12; 29; 35; 55; 26. From table 17 it can be observed that there is no German activity satisfying the 1st criterion which is not done also in English. Instead, there are some English activities satisfying the 1st criterion which are not done in German (i.e. 7; 13; 18; 25; 36; 42; 44; 50; 51; 5; 10; 17; 19; 27; 37; 39; 48; 2; 9; 32; 33; 38; 40; 43; 52; 6; 31; 34; 46; 1). This tells us that the activities most done in German form a subset within the more extended set of the activities most done in English;
- for the 2nd criterion: 9; 38; 52; 1. It must be noticed that there were only *English* activities which were done by *at least* 50,1% of the whole sample *at least* twice/three times a week *and* which were done *at most* by 10% of the whole sample in *German* *at least* twice/three times a week. However, there were not *German* activities which were done by *at least* 50,1% of the whole sample *at least* twice/three times a week *and* which were done *at most* by 10% of the whole sample in *English* *at least* twice/three times a week;
- for the 3rd criterion: English activities 11; 15; 16; 22; 23; 45 and German activities 1; 3; 4; 8; 9; 11; 13; 14; 15; 16; 18; 19; 21; 22; 23; 36; 37; 38; 41; 42; 45; 47; 52; 53. From table 17 it is clear that all the activities least done in English are also the least done in German. There is no English activity satisfying the 3rd criterion which does not satisfy such a criterion also in German. However, there are some German activities satisfying the

3rd criterion which do not satisfy the 3rd criterion in English. They are activities 1; 3; 4; 8; 9; 13; 14; 18; 19; 21; 36; 37; 38; 41; 42; 47; 52; 53.

This tells us that the activities least done in English form a subset within the more extended set of the activities least done in German.

Consequently, *irrelevant* activities are:

- English activities 4; 8; 21; 41; 53; 3; 14; 20; 24; 28; 47; 54; 56;
- German activities 2; 5; 6; 10; 17; 20; 27; 28; 32; 33; 34; 39; 40; 46; 48; 54; 7; 24; 25; 31; 43; 44; 50; 51; 56.

It goes without saying that irrelevant activities are those which are done *at least* by 10.1% of the whole sample *at least* twice/three times a week *and* which are done *at most* by 30% of the whole sample *at least* twice/three times a week (i.e. $10.1\% \leq x \leq 30\%$). They might be viewed as mathematically stuck in a limbo because neither are they done by *at least* (nearly) a third of the whole sample nor are they totally rejected. Furthermore, it should be noticed that the distinction between relevant and irrelevant activities is blurred when activities are considered *as a whole* in the course of the analysis. This happens for two principal reasons: a) considering activities 1-56 as a whole, for example, when calculating the mean of each frequency option or of the skills used gives a complete overview of the phenomenon investigated through item 17; b) considering activities 1-56 as a whole does not involve space issues while analysing *each* activity, for example, in order to determine the most recurrent types of activities does (hence, the necessity of establishing some criteria; see above). Nevertheless, activities 54, 55, and 56 were excluded when we calculated the mean of the skills used. These activities were inserted in order to answer research question 1 on the *types* of activities done by the students as they represent the specific category of informal activities resembling formal learning. After all, they might involve more than one skill and including them when calculating the mean of each skill used would be misleading (see 2.4.1)

3) We decided to insert the results obtained in item 18 of both questionnaires regardless of their satisfying the above-presented criteria. This was done because these results were in part open questions and they could correct the rigidity of item

17, which did not give the students the possibility to freely express the type of activity they wished.

4) '*Più sì che no*' and '*Decisamente sì*' were considered positive answers while '*Più no che sì*' and '*Decisamente no*' negative answers in items 3, 9, 10, 11, and 14. Similarly, we also made the following somewhat arbitrary choices:

- the first three answers in item 4 tended to be positive while the last three tended to be negative;

- the third and the fourth answers in items 5 and 7 tended to be positive while the first two answers and the last one tended to be negative;

- the first three answers in item 8 tended to be positive while the last three tended to be negative.

5) Regarding calculations, only the first decimal was kept. We considered the second decimal in order to round the first decimal up or down. If the second decimal was the same as 5 or more, the decimal we kept was rounded up (i.e. $5 \leq x \leq 9 \rightarrow y$ was rounded up, where x is the second and y the first decimal, which we kept). If the second decimal was less than 5, the decimal we kept was rounded down (i.e. $0 \leq x \leq 4 \rightarrow y$ was rounded down).

6) Generally, answers were not accepted when either the student gave no answers at all or when he/she gave more than one answer when only one was permitted. As for item 18, which was in part an open question, answers were not accepted if the activity freely expressed was one of the 56 activities already present in item 17. Our general criterion was also to reject incomprehensible answers. However, it was not the case because all the open answers for this question were comprehensible and, thus, accepted. Furthermore, similar answers were standardised as much as possible.

7) Open questions (i.e. 12, 15, and 16) were quantified. As for item 12, answers were quantified by reducing them to conceptual labels. Then, they were counted. The total number of how many times a given label appeared was later transformed into a percentage. With regards to items 15 and 16, the adjectives proposed by the students were immediately counted after standardising them as much as possible. For example, if two different synonyms were employed by the students to express the same concept, only one was maintained. Finally, adjectives were counted and

transformed into percentages. It must be noticed that if we do the sum of all the percentages obtained for each of the above-mentioned open questions in order to verify whether the calculation is correct, we will discover that the result is not 100%. This is due to the fact that: 1) some students included more than one label in their answer as far as item 12 was concerned; 2) some students included more than one adjective in their answer as far as item 15 was concerned; 3) each student was asked to give three adjectives as far as item 16 was concerned. In fact, the total number of answers exceed the total number of participants of the study. This is why the total percentage of the answers obtained for a given item exceeds 100%.

8) As for the section '*Alcune Generalità*', only the answers given in questionnaire 1 were considered. Those given in questionnaire 2 were expected to be *identical* and were considered if there were some gaps in questionnaire 1. We expected these *gaps* to be present because this section was at the end of the questionnaires and the students could have been tired by then, which had been confirmed also by teachers when we had asked them for suggestions during the creation of the questionnaires. (see 2.4.1) This is why we proposed the very same questions also in questionnaire 2 anyway, but primarily considered those in questionnaire 1.

9) The layout of the following chapter on the analysis of data was arranged according to the research questions we posed for our research project; these were the major criterion we employed to analyse data. For this reason, some details should be now specified as far as some of our research questions are concerned:

- Our first research question, i.e. '*What type of informal learning activities do third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice engage in, as far as English and German are concerned?*', intends to understand what *types* of informal activities the students actually *engage in*. (see above, 1st sub-criterion to determine relevant activities) It focuses only on the activities most done by the students and frequencies are not very relevant here. Therefore, overall calculations about frequencies were often made which do not distinguish between the different frequency options. Nonetheless, in order to know what the activities more frequently done were (and thus infer what type of activities were preferred), frequencies had to be taken into account. As a result, they were involved in order to answer research question 1. In any case, analysing frequencies here anticipated

(and facilitated) the analysis of some results useful to answer research question 3, which particularly focuses on frequencies, and therefore diluted the density of our whole work.

- Our third research question, i.e. *'Is there a difference between English and German in the type of informal learning activities, in their frequencies, and in the skills used?'*, intends to do a comparative analysis between the two languages. Its aim is to find any sort of *difference* lying between them as far as the types of activities, their frequencies and the skills used are concerned. Therefore, not only did our analysis focus on the activities most done by the students (i.e. the ones explored in research question 1) from a more comparative perspective, but it also took into consideration those which were preferred in one language but not in the other and those which were highly rejected. (see above, 2nd and 3rd sub-criteria, respectively, which were employed to determine relevant activities) Mentioning frequencies, research question 3 *particularly* focuses on this variable, unlike research question 1. For this reason, when frequencies were analysed, calculations were made which distinguished between the different frequency options; these were considered in their *quantitative* connotation. (see above, criterion 1) It must be noticed that as far as the frequencies and the skills used were concerned both relevant and irrelevant activities were considered in order to calculate their means. Nevertheless, this did not occur when we considered the types of informal activities, which were *individually* analysed and which therefore required that some criteria met in order to be considered relevant – with reference to research question 1. (see above, criterion 2) It should also be noticed that while research question 2, i.e. *'What language skills do they use outside school for both languages?'*, particularly focuses on the skills actually used by the students for both languages, research question 3 considers the skills from a wider perspective in order to identify any sort of difference between the two languages. Generally, research question 3 tends to take into account both positive and negative values and not only positive ones (as the first and second research questions do).

- Our fourth research question, i.e. *'What are students' perceptions of informal language learning?'*, is subdivided into two main sections, i.e. perceptions about English informal learning and perceptions about German informal learning. The

research question does not intend to describe any difference between the two languages. Therefore, a comparative analysis is not conducted here; it is left for chapter 4 on the discussion of results. After all, such an analysis would involve speculating on the results obtained from a wider perspective. This is the same reason why a more detailed typology is not put forth as far as the different types of activities are concerned in research question 1. This will also be discussed in chapter 4.

2.6.2 Teachers' Interviews

After being transcribed, teachers' interviews were analysed in two different steps. In both steps, they were however analysed *according to the interview questions*. Firstly, each interview was individually analysed. Quotations from the interview which could answer the interview questions were transcribed in a table. In the table, the interview questions were put in the left column, the transcriptions in the middle column, and the categories of analysis¹⁷ in the right column. Not only were the quotations chosen which directly¹⁸ answered the interview question posed, but also other quotations in the course of the interview which substantiated the category of analysis found. Some quotations were sometimes repeated in order to indirectly¹⁹ answer more interview questions. We did this for two reasons: 1) either because the quotation repeated simultaneously responded to more interview questions which required, to our view, to be answered through the very same category of analysis previously found for another interview question (in this case the same expressions were put in bold in the different quotations); 2) or because the quotation repeated incorporated two different concepts and, thus, two different

¹⁷ By 'category of analysis', we mean a label which is substantiated by one or more bold expressions in the middle-column quotations. Categories of analysis are abstractions, conceptualisations, and/or generalisations of the bold expression(s) on their left. They concisely summarise what the interviewee thought about a topic and may refer to another category previously found (in this case the expression 'given that' was generally used to signal this link).

¹⁸ By 'direct quotations', we mean the quotations which are chronologically immediately after the question posed in the interview.

¹⁹ By 'indirect quotations', we mean the quotations which are *not* chronologically immediately after the question posed in the interview as a direct answer to it. However, they deal with the issue raised by the interview question with which they are associated in the table, despite their being chronologically far from such question.

categories of analysis (in this case different expressions were put in bold in the quotation repeated). An example for this type of analysis may be seen in appendix D. Secondly, the interviews were comparatively analysed. (see table 63) In order to do this, a table was designed which intended to allow a comparison between the categories of analysis found in individual analyses and to have a general overview of the responses obtained. It was composed of five columns. Reading these from left to right, the first column contained the interview questions, the second column English Teacher A's categories of analysis, the third column English Teacher B's categories of analysis, the fourth column English Teacher C's categories of analysis, and the fifth column the German Teacher's categories of analysis. The comments following the table constituted the actual comparative analysis of teachers' interviews. In this case, the categories of analysis substantiated the researcher's comments. Similar categories within each column were reduced to one category in order to avoid repetitions as an answer to a given interview question. A distinction was finally made between major and minor categories. The most frequent categories among all the interviews and/or the most relevant to our discourse were considered major categories. The least frequent categories among all the interviews and/or the least relevant to our discourse were considered minor categories. In the table, an asterisk was put next to major ones.

2.7 Ethical Issues

In this paragraph, ethical issues connected to our research project will be briefly illustrated. In order for the research project to be conducted in the school, the headmaster had first to approve it. We applied to the headmaster for permission in a written form. By virtually two weeks, we received the form signed, which attested that we could conduct the research project in the school. Despite the questionnaires being anonymous, we also had to ask students' family for permission to let students do it. In order for explanatory leaflets to be distributed to the students and thus to be signed by one of their parents, another official document had first to be approved by the headmaster. This document attested that the leaflets could be officially distributed. When the headmaster

approved, the leaflets were printed and distributed to the students. This second step took virtually one month for logistical reasons. As for the interviews, teachers were informed that they would be audio-recorded some months before the interviews took place. They were also informed of this during the interview and they always approved. This can be seen in the transcriptions of the interviews (appendix C) where the researcher illustrates to the interviewee the research project and the ethical issue connected to teachers' recordings. In detail, it was illustrated at the very beginning of the interview when the researcher says that teachers' recordings will be used exclusively for the present research project and they will be eliminated when transcribed. Moreover, in any application for conducting the present research project, the researcher has ensured to protect the privacy of all the people attending the school. This is why no personal information or specificity about the school which might make the school or the people attending it recognisable are expressed.

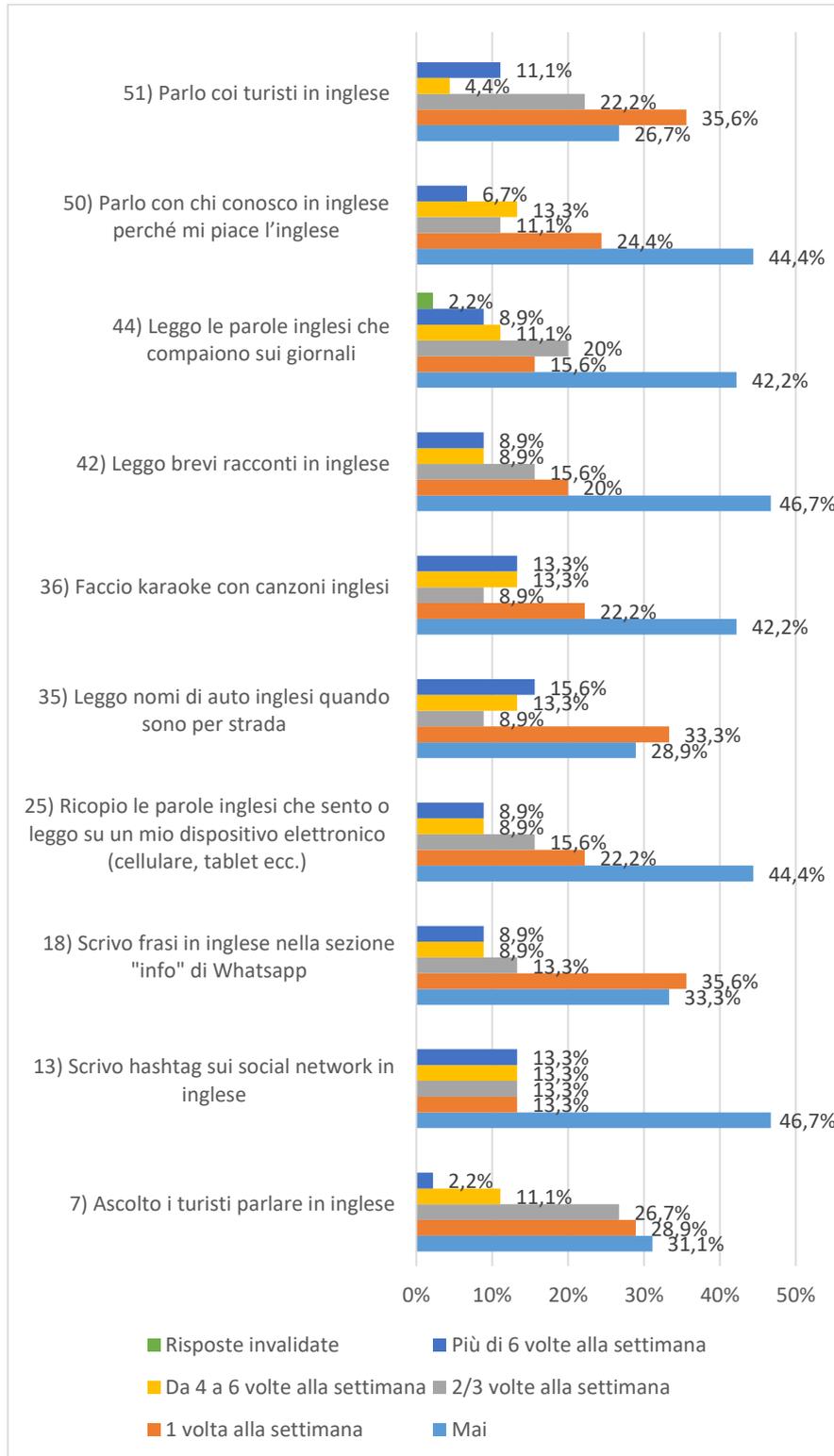
3. RESULTS

In this section, the data retrieved from students' questionnaires (see 3.1) and teachers' interviews (see 3.2) will be analysed.

3.1 Students' Questionnaires

In order to answer our first research question, i.e. '*What type of informal learning activities do third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice engage in, as far as English and German are concerned?*', we will consider the activities that *at least* (approximately) one third of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week. (see 2.6.1 for the method of analysis of students' questionnaires; see next page for the analysis)

Table 18 illustrating the activities that 30,1%-40% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English



The bar chart shows the activities that 30,1%-40% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. It can be seen that 35,6% of the students talk to tourists in English once a week while 26,7% of them never engage in this activity (i.e. activity 51). However, it is clear that 22,2% of them talk to tourists in English twice/three times a week, 11,1% more than six times a week, and 4,4% between four and six times a week. If we calculate the sum of the positive frequencies, i.e. '*2/3 volte alla settimana*', '*Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana*', and '*Più di 6 volte alla settimana*' (see 2.6.1), it may be observed that approximately two fifths (37,8%) of the whole sample engages in this activity *at least* twice/three times a week. If we calculate the sum of the negative frequencies, i.e. '*1 volta alla settimana*' and '*Mai*', it is clear that more than three fifths (62,2%) of the whole sample tends not to do activity 51. If we now turn to activity 50 (i.e. talking in English to people that students know because they like English), it can be seen that 44,4% of the students never do this activity while 24,4% of them do it once a week. Nevertheless, 13,3% claim to do it between four and six times a week, 11,1% twice/three times a week, and 6,7% more than six times a week. Overall, it can be observed that nearly a third (31,1%) of the whole sample tends to engage in this activity while more than two thirds (68,9%) tend not to do it. As for reading English words on newspapers (i.e. activity 44), 42,2% of the whole sample never does this activity. 20% of it does it twice/three times a week, 15,6% once a week, 11,1% between four and six times a week, and 8,9% more than six times a week. 2,2% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted. (see 2.6.1) Taking into account only the accepted answers, overall we can observe that two fifths (40%) of the whole sample does this activity *at least* twice/three times a week while less than three fifths (57,8%) tend not to do it. If we turn to activity 42 (i.e. reading short stories in English), 46,7% of the students never read them while 20% read them once a week. However, 15,6% of the students read short stories in English twice/three times a week, 8,9% between four and six times a week, and another 8,9% more than six times a week. Therefore, it can be highlighted that a third of the whole sample (33,3%) is likely to do this activity while approximately two-thirds (66,7%) are unlikely to do it. With reference to activity 36 (i.e. singing karaoke with English songs), it can be seen that 42,2% of

the students never engage in this activity while 22,2% of them do it once a week. Nonetheless, 13,3% sing karaoke with English songs between four and six times a week, another 13,3% more than six times a week, and 8,9% two/three times a week. In total, more than a third (35,6%) is likely to engage in this activity while almost two-thirds (64,4%) are unlikely to do it. As for activity 35 (i.e. reading English car brands names on the street), 33,3% of the whole sample does this activity once a week while 28,9% never do it. However, 15,6% read English car brands names on the street more than six times a week, 13,3% between four and six times a week, and 8,9% twice/three times a week. Overall, it may be observed that approximately two fifths (37,8%) of the whole sample tends to do this activity while more than three fifths (62,2%) tend not to do it. Regarding activity 25 (i.e. copying English words which are heard or read on an electronic device), it may be observed that 44,4% of the students never do this activity while 22,2% do it once a week. Nevertheless, 15,6% undertake this activity twice/three time a week, 8,9% between four and six times a week, and another 8,9% more than six times a week. As a result, it may be underlined that a third of the sample (33,3%) is willing to do this activity while more than two thirds (66,7%) are unwilling to do it. As for writing sentences in English in the section 'info' on Whatsapp (i.e. activity 18), 35,6% of the students do this activity once a week while 33,3% of them never do it. However, 13,3% do this activity twice/three times a week, 8,9% between four and six times a week, and another 8,9% more than six times a week. In the light of these results, it can be calculated that nearly a third (31,1%) of the sample tends write sentences in English in the section 'info' on Whatsapp while more than two thirds (68,9%) tend not to do it. Activity 13 (i.e. writing hashtags in English on social networks) is never done by 46,7% of the sample while it is done by 13,3% of it once a week. Nevertheless, another 13,3% of the sample does it twice/three times a week, another 13,3% between four and six times a week, and another 13,3% more than six times a week. In total, it can be observed that two fifths (40%) of the sample is likely to engage in this activity while three-fifths (60%) are unlikely to do it. Finally, activity 7 (i.e. listening to tourists talking in English) is never undertaken by 31,1% of the sample while it is undertaken by 28,9% of it once a week. However, 26,7% of the sample undertakes this activity

twice/three times a week, 11,1% between four and six times a week, and 2,2% more than six times a week. Overall, it is clear that two fifths (40%) of the sample tends to undertake this activity while three-fifths (60%) tend not to undertake it.

In conclusion, as far as table 18 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- two fifths of the students engage in activities 44, 13, and 7 *at least* twice/three times a week;

- almost two fifths engage in activities 51 and 35 *at least* twice/three times a week;

- more than a third engages in activity 36 *at least* twice/three times a week;

- a third engages in activities 42 and 25 *at least* twice/three times a week;

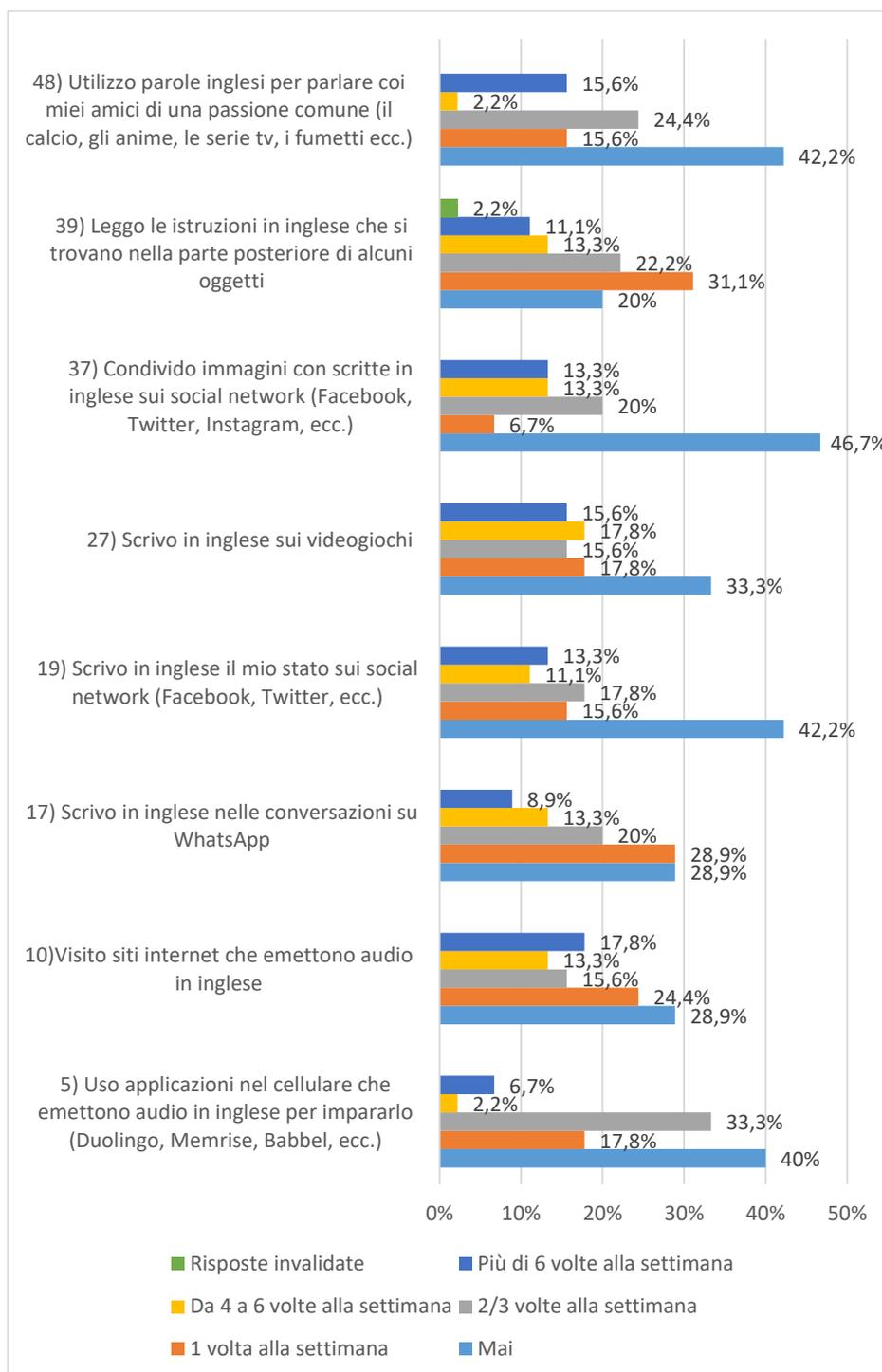
- almost a third engages in activities 50 and 18 *at least* twice/three times a week.

Although the students engage more in some activities (i.e. 44, 13, 7, 51, 35, and 36) than in others (i.e. 42, 25, 50, and 18), the results seem to overall indicate that:

- an appreciable proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a somewhat moderate interest in all these activities;

- an appreciable proportion of the whole sample engages in activities of six principal types, i.e. interactive oral activities (i.e. 51 and 50), activities related to tourists (i.e. 51 and 7), activities related to printed readings (i.e. 44 and 42), activities related to technology (i.e. 25, 36, 18, and 13), activities related to music (i.e. 36), and activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 35; see 1.2.3).

Table 19 illustrating the activities that 40,1%-50% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English



The bar chart shows the activities that 40,1%-50% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. If we look at activity 48 (i.e. using English words when talking to friends about a common interest), it is clear that

42,2% of the students never do this activity while 15,6% do it once a week. Nevertheless, 24,4% do this activity twice/three times a week, 15,6% more than six times a week, and 2,2% between four and six times a week. Therefore, it can be calculated that more than two fifths (42,2%) of the sample is likely to do this activity while less than three fifths (57,8%) are unlikely to do it. As for activity 39 (i.e. reading the English instructions on the side of some objects), we can see that 31,1% engage of the students engage in this activity only once a week and 20% never do it. However, 22,2% of the students engages in this activity twice/three times a week, 13,3% between four and six times a week, and 11,1% more than six times a week. 2,2% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted. Taking into account only the accepted answers, overall we can conclude that just under a half (46,7%) of the sample tends to engage in this activity while more than half (51,1%) tends not to engage in it. If we consider activity 37 (i.e. sharing pictures showing English quotations on social networks), it can be observed that 46,7% of the sample never does this activity while 6,7% does it once a week. Nonetheless, 20% of the students do it twice/three times a week, 13,3% more than six times a week, and another 13,3% between four and six times a week. In total, just under a half (46,7%) of the sample is willing to do this activity while more than half (53,3%) is unwilling to do it. Taking into account activity 27 (i.e. writing in English on videogames), it is clear that 33,3% of the students never do this activity while 17,8% do it once a week. Nevertheless, 17,8% of the sample does it between four and six times a week, 15,6% more than six times a week, and another 15,6% twice/three times a week. Overall, these results indicate that nearly half (48,9%) of the sample tends to do this activity and nearly another half (51,1%) of the sample tends not to do it. With reference to writing the status on social networks in English (i.e. activity 19), 42,2% of the students never do it and 15,6% do it once a week. However, 17,8% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week, 13,3% more than six times a week, and 11,1% between four and six times a week. Therefore, it can be observed that more than two fifths (42,2%) of the sample is likely to do this activity while nearly three fifths (57,8%) are unlikely to do it. Regarding activity 17 (i.e. texting in English on Whatsapp), 28,9% of the students never undertake this activity and

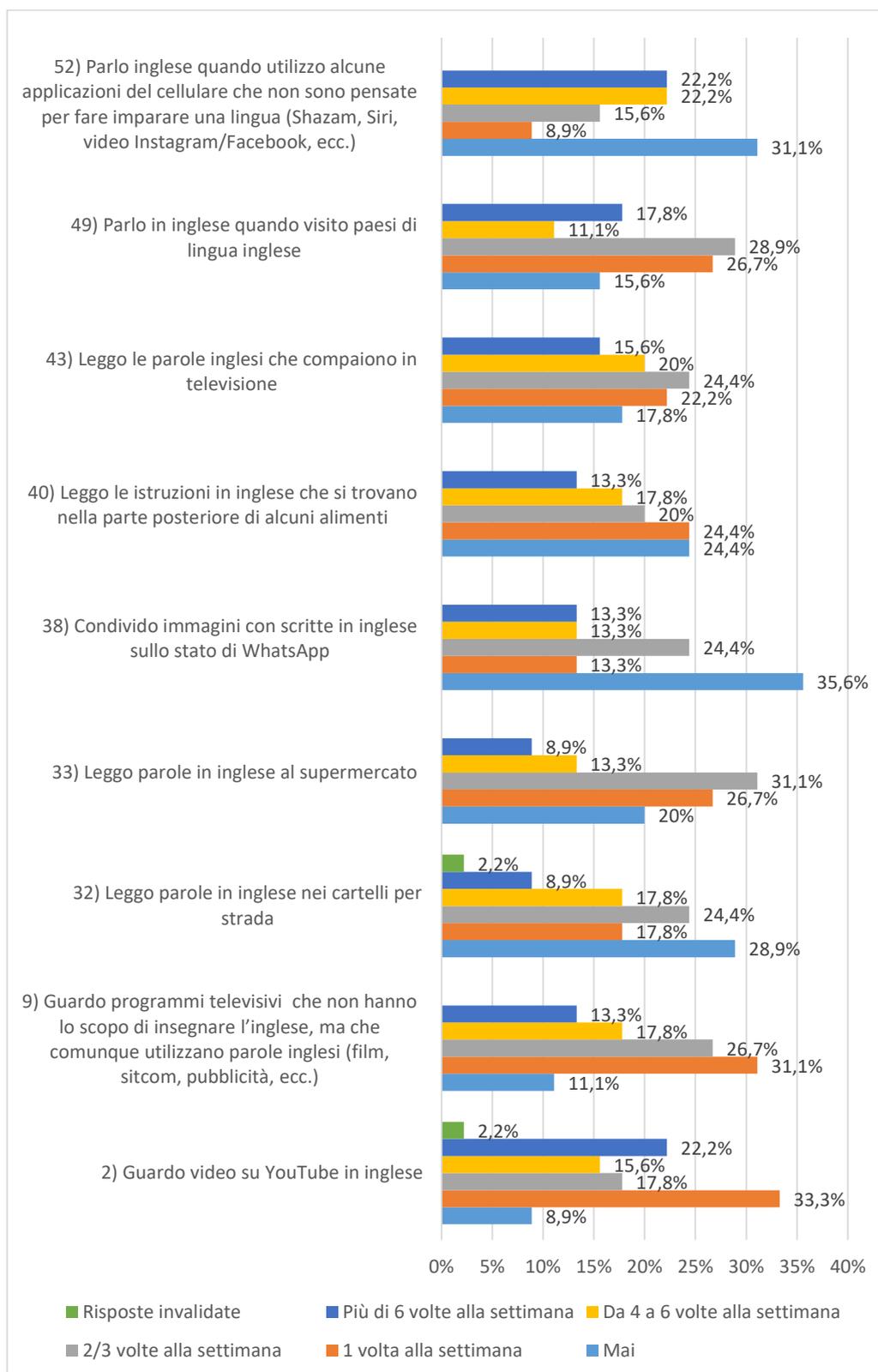
another 28,9% undertake it once a week. Nonetheless, 20% of the sample engages in this activity twice/three times a week, 13,3% between four and six times a week, and 8,9% more than six times a week. In total, we can see that more than two fifths (42,2%) of the sample tends to do this activity while nearly three fifths (57,8%) tend not to do it. If we now turn to accessing websites which involve English recordings (i.e. activity 10), it can be observed that 28,9% of the students never engage in this activity while 24,4% engage in it once a week. However, 17,8% of the sample undertakes this activity more than six times a week, 15,6% twice/three times a week, and 13,3% between four and six times a week. Overall, it is clear that just under a half (46,7%) of the sample is likely to undertake this activity while more than half (53,3%) is unlikely to undertake it. Referring to activity 5 (i.e. using mobile language learning apps which involve English recordings), we can see that 40% of the students never do this activity while 17,8% do it once a week. Nonetheless, 33,3% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week, 6,7% more than six times a week, and 2,2% between four and six times a week. These results overall indicate that more than two fifths (42,2%) of the students tend to do this activity while nearly three fifths (57,8%) tend not to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 19 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- nearly half of the students engage in activity 27 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- just under a half engages in activities 39, 37, and 10 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- more than two fifths engage in activities 48, 19, 17, and 5 *at least* twice/three times a week.

Although the students engage more in some activities (i.e. 27, 39, 37, and 10) than in others (i.e. 48, 19, 17, and 5), the results seem to overall indicate that:

- a significant proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a somewhat lively interest in all these activities;
- a significant proportion of the whole sample engages in activities of three principal types, i.e. activities involving face-to-face communities of practice (i.e. 48; see 1.2.3), activities related to technology (i.e. 37, 27, 19, 17, 10, and 5), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape (see 1.2.3) at home (i.e. 39).

Table 20 illustrating the activities 50,1%-60% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English



The bar chart shows the activities that 50,1%-60% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. It can be seen that 31,1% of the students never speak English when using some mobile apps which were not created in order to learn a foreign language (i.e. activity 52). However, 22,2% of the sample undertakes this activity more than six times a week, another 22,2% between four and six times a week, and 15,6% twice/three times a week. Only 8,9% of the sample does this activity once a week. Overall, it can be calculated that three fifths (60%) of the sample is likely to undertake this activity while two fifths (40%) are unlikely to undertake it. Regarding activity 49 (i.e. speaking English when visiting English-speaking countries), we can see that 28,9% of the students do this activity twice/three times a week, 17,8% more than six times a week, and 11,1% between four and six times a week. Only 15,6% of the sample never does this activity and 26,7% does it once a week. Therefore, nearly three fifths (57,8%) of the sample tends to do this activity while more than two fifths (42,2%) tend not to do it. With reference to activity 43 (i.e. reading English words on television), it is clear that 24,4% of the students engage in this activity twice/three times a week, 20% between four and six times a week, and 15,6% more than six times a week. However, 22,2% of the sample does this activity once a week and 17,8% never does it. In total, it can be calculated that three fifths (60%) of the sample is willing to do this activity while two fifths (40%) are unwilling to do it. If we now turn to activity 40 (i.e. reading the English instructions on the side of some food), we can observe that 24,4% of the students never do this activity and that another 24,4% do it once a week. Nevertheless, 20% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week, 17,8% between four and six times a week, and 13,3% more than six times a week. Overall, it is clear that more than half (51,1%) of the students are likely to do this activity while just under a half (48,9%) are unlikely to do it. As for activity 38 (i.e. sharing pictures showing English quotations as a status on Whatsapp), it can be underlined that 35,6% of the students never do this activity while 13,3% do it once a week. Nonetheless, 24,4% of the sample undertakes this activity twice/three times a week, 13,3% more than six times a week, and another 13,3% between four and six times a week. These results overall indicate that more than half (51,1%) of the sample tends to engage in this activity while just under a

half (48,9%) tend not to engage in it. Referring to activity 33 (i.e. reading English words at the supermarket), it can be seen that 31,1% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week, 13,3% between four and six times a week, and 8,9% more than six times a week. However, 26,7% of the students do this activity once a week and 20% never do it. In the light of these results, it can be calculated that more than half (53,3%) of the students are willing to do this activity while just under a half (46,7%) are unwilling to do it. If we turn to activity 32 (i.e. reading English words on street billboards), we can see that 28,9% of the sample never does this activity while 17,8% does it once a week. Despite this, 24,4% of the students undertake this activity twice/three times a week, 17,8% between four and six times a week, and 8,9% more than six times a week. 2,2% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted. Taking into account only the accepted answers, overall we can conclude that more than half (51,1%) of the sample is likely to undertake this activity while more than two fifths (46,7%) are unlikely to undertake it. Dealing with activity 9 (i.e. watching television programmes involving English words but not created in order to learn a foreign language), it is clear that 31,1% of the sample engages in this activity once a week while 11,1% never engages in it. Nevertheless, 26,7% of the students do this activity twice/three times a week, 17,8% between four and six times a week, and 13,3% more than six times a week. Therefore, we can calculate that nearly three fifths (57,8%) of the sample tends to undertake this activity while more than two fifths (42,2%) tend not to do it. As for activity 2 (i.e. watching English videos on YouTube), we can observe that 33,3% of the sample does this activity once a week while 8,9% never does it. Nonetheless, 22,2% undertakes this activity more than six times a week, 17,8% twice/three times a week, and 15,6% between four and six times a week. 2,2% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted. Taking into account only the accepted answers, it can be calculated that more than half of the sample is likely to undertake this activity (55,6%) while more than two fifths (42,2%) are unlikely to undertake it. In conclusion, as far as table 20 is concerned the main trends are the following:

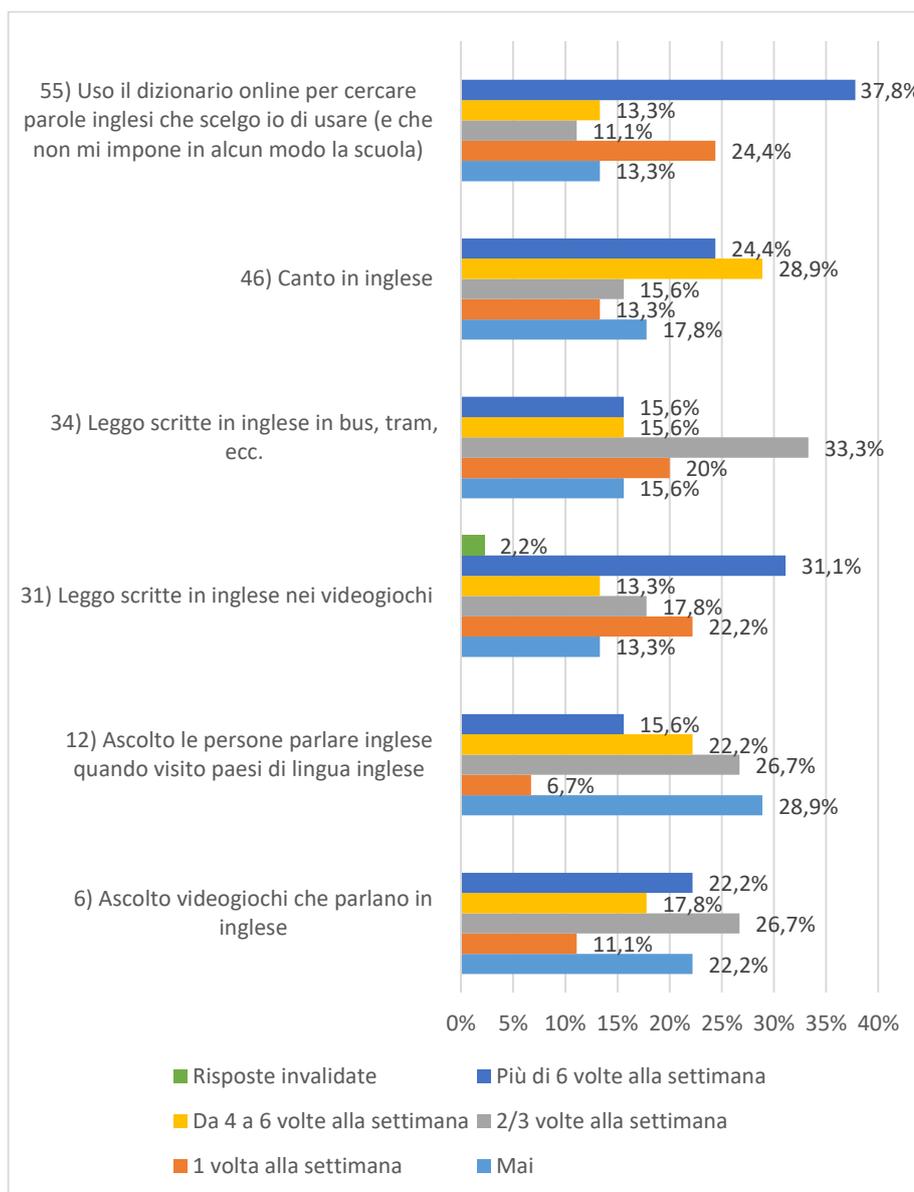
- three fifths of the students engage in activities 52 and 43 *at least* twice/three times a week;

- nearly three fifths engage in activities 49 and 9 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- more than half engage in activities 40, 38, 33, 32, and 2 *at least* twice/three times a week.

Although the students engage more in some activities (i.e. 52, 43, 49, and 9) than in others (i.e. 40, 38, 33, 32, and 2), the results seem to overall indicate that:

- a substantial proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a somewhat intense interest in all these activities;
- a substantial proportion of the whole sample engages in activities of four principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 52, 43, 38, 9, and 2), activities related to journeys (i.e. 49), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 33 and 32; see 1.2.3), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home (i.e. 40).

Table 21 illustrating the activities 60,1%-70% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English



The bar chart shows the activities that 60,1%-70% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. If we observe activity 55 (i.e. using an online dictionary in order to consult some English words), it is clear that 37,8% of the students do this activity more than six times a week. Although 24,4% do this activity once a week, 13,3% of the students do it between four and six times a week and 11,1% twice/three times a week. Only 13,3% of the sample never does this activity. Overall, it can be seen that approximately three fifths (62,2%) of the sample is likely to do this activity while nearly two fifths (37,8%) are unlikely to

do it. With reference to activity 46 (i.e. singing in English), we can see that 28,9% of the students engage in this activity between four and six times a week, 24,4% more than six times a week, and 15,6% twice/three times a week. Only 17,8% of the sample never engages in this activity and 13,3% does it once a week. These results overall indicate that more than two thirds (68,9%) of the sample tends to engage in this activity while approximately a third (31,1%) tends not to engage in it. Referring to activity 34 (i.e. reading English words on the bus, on the tram, etc.), it can be observed that 33,3% of the students do this activity twice/three times a week, 15,6% more than six times a week, and another 15,6% between four and six times a week. However, 20% of the sample does this activity once a week and 15,6% never does it. In the light of these results, it is clear that nearly two thirds (64,4%) of the sample is willing to undertake this activity while more than a third (35,6%) is unwilling to undertake it. As for activity 31 (i.e. reading English words on videogames), it can be seen that 31,1% of the students do this activity more than six times a week, 17,8% twice/three times a week, and 13,3% between four and six times a week. Nevertheless, 22,2% of the sample does this activity once a week and 13,3% never does it. 2,2% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted. Taking into account only the accepted answers, it can be calculated that approximately three fifths (62,2%) of the sample is likely to do this activity while less than two fifths (35,6%) are unlikely to do it. If we now turn to activity 12 (i.e. listening to people talking in English when visiting English-speaking countries), it is clear that 28,9% of the students never do engage in this activity while 6,7% do it once a week. Nonetheless, 26,7% of the sample undertakes this activity twice/three times a week, 22,2% between four and six times a week, and 15,6% more than six times a week. In total, nearly two thirds (64,4%) of the sample is willing to do this activity while more than a third (35,6%) is unwilling to do it. Regarding activity 6 (i.e. listening to English-speaking videogames), we can see that 26,7% of the students undertake this activity twice/three times a week, 22,2% more than six times a week, and 17,8% between four and six times a week. Nevertheless, 22,2% of the sample never does this activity and 11,1% does it once a week. Overall, it can be calculated that more than two thirds (66,7%) of the sample tends to do this activity while a third

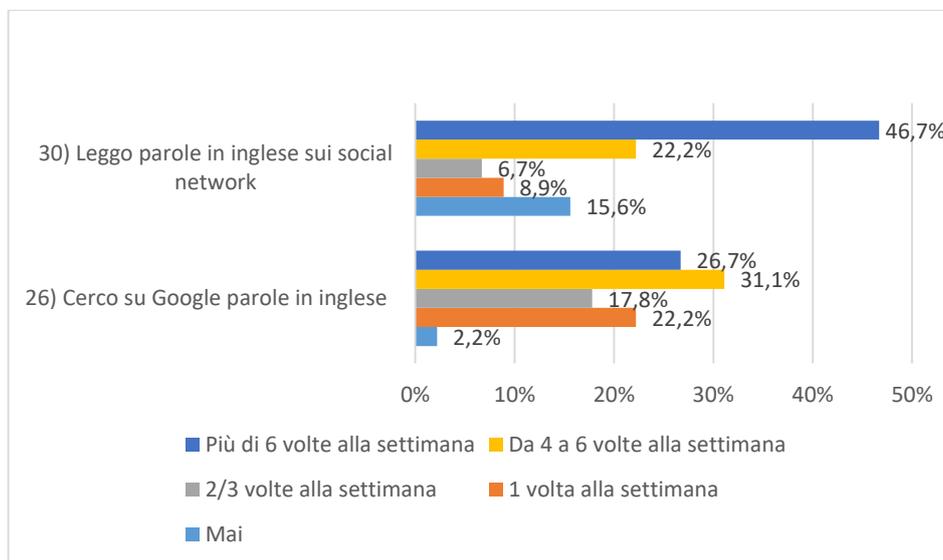
(33,3%) tends not to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 21 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- more than two thirds of the students engage in activities 46 and 6 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- nearly two thirds engage in activities 34 and 12 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- approximately three fifths engage in activities 55 and 31 *at least* twice/three times a week.

Although the students engage more in some activities (i.e. 46 and 6) than in others (i.e. 34, 12, 55, and 31), the results seem to overall indicate that:

- a quite large proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a quite strong interest in all these activities;
- a quite large proportion of the whole sample engages in activities of four principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 55, 31, and 6), activities related to music (i.e. 46), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 34; see 1.2.3), and activities related to journeys (i.e. 12).

Table 22 illustrating the activities 70,1%-80% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English

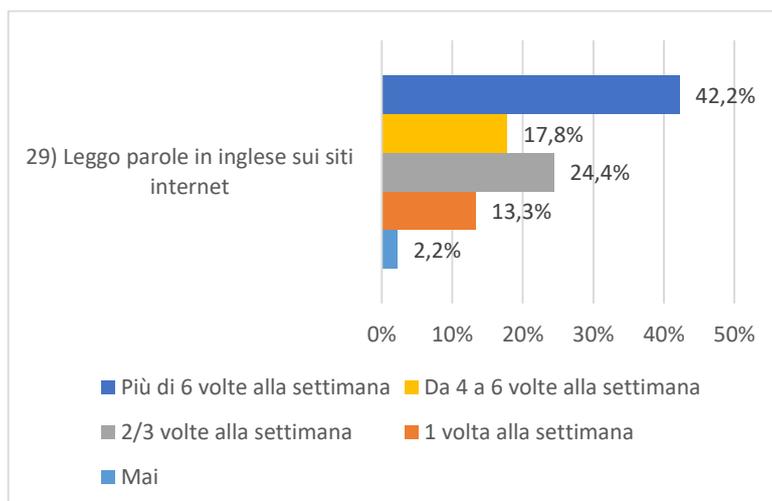


The bar chart shows the activities that 70,1%-80% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. If we observe activity 30 (i.e. reading English words on social networks), we can see that 46,7% of the students engage

in this activity more than six times a week, 22,2% between four and six times a week, and 6,7% twice/three times a week. Only 15,6% of the sample never does this activity and 8,9% does it once a week. Overall, it can be highlighted that approximately three quarters (75,6%) of the sample tends to engage in this activity while approximately a quarter (24,4%) tends not to engage in it. Regarding activity 26 (i.e. googling English words), it can be underlined that 31,1% of the sample does this activity between four and six times a week, 26,7% more than six times a week, and 17,8% twice/three times a week. Only 2,2% of the students never do this activity and 22,2% do it once a week. Therefore, it can be calculated that approximately three quarters (75,6%) of the sample is likely to do this activity while approximately a quarter (24,4%) is unlikely to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 22 is concerned the main trends are following:

- approximately three quarters of the students engage in activities 30 and 26 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- a very large majority of the whole sample engages and shows a keen interest in these activities;
- a very large majority of the whole sample engages in activities related to technology (i.e. 30 and 26).

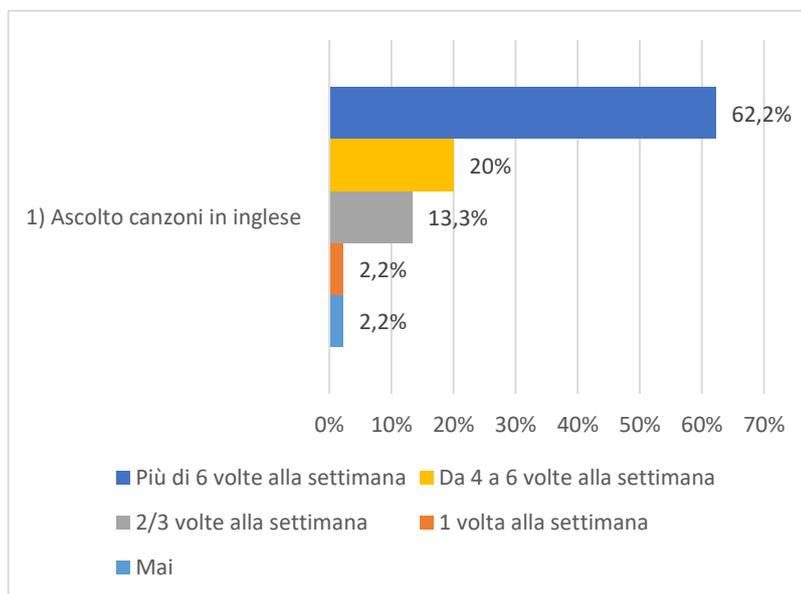
Table 23 illustrating the activity 80,1% -90% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English



The bar chart shows the activity that 80,1%-90% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. Concerning activity 29 (i.e. reading English words on websites), it can be seen that 42,2% of the students do this activity more than six times a week, 24,4% twice/three times a week, and 17,8% between four and six times a week. Only 2,2% of the sample never does this activity and 13,3% does it once a week. Overall, more than four fifths of the sample (84,4%) is willing to do this activity while less than a fifth (15,6%) is unwilling to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 23 is concerned the main trends are following:

- more than four fifths of the students engage in activity 29 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- an enormous majority of the whole sample engages and shows a burning interest in this activity;
- an enormous majority of the whole sample engages in an activity related to technology (i.e. 29).

Table 24 illustrating the activity 90,1%-100% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English



The bar chart shows the activity that 90,1%-100% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. As for activity 1 (i.e. listening to English songs), it is clear that 62,2% of the students do this activity more than six times a week, 20% between four and six times a week, and 13,3% twice/three times a

week. Only 2,2% of the sample never does this activity and another 2,2% does it once a week. Therefore, it can be calculated that more than nine in ten students (95,6%) are likely to engage in this activity while less than one in ten students (4,4%) is likely to engage in it. In conclusion, as far as table 24 is concerned the main trends are following:

- more than nine in ten students engage in activity 1 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- an overwhelming majority of the whole sample engages and shows an all-consuming interest in this activity;
- an overwhelming majority of the whole sample engages in an activity related to music and, probably, to technology at the same time (i.e. 1).

With reference to item 18 in questionnaire 1 (where students could *freely* express other informal activities they do in English), it has been found that less than one in twenty students also:

- listens to foreign songs with the help of English subtitles between four and six times a week (4,4%)
- reads English websites more than six times a week in order to do online shopping (2,2%);
- listens to English videogames with the help of Italian subtitles more than six times a week (2,2%);
- reads instructions written in the English programming language more than six times a week in order to know more about computer programming (2,2%);
- translates English texts into Italian between four and six times a week (2,2%);
- attends extra English courses twice/three times a week (2,2%).

To conclude, as far as English informal activities are concerned the main trends are the following:

- 30,1%-40% of the whole sample engages in activities of six principal types, i.e. interactive oral activities (i.e. 51 and 50), activities related to tourists (i.e. 51 and 7), activities related to printed readings (i.e. 44 and 42), activities related to

technology (i.e. 25, 36, 18, and 13), activities related to music (i.e. 36), and activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 35; see 1.2.3);

- 40,1%- 50% of the whole sample engages in activities of three principal types, i.e. activities involving face-to-face communities of practice (i.e. 48; see 1.2.3), activities related to technology (i.e. 37, 27, 19, 17, 10, and 5), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape (see 1.2.3) at home (i.e. 39);

- 50,1%-60% of the whole sample engages in activities of four principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 52, 43, 38, 9, and 2), activities related to journeys (i.e. 49), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 33 and 32; see 1.2.3), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home (i.e. 40);

- 60,1%-70% of the whole sample engages in activities of four principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 55, 31, and 6), activities related to music (i.e. 46), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 34; see 1.2.3), and activities related to journeys (i.e. 12);

- 70,1%-80% of the whole sample engages in activities related to technology (i.e. 30 and 26);

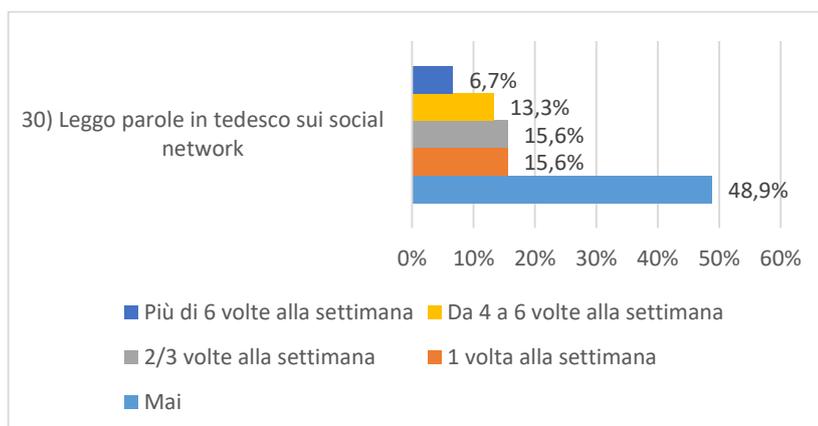
- 80,1%-90% of the whole sample engages in an activity related to technology (i.e. 29);

- 90,1%-100% of the whole sample engages in an activity related to music and, probably, to technology at the same time (i.e. 1).

Overall, the results indicate that the students primarily engage in English informal activities related to technology. More than half of them constantly engage in activities related to music, the linguistic landscape²⁰ and journeys as well. However, music seems to play a major role in their lives.

²⁰ Even when resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home.

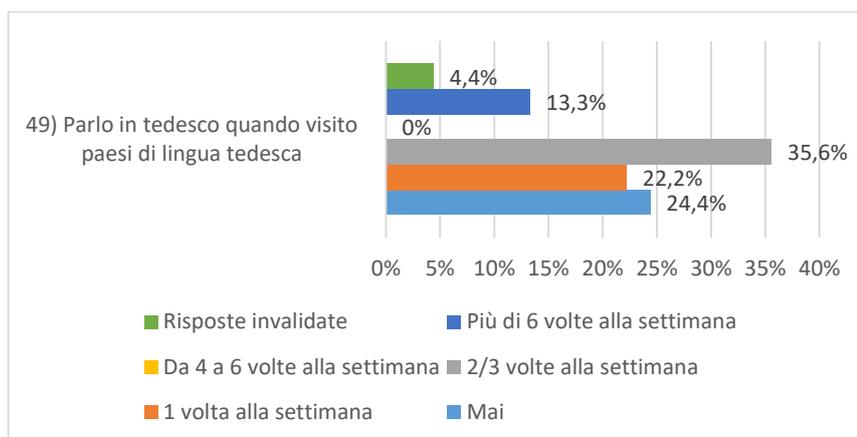
Table 25 illustrating the activities that 30,1%-40% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German



The bar chart shows the activity that 30,1%-40% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German. With regards to activity 30 (i.e. reading German words on social networks), it can be seen that 48,9% of the students never do this activity while 15,6% do it once a week. If we consider the *positive* frequencies (see 2.6.1), we can observe that another 15,6% of the sample undertakes this activity twice/three times a week, 13,3% between four and six times a week, and 6,7% more than six times a week. In total, more than a third (35,6%) of the students tend to do this activity while nearly two thirds (64,4%) tend not to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 25 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- more than a third of the students engage in activity 30 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- an appreciable proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a somewhat moderate interest in this activity;
- an appreciable proportion of the whole sample engages in an activity related to technology (i.e. 30).

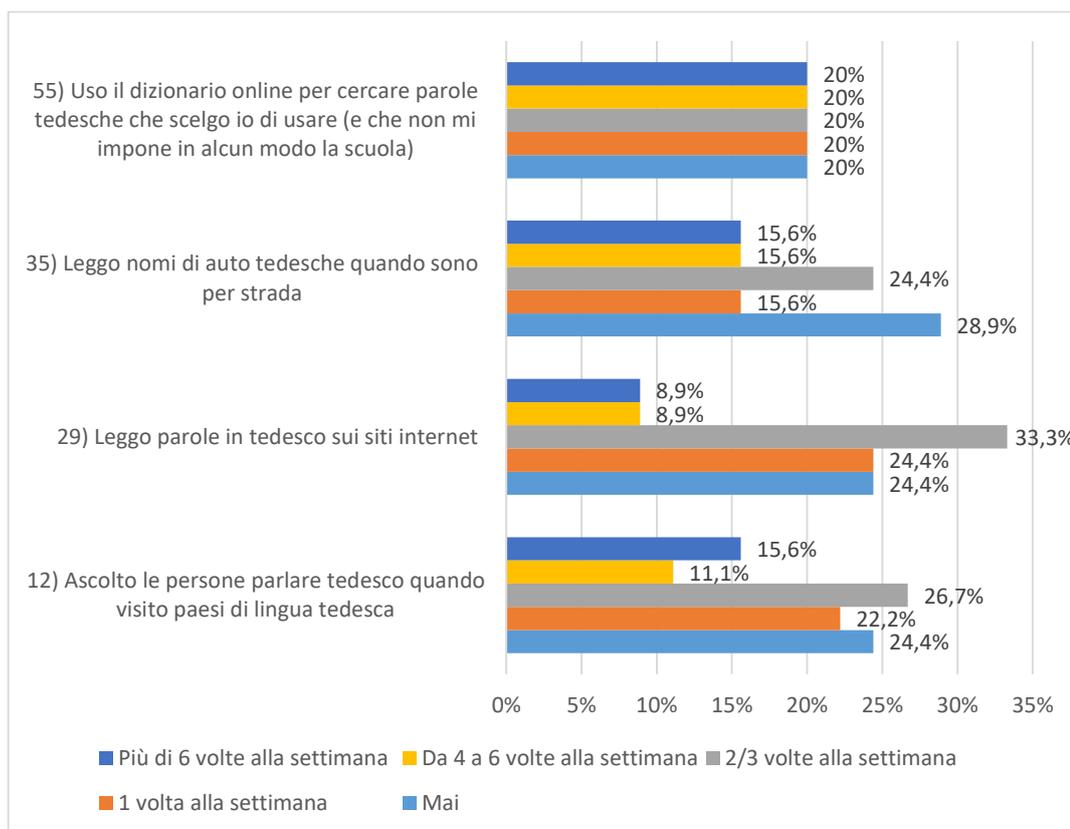
Table 26 illustrating the activities that 40,1%-50% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German



The bar chart shows the activity that 40,1%-50% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German. As for activity 49 (i.e. speaking German when visiting German-speaking countries), it is clear that 35,6% of the students engage in this activity twice/three times a week while 13,3% more than six times a week. However, 24,4% of the sample never does this activity and 22,2% does it once a week. No students engage in this activity between four and six times a week. 4,4% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted. Taking into account only the accepted answers, it can be observed that nearly a half (48,9%) of the sample is likely to do this activity while more than two fifths (46,7%) are unlikely to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 26 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- nearly a half of the students engage in activity 49 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- a significant proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a somewhat lively interest in this activity;
- a significant proportion of the whole sample engages in an activity related to journeys (i.e. 49).

Table 27 illustrating the activities that 50,1%-60% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German



The bar chart shows the activity that 50,1%-60% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German. With reference to activity 55 (i.e. using an online dictionary in order to consult some German words), it can be seen that 20% of the students engage in this activity more than six times a week, another 20% between four and six times a week, and another 20% twice/three times a week. Similarly, another 20% of the sample never engages in this activity and another 20% undertakes it once a week. Therefore, it can be highlighted that three fifths (60%) of the sample is willing to engage in this activity while two fifths (40%) are unwilling to engage in it. Dealing with activity 35 (reading German car brands names on the street), it is clear that 28,9% of the students never undertake this activity while 15,6% undertake it once a week. Nonetheless, 24,4% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week, 15,6% between four and six times a week, and another 15,6% more than six times a week. Overall, it can be observed that more than half (55,6%) of the sample tends to do this activity while more than

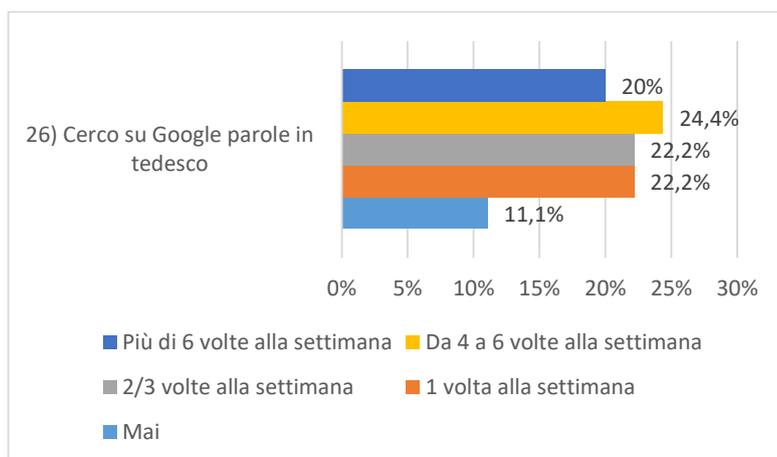
two fifths (44,4%) tend not to do it. As for activity 29 (i.e. reading German words on websites), we can highlight that 33,3% of the students do this activity twice/three times a week, 8,9% more than six times a week, and another 8,9% between four and six times a week. However, 24,4% of the sample never does this activity while another 24,4% does it once a week. These results overall indicate that more than half (51,1%) of the sample is likely to engage in this activity while just under a half (48,9%) is unlikely to engage in it. Regarding activity 12 (i.e. listening to people talking in German when visiting German-speaking countries), it is clear that 26,7% of the students undertake this activity twice/three times a week, 15,6% more than six times a week, and 11,1% between four and six times a week. Despite this, 24,4% of the sample never does this activity and 22,2% does it once a week. Overall, we can calculate that more than half (53,3%) of the sample tends to do this activity while just under a half (46,7%) tends not to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 27 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- three fifths of the students engage in activity 55 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- more than half engage in activities 35, 29, and 12 *at least* twice/three times a week.

Although the students engage more in an activity (i.e. 55) than in the others (i.e. 35, 29, 12), the results seem to overall indicate that:

- a substantial proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a somewhat intense interest in all these activities;
- a substantial proportion of the whole sample engages in activities of three principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 55 and 29), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 35), and activities related to journeys (i.e. 12).

Table 28 illustrating the activities that 60,1%-70% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German



The bar chart shows the activity that 60,1%-70% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German. Referring to activity 26 (i.e. googling German words), it is clear that 24,4% of the students engage in this activity between four and six times a week, 22,2% twice/three times a week, and 20% more than six times a week. Nevertheless, 22,2% of the sample does this activity once a week and 11,1% never does it. Overall, it can be underlined that more than two thirds (66,7%) of the sample tends to engage in this activity while a third (33,3%) tends not to engage in it. In conclusion, as far as table 28 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- more than two thirds of the students engage in activity 26 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- a quite large proportion of the whole sample engages and shows a quite strong interest in this activity;
- a quite large proportion of the whole sample engages in an activity related to technology (i.e. 26).

With reference to item 18 in questionnaire 2 (where students could *freely* express other informal activities they do in German), it has been found that less than one in twenty students also:

- listens to his/her sister more than six times a week when his/her sister talks to her German friends (2,2%);

- helps and listens to his/her sister more than six times a week when his/her sister studies German for university (2,2%);
- texts some German friends met during an intercultural exchange (see 2.2.1) twice/three times a week (2,2%).

To conclude, as far as German informal activities are concerned the main trends are the following:

- 30,1%-40% of the whole sample engages in an activity related to technology (i.e. 30);
- 40,1%-50% of the whole sample engages in an activity related to journeys (i.e. 49);
- 50,1%-60% of the whole sample engages in activities of three principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 55 and 29), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 35), and activities related to journeys (i.e. 12);
- 60,1%-70% of the whole sample engages in an activity related to technology (i.e. 26).

Overall, the results indicate that the students primarily engage in German informal activities related to technology. More than half of them engage in activities related to the linguistic landscape and journeys as well. However, the very large majority (from 70,1% onwards) of the students do not engage in any German informal activities at all. If they do, they engage in such activities only once a week. Therefore, the main trends on what types of informal learning activities the students engage in are referred to a limited proportion of the whole sample (i.e. range 30,1%-70%) who engages in the activities *at least* twice/three times a week and who therefore expresses *at least* a lively interest in these activities. (see 2.6.1)

In order to answer our second research question, i.e. ‘*What language skills do the students use outside school for both languages?*’, we will consider table 29 for English and table 30 for German.

Table 29 illustrating the mean of each frequency for each language skill when used outside school for English

	Mai	1 volta alla settimana	2/3 volte alla settimana	Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana	Più di 6 volte alla settimana	Risposte invalidate
Listening	36,1%	18,5%	19,3%	10,6%	15,4%	0,2%
Writing	54,3%	16,5%	11,9%	8,2%	8,9%	0,1%
Reading	30%	19,2%	19,6%	14%	16,7%	0,6%
Speaking	40,5%	20,2%	16,3%	10,1%	12,8%	0%

Table 29 shows the mean of each frequency for each language skill when used outside school for English. With reference to listening, it can be seen that 36,1% of the students never do informal activities involving this skill while 18,5% do informal activities involving this skill once a week. However, 19,3% of the sample undertakes informal activities involving listening twice/three times a week, 10,6% between four and six times a week, and 15,4% more than six times a week. 0,2% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted and which will not be considered. If we calculate the sum of the positive frequencies (see 2.6.1), it may be observed that just under a half (45,2%) of the students are likely to engage in informal activities involving listening while more than half (54,6%) is unlikely to engage in such activities. With regards to writing, it is clear that 54,3% of the sample never does informal activities entailing this skill while 16,5% engages in activities entailing this skill once a week. Nonetheless, 11,9% of the students undertake activities involving writing twice/three times a week, 8,2% between four and six times a week, and 8,9% more than six times a week. 0,1% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted and which will not be taken into account. Overall, we can observe that less than a third (29%) of the students tend do informal activities entailing writing while more than two thirds (70,8%) tend not to do such activities. As for reading, the results indicate that 30% of the students never engage in informal activities related to this skill while 19,2% engage in informal activities related to this skill once a week. Nevertheless, 19,6%

of the sample does activities implying reading twice/three times a week, 14% between four and six times a week, and 16,7% more than six times a week. 0,6% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted and which will not be considered. Overall, it can be highlighted that approximately half (50,3%) of the students are willing to engage in informal activities related to reading while just under a half (49,2%) is unwilling to engage in such activities. Concerning speaking, we can see that 40,5% of the students never undertake informal activities implying this skill and that 20,2% do informal activities related to speaking once a week. However, 16,3% of the sample does activities connected to speaking twice/three times a week, 10,1% between four and six times a week, and 12,8% more than six times a week. Therefore, approximately two fifths (39,3%) of the sample is likely to do informal activities related to speaking while approximately three fifths (60,7%) are unlikely to undertake such activities. In conclusion, as far as table 29 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- approximately half (50,3%) of the students engage in informal activities connected to reading *at least* twice/three times a week;
- just under a half (45,2%) of the students engage in informal activities implying listening *at least* twice/three times a week;
- approximately two fifths (39,3%) of the students engage in informal activities involving speaking *at least* twice/three times a week;
- less than a third (29%) of the students engage in informal activities entailing writing *at least* twice/three times a week.

On average, when the students engage in English informal activities, they primarily engage in activities entailing reading and listening. An appreciable proportion of the students undertake activities involving speaking as well. However, only a minority does activities related to writing.

Table 30 illustrating the mean of each frequency for each language skill when used outside school for German

	Mai	1 volta alla settimana	2/3 volte alla settimana	Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana	Più di 6 volte alla settimana	Risposte invalidate
Listening	69,3%	18,9%	7,2%	2,4%	2,2%	0%
Writing	76,7%	10%	7,2%	3,3%	2,8%	0%

Reading	60,6%	18,8%	12,4%	4,3%	4%	0%
Speaking	66,7%	16,5%	12,1%	0,5%	3,5%	0,7%

Table 30 shows the mean of each frequency for each language skill when used outside school for German. As for listening, it can be seen that 69,3% of the students never do informal activities related to this skill while 18,9% do informal activities related to this skill once a week. However, 7,2% of the sample does informal activities connected to listening twice/three times a week, 2,4% between four and six times a week, and 2,2% more than six times a week. Overall, it can be observed that approximately one in ten students (11,9%) tends to do informal activities involving listening while approximately nine in ten students (88,1%) tend not to do such activities. As for writing, it is clear that 76,7% of the students never engage in activities related to this skill while 10% engage in activities related to this skill once a week. Nonetheless, 7,2% of the sample undertakes informal activities involving writing twice/three times a week, 3,3% between four and six times a week, and 2,8% more than six times a week. Therefore, it can be calculated that approximately one in ten students (13,3%) is likely to engage in informal activities implying writing while approximately nine in ten students (86,7%) are unlikely to engage in such activities. With reference to reading, 60,6% of the sample never does informal activities involving this skill and 18,8% does informal activities involving this skill once a week. Nevertheless, 12,4% of the students engage in informal activities implying reading twice/three times a week, 4,3% between four and six times a week, and 4% more than six times a week. Overall, it can be observed that approximately a fifth (20,7%) of the sample is willing to do informal activities related to reading while nearly four fifths (79,3%) are unwilling to do such activities. Regarding speaking, it can be seen that 66,7% of the students never engage in informal activities entailing this skill while 16,5% engage in informal activities entailing this skill once a week. However, 12,1% of the sample does informal activities connected to speaking twice/three times a week, 3,5% more than six times a week, and 0,5% between four and six times a week. 0,7% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted and which will not be considered. The results indicate that less than a fifth (16%) of the sample is likely to undertake informal activities related to speaking while more

than four fifths (83,2%) are unlikely to engage in such activities. In conclusion, as far as table 30 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- approximately a fifth (20,7%) of the students engage in informal activities connected to reading *at least* twice/three times a week;
- less than a fifth (16%) of the students engage in informal activities involving speaking *at least* twice/three times a week;
- approximately one in ten students (13,3%) engages in informal activities implying writing *at least* twice/three times a week;
- approximately one in ten students (11,9%) engages in informal activities entailing listening *at least* twice/three times a week.

In the light of these results, it can be highlighted that a small minority of the whole sample *does* German informal learning activities. This is why most of the students never use any kind of skills. On average, the students of this minority (i.e. 20,7% of the whole sample) primarily engage in activities entailing reading. Most of them undertake activities related to speaking as well. More than half of this minority also does activities implying writing and listening.

In order to answer our third research question, i.e. *'Is there a difference between English and German in the type of informal learning activities, in their frequencies, and in the skills used?'*, we will do a comparative analysis of the results obtained for English and German according to the criteria we used to select what we consider the most *relevant* data to be analysed. (see 2.6.1)

Firstly, the differences between English and German in the *type* of informal learning activities will be explored. With reference to the activities the students are likely to *engage in for both languages*, the tables presented for research question 1 are considered in order to be compared. The following observations may be made:

- while 30,1%-40% of the whole sample engages in English informal learning activities of six principal types *at least* twice/three times a week, i.e. interactive oral activities (i.e. 51 and 50), activities related to tourists (i.e. 51 and 7), activities related to printed readings (i.e. 44 and 42), activities related to technology (i.e. 25, 36, 18, and 13), activities related to music (i.e. 36), and activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 35; see 1.2.3), more than a third of the students engage in a German informal learning activity related to technology (i.e. 30) *at least* twice/three times a week;

- while 40,1%- 50% of the whole sample engages in English informal learning activities of three principal types *at least* twice/three times a week, i.e. activities involving face-to-face communities of practice (i.e. 48; see 1.2.3), activities related to technology (i.e. 37, 27, 19, 17, 10, and 5), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape (see 1.2.3) at home (i.e. 39), nearly half of the students engage in a German informal learning activity related to journeys (i.e. 49) *at least* twice/three times a week;

- while 50,1%-60% of the whole sample engages in English informal learning activities of four principal types *at least* twice/three times a week, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 52, 43, 38, 9, and 2), activities related to journeys (i.e. 49), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 33 and 32; see 1.2.3), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home (i.e. 40), 50,1%-60% of the whole sample engages in German informal learning activities of three

principal types *at least* twice/three times a week, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 55 and 29), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 35), and activities related to journeys (i.e. 12);

- while 60,1%-70% of the whole sample engages in English informal learning activities of four principal types *at least* twice/three times a week, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 55, 31, and 6), activities related to music (i.e. 46), activities related to the linguistic landscape (i.e. 34; see 1.2.3), and activities related to journeys (i.e. 12), more than two thirds of the students engage in a German informal learning activity related to technology (i.e. 26) *at least* twice/three times a week;

- while 70,1%-80% of the whole sample engages in English informal learning activities related to technology (i.e. 30 and 26) *at least* twice/three times a week, no German informal learning activities are done in this range;

- while more than four fifths engage in an English informal learning activity related to technology (i.e. 29) *at least* twice/three times a week, no German informal learning activities are done in the range 80,1%-90%;

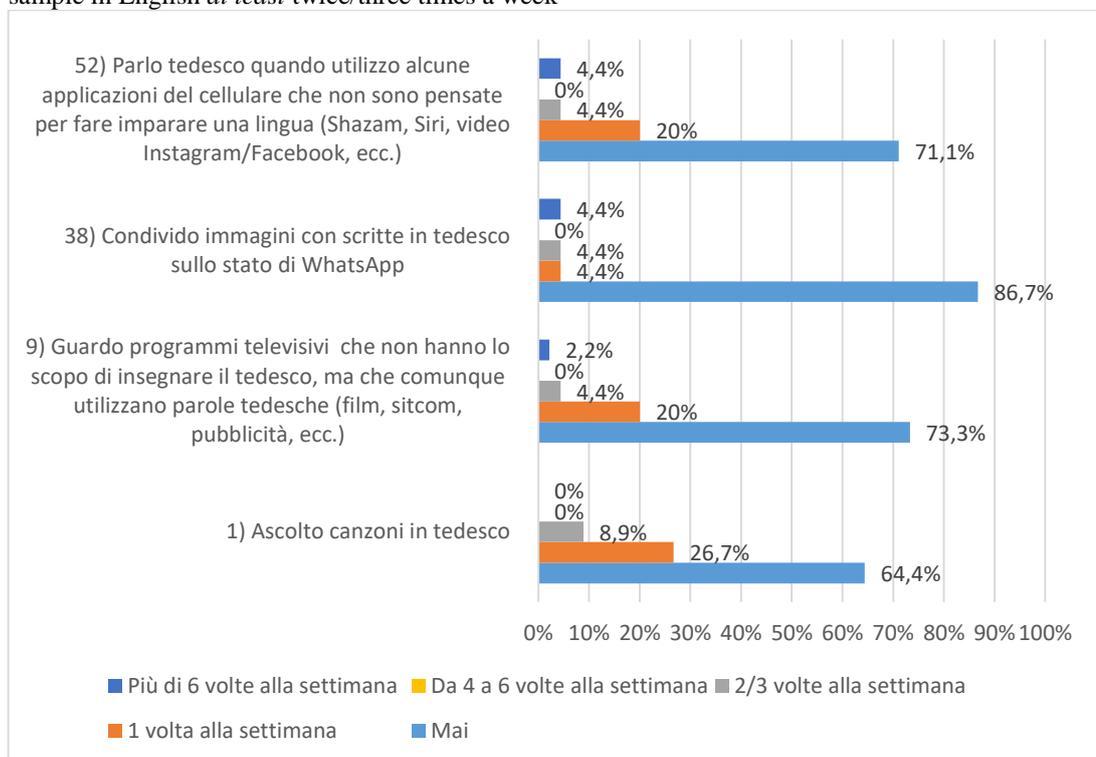
- while more than nine in ten students engages in an English informal learning activity related to music and, probably, to technology at the same time (i.e. 1) *at least* twice/three times a week, no German informal learning activities are done in the range 90,1%-100%.

Overall, when the students engage in informal learning, they primarily engage in informal activities linked to technology for both languages. More than half of the sample also engages in activities connected to the linguistic landscape and journeys for both languages. However, while English music seems to play a prominent role in students' lives, this type of informal learning activity is non-existent as far as German is concerned. In any case, English informal learning seems more varied, above all at lower levels. While 30,1%-50% of the students engage in interactive oral activities, activities related to tourists, activities related to printed readings, activities involving face-to-face communities of practice and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home (apart from activities linked to technology, music, and the linguistic landscape) as far as English is concerned, the same range engages only in activities related to technology and

journeys as far as German is concerned. Besides, it should be noticed that, while *many* English informal activities are undertaken by more than a third of the sample *at least twice/three times a week*, *few* German informal activities are undertaken by the same range. (see the conclusion of the previous paragraph on the use of German skills outside school)

As for the informal learning activities the students are likely to *engage in for one language but not for the other*, the following table regarding German will be considered in order to be finally compared with tables 20 and 24 concerning English.

Table 31 illustrating the activities least done in German which are done by more than half of the sample in English *at least twice/three times a week*



The bar chart shows the activities least done in German which are however done by more than half of the sample in English *at least twice/three times a week*. The corresponding English activities have already been described for research question 1 (see table 20 for activities 52, 38, and 9; see table 24 for activity 1). The results obtained in research question 1 which regard the corresponding

English activities will be finally considered in order to be compared with the activities in table 31 which are done in German.

First of all, table 31 will be described in order to see what the main trends are. As for activity 52 (i.e. speaking German when using some mobile apps which were not created in order to learn a foreign language), it is clear that 71,1% of the students never engage in this activity while 20% undertake it once a week. 4,4% of the students do this activity twice/three times a week, another 4,4% more than six times a week, 0% between four and six times a week. Overall, it can be calculated that more than nine in ten students (91,1%) tend not to do this activity while less than one in ten students (8,9%) tends to do it. As for activity 38 (i.e. sharing pictures showing German quotations as a status on Whatsapp), it can be seen that 86,7% of the students never do this activity while 4,4% do it once a week. 4,4% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week, 4,4% more than six times a week, and 0% between four and six times a week. Therefore, it can be underlined that more than nine in ten students (91,1%) are unwilling to do this activity while less than one in ten students (8,9%) is willing to do it. With regards to activity 9 (i.e. watching television programmes involving German words but which were not created in order to learn a foreign language), we can observe that 73,3% of the students never engage in this activity while 20% do it once a week. 4,4% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week, 2,2% more than six times a week, and 0% between four and six times a week. Overall, it can be highlighted that more than nine in ten students (93,3%) are unlikely to do this activity while less than one in ten students (6,7%) is likely to do it. Referring to activity 1 (i.e. listening to German songs), we can observe that 64,4% of the students never do this activity while 26,7% do it once a week. 8,9% of the sample does it twice/three times a week. No students do this activity more than six times a week or between four and six times a week. Therefore, we can calculate that more than nine in ten students (91,1%) tend not to do this activity while less than one in ten students (8,9%) tends to do it. In conclusion, as far as table 31 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- less than one in ten students engages in these activities *at least* twice/three times a week;

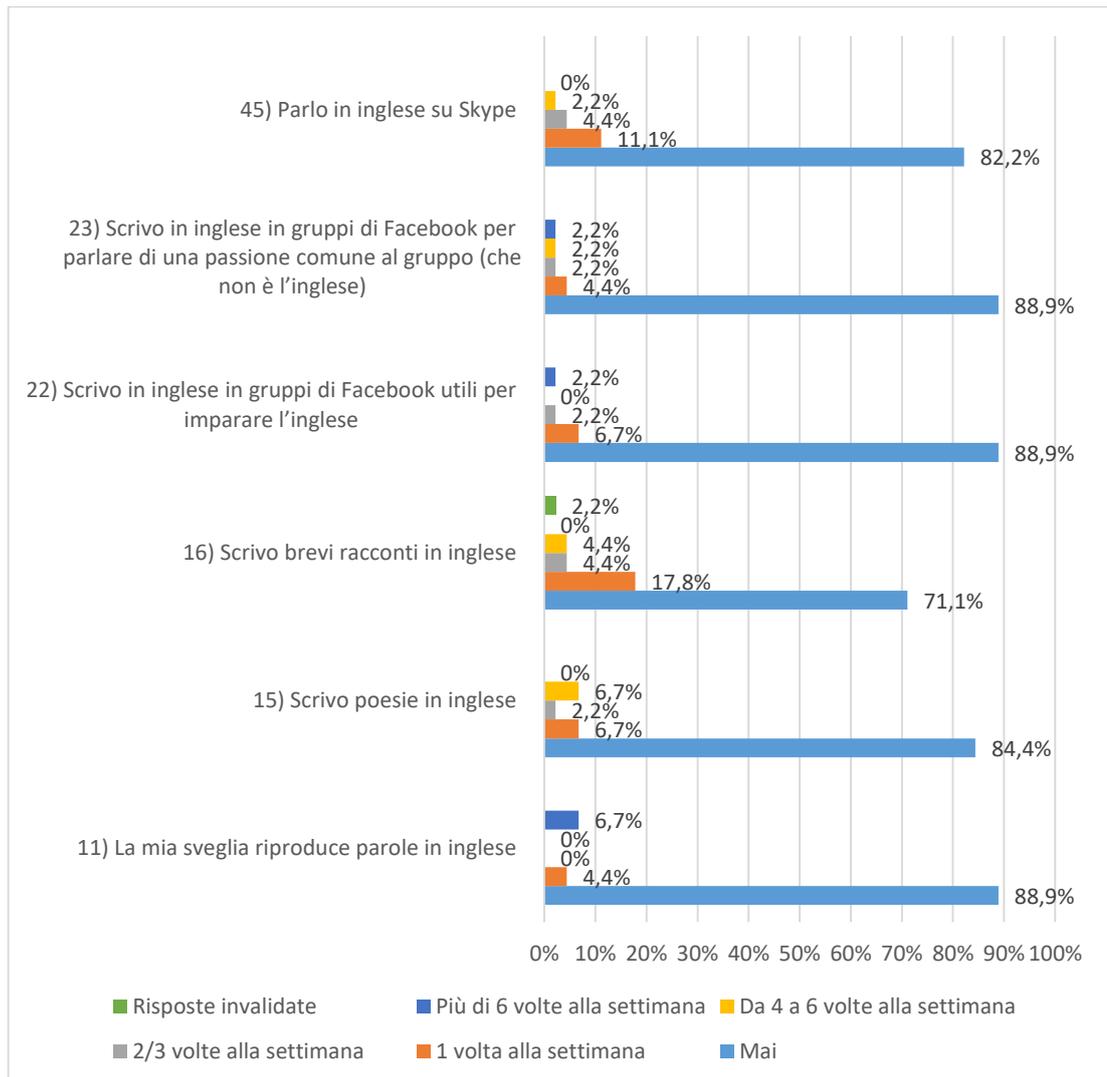
- more than nine in ten students tend not to engage in these activities;
- very few students engage and show a somewhat lively interest in these activities;
- the overwhelming majority of the sample does not seem to be interested in these activities at all;
- the activities unanimously rejected are of two principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 52, 38, and 9) and activities related to music and, probably, to technology at the same time (i.e. 1)

In the light of the results obtained from table 31, the following observations may be made in relation to the corresponding English activities (see table 20 for activities 52, 38, and 9; see table 24 for activity 1):

- it can be observed that there are only activities done by more than half of the sample *in English* which are some of the least done *in German*, but not the other way round (see 2.6.1);
- while less than one in ten students engages in activities 52, 38, 9, and 1 *at least* twice/three times a week in German, more than nine in ten students engage in activity 1, three fifths in activity 52, nearly three fifths in activity 9, and more than half in activity 38 *at least* twice/three times a week in English;
- despite being activities of the same type, activities 52, 38, 9, and 1 are overwhelmingly done by students in English while the same activities are largely avoided in German;
- this suggests that students choose what informal learning activities to do according to the *language* to be employed apart from the type of activities;
- if this were true, the difference between English and German would not lie, at least in this case, only in the *type* of informal learning activities, but also in the *language* to be employed in informal learning.

As for the informal learning activities the students are *unlikely to engage in*, the following tables and lists will be considered. First of all, the activities least done in English, which are *some* of the least done in German, will be presented. (see 2.6.1)

Table 32 illustrating the activities 0%-10% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English



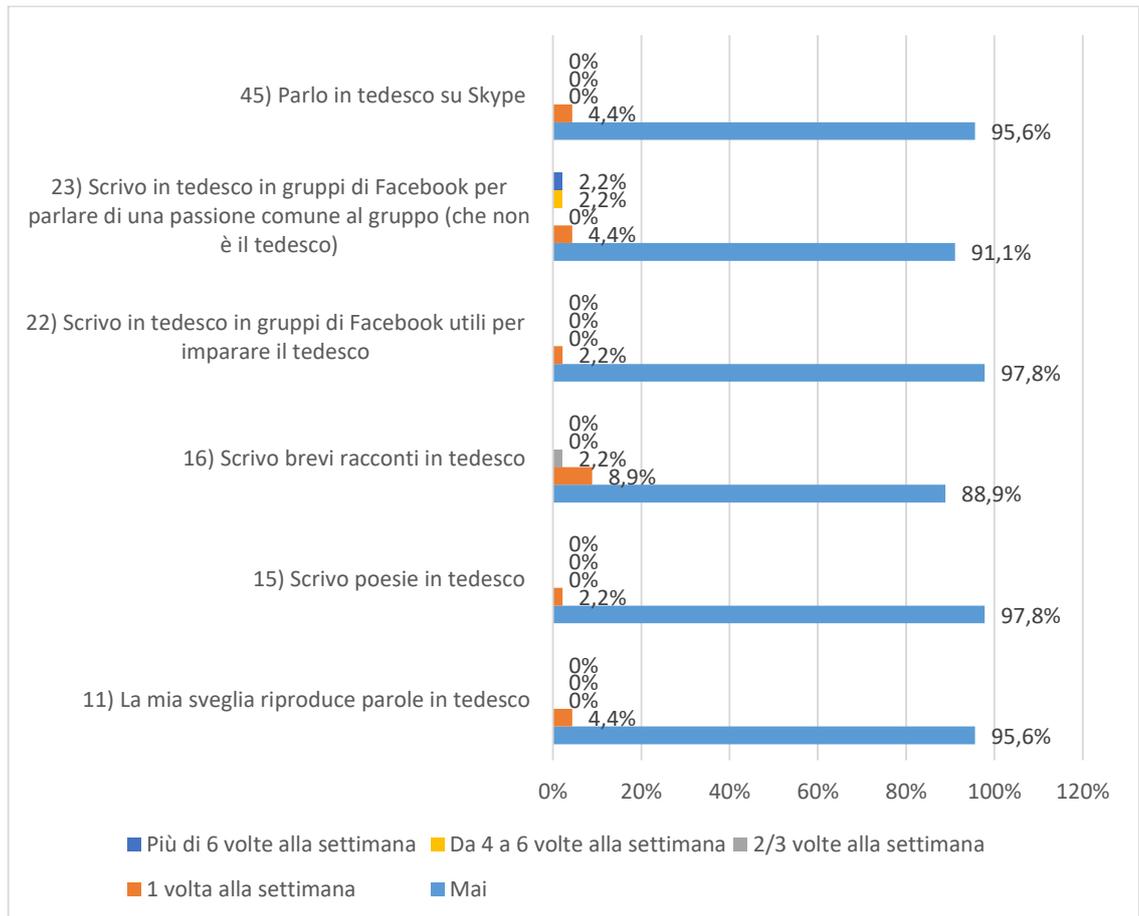
The table shows the activities 0%-10% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in English. Regarding activity 45 (i.e. skyping in English), it can be observed that 82,2% of the students never do this activity while 11,1% do it once a week. 4,4% of the sample undertakes this activity twice/three times a week, 2,2% between four and six times a week. No students engage in these activities more than six times a week. Therefore, we can calculate that more than nine in ten students (93,3%) are unlikely to do this activity while less than one in ten students (6,7%) is likely to do it. As for activity 23 (i.e. posting in English in Facebook groups to talk about a mutual interest which is not English), it is clear that 88,9% of the students never do this activity while 4,4% do it once

a week. 2,2% of the sample undertakes this activity twice/three times a week, another 2,2% between four and six times a week, and another 2,2% more than six times a week. Overall, it can be observed that more than nine in ten students (93,3%) tend not to do this activity while less than one in ten students (6,7%) tends to do it. With reference to activity 22 (i.e. posting in English in Facebook groups which are useful to learn English), we can see that 88,9% of the students never engage in this activity while 6,7% undertake it once a week. 2,2% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week and 2,2% more than six times a week. No students engage in this activity between four and six times a week. These results overall indicate that more than nine in ten students (95,6%) are unwilling to do this activity while less than one in ten students (4,4%) is likely to do it. Referring to activity 16 (i.e. writing short stories in English), 71,1% of the students never engage in this activity while 17,8% do it once a week. 4,4% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week and another 4,4% between four and six times a week. No students engage in this activity more than six times a week. 2,2% of the sample gave instead answers which were not accepted and which will not be considered. Overall, it can be calculated that approximately nine in ten students (88,9%) are unlikely to do this activity while less than one in ten students (8,9%) is likely to do it. As for activity 15 (i.e. writing poems in English), it is clear that 84,4% of the students never do this activity while 6,7% undertake it once a week. Another 6,7% of the sample does this activity between four and six times a week and 2,2% twice/three times a week. No students engage in this activity more than six times a week. Overall, we can observe that more than nine in ten students (91,1%) are unwilling to do this activity while less than one in ten students (8,9%) is willing to do it. Concerning activity 11 (i.e. my alarm clock says English words), it can be underlined that 88,9% of the students never do this activity while 4,4% do it once a week. 6,7% of the sample undertakes this activity more than six times a week. However, no students engage in this activity twice/three times a week or between four and six times a week. Overall, it can be highlighted that more than nine students in ten (93,3%) tend not to undertake this activity while less than one student in ten (6,7%) tends to undertake it. In conclusion, as far as table 32 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- less than one in ten students engages in these activities *at least* twice/three times a week;
- approximately more than nine in ten students tend not to engage in these activities;
- very few students engage and show a somewhat lively interest in these activities;
- the overwhelming majority of the sample does not seem to be interested in these activities at all;
- the activities unanimously rejected are of three principal types, i.e. activities related to online interactive oral activities (i.e. 45), activities related to online communities of practice (i.e. 23 and 22), activities related to writing (i.e. 16 and 15), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home possibly related to technology (i.e. 11).

Moreover, the corresponding German activities, which are *some* of all the activities least done in German, will be outlined. (see 2.6.1)

Table 33 illustrating the activities which 0%-10% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German and which correspond to the least done in English (see table 32)



The table shows the activities which 0%-10% of the whole sample does *at least* twice/three times a week in German and which correspond to the least done in English (see table 32). If we look at activity 45 (i.e. skyping in German), it can be observed that 95,6% of the students never do this activity while 4,4% do it once a week. No students do this activity twice/three times a week, between four and six times a week, or more than six times a week. Therefore, it can be calculated that all the students (100%) are unlikely to do this activity. As for activity 23 (i.e. posting in German in Facebook groups to talk about a mutual interest which is not German), it is clear that 91,1% of the students never engage in this activity while 4,4% do it once a week. 2,2% of the sample does this activity between four and

six times a week and another 2,2% more than six times a week. No students undertake this activity twice/three times a week. Overall, it can be highlighted that more than nine in ten students (95,6%) tend not to do this activity while less than one in ten students (4,4%) tends to do it. With reference to activity 22 (i.e. posting in German in Facebook groups which are useful to learn German), it can be seen that 97,8% of the students never do this activity while 2,2% do it once a week. No students do this activity twice/three times a week, between four and six times a week, or more than six times a week. These results indicate that all the students (100%) are unwilling to do this activity. With regards to activity 16 (i.e. writing short stories in German), we can observe that 88,9% of the students never engage in this activity while 8,9% do it once a week. 2,2% of the sample does this activity twice/three times a week. No students undertake it between four and six times a week or more than six times a week. Overall, it can be seen that nearly all the students (97,8%) tend not to do this activity while a very small minority (2,2%) tends to do it. Regarding activity 15 (i.e. writing poems in German), it is clear that 97,8% of the students never engage in this activity while 2,2% undertake it once a week. No students do this activity twice/three times a week, between four and six times a week, or more than six times a week. Therefore, all the students (100%) are unlikely to do this activity. Dealing with activity 11 (i.e. my alarm clock says German words), it can be observed that 95,6% of the students never do this activity while 4,4% do it once a week. No students do this activity twice/three times a week, between four and six times a week, or more than six times a week. These results indicate that all the students (100%) are unwilling to engage in this activity. In conclusion, as far as table 33 is concerned the main trends are the following:

- all the students do not engage in activities 45, 22, 15, and 11 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- nearly all the students do not engage in activity 16 *at least* twice/three times a week;
- less than one in ten students engages in activity 23 *at least* twice/three times a week;

- approximately no students engage and show a somewhat lively interest in these activities;
- the overwhelming majority of the sample seems to be extremely uninterested in these activities;
- the activities unanimously rejected are of three principal types and correspond to those in table 32, i.e. activities related to online interactive oral activities (i.e. 45), activities related to online communities of practice (i.e. 23 and 22), activities related to writing (i.e. 16 and 15), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home possibly related to technology (i.e. 11).

Furthermore, a list of all the other activities least done (only) in German will be provided²¹ together with the corresponding ranges of students undertaking the same activities in English. If we look at table 17, we can observe that only 0%-10% of the students engage in the following activities *at least* twice/three times a week:

- 95,6% of the students tend not to engage in activity 37 (i.e. sharing pictures showing German quotations on social networks) while 4,4% tend to undertake it (vis-à-vis 53,3% for negative frequencies and 46,7% for positive ones);
- 95,6% are unlikely to do activity 19 (i.e. writing the status on social networks in German) while 4,4% are likely to undertake it (vis-à-vis 57,8% for negative frequencies and 42,2% for positive ones);
- 95,6% are unwilling to undertake activity 13 (i.e. writing hashtags in German on social networks) while 4,4% are willing to do it (vis-à-vis 60% for negative frequencies and 40% for positive ones);
- 95,6% tend not to do activity 36 (i.e. singing karaoke with German songs) while 4,4% tend to do it (vis-à-vis 64,4% for negative frequencies and 35,6% for positive ones);

²¹ The following activities must be integrated with those seen in tables 31 and 33, which present *some* of the activities least done in German (i.e. undertaken by 0%-10% of the students *at least* twice/three times a week; also see table 17). The activities in tables 31 and 33 will not be repeated here. Furthermore, it should be noticed that the following activities are presented from most to least done *in English*. While they all equally belong to the range 0%-10% of those who do them *at least* twice/three times a week when undertaken in German, it is not the case for the corresponding English activities. The results for the corresponding English activities are put in brackets.

- 95,6% are unlikely to do activity 42 (i.e. reading short stories in German) while 4,4% are likely to do it (vis-à-vis 66,7% for negative frequencies and 33,3% for positive ones);
- 93,3% are unwilling to undertake activity 18 (i.e. writing sentences in German in the section 'info' on Whatsapp) while 6,7% are willing to do it (vis-à-vis 68,9% for negative frequencies and 31,1% for positive ones);
- 91,1% tend not to undertake activity 47 (i.e. playing parlour games which involve saying German words) while 8,9% tend to do it (vis-à-vis 71,1% for negative frequencies and 28,9% for positive ones);
- 97,8% are unwilling to do activity 3 (i.e. watching German films online) while 2,2% are willing to do it (vis-à-vis 71,1% for negative frequencies and 28,9% for positive ones);
- 100% are unlikely to engage in activity 14 (i.e. writing songs in German) (vis-à-vis 77,8% for negative frequencies and 22,2% for positive ones);
- 100% tend not to do activity 4 (i.e. watching German television) (vis-à-vis 80% for negative frequencies and 20% for positive ones);
- 95,6% are unlikely to do activity 53 (i.e. sending recordings including some German words on Whatsapp) while 4,4% are likely to do it (vis-à-vis 80% for negative frequencies and 20% for positive ones);
- 97,8% tend not to engage in activity 8 (i.e. watching television programmes which intend to teach German with fun) while 2,2% tend to do it (vis-à-vis 82,2% for negative frequencies and 17,8% for positive ones);
- 91,1% are unlikely to engage in activity 21 (i.e. writing in German in order to know foreign pen pals through the computer) while 8,9% are likely to do it (vis-à-vis 84,4% for negative frequencies and 15,6% for positive ones);
- 100% tend not to engage in activity 41 (i.e. reading German poems) (vis-à-vis 88,9% for negative frequencies and 11,1% for positive ones).

In conclusion, the following observations may be made:

- while less than one in ten students engages in all these activities *at least* twice/three times a week in German, more than two fifths do activities 37 and 19, two fifths do activity 13, more than a third does activity 36, a third does activity

42, and approximately a third does activity 18 in English *at least* twice/three times a week;

- despite being done by less than a third of the sample, the activities 47, 3, 14, 4, 53, 8, 21, and 41 are all however done by more than one in ten students in English while the corresponding German activities are all done by less than one in ten students;

- even when the corresponding English activities are done by a small minority of the sample, they are always more commonly done in English than in German;

- *some* of the corresponding English activities are *far* more common than in German (i.e. 37, 19, 13, 36, 42, and 18) while the same activities are all largely avoided in German;

- the above-presented activities are of four principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 37, 19, 13, 36, 18, 3, 4, 53, 8, and 21), activities related to music (i.e. 36 and 14), activities related to printed readings (i.e. 42), interactive oral activities (i.e. 47), and activities related to reading and, possibly, also to technology (i.e. 41);

- despite being activities of the same type, all the above-presented activities tend to be done more in English than in German (as said above);

- this suggests two things: 1) when the students avoid the activities in both languages, it might be because they are not interested in the *type* of the activities proposed; 2) when the students avoid some activities in German but an appreciable proportion of them do the corresponding English activities, it might be because the students choose what informal learning activities to do according to the *language* to be employed apart from the type of activity. Therefore, if they like the language, they will do the activity. If they do not like the language, they will not do the activity even though they like the type of activity.

Secondly, the differences between English and German in the *frequencies* of informal learning activities will be outlined. As for the mean of each frequency, the following tables will be considered in order to be compared.

Table 34 illustrating the mean of each frequency for activities 1-56 (item 17) in Questionnaire 1 on English informal learning

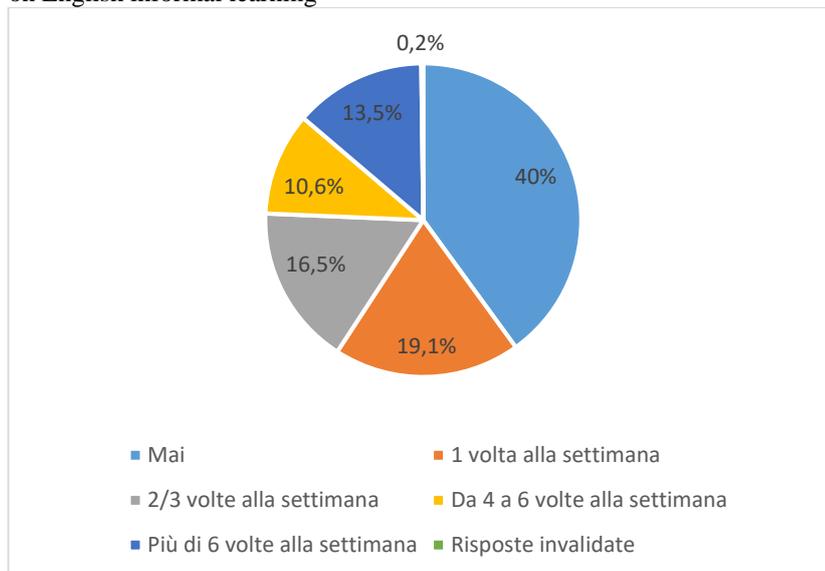


Table 34 shows the mean of each frequency for activities 1-56 (item 17) in Questionnaire 1 on English informal learning. For each of the 56 activities students had to tick one of the following possibilities: ‘mai’, ‘1 volta alla settimana’, ‘2/3 volte alla settimana’, ‘da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana’, ‘più di 6 volte alla settimana’. From the pie chart it is clear that on average 40% of the students never do the 56 activities proposed while 19,1% do them once a week. However, 16,5% of the sample undertakes the activities twice/three times a week, 10,6% between four and six times a week, and 13,5% more than six times a week. 0,2% of the students gave instead answers which were not accepted and which will not be considered. Overall, approximately three fifths (59,1%) of the students tend not to do activities 1-56 while approximately two fifths (40,6%) tend to do them. In strict terms, it can be seen that (see 2.6.1):

- two fifths (40%) of the students *never* do activities 1-56;
- nearly a fifth (19,1%) *rarely* does activities 1-56;
- less than a fifth (16,5%) *sometimes* does activities 1-56;
- approximately one in ten students (10,6%) *often* does activities 1-56;
- approximately one in ten students (13,5%) *always* does activities 1-56.

These results seem to indicate that:

- of the students unwilling to do the activities (i.e. 59,1%), more than two thirds never do them while approximately a third does them once a week;
- of the students willing to do the activities (i.e. 40,6%), approximately two fifths prefer doing them twice/three times a week, more than a quarter prefers doing them more than six times a week, and approximately a third prefers doing them between four and six times a week;
- a substantial proportion of the whole sample (i.e. 59,1%) tends not to do activities 1-56; however, an appreciable proportion of those who tend not to engage in these activities generally do them once a week;
- a significant proportion of the whole sample (i.e. 40,6%) tends to do activities 1-56 and the majority of those who tend to undertake these activities prefer doing them twice/three times a week.

Table 35 illustrating the mean of each frequency for activities 1-56 (item 17) in Questionnaire 2 on German informal learning

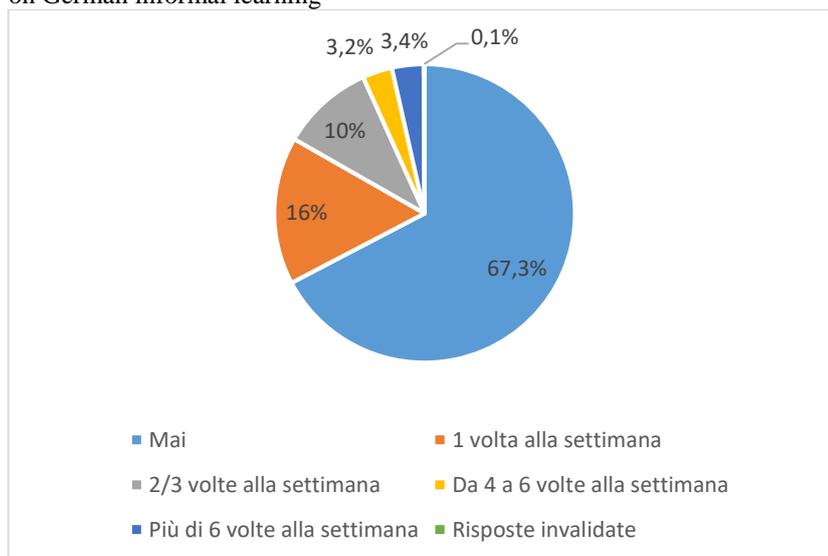


Table 35 shows the mean of each frequency for activities 1-56 (item 17) in Questionnaire 2 on German informal learning. It can be seen that on average 67,3% of the sample never engages in these activities while 16% undertakes them once a week. Nevertheless, 10% of the students do the activities twice/three times a week, 3,4% more than six times a week, and 3,2% between four and six times a week. 0,1% of the students gave instead answers which were not accepted and which will not be considered. Overall, more than four fifths (83,3%) of the

students are unlikely to undertake activities 1-56 while less than a fifth (16,6%) is likely to undertake them. In strict terms, it can be highlighted that:

- more than two thirds (67,3%) of the students *never* do activities 1-56;
- less than a fifth (16%) *rarely* do activities 1-56;
- one in ten students (10%) *sometimes* do activities 1-56;
- a very small minority (3,2%) *often* does activities 1-56;
- a very small minority (3,4%) *always* does activities 1-56.

These results seem to indicate that:

- of the students unwilling to do the activities (i.e. 83,3%), approximately four fifths never do them while approximately a fifth does them once a week;
- of the students willing to do the activities (i.e. 16,6%), approximately three fifths prefer doing them twice/three times a week, approximately a fifth prefers doing them between four and six times a week, and approximately another fifth prefers doing them more than six times a week;
- an enormous majority of the whole sample (i.e. 83,3%) tends not to engage in activities 1-56; however, a small minority of those who tend not to engage in these activities generally do them once a week;
- a small minority of the whole sample (i.e. 16,6%) tends to engage in activities 1-56 and the majority of those who tend to undertake these activities prefer doing them twice/three times a week.

In conclusion, it can be observed that:

- the students engage much more often in English informal activities than in German ones;
- however, also in English informal learning many students are unlikely to do the activities; more than half of the them tend to avoid doing the activities while much less than half tends to undertake them;
- in any case, a significant proportion of the whole sample tends to do the activities in English, which is not true for German given that only a small minority of the whole sample tends to undertake the activities;
- of the students unwilling to do the activities in English, a quite large proportion never does the activities *tout court* while an appreciable proportion does them once a week (*vis-à-vis* of the students unwilling to do the activities in German, a

very large majority never does them *tout court* while a small minority does them once a week);

- of the students willing to do the activities in English, the majority prefers doing them twice/three times a week and an appreciable proportion prefers doing them between four and six times a week while a small minority prefers doing them more than six times a week (*vis-à-vis* of the students willing to do the activities in German, the majority prefers doing them twice/three times a week, a small minority between four and six times a week, and another small minority more than six times a week).

Thirdly, the differences between English and German in the *skills* used will be provided. To this aim, the tables presented for research question 2 are considered in order to be compared. The following observations may be made:

- referring to listening, just under a half (45,2%) of the students engage in English informal activities implying listening *at least* twice/three times a week, while approximately one in ten students (11,9%) engages in German informal activities entailing listening *at least* twice/three times a week;

- referring to writing, less than a third (29%) of the students engage in English informal activities entailing writing *at least* twice/three times a week, while approximately one in ten students (13,3%) engages in German informal activities implying writing *at least* twice/three times a week;

- referring to reading, approximately half (50,3%) of the students engage in English informal activities connected to reading *at least* twice/three times a week, while approximately a fifth (20,7%) of the students engage in German informal activities connected to reading *at least* twice/three times a week;

- referring to speaking, approximately two fifths (39,3%) of the students engage in English informal activities involving speaking *at least* twice/three times a week, while less than a fifth (16%) of the students engage in German informal activities involving speaking *at least* twice/three times a week.

Overall, the results indicate that, *when* the students engage in informal learning²², they use the language skills differently according to the language employed. If we consider English skills from most to least used, the list is as follows: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. If we do the same with German skills, the skills are in the following order: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. As we can see, reading is the most used skill for both languages. While listening immediately follows reading in English informal learning, listening is the least used skill in German informal learning. While speaking immediately follows reading in German informal learning, speaking is the penultimate skill used in English informal learning. Similarly, the students make a limited use of writing both in German and in English informal learning. While it is the penultimate skill used in German informal learning, writing is the least used in English informal learning. Nonetheless, it is difficult to compare the skills used between the two languages. While many students engage in many English informal activities, a small minority of the whole sample *does* some German informal learning activities. The disproportionate number between English and German of those who actually engage in informal learning suggests that a basis for comparison be somewhat absent. If we were to take account of this disproportion in strict terms, we should automatically conclude that no skill is actually employed in German informal learning because very few students actually engage in German informal activities. While a very large majority of the sample constantly undertakes English informal activities, the very large majority (from 70,1% onwards) of the students do not engage in any German informal activities at all. As a result, no comparison would be possible between English and German. German would be strictly defined as language not used informally *tout court* and, thus, not involving a considerable use of any skills. Albeit small, a minority in the whole sample however *does* some German informal activities. As our aim was to compare the two languages as far as language skills were concerned, we could not pretend that no type of comparison was possible. We thought that it *was* possible as far as we considered

²² Firstly, the language skills will be considered in proportion to the group of students who actually *do* informal activities within a given language. They will be compared between the two languages regardless of the apparent disproportion referring to the total number of students forming the whole sample and between the two languages. Secondly, they will be taken into account in strict terms, i.e. according to such disproportion.

the small minority regardless of the apparent disproportion referring to the total number of students forming the whole sample and between the two languages. Nevertheless, it is clear that English informal learning is far more common than German one. Therefore, English skills are actually employed by the very large majority of the whole sample. Apart from writing, which is used by less than a third of the students, all the other skills are commonly used in English informal learning, which is not true in strict terms for any German skills. Ultimately, this incontrovertible evidence cannot be ignored.

In order to answer our fourth research question, i.e. *'What are students' perceptions of informal language learning?'*, the following tables will be considered. Firstly, students' perceptions of English informal learning will be taken into account.

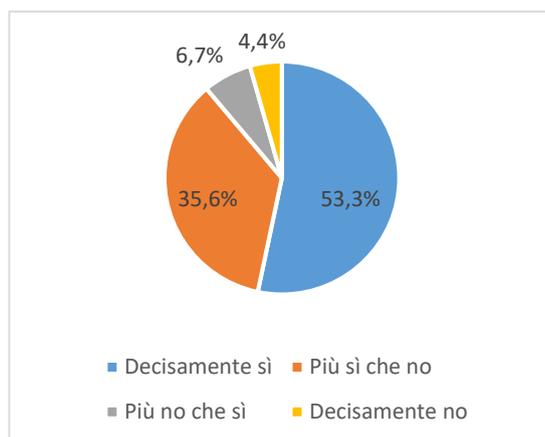


Table 36 *Ti sei mai accorto che ci sono così tante attività che potresti fare fuori dalla scuola in inglese?*

Table 36 shows if the students are aware of the fact that they could do all the English informal activities presented in question 17 of Questionnaire 1. From the pie chart it is clear that more than half (53,3%) of the students are fully aware while more than a third (35,6%) is more aware than unaware. Nonetheless, a small minority (4,4%) of the sample is fully unaware while another small minority (6,7%) is more unaware than aware. These results overall indicate that the overwhelming majority of the students tend to be somewhat aware of the fact that they could do all the English informal activities presented in question 17 while a very small minority tends to be unaware of it.

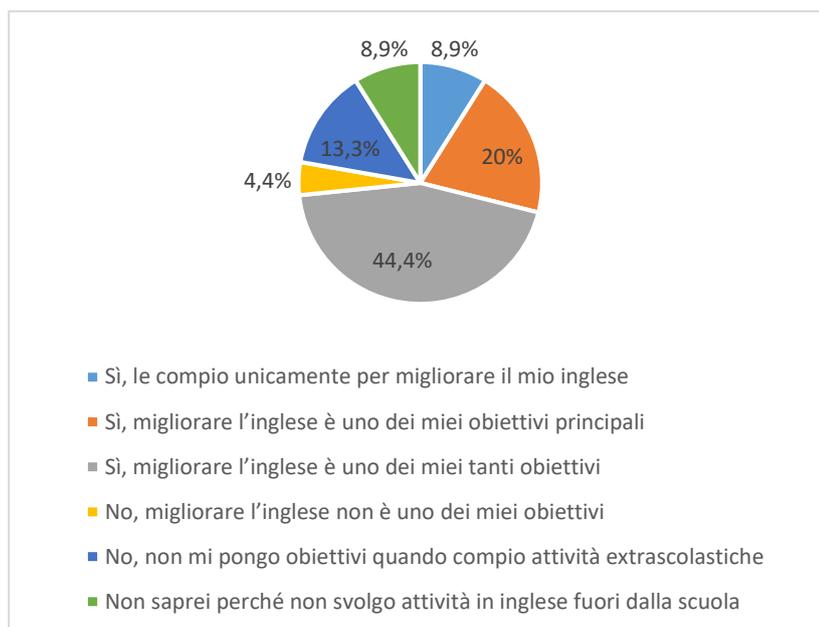


Table 37
Generalmente, quando compi attività in inglese fuori dalla scuola di tua spontanea volontà le fai intenzionalmente per imparare l'inglese?

Table 37 shows how intentionally the students do English informal activities in order to learn English. It can be seen that more than two fifths (44,4%) of the students do informal activities in order to improve their English but this this is one among many other goals. A fifth (20%) of the students do informal activities in order to improve their English, which one of their main goals. A small minority (13,3%) does not establish any kind of goals when doing English informal activities. Another small minority (8,9%) does informal activities exclusively in order to improve its English. Another small minority (8,9%) does not know because it does not engage in any English informal activities. A very small minority (4,4%) does English informal activities but has not the aim of improving it. Overall, it can be observed that a very large majority of the students tend to do informal activities in order to learn English. However, they do not undertake such activities exclusively in order to improve English. Generally, improving English is one among many other goals. Only a small minority of the whole sample does not mean to improve English at all while doing informal activities.

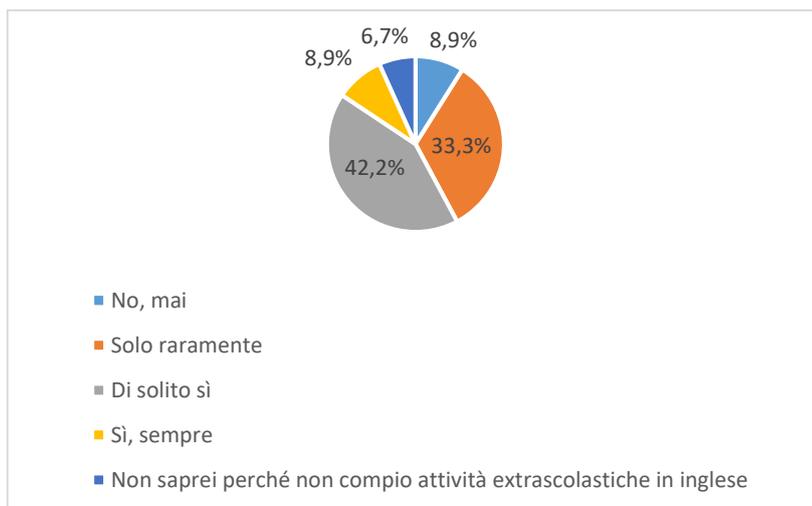


Table 38 *Dopo avere compiuto attività extrascolastiche in inglese di tua spontanea volontà, rifletti mai su quanto queste attività ti possano essere state utili al fine di migliorarlo?*

Table 38 shows how often the students reflect on how useful the English informal activities they do have been in order to improve their English. It can be highlighted that more than two fifths (42,2%) of the students usually reflect on the usefulness of English informal learning while a small minority (8,9%) always reflects on it. However, a third (33,3%) of the sample rarely reflects on the usefulness of English informal learning and a small minority (8,9%) never reflects on it. Another small minority (6,7%) does not know because it does not engage in any English informal activities at all. Therefore, it can be observed that approximately half of the students generally reflect on how useful the English informal activities they do have been in order to improve their English. Of these students, the majority has made it a usual habit. Nevertheless, approximately another half of the whole sample tends not to reflect on its English informal learning. Of this, only rarely does the majority reflect on it.

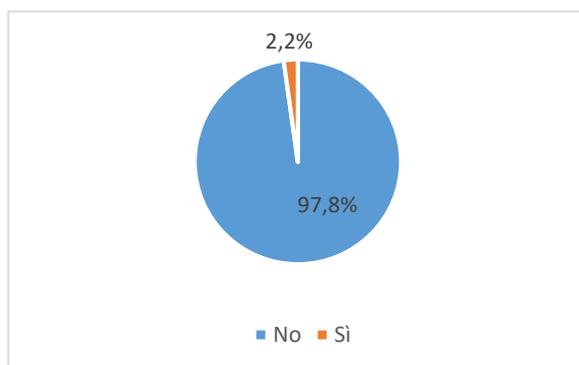


Table 39 *Sai cos'è il portfolio linguistico europeo?*

Table 39 shows whether the students know what the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is. It is clear that the overwhelming majority (97,8%) of the sample does not know what it is while a very small minority (2,2%) does. Nearly all the students are therefore completely unaware of what ELP is.

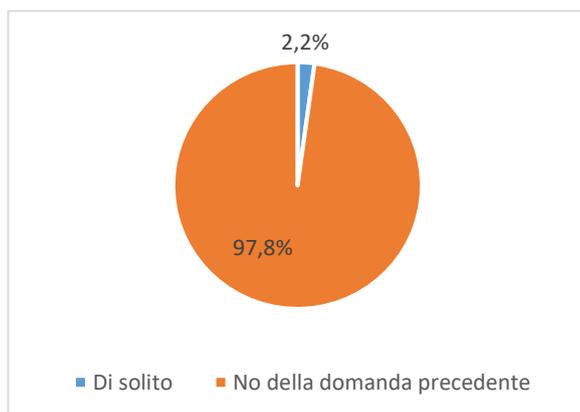


Table 40 *Se sì, quanto spesso l'hai usato alla scuola media per riflettere sul tipo di apprendimento che hai compiuto attraverso questo tipo di attività?*

Table 40 shows how often the students who know what the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is employ it at school in order to reflect on their English informal learning. Given that only a small minority (2,2%) of the whole sample knows what ELP is (see table 39), the same small minority (2,2%) could actually answer this question. Despite being an insignificant proportion of the whole sample, 2,2% of the students *usually* employ ELP at school in order to reflect on their English informal learning. However, the overwhelming majority (97,8%) of the whole sample does not know what ELP is (see table 39) and cannot therefore say how often it employs it at school. Therefore, we reach the very same conclusion as for table 39, i.e. nearly all the students are completely unaware of what ELP is.²³

²³ No students chose the options 'mai', 'solo raramente', 'sempre', 'non saprei perché non compio questo tipo di attività' (see item 7, Questionnaire 1)

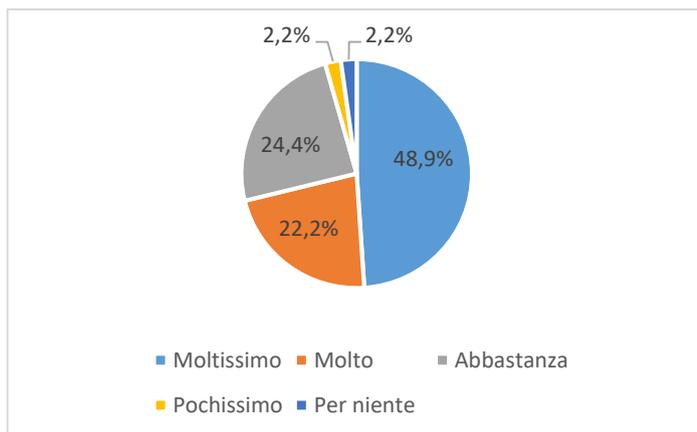


Table 41 *Secondo te, quanto è utile usare l'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?*

Table 41 shows the degree to which the students find it useful to do English informal activities in order to learn English. Nearly half (48,9%) of the students find it very useful to do them in order to learn English. Approximately a fifth (22,2%) finds it useful. More than a fifth (24,4%) finds it pretty useful. Only a small minority (2,2%) of the students find it very useless and another small minority (2,2%) thinks it is not useful at all.²⁴ Overall, it can be underlined that the overwhelming majority of the students find it somewhat useful to do English informal activities in order to learn English. Of these students, a large proportion thinks it is very useful. Only a very small minority of the whole sample tends to think it is not useful to engage in English informal activities in order to learn English.

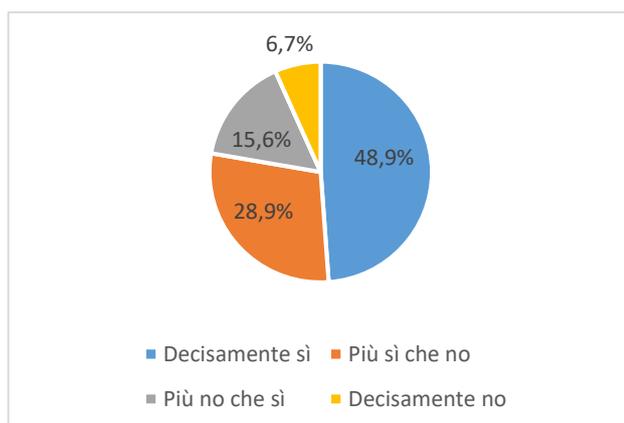


Table 42 *Secondo te, fare attività extrascolastiche in inglese di propria iniziativa è più utile al fine di impararlo rispetto al solo studiarlo per la scuola?*

²⁴ No students chose the option 'poco' (see item 8, Questionnaire 1)

Table 42 shows if the students find it more useful to do English informal activities than exclusively studying it for school in order to acquire the language. It is clear that nearly half (48,9%) of the sample finds English informal learning undoubtedly much more useful than exclusively studying it for school in order to acquire the language. Similarly, less than a third (28,9%) tends to think it is more useful. However, less than a fifth (15,6%) of the students tend to think that English informal learning is not more useful than exclusively studying it for school in order to learn English and a small minority (6,7%) does not find it more useful at all. These results overall indicate that a very large majority of the sample finds it somewhat more useful to do English informal activities than exclusively studying it for school in order to learn English. Of these students, the majority finds it much more useful. Only a small minority tends not to think that informal learning can be more useful than formal learning in order to learn English.

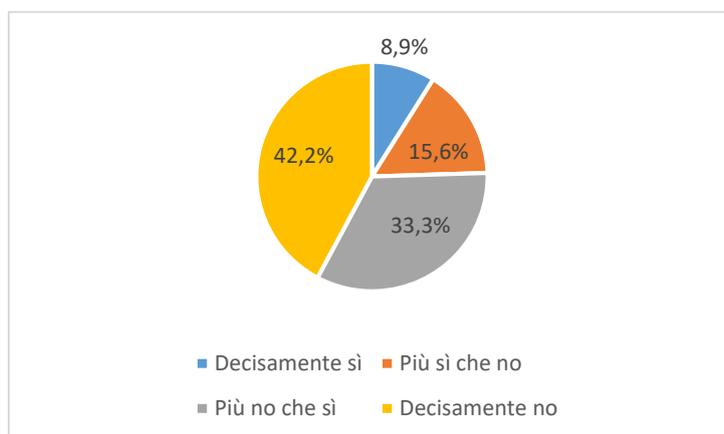


Table 43 *Per te, l'inglese equivale semplicemente a una materia scolastica?*

Table 43 shows if the students perceive English as a mere school subject. More than two fifths (42,2%) of the students do not perceive English as a mere school subject at all. Similarly, a third (33,3%) of the sample tends not to think of it as a school subject. Nevertheless, less than a fifth (15,6%) tends to see English as a mere school subject while a small minority (8,9%) thinks English absolutely coincides with a school subject. Overall, the very large majority of the students are unlikely to perceive English as a mere school subject. Only a small minority is likely to see it as such.

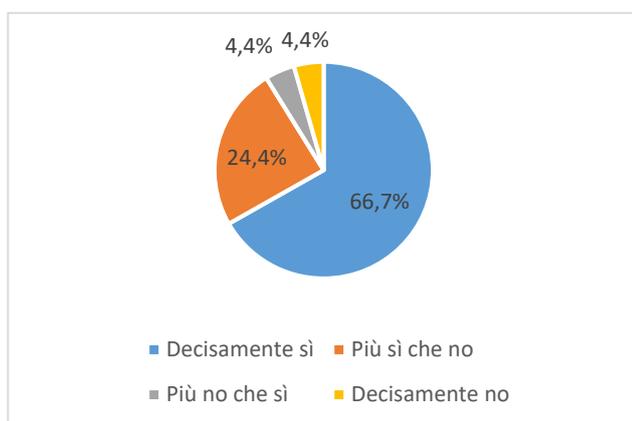


Table 44 *Secondo te, l'inglese è parte integrante della vita reale?*

Table 44 shows if the students perceive English as a real life tool. More than two thirds (66,7%) of the students absolutely perceive English as a real life tool while less than a third (24,4%) *tends* to perceive it as a real life tool. Only a small minority (4,4%) tends not to perceive it as a real life tool and another small minority (4,4%) does not perceive English as a real life tool at all. Overall, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the students tend to perceive English as a real life tool while only a small minority is unlikely to see it as such.

Table 45 *Se sì, perché lo è? Dai una breve risposta*

37,5%	English as a global language
32,5%	English as a lingua franca
10%	English as an everyday language
10%	English as a language used on journeys
10%	English as a useful and chance-giving language
7,5%	English as a business language
5%	English as a lifelong tool
5%	English as a widespread language
2,5%	English as a beautiful language for its sake
2,5%	English as a language used for fun
2,5%	English as the language of the future

Table 45 explores the reason why the students perceiving English as a real life tool (see table 44) perceive it as such. 88,9% of the whole sample gave answers²⁵

²⁵ Some students gave an answer including only one of the labels in table 45. Some other students gave an answer including more than one of the labels in table 45. (see 2.6.1)

to this question which were accepted and represents those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. 8,9% of the students did not give any answers to this question because of their negative answer to the previous question. 2,2% of the students gave answers to this question which could not be accepted despite belonging to the group of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. Of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted (i.e. 88,9% of the whole sample), nearly two fifths (37,5%) perceive English as a real life tool because they see it as a global language while approximately a third (32,5%) of the students perceive English as a real life tool because they conceive it as a lingua franca. One in ten students (10%) thinks English is a real life tool because it is an everyday language. Another small minority (10%) thinks it is a real life tool because it is a language useful on journeys. Another small minority (10%) perceives English as a real life tool because it is a useful and chance-giving language in general terms. Other very small minorities feel English as a real life tool for the following reasons:

- because English is a business language (7,5%);
- because English is a lifelong tool (5%);
- because English is a widespread language (5%) (however, it is not claimed to be specifically global);
- because English is a beautiful language for its sake (2,5%);
- because English is a language used for fun (2,5%);
- because English is the language of the future (2,5%).

These results overall indicate that the majority of the students who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted perceive English as a real life tool for two principal reasons: 1) because it is a global language; 2) because it is a lingua franca.

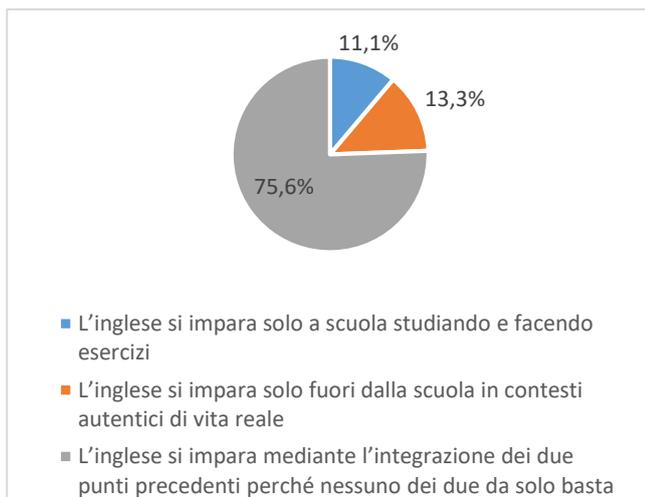


Table 46 Segna l'affermazione che ritieni più vera per te (see the options on the table)

Table 46 shows if the students think that English can be learnt only through formal learning, if they think that it can be learnt only through informal learning, or if they think that both types of learning should be involved in order to learn English and, thus, that they should be integrated. Approximately three quarters (75,6%) of the whole sample thinks that both formal learning and informal learning should be involved in order to learn English and, thus, that these two types of learning should be integrated. A small minority (13,3%) thinks that English can be learnt only through informal learning and another small minority (11,1%) thinks that it can be learnt only through formal learning. Therefore, a very large majority of the students consider both formal learning and informal learning necessary in order to learn English.

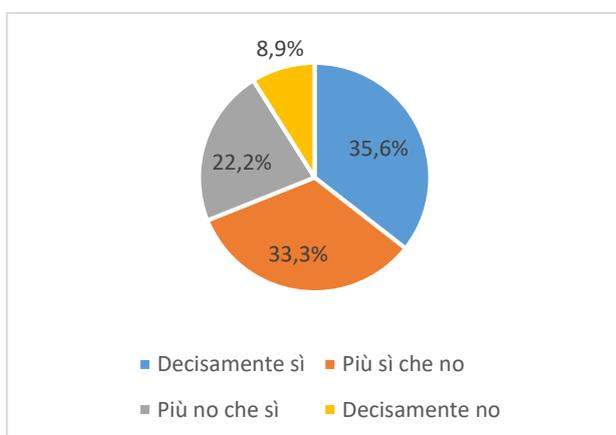


Table 47 Secondo te, apprendere l'inglese fuori dalla scuola in attività che tu scegli di fare rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che dovrai compiere da adulto senza l'appoggio della scuola?

Table 47 shows if the students think that their English informal learning reflects the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults. More than a third (35,6%) of the sample is absolutely convinced of this. A third (33,3%) is almost convinced of this. Approximately a fifth (22,2%) is doubtful about this. A small minority (8,9%) is not convinced of this at all. Overall, a quite large proportion of the students tend to think that their English informal learning reflects the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults. However, an appreciable proportion of them tend to be doubtful about this.

Table 48 *Se sì, come definiresti questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non ci sono dei professori che ti obbligano a studiare? Definiscilo in non più di sei parole: "Apprendimento..."*

spontaneo	36,7%
extrascolastico	16,7%
libero	13,3%
utile	10%
facile	6,7%
divertente	6,7%
veloce	6,7%
autodidatta	3,3%
autonomo	3,3%
interessante	3,3%
sereno	3,3%
graduale	3,3%
bello	3,3%
impegnativo	3,3%
musicale	3,3%
personale	3,3%

Table 48 shows how the students define the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults²⁶ as far as English is concerned. (see table 47) 66,7% of the whole sample gave answers²⁷ to this question which were accepted and represents those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. 31,1% of the students did not give any answers to this question because of their negative answer to the previous question. 2,2% of the students gave

²⁶ We defined it as *informal lifelong learning* in 1.2.1.

²⁷ Some students gave an answer including only one of the labels in table 48. Some other students gave an answer including more than one of the labels in table 48. (see 2.6.1)

answers to this question which could not be accepted despite belonging to the group of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. Of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted (i.e. 66,7% of the whole sample), more than a third (36,7%) defines the type of learning mentioned in the previous question as spontaneous while less than a fifth (16,7%) defines it as an out-of-school type of learning. Other small minorities define it as follows: free (13,3%); useful (10%); easy (6,7%); fun (6,7%); fast (6,7%); self-taught (3,3%); autonomous (3,3%); interesting (3,3%); peaceful (3,3%); gradual (3,3%); cool (3,3%); demanding (3,3%); musical (3,3%); personal (3,3%).

These results overall indicate that the majority of the students who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted define what we call informal lifelong learning as a spontaneous type of learning.

Table 49 *Come trovi l'apprendimento dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola? Descrivilo usando tre aggettivi*

utile	66,7%
divertente	40%
interessante	35,6%
bello	31,1%
impegnativo	15,6%
formativo	11,1%
spontaneo	11,1%
facile	8,9%
inutile	6,7%
parlato	6,7%
extrascolastico	6,7%
noioso	4,4%
reale	4,4%
importante	4,4%
sereno	4,4%
musicale	4,4%
rilassante	2,2%
facile da ricordare	2,2%
migliorabile	2,2%
negativo	2,2%
positivo	2,2%
strano	2,2%
necessario	2,2%

diverso	2,2%
visivo	2,2%
sorprendente	2,2%
scritto	2,2%
obbligatorio	2,2%
stimolante	2,2%
soddisfacente	2,2%
completo	2,2%
significativo	2,2%
unico	2,2%

Table 49 shows how the students perceive English informal learning.²⁸ Of the whole sample, more than two thirds (66,7%) perceive it as useful, more than a third (40%) as fun, more than a third (35,6%) as interesting, and nearly a third (31,1%) as cool. Less than a fifth (15,6%) finds it demanding. More than one in ten students (11,1%) feels it as formative and another small minority (11,1%) finds it spontaneous. Other small minorities describe English informal learning as follows: easy (8,9%); useless (6,7%); spoken (6,7%); out-of-school (6,7%); boring (4,4%); real (4,4%); important (4,4%); peaceful (4,4%); musical (4,4%); relaxing (2,2%); easy to remember (2,2%); improvable (2,2%); bad (2,2%); good (2,2%); weird (2,2%); necessary (2,2%); different (2,2%); visual (2,2%); surprising (2,2%); written (2,2%); compulsory (2,2%); stimulating (2,2%); satisfying (2,2%); complete (2,2%); significant (2,2%); unique (2,2%).

Overall, it is clear that a quite large proportion of the whole sample perceives English informal learning as useful. An appreciable proportion also finds it fun, interesting, and cool. Only a small minority perceives it as demanding.

²⁸ Each of the students had to describe it with three adjectives.

Secondly, students' perceptions of German informal learning will be dealt with.

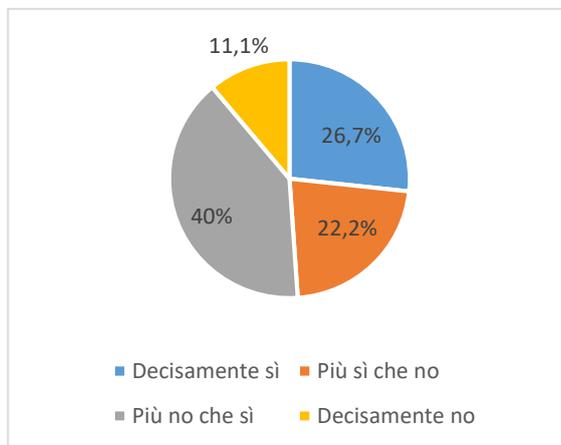


Table 50 *Ti sei mai accorto che ci sono così tante attività che potresti fare fuori dalla scuola in tedesco?*

Table 50 shows if the students are aware of the fact that they could do all the German informal activities presented in question 17 of Questionnaire 2. It can be observed that two fifths (40%) of the students are more unaware than aware while more than one in ten students (11,1%) is fully unaware. However, more than a fifth (26,7%) is fully aware. Similarly, more than a fifth (22,2%) is more aware than unaware. These results overall indicate that approximately half of the students tend to be unaware of the fact that they could do all the German activities presented in question 17 while approximately another half of the students tend to be somewhat aware of it.

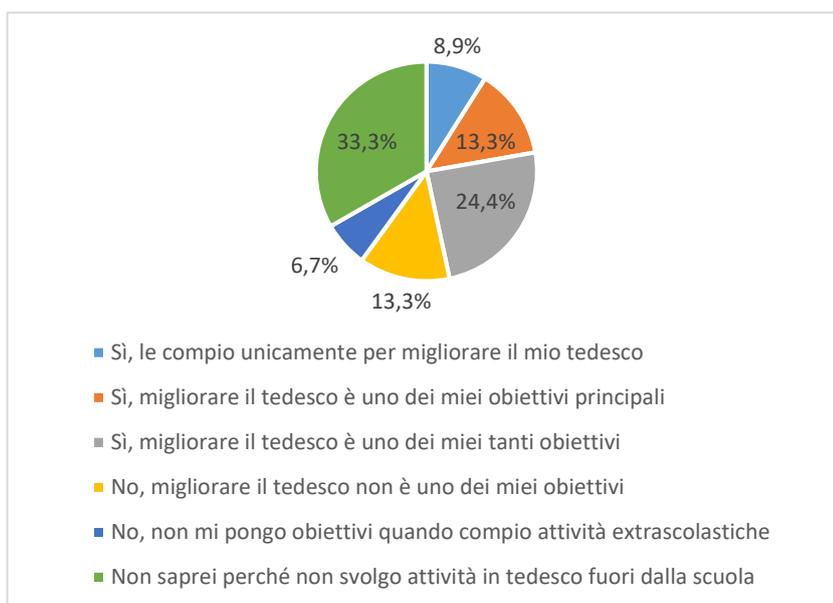


Table 51
Generalmente, quando compi attività in tedesco fuori dalla scuola di tua spontanea volontà le fai intenzionalmente per imparare il tedesco?

Table 51 shows how intentionally the students do German informal activities in order to learn German. From the pie chart it is clear that a third (33,3%) of the students do not know because they do not engage in any German informal activities. More than a fifth (24,4%) does informal activities in order to improve its German but this is one among many other goals. A small minority (13,3%) does informal activities in order to improve their German, which is one of their main goals. Another small minority (13,3%) does German informal activities but has not the aim of improving it. Only 8,9% of the students do informal activities exclusively in order to improve their German while 6,7% does not establish any kind of goals when doing German informal activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that a significant proportion of the students tend to do informal activities in order to learn German. However, they do not undertake such activities exclusively in order to improve German. Generally, improving German is one among many other goals. Only a small minority does not mean to improve German at all while doing informal activities. Nevertheless, an appreciable proportion of the students do not engage in any German informal activities at all.

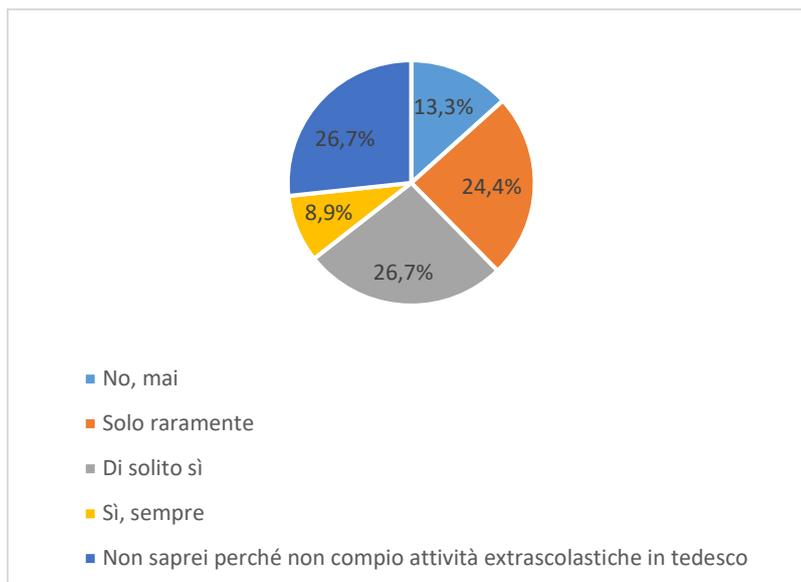


Table 52 *Dopo avere compiuto attività extrascolastiche in tedesco di tua spontanea volontà, rifletti mai su quanto queste attività ti possano essere state utili al fine di migliorarlo?*

Table 52 shows how often the students reflect on how useful the German informal activities they do have been in order to improve their German. From the pie chart it is clear that 26,7% of the students do not know because they do not engage in any German informal activities at all. Only rarely does 24,4% reflect on their German informal learning while 13,3% never reflect on it. However, another 26,7% of the students usually reflect on their German informal learning while 8,9% always reflect it. Overall, it can be seen that an appreciable proportion of the students generally reflect on how useful the German informal activities they do have been in order to improve their German. Of these students, the majority has made it a usual habit. Nonetheless, a quite large proportion of the whole sample tends not to reflect on its German informal learning. Of these students, the majority does not engage in any German informal activities at all while a good proportion rarely reflects on such activities.

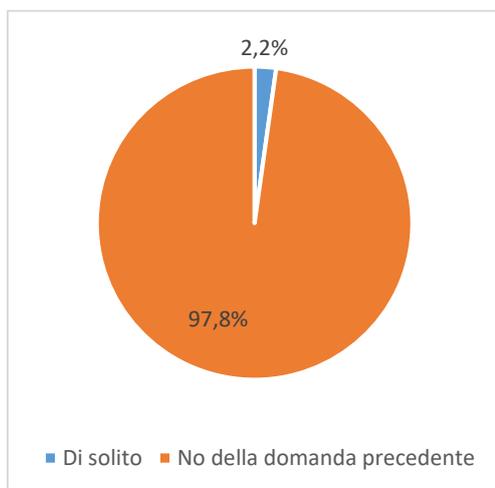


Table 53 Se [conosci il portfolio linguistico europeo], quanto spesso l'hai usato alla scuola media per riflettere sul tipo di apprendimento che hai compiuto attraverso questo tipo di attività?

Table 53 shows how often the students who know what the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is employ it at school in order to reflect on their German informal learning. As only a small minority (2,2%) of the whole sample knows what ELP is (see table 39), the same small minority (2,2%) could actually respond to this question. In spite of being an insignificant proportion of the whole sample, 2,2% of the students *usually* employ ELP at school in order to reflect on their German informal learning. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority (97,8%) of the whole sample does not know what ELP is (see table 39) and cannot therefore say how often it employs it at school. Thus, we come to the very same conclusion as for table 39, i.e. nearly all the students are completely unaware of what ELP is.²⁹

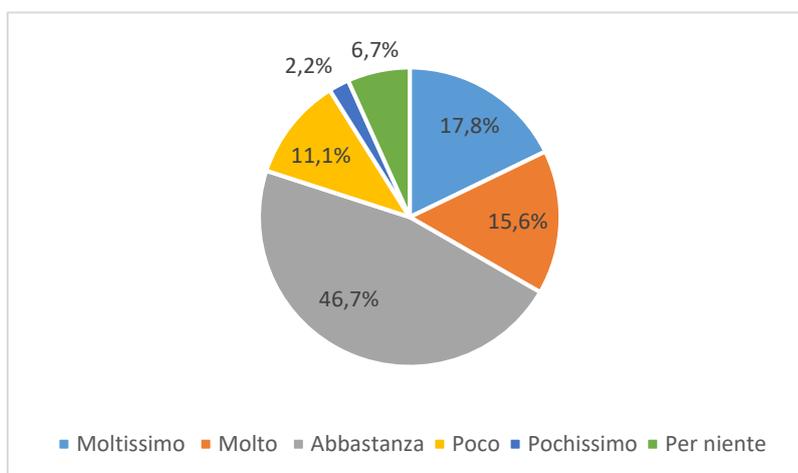


Table 54 Secondo te, quanto è utile usare il tedesco fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?

²⁹ No students chose the options 'mai', 'solo raramente', 'sempre', 'non saprei perché non compio questo tipo di attività' (see item 7, Questionnaire 2)

Table 54 shows the degree to which the students find it useful to do German informal activities in order to learn German. More than two fifths (46,7%) of the students find it pretty useful. Less than a fifth (17,8%) finds it very useful and another small minority (15,6%) confirms that it is useful. Nevertheless, more than one in ten students (11,1%) does not find it much useful. Only 2,2% of the students find it very useless while 6,7% think it is not useful at all. Therefore, it can be highlighted that the enormous majority of the whole sample finds it somewhat useful to do German informal activities in order to learn German. Of these students, the majority however finds it only pretty useful. Only a small minority of the whole sample tends to think that German informal activities are not useful in order to learn German.

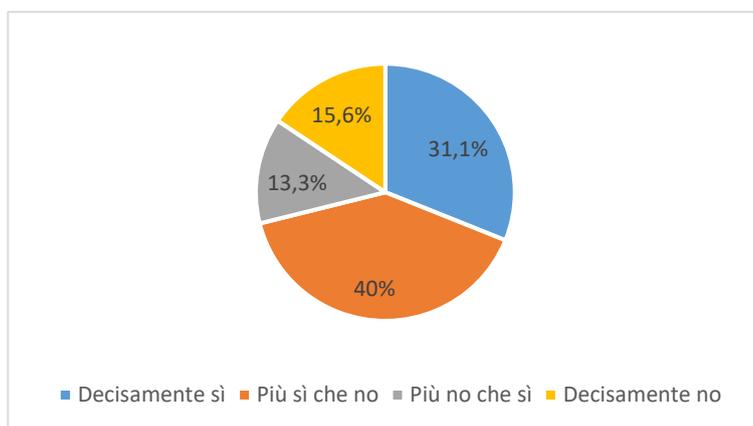


Table 55 *Secondo te, fare attività extrascolastiche in tedesco di propria iniziativa è più utile al fine di impararlo rispetto al solo studiarlo per la scuola?*

Table 55 shows if the students find it more useful to do German informal activities than exclusively studying it for school in order to acquire the language. It can be seen that two fifths (40%) of the students tend to think it is more useful while nearly a third (31,1%) finds German informal learning undoubtedly much more useful. A small minority (13,3%) tends to think that German informal learning is not more useful than exclusively studying it for school in order to learn German and less than a fifth (15,6%) does not find it more useful at all. Overall, a very large majority of the students find it somewhat more useful to do German informal activities than exclusively studying it for school in order to learn German. Of these students, the majority finds it more useful than useless. However, a substantial

minority tends not to think that informal learning can be more useful than formal learning in order to learn German.

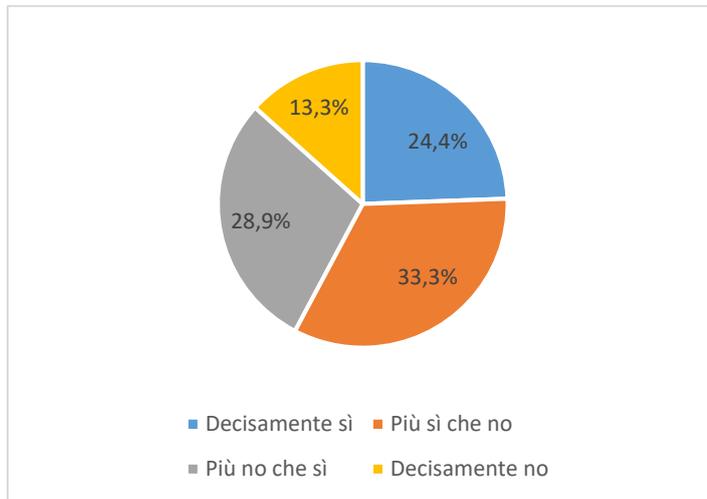


Table 56 *Per te, il tedesco equivale semplicemente a una materia scolastica?*

Table 56 shows if the students perceive German as a mere school subject. A third (33,3%) of the students tend to see German as a mere school subject and nearly a quarter (24,4%) thinks German absolutely coincides with a school subject. Nonetheless, less than a third (28,9%) of the whole sample tends not to think of it as a school subject. Only a small minority (13,3%) does not see German as a mere school subject at all. Therefore, it can be observed that a substantial proportion of the whole sample is likely to perceive German as a mere school subject. However, a large minority is unlikely to perceive it as such.

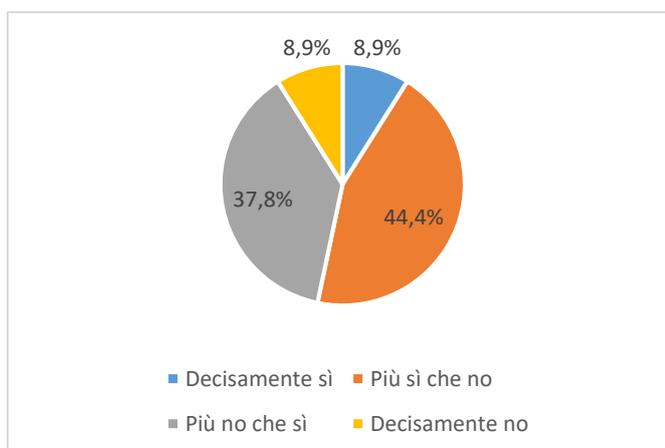


Table 57 *Secondo te, il tedesco è parte integrante della vita reale?*

Table 57 shows if the students perceive German as a real life tool. More than two fifths (44,4%) of the students *tend* to perceive German as a real life tool. Only a

small minority (8,9%) absolutely perceives it as a real life tool. Nearly two fifths (37,8%) of the whole sample tends not to perceive German as a real life tool while another small minority (8,9%) does not perceive it as a real life tool at all. These results overall indicate that just over half of the students tend to think of German as a real life tool while less than half of the students tend not to perceive it as such.

Table 58 *Se sì, perché lo è? Dai una breve risposta*

German as a widespread language	26,1%
German as a business language	21,7%
German as a tool to communicate with people	17,4%
German as a useful language	13%
German as a language used on journeys	13%
German as a tool to communicate with Germans	8,7%
German as a lingua franca	8,7%
German as a necessary language	8,7%
German as a close language	8,7%
German as a beautiful language for its sake	4,3%
German as a language of culture	4,3%

Table 58 investigates the reason why the students perceiving German as a real life tool (see table 57) perceive it as such. 51,1% of the whole sample gave answers³⁰ to this question which were accepted and represents those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. 46,7% of the students did not give any answers to this question because of their negative answer to the previous question. 2,2% of the students gave answers to this question which could not be accepted despite belonging to the group of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. Of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted (i.e. 51,1% of the whole sample), more than a quarter (26,1%) perceives German as a real life tool because they see it as a widespread language while more than a fifth (21,7%) sees German as a real life tool because they conceive it as a business language. Less than a fifth (17,4%) sees German as a real life because they view it as a tool to communicate with people. More than one in ten students (13%) thinks German is a real life tool because it is a useful

³⁰ Some students gave an answer including only one of the labels in table 58. Some other students gave an answer including more than one of the labels in table 58. (see 2.6.1)

language (in general terms). Another small minority (13%) thinks it is a real life tool because it is a language useful on journeys. Other very small minorities feel German as a real life tool for the following reasons:

- because German is a tool to communicate specifically with Germans (8,7%);
- because German is a lingua franca (8,7%);
- because German is a necessary language (8,7%);
- because German is a close language (8,7%);
- because German is a beautiful language for its sake (4,3%);
- because German is a language of culture (4,3%).

Overall, it can be underlined that the majority of the students who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted perceive German as a real life tool for three principal reasons: 1) because it is a widespread language; 2) because it is a business language; 3) because it is a tool to communicate with people.



Table 59 Segna l'affermazione che ritieni più vera per te (see the options on the table)

Table 59 shows if the students think that German can be learnt only through formal learning, if they think that it can be learnt only through informal learning, or if they think that both types of learning should be involved in order to learn German and, thus, that they should be integrated. Nearly three fifths (57,8%) of the whole sample thinks that both formal learning and informal learning should be involved in order to learn German and, thus, that these two types of learning

should be integrated. Nearly a third (31,1%) thinks that German can be learnt only through formal learning while a small minority (11,1%) thinks that it can be learnt only through informal learning. Overall, a substantial proportion of the students consider both formal learning and informal learning necessary in order to learn German. However, an appreciable proportion of the whole sample thinks that formal learning is more appropriate to learn German.

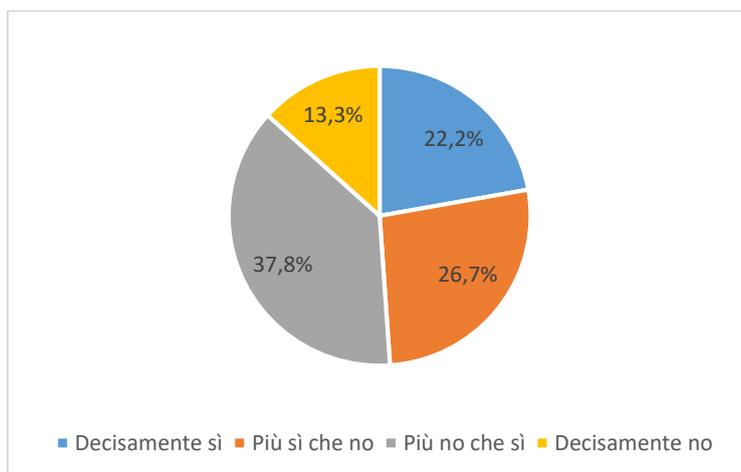


Table 60 *Secondo te, apprendere il tedesco fuori dalla scuola in attività che tu scegli di fare rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che dovrai compiere da adulto senza l'appoggio della scuola?*

Table 60 shows if the students think that their German informal learning reflects the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults. More than a third (37,8%) of the sample is doubtful about this while a small minority (13,3%) is not convinced of this at all. However, more than a quarter (26,7%) is almost convinced of this while more than a fifth (22,2%) is absolutely convinced of this. These results overall indicate that more than half of the students tend not to think that their German informal learning reflects the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults while nearly half of them tend to be convinced of this.

Table 61 *Se sì, come definiresti questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non ci sono dei professori che ti obbligano a studiare? Definiscilo in non più di sei parole: "Apprendimento..."*

spontaneo	23,8%
interessante	14,3%
extrascolastico	9,5%
divertente	9,5%
libero	9,5%

utile	9,5%
facile	9,5%
sereno	4,8%
autodidatta	4,8%
autonomo	4,8%
bello	4,8%
veloce	4,8%
musicale	4,8%
continuo	4,8%
parlato	4,8%

Table 61 shows how the students define the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults as far as German is concerned. (see table 60) 46,7% of the whole sample gave answers³¹ to this question which were accepted and represents those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. 51,1% of the students did not give any answers to this question because of their negative answer to the previous question. 2,2% of the students gave answers to this question which could not be accepted despite belonging to the group of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question. Of those who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted (i.e. 46,7% of the whole sample), more than a fifth (23,8%) defines the type of learning mentioned in the previous question as spontaneous while less than a fifth (14,3%) defines it as an interesting type of learning. Other small minorities define it as follows: out-of-school (9,5%); fun (9,5%); free (9,5%); useful (9,5%); easy (9,5%); peaceful (4,8%); self-taught (4,8%); autonomous (4,8%); cool (4,8%); fast (4,8%); musical (4,8%); continuous (4,8%); spoken (4,8%). Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the students who gave an affirmative answer to the previous question and whose answer was accepted define what we call informal lifelong learning as a spontaneous type of learning.

Table 62 *Come trovi l'apprendimento del tedesco fuori dalla scuola? Descrivilo usando tre aggettivi*

utile	71,1%
noioso	31,1%

³¹ Some students gave an answer including only one of the labels in table 61. Some other students gave an answer including more than one of the labels in table 61. (see 2.6.1)

interessante	28,9%
bello	26,7%
divertente	17,8%
impegnativo	15,6%
spontaneo	11,1%
difficile	11,1%
inutile	8,9%
brutto	8,9%
extrascolastico	4,4%
musicale	4,4%
importante	4,4%
positivo	4,4%
sorprendente	4,4%
sereno	4,4%
geniale	2,2%
artigianale	2,2%
rilassante	2,2%
difficile da ricordare	2,2%
forzato	2,2%
impronunciabile	2,2%
negativo	2,2%
superficiale	2,2%
impossibile	2,2%
necessario	2,2%
diverso	2,2%
visivo	2,2%
parlato	2,2%
concreto	2,2%
costante	2,2%
libero	2,2%
entusiasmante	2,2%
informativo	2,2%
completo	2,2%

Table 62 shows how the students perceive German informal learning.³² Of the whole sample, just under three quarters (71,1%) perceive it as useful and nearly a third (31,1%) as boring. Less than a third (28,9%) finds it interesting. Just over a quarter (26,7%) finds it cool. Less than a fifth (17,8%) perceives it as fun and another small minority (15,6%) as demanding. More than one in ten students

³² Each of the students had to describe it with three adjectives.

(11,1%) thinks it is spontaneous while another small minority (11,1%) finds it difficult. Other small minorities describe German informal learning as follows: useless (8,9%); uncool (8,9%); out-of-school (4,4%); musical (4,4%); important (4,4%); good (4,4%); surprising (4,4%); peaceful (4,4%); brilliant (2,2%); artisanal (2,2%); relaxing (2,2%), difficult to remember (2,2%); forced (2,2%); unpronounceable (2,2%); bad (2,2%); superficial (2,2%); impossible (2,2%); necessary (2,2%); different (2,2%); visual (2,2%); spoken (2,2%); concrete (2,2%); constant (2,2%); free (2,2%); exciting (2,2%); informative (2,2%); complete (2,2%).

Overall, it can be seen that a very large majority of the whole sample perceives German informal learning as useful. An appreciable proportion however finds it boring. A small minority finds it interesting and cool. Some students think it is fun and demanding as well.

3.2 Teachers' Interviews

In order to answer our fifth research question, i.e. *'What do teachers think of students' informal language learning?'*, a table is presented which summarises all the answers given by each teacher in the course of the interview. Its aim is to allow a comparative analysis of teachers' interviews. Most of the interview questions are the same as the ones in students' questionnaires. This was done to enable a subsequent comparison between teachers' and students' point of view on informal language learning. (see 4.2) Other types of questions were asked which were not linked to students' questionnaires in order to have a broader overview of the issue.

Table 63 illustrating a comparative analysis of teachers' interviews

Questions	English Teacher A	English Teacher B	English Teacher C	German Teacher
<p>1) <i>Si è mai reso/a conto che potenzialment e le opportunità di apprendiment o che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese?</i></p>	<p>Awareness of students' informal opportunities to learn English*</p> <p>Students' immersion in a reality continuously exposing them to English*</p>	<p>Awareness of students' informal opportunities to learn English*</p> <p>Middle school students' young age as a factor precluding them from being autonomous in informal learning*</p> <p>Middle school students' immaturity and lack of autonomy as factors requiring them to be constantly guided in informal learning*</p> <p>Middle school students' unconscious exposition to English outside school*</p>	<p>Awareness of students' informal opportunities to learn English*</p> <p>Students' immersion in a reality continuously exposing them to English*</p>	<p>Awareness of students' informal opportunities to learn German*</p> <p>Students' lower exposition to German in real life if compared to English*</p> <p>Students' more limited acquisition of German through informal learning if compared to English*</p> <p>Teacher's uncertainty about the actual degree to which students are exposed to German in real life</p> <p>Widespread prejudices against German as a phonologically harsh language having a difficult grammar and against German people as factors precluding people from coming in contact with German*</p>

<p>2) <i>Lei è a conoscenza delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontanea volontà?</i></p>	<p>Poor communication with students about their informal activities*</p> <p>Lack of time, students' immaturity and class heterogeneity in motivation as factors interfering in teacher-student communication and, thus, in becoming acquainted with students' informal activities*</p> <p>First-year students' enthusiasm for learning and absence of knowledge gap between students as factors contributing to class homogeneity in motivation</p> <p>Second- and third-year students' lack of enthusiasm for learning and increased knowledge gap between students as factors affecting class heterogeneity in motivation</p> <p>First-year students' limited knowledge of English as a</p>	<p>Slight acquaintance with students' informal activities*</p> <p>Cultural level of students' family as a factor indirectly affecting students' motivation in learning English above all as far as Italian students are concerned</p> <p>Incommunicability with Chinese students as a complex reality hard to explore</p> <p>Cultural background of Bengali students' family as a factor affecting Bengali students' motivation in learning English</p> <p>Occasional communication with students' parents about students' informal activities*</p> <p>Paradoxical effective communication with students about their informal activities</p>	<p>Effective communication with students about their informal activities*</p> <p>Occasional communication with students' parents about students' informal activities*</p>	<p>Effective communication with students about their informal learning activities*</p> <p>Specificity of teacher's reporting about first-year students' informal activities*</p> <p>Teacher's special attention to communicating with first-year students about their informal learning activities*</p>
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	<p>factor precluding them from doing a large amount of informal activities</p> <p>Slight acquaintance with students' informal activities*</p> <p>Unpostponable institutional tasks as a factor contributing to lack of time and interfering in teacher-student communication and, thus, in becoming acquainted with students' informal activities*</p> <p>Assumption about students' non-use of English outside school given the poor communication with students about their informal learning activities</p> <p>Assumption about students' occasional use of English in some informal activities given the poor communication with them about their informal</p>	<p>given the slight acquaintance with their informal activities</p> <p>Close acquaintance with students' informal activities resembling formal activities*</p> <p>General acquaintance with students' informal activities not resembling formal activities*</p> <p>Hyperbolic claim about students' informal activities</p> <p>Unspecificity of teacher's reporting about students' informal activities*</p> <p>Hyperbolic assumption about students' informal activities given teacher's slight and general acquaintance with their informal learning activities</p> <p>Prejudicial attitude</p>		
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	<p>learning activities</p> <p>Occasional chance discoveries of students' knowledge of some English expressions unavailable in the school book*</p>	<p>towards students' knowledge about real life events</p> <p>Tacit agreement with widespread assumptions about students' negative attitude towards becoming informed about real life events</p> <p>Middle school students' low level of English as a factor precluding them from doing a large amount of informal activities*</p> <p>Lack of time and ordinary logistical issues as factors interfering in teacher-student communication and, thus, in becoming acquainted with students' informal activities*</p>		
<p>3) <i>Secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso</i></p>	<p>Student's acute unawareness of the fact that they can improve their English through informal activities*</p>	<p>Students' full unawareness of the fact that they can improve their English through informal activities*</p>	<p>Middle school students' awareness of the fact that they can improve their English through informal activities*</p>	<p>Students' general unawareness of the fact that they can improve their German through informal activities*</p>

<p><i>queste attività?</i></p>	<p>Students' rigid separation between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school*</p> <p>Teacher's active role in leading her students to seeing the underlying unity between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school*</p> <p>Students' astonishment at the teacher's showing them the underlying unity between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school*</p> <p>Students' full unawareness of their inability to integrate formal learning with informal learning*</p> <p>Students' consideration of school as an academic place*</p> <p>Students' unconscious knowledge of English acquired through informal activities*</p>	<p>Middle school students' unconscious exposition to English outside school*</p> <p>Prejudicial attitude towards students' ability to deal with informal activities given teacher's complete ignorance about their dealing with such informal activities</p> <p>Middle school students' immaturity and lack of autonomy as factors making them unaware of their informal learning*</p> <p>Middle school students' alienated nature from real life as a factor making them unaware of it</p> <p>Requirement that students should autonomously reflect upon their informal learning through ELP at home*</p>	<p>Middle school students' playful attitude as a factor possibly deceiving teachers into thinking that their students are not aware of their possibility to improve English through informal activities*</p> <p>First-year students' awareness of the fact that they can improve their English through informal activities*</p> <p>Students' view of English used for real communicative purposes in class as something not linked to the English class*</p> <p>Students' unawareness of their immersion in a reality continuously exposing them to English*</p>	
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	<p>Adults' conscious integration of formal learning with informal learning</p> <p>Students' unconscious integration of formal learning with informal learning*</p> <p>Students' inability to integrate English as a real life tool with English as a school subject*</p> <p>Students' consideration of English as a mere school subject*</p>			
<p>4) <i>Qual è la relazione tra questi due tipi di apprendimento (formale e informale) per apprendere al meglio una lingua?</i></p>	<p>Complementary nature of the relationship between formal and informal learning*</p> <p>Assumption that the separation between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school is to be avoided in favour of a fusion between these dimensions*</p> <p>Formal learning as a concept that has changed over time and that now</p>	<p>Non-antithetical view of informal learning as opposed to formal learning*</p> <p>Necessity of implementing the hours of formal learning at school with the support of a mother-tongue teacher*</p> <p>Potentiality of informal learning to capture students' attention if performed at school due to</p>	<p>Complementary nature of the relationship between formal and informal learning*</p> <p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning due to insufficient hours of formal learning at school*</p>	<p>Necessity of integrating informal learning with formal learning*</p> <p>Complementary nature of the relationship between formal and informal learning*</p>

	<p>seems to exhibit a decreased academic trait</p> <p>Informal activities as an unquestionable solution to capture students' attention when performed in class and, thus, to keep formal learning going and make it more involving from students' perspective*</p> <p>Possible short-term effectiveness and possible aimlessness of informal activities when performed in class to improve the quality of formal learning*</p>	its interesting nature*		
<p>5) <i>Qual è il ruolo della scuola: deve prediligere un tipo di apprendimento o rispetto all'altro?</i></p>	<p>The formative aim of school, i.e. stimulating students' interests, awakening students' curiosity, arousing students' open-mindedness, making students aware that learning is not only useful but also interesting for its own sake, as the primary</p>	<p>Teacher's active role in leading her students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school*</p> <p>Raw nature of informal learning as a factor precluding school from easily employing informal</p>	<p>Guiding students to bridging their gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school as a school responsibility*</p> <p>Students' acquisition of basic grammar as a school responsibility*</p> <p>Students' acquisition of vocabulary and spelling as</p>	<p>Communication with students about their out-of-school life, and, thus, about their informal learning, as a middle school responsibility*</p> <p>The formative aim of middle school, i.e. developing students' personality and arousing students' open-</p>

	<p>responsibility of school*</p> <p>Uselessness of grammar from a long-term perspective given the formative aim of school*</p> <p>Necessity of basic grammar to face high school*</p> <p>Uselessness of motivation and enthusiasm to face high school if not accompanied also by a solid knowledge of English grammar*</p> <p>The school system as a rigid system where grammar correctness is highly requested to be known and pure notions are considered more important than competences above all from high school onwards*</p> <p>The inability of the school system to adapt itself to the European guidelines on valuing competences more than pure notions*</p>	<p>learning materials*</p> <p>Lack of time and ordinary logistical issues as factors precluding school from reflecting with students upon their informal activities*</p> <p>Formal learning as the predominant type of learning*</p>	<p>a prior school responsibility in the teaching of English given the relatively easy nature of English grammar and the linguistic distance of foreign students' mother tongue from the European language family*</p> <p>Lack of time as a factor precluding school from providing students with a full knowledge of English which is asked to be autonomously acquired through informal activities outside school*</p>	<p>mindedness, achieved through a communicative approach in language teaching*</p> <p>Students' informal learning activities as a topic to discuss with students in class in order to support the communicative approach and, thus, the formative aim of middle school*</p> <p>Pure formal teaching as a high school responsibility*</p> <p>The communicative approach as a lack in high school due to high school propensity for pure formal teaching</p> <p>Guiding students to bridging their gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school as a school responsibility*</p>
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	<p>Dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school*</p> <p>Informal activities in class as a mere preliminary phase to arouse students' attention and to introduce formal learning which seems to be considered the real lesson*</p>			
<p>6) <i>Il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola. Conosce questo strumento? Se sì, ha mai fatto usare questo strumento ai suoi studenti per farli riflettere sul loro apprendimento?</i></p>	<p>ELP as an unknown tool to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning*</p> <p>Dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school*</p>	<p>ELP as an unknown tool to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning*</p> <p>Dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school*</p> <p>Lack of time and ordinary logistical issues as factors precluding school from accomplishing the theoretical European guidelines on learning*</p>	<p>ELP as a known and orally used tool to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning*</p> <p>Dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school*</p> <p>Lack of time as a factor precluding school from accomplishing the theoretical European guidelines on learning*</p> <p>View of ELP as a useful methodological point reference in the different</p>	<p>ELP as a known but unused tool to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning*</p> <p>Dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school*</p> <p>Lack of time as a factor precluding school from accomplishing the theoretical European guidelines on learning*</p>

			stages of English teaching*	
7) <i>Secondo lei, quanto è utile usare l'inglese/il tedesco fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?</i>	<p>Uselessness of informal learning due to the fact that students are not immersed in an authentic English speaking world out of school*</p> <p>Limited and superficial nature of informal learning*</p> <p>Subjective and arbitrary nature of informal learning*</p> <p>Unnaturalness of informal learning*</p> <p>Persuasive nature of informal learning in conveying the message that knowing English is important*</p> <p>Limited knowledge of English as a factor making informal learning useless*</p> <p>Uselessness of students' unconscious knowledge of English acquired through informal activities*</p>	<p>High potentiality of informal learning in resulting useful to learn English due to its spontaneous nature*</p> <p>Uselessness of informal learning due to students' unawareness of it*</p> <p>Uselessness of informal learning due to students' immaturity and lack of autonomy which require them to be constantly guided in informal learning*</p> <p>Potentiality of informal learning to capture students' attention if performed at school due to its interesting nature*</p> <p>Necessity of thinking of informal learning as a controlled and adult-driven type of learning in order to be useful*</p>	<p>Usefulness of informal learning activities in giving learners the opportunity to expand their vocabulary*</p> <p>Vocabulary expansion as the difficult preliminary stage to comprehend a language</p> <p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning*</p> <p>Specific usefulness of English informal learning activities in giving learners the opportunity to expand their English vocabulary given the relatively easy nature of English grammar *</p> <p>Different degree of usefulness in doing informal learning activities between Italian learners who make most of them and foreign learners who</p>	<p>Usefulness of communicating with students about their informal learning activities for increasing students' motivation*</p> <p>Uselessness of students' informal learning due to their limited acquisition of German through informal learning activities*</p> <p>Guiding students in learning German and overcoming prejudices against German as the conditions for students to learn German and to become satisfied with their learning*</p> <p>Necessity of a guide to learning foreign languages informally through technological devices regardless of the learner's age*</p>

		<p>Uselessness of informal learning due to its utilitarian and superficial use made at middle school students' age*</p> <p>Middle school students' young age as a factor making informal learning useless*</p> <p>Being motivated in, being purposeful in and gaining satisfaction from doing informal learning activities as prerequisites to make informal learning useful to learn English*</p> <p>Direct experience and time management of learning as essential conditions to make informal learning useful*</p>	do not make most of them because of the linguistic distance of the mother tongue of the latter from the European language family*	
8) <i>Come concepisce la lingua che insegna: più come una materia scolastica da fare apprendere fine a se stessa o come qualcosa di vivo a cui gli</i>	<p>Assumption that the separation between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school is to be avoided*</p> <p>Teacher's attempts to show students</p>	View of English as a real life tool*	<p>View of English as a real life tool*</p> <p>View of English as a communication tool which can be used to talk about topics related to non-linguistic</p>	View of English as a real life tool*

<p><i>studenti possono essere esposti oltre la scuola o persino per tutta la loro vita?</i></p>	<p>that English is more than a mere school subject*</p> <p>Necessity of integrating what is learnt in real life with what is learnt at school*</p>		<p>school subjects</p>	
<p>9) <i>Pensa che la visione che ha della lingua che insegna (materia scolastica/strumento di vita reale) sia coerente con il tipo di apprendimento che predilige in classe (formale/informale)?</i></p>	<p>Formal learning as the predominant type of learning due to lack of time and unpostponable institutional tasks*</p> <p>Assumption about informal learning as something 'other' from the real lesson*</p> <p>Informal activities in class as a mere preliminary phase to arouse students' attention and to introduce formal learning which seems to be considered the real lesson*</p> <p>Teacher's active role in leading her students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school*</p>	<p>Raw nature of informal learning as a factor precluding school from easily employing informal learning materials*</p> <p>Necessity of implementing the hours of formal learning at school with a mother-tongue teacher*</p> <p>Formal learning as the 'normal' learning constituting the real lesson*</p> <p>Formal learning as the predominant type of learning*</p>	<p>Teacher's active role in leading his students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school*</p> <p>The teacher as a students' guide to bridging their gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school, i.e. a school responsibility*</p> <p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning*</p>	<p>Teacher's active role in leading her students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school*</p> <p>Teacher's adoption of the communicative approach in class involving the simulation of real life conversations in German*</p> <p>Teachers' concern about making German conversations in class authentic*</p> <p>Importance of teaching basic grammar*</p> <p>Major importance of making middle school students communicate in class rather than teaching them grammar*</p>

<p>10) <i>Scelga l'affermazione con cui più è in sintonia e la giustifichi:</i> - <i>L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi.</i> - <i>L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale.</i> - <i>Serve una integrazione dei due punti precedenti per imparare il tedesco perché nessuno dei due da solo basta.</i></p>	<p>Necessity of integrating what is learnt in real life with what is learnt at school*</p>	<p>Necessity of integrating informal learning with formal learning*</p>	<p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning*</p>	<p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning*</p>
<p>11) <i>Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico o di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese/il tedesco, quando non dovranno più</i></p>	<p>Informal lifelong learning as an experiential type of learning*</p> <p>Experiential learning as a type of learning not leading to the acquisition of new notions*</p> <p>Passion-driven nature of experiential learning as the condition to learn through experiential learning*</p> <p>Passion-driven experiential learning as the specific type of experiential</p>	<p>Informal lifelong learning as a utilitarian type of learning*</p>	<p>Lifelong informal learning as a spontaneous type of learning*</p>	<p>Lifelong informal learning as a permanent motivation-driven type of learning, regardless of the type of motivation involved*</p>

<p><i>studiare obbligatoriam ente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendiment o che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare?</i></p>	<p>learning resulting in effective learning and leading to the acquisition of new notions*</p> <p>Subjective nature of passion-driven experiential learning*</p> <p>Unconscious side of passion-driven experiential learning*</p>			
<p>12) <i>Come trova l'apprendimen to dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?</i></p>	<p>Informal learning as an essential and highly motivating kind of learning which brings much satisfaction*</p> <p>Awareness of informal learning as the condition to take advantage of it*</p> <p>Informal activities as an unquestionabl e solution to capture students' attention when performed in class and, thus, to keep formal learning going and make it more involving from the students' perspective*</p> <p>Additional nature of informal</p>	<p>Informal learning as inherently constituted by a gradual three-stage process which involves an initial relatively hard stage, a successive pleasant stage and a final stage bringing satisfaction*</p> <p>High specificity of informal learning as far as students' areas of interests are concerned*</p> <p>Necessity of thinking of informal learning as a controlled and adult-driven type of learning in order to be useful as far as middle school students are concerned*</p>	<p>Informal learning as a chaotic type of learning given its incredible availability through a wide range of tools*</p> <p>Informal learning as a concrete, immediate and effective type of learning*</p> <p>Informal learning as an incomplete type of learning which requires to be guided as far as middle school students are concerned in order to increase their awareness of it*</p> <p>Informal learning as a controlled and adult-driven type of learning as far</p>	<p>Informal learning as inherently constituted by a gradual three-stage process which involves an initial hard stage, a successive rewarding stage and a final stage bringing satisfaction*</p> <p>Knowing German culture and previous formal learning as preliminary conditions to achieve a level of satisfaction in German informal learning*</p> <p>Incomplete nature of informal learning which needs to be integrated with formal learning*</p>

	<p>learning in class*</p> <p>Possible short-term effectiveness and possible aimlessness of informal activities when performed in class to improve the quality of formal learning*</p> <p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning*</p>	<p>Prevailing view of informal learning activities as resembling formal learning*</p> <p>Unpleasantness of informal learning constrained by parents*</p> <p>Unspontaneity of informal learning constrained by parents*</p> <p>Superficial nature of informal learning*</p> <p>Informal learning as a utilitarian type of learning*</p> <p>Raw nature of informal learning as a factor precluding school from easily employing informal learning materials*</p> <p>Interesting nature of informal learning*</p> <p>High potentiality of informal learning in resulting useful to learn English due to its spontaneous nature*</p>	<p>as middle school students are concerned*</p>	<p>Informal learning as a motivating kind of learning*</p> <p>Informal learning as a possible deceiving kind of learning and, thus, requiring to be guided regardless of the learner's age*</p> <p>Necessity of formally guiding students to German informal learning due to the widespread prejudices against German language and German people*</p>
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<p>13) <i>Come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese in classe al fine di impararlo?</i></p>	<p>Boring nature of formal learning from students' perspective*</p> <p>Positive nature of formal learning*</p> <p>Formal learning as a never completely useful kind of learning*</p> <p>Formal learning as a completely useful kind of learning only in idealised classes</p> <p>Formal learning as a concept that has changed over time and that now seems to exhibit a decreased academic trait</p> <p>Incomplete nature of formal learning which needs to be integrated with informal learning in order to become more involving from students' perspective*</p> <p>Tiring nature of formal learning*</p> <p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with</p>	<p>Formal learning as inherently constituted in the very beginning by a 'simian' and playful stage lacking awareness*</p> <p>Formal learning as a partially adequate type of learning due to its lack of 'formal exposition' to real language in class through the assistance of a mother-tongue teacher*</p> <p>Incomplete nature of formal learning which needs to be integrated with informal learning*</p> <p>Formal learning as a rigid type of learning lacking authenticity*</p>	<p>Formal learning as a structured, rigid and useful type of learning*</p> <p>Formal learning as an incomplete type of learning given its limited time*</p> <p>Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning*</p> <p>Exclusivity of grammar in English classes as an insufficient way to learn a language *</p>	<p>Formal learning as a fundamental, challenging and rewarding type of learning*</p> <p>Formal learning as a way to overcome the widespread prejudices of German as a difficult language*</p> <p>Formal learning as increasing students' self-esteem and their awareness of the language*</p> <p>Incomplete nature of formal learning which needs to be integrated with informal learning in order to increase students' motivation*</p> <p>Previous formal learning as a preliminary condition to achieve a level of satisfaction in German informal learning*</p> <p>Necessity of formally guiding students to German informal learning due</p>
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	informal learning*			to the widespread prejudices against German language and German people*
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Concerning Question 1, i.e. *‘Si è mai reso/a conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l’inglese?’*, all the teachers seem to be aware of students’ informal opportunities to learn English or German. While English Teachers A and C agree that students are immersed in a reality continuously exposing them to English, the German Teacher seems to believe that students are little exposed to German outside school. Despite appearing to be uncertain about the actual degree to which students are exposed to German in real life, the German Teacher seems to consider students’ exposition to German undoubtedly lower than their exposition to English. She seems to identify the cause for this in the widespread prejudices against German as a phonologically harsh language having a difficult grammar and against German people. English Teacher B seems to assume that students are somehow exposed to English outside school. However, what appears to be clearly highlighted is that their exposition is useless due their immaturity and lack of autonomy, which prevent them from learning English informally in a conscious way. Question 2 was *‘Lei è a conoscenza delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontanea volontà?’*. English Teachers A and B do not seem to have an effective communication with students about their informal activities. Therefore, they seem to have a slight acquaintance with students’ informal learning. Although Teacher B claims that she does know about her students’ informal activities, 1) her premise that she has a slight acquaintance with students’ informal learning, 2) her incommunicability with Chinese students seen as a complex reality hard to explore, 3) the unspecificity of her reporting about students’ informal activities, 4) her hyperbolic assumptions about students’ informal activities, 5) her seemingly prejudicial attitude towards students’ knowledge about real life events, and 6) her exclusive acquaintance with students’

informal activities resembling formal activities lead us to thinking that she might be not as closely acquainted with students' informal activities as she initially claims to be. Both teachers appear to agree that lack of time and ordinary institutional tasks interfere in teacher-student communication and, thus, in becoming acquainted with students' informal learning. Teacher A seems to think that class heterogeneity in motivation also interferes in teacher-student communication. However, first-year students' enthusiasm for learning and absence of knowledge gap between students seem to contribute to class homogeneity in motivation and, thus, probably also to a more effective communication with students. English Teacher C and the German Teacher appear to have an effective communication with students about their informal activities. Like English Teacher B, English Teacher C seems to occasionally discuss with students' parents about students' informal activities. Unlike English Teacher B, the specificity of the German Teacher's reporting about her students' informal activities seems to lend more credibility to her premise that the communication with her students about their informal learning is effective. However, the German Teacher appears to devote special attention to communicating with first-year students, which makes the effectiveness of the communication with her second-year and third-year students disputable. Question 3 was *'Secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività?'*. English Teachers A and B and the German Teacher seem to agree that students are generally unaware of the fact that they can improve their foreign language skills through informal activities. Teacher A seems to identify the cause for this in students' rigid separation between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school and, thus, in students' inability to integrate English as a real life tool with English as a school subject. English Teacher B appears to identify it in students' immaturity, lack of autonomy, and alienated nature from real life. Unlike English Teacher A and B and the German Teacher, English Teacher C seems to believe that students are aware of the fact that they can improve their English through informal activities. Despite being unaware of their immersion in a reality continuously exposing them to English, students are claimed to perceive the English used for real communicative purposes in class as

something not merely linked to the English class. English Teacher C also seems to suggest that middle school students' playful attitude towards life be a factor possibly deceiving teachers into thinking that students are not aware of their possibility to improve English through informal activities. Question 4 was '*Qual è la relazione tra questi due tipi di apprendimento (formale e informale) per apprendere al meglio una lingua?*'. All the teachers appear to agree that formal learning and informal learning are complementary to each other. Despite initially rejecting an antithetical view of informal learning as opposed to formal learning, Teacher B seems more inclined to the view that formal learning plays a major role in students' learning. She urges that the hours of formal learning at school should be implemented with the support of a mother-tongue assistant. However, she seems to also recognise the potentiality of informal learning to capture students' attention in class due to its interesting nature. Similarly, English Teacher A seems to recognise the necessity of implementing informal activities in class because these might be a solution to capture students' attention and, thus, to keep formal learning going and make it more involving from students' perspective. However, English Teacher A seems to conclude that such activities might remain short-term effective and probably aimless when performed in class to improve the quality of formal learning. In any case, all the teachers seem to suggest that an integration of formal learning with informal learning should occur in order to acquire a language. Question 5 was '*Qual è il ruolo della scuola: deve prediligere un tipo di apprendimento rispetto all'altro?*'. Teacher A and the German Teacher seem to agree that the school has, first of all, a formative aim. However, while the latter appears to identify it as a specificity of middle school, the former seems to wonder if it should be the aim of the entire school system. Despite seeming initially inclined to informal learning as having a strong impact to achieve such an aim, Teacher A seems to finally express the necessity of formal learning in middle school in order for students to be able to later face high school. Given the inability of the school system to adapt itself to the European guidelines on valuing competences more than pure notions, English Teacher A seems to conclude that informal activities in class could only take the role of a mere preliminary phase to arouse students' attention and to introduce formal learning, which seems to be

considered the real lesson. On the other hand, the German Teacher clearly mentions the communication with students about their out-of-school life, and, thus, about their informal learning, as a school responsibility. Informal learning should serve as a topic to discuss with students in class in order to support the communicative approach in language teaching and, thus, the formative aim of middle school. Apart from considering the communicative approach in German teaching a lack in high school due to the high propensity of this for pure formal teaching, the German Teacher seems to think, like English Teacher C, that guiding students to bridging their gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school is a responsibility of the entire school system. Besides, English Teacher C appears to believe that the acquisition of basic grammar is also a school responsibility in language teaching. However, students' acquisition of vocabulary and spelling should be judged as a prior school responsibility in the teaching of English given the relatively easy nature of English grammar and the linguistic distance of foreign students' mother tongue from the European language family. Despite being personally concerned in leading her students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school, English Teacher B seems to think that formal learning should be the predominant type of learning due to the raw nature of informal learning precluding school from easily employing informal learning materials in class and to the lack of time and ordinary logistical issues. Question 6 was *'Il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola. Conosce questo strumento? Se sì, ha mai fatto usare questo strumento ai suoi studenti per farli riflettere sul loro apprendimento?'*. English Teachers A and B do not seem to know ELP as a tool which can bridge the gap between formal and informal learning. English Teacher C and the German Teacher seem to know it. While the former claims to use it orally as a useful methodological point reference in the different stages of English teaching, the latter does not use it at all. Therefore, all the teachers prove a dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school to be present. Despite lack of time being a recurrent topic in English Teacher A's

interview, it is English Teachers B and C and the German Teacher that clearly express it here as a factor precluding school from accomplishing the theoretical European guidelines on learning. Question 7 was *'Secondo lei, quanto è utile usare l'inglese/il tedesco fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?'*. English Teachers A and B seem to agree that informal learning is useless because students are unaware of it and take it superficially. Both teachers seem to think that direct experience of learning is one of the conditions to make informal learning useful. According to English Teacher A, informal learning is useless for students due to the fact that they are not immersed in an authentic English-speaking world out of school. According to English Teacher C, informal learning is useful because it gives students the opportunity to expand their vocabulary. However, it is argued that the degree of usefulness in doing informal learning activities varies between Italian students, who make most of them, and foreign learners, who do not make most of them because of the linguistic distance of their mother tongue from the European language family. Despite considering informal learning a topic worth being discussed in class and useful to increase her students' motivation, the German Teacher seems to state the uselessness of students' informal learning due their limited acquisition of German through it. As suggested also by other teachers in the course of the analysis (see question 12), the necessity of a guide to learning foreign languages informally seems to be fundamental according to the German Teacher. Regarding question 8, i.e. *'Come concepisce la lingua che insegna: più come una materia scolastica da fare apprendere fine a se stessa o come qualcosa di vivo a cui gli studenti possono essere esposti oltre la scuola o persino per tutta la loro vita?'*, all the teachers seem to conceive the foreign language they teach as a real life tool and not as a merely school subject. Question 9 was *'Pensa che la visione che ha della lingua che insegna (materia scolastica/strumento di vita reale) sia coerente con il tipo di apprendimento che predilige in classe (formale/informale)?'*. With reference to the common answer given for the previous question, i.e. the foreign language taught is seen as a real life tool, English Teacher C and the German Teacher appear to be coherent with it. They seem to be actively concerned with leading their students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school. It is in particular the German

Teacher that appears to give major importance to making students communicate in German in class rather than teaching them only grammar. On the other hand, English Teachers A and B seem to be less coherent with the answer given for the previous question. Despite declaring that they see English as a real life tool, they appear to conceive formal learning as the predominant type of learning in class. However, while English Teacher A seems to identify the cause for this in the lack of time and in unpostponable institutional tasks, English Teacher B seems to identify it in the raw nature of informal learning, which precludes school from easily employing informal learning materials, and in the necessity of increasing the exposition to formal learning, given that formal learning is seen as the 'normal' learning constituting the real lesson. As for question 10, i.e. *'Scelga l'affermazione con cui più è in sintonia e la giustifichi: 1) L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi; 2) L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale; 3) Serve una integrazione dei due punti precedenti per imparare il tedesco perché nessuno dei due da solo basta.'*, all the teachers seem to think that formal learning should be integrated with informal learning, or vice versa. Question 11 was *'Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese/il tedesco, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare?'*. English Teacher A seems to think of informal lifelong learning as an experiential type of learning. Seeming perplexed about experiential learning as leading to effective learning, English Teacher A seems to conceive experiential learning as a type of learning not leading to the acquisition of notions. Passion-driven experiential learning is claimed to be the specific type of experiential learning which results in effective learning and which leads to the acquisition of new notions. Being the condition to learn through experiential learning, the passion-driven nature of experiential learning seems to make this type of learning subjective and not exclusively conscious. While English Teacher

B seems to see informal lifelong learning as a utilitarian type of learning, English Teacher C appears to associate it with spontaneity in learning. Besides, the German Teacher seems to conceive it as a motivation-driven type of learning, in which motivation is permanent. Question 12 was *'Come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?'*. All the teachers seem to perceive informal learning as an incomplete kind of learning which should be integrated with formal learning. English Teachers B and C and the German Teacher appear to consider informal learning as a learning that should be controlled and adult-driven in order to be useful. However, while English Teachers B and C refer exclusively to middle school students, the German Teacher seems to refer to all German learners regardless of their age. The German Teacher seems to claim that in particular German learners should be guided when approaching the language due to the widespread prejudices against the German language and German people. The German Teacher and English Teacher B seem to describe informal learning as inherently constituted by a three-stage process which involves an initial hard stage, a successive pleasant (cf. English Teacher B) or rewarding (cf. the German Teacher) stage and a final stage bringing satisfaction. Also English Teacher A seems to agree that informal learning brings much satisfaction. English Teacher A and the German Teacher also appear to agree that informal learning is motivating. Paradoxically, English Teacher A seems to claim that informal learning is essential and additional at the same time. Similarly, English Teacher B seems to define informal learning as having a spontaneous and unspontaneous nature at the same time. Moreover, despite identifying a pleasant stage in the process of informal learning, English Teacher B seems to state the unpleasantness of informal learning constrained by parents. This induces us to think that she draws, perhaps, a distinction between an informal learning which is totally unconstrained and an informal learning which is constrained by parents. If this were true, it might be speculated that this is why she does not find it paradoxical to conceive informal learning as having a dichotomical nature (i.e. informal learning constrained nature vis-à-vis informal learning unconstrained nature). Question 13 was *'Come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese in classe al fine di impararlo?'*. All the teachers seem to perceive

formal learning as an incomplete kind of learning which should be integrated with informal learning. English Teachers B and C appear to find formal learning as a rigid kind of learning. Similarly, English Teacher A seems to recognise the tiring and boring nature of formal learning in spite of stating its today's decreased academic trait. However, while English Teacher C seems to find formal learning useful, English Teacher A appears to claim that formal learning will never be completely useful. Despite seeming a strong supporter of formal learning as seen in the course of the analysis, English Teacher B appears to describe it as a partially adequate type of learning due to the lack of 'formal exposition' to real language through the assistance of a mother-tongue teacher in middle school. Moreover, she seems to recognise its unauthentic nature. Depicting it as a fundamental, challenging and rewarding type of learning, the German Teacher seems to present formal learning as a way to overcome the widespread prejudices of German as a difficult language and to increase students' self-esteem and their awareness of the language. It seems to be thought of as the preliminary condition to later achieve a level of satisfaction in German informal learning. In conclusion, all the teachers seem to judge formal learning as a somewhat positive kind of learning.

4. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the implications of the results analysed in chapter 3 for the field of applied linguistics will be explored. Firstly, research questions will be directly answered in the light of the results obtained. Research hypotheses put forth in 2.1 will be discussed. Speculations will be raised over the salient themes that will emerge from our discussion. Therefore, references to previous research will be made. Secondly, teachers' point of view will be compared with students' one. (see 2.3) Thirdly, the limits of our study will be presented. Fourthly, suggestions for future studies will be put forward.

4.1 Discussion of Research Questions

In this section, research questions will be considered one by one in order to be directly answered and discussed.

4.1.1 Research Question 1

The first research question is *'What type of informal learning activities do third-year students in a middle school on the mainland of Venice engage in, as far as English and German are concerned?'*. Our research hypothesis was that they mostly engage in informal activities linked to technology for both languages. (see 2.1) However, the current study found that:

1) the students primarily engage in English informal activities related to technology and music. Many students also engage in informal activities connected to the linguistic landscape³³ (see 1.2.3) and journeys. Nonetheless, interactive oral activities, activities related to tourists, activities related to printed readings, and activities involving face-to-face communities of practice (see 1.2.3) are also somewhat popular;

³³ Even when resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home (i.e. activity 40).

2) the students primarily engage in German informal activities related to technology. Many students also engage in informal activities connected to the linguistic landscape and journeys. Nonetheless, the very large majority of them do not engage in any German informal activities at all.

The use of technology in informal language learning environments is also attested in earlier studies. Van Marsenille (2015)'s study found that a group of Higher Education (HE) students from Brussels spent 'quite a lot of time watching films and series in English, as they consider[ed] this a pleasurable activity.' (p.162) Identifying the increased use of technology in informal language learning environments as a result of a more digitalised society, she reported that

'according to Drotner et al. (2008b), the relations between digital media and informal learning are significant, because the knowledge society is transforming our way of learning: "Online games, social networking websites such as the videosharing site YouTube and community-generated encyclopedias such as Wikipedia all offer new means of communication, collaboration and creation for their users" (2008b, p.2). [...]

The knowledge or information society has also changed our print culture into a digital and image culture (Hampel et al., 2006, p.5; Sefton-Green, 2008, p.238). The print media, radio and television can now be made digital (Drotner, 2008, p.16). [...] This change of society has an impact on the formal and informal learning process and activities. One of the consequences is that people watch films and series on the Internet and on TV. Through the evolution of the new media, we live in a digital and image culture, which is represented, for instance, by TV series. Young people watch many TV series, and this is observed in different countries in the world.' (p.56-57)

Chik et al. (2014)'s study, which is centred on an online exchange project between German and Hong Kong Chinese learners, showed that 'watching films and series on the Internet is a popular activity for young people nowadays.' (as cited in Van Marsenille, 2015, p.163) They discovered that the popularity of technology in informal language learning environments went beyond cultural boundaries and they noticed that

'the Hong Kong students were surprised that the German students were watching the same American sitcom or TV series or movies as they did; the German students found that the Hong Kong students also used popular cultural material to create individual virtual spaces for language learning.' (as cited in Van Marsenille, 2015, p.57)

Menegale (2011)'s extensive study on autonomy in language learning seems to confirm our results as well. Although her study is not principally focused on informal learning, her results however revealed that a significant proportion of a

large group of pupils aged from 11 to 18 engaged in activities related to technology every day. Nonetheless, of the few activities connected to technology that she proposed in a questionnaire, some were rejected by students. This also accords to our results, which showed that not all the activities related to technology are done. Some of these are not done in any of the two languages. A possible explanation for this might be that informal activities are not chosen on the basis of their being related to technology. This corroborates the idea of Clough et al. (2007), which suggested that, for instance, informal mobile learning should be conceptualised as being informed by a wide range of mobile functions. (see 1.1.2.5) In other words, the same technological device may entail a plethora of different activities, which are differentiated on the basis of the *function* they have. (see 1.1.2.5) If we transfer Clough et al. (2007)'s taxonomy on informal *mobile* learning, to *general* informal *language* learning, we might perhaps understand why some of the activities connected to technology are done while some are not. In the light of our results, we know that the majority of the students engage in the following English informal activities connected to technology:

- *Activities involving Whatsapp*: writing sentences in English in the section 'info' on Whatsapp (activity 18), texting in English on Whatsapp (activity 17), reading English words on Whatsapp (activity 43), sharing pictures showing English quotations as a status on Whatsapp (activity 38);
- *Activities involving social networks*: writing hashtags in English on social networks (activity 13), sharing pictures showing English quotations on social networks (activity 37), writing the status on social networks in English (activity 19), reading English words on social networks (activity 30);
- *Activities involving videogames*: writing in English on videogames (activity 27), reading English words on videogames (activity 31), listening to English-speaking videogames (activity 6);

- *Activities involving songs*: singing karaoke with English songs³⁴ (activity 36), listening to English songs³⁵ (activity 1);
- *Activities involving YouTube*: watching English videos on YouTube³⁶ (activity 2);
- *Activities involving Google*: accessing websites which involve English recordings (activity 10), googling English words (activity 26), using an online dictionary in order to consult some English words³⁷ (activity 55), reading English words on websites (activity 29);
- *Activities involving mobile apps*: using mobile language learning apps which involve English recordings (activity 5), speaking English when using some mobile apps which were not created in order to learn a foreign language (activity 52);
- *Activities involving television*: watching television programmes involving English words but not created in order to learn a foreign language (activity 9);
- *Activities involving the use of an electronic device instead of a paper notebook*: copying English words which are heard or read on an electronic device (activity 25).

We also know that the majority of the students engage in the following German informal activities connected to technology:

- *Activities involving social networks*: reading German words on social networks (activity 30);
- *Activities involving Google*: googling German words (activity 26), using an online dictionary in order to consult some German words (activity 55), reading German words on websites (activity 29).

³⁴ This activity *might* involve the use of YouTube.

³⁵ This activity was labelled in chapter 3 as an activity related to music and, probably, to technology as well.

³⁶ This activity *might* involve songs.

³⁷ This activity *might* also occur in the form of a mobile app.

In Clough et al. (2007)'s terms (see 1.1.2.5), we might claim that the students tend to mainly engage in English informal activities related to technology which are: 1) individually and collaboratively referential³⁸; 2) individually, collaboratively, and interactively reflective³⁹; 3) individually and collaboratively constructive⁴⁰ and they mainly engage in German informal activities related to technology which are individually referential. Nevertheless, Clough et al. (2007)'s model cannot fully support the current study, being the former restricted to *mobile* informal learning. Our results therefore need to be interpreted with caution. It is important to bear in mind that we are dealing with *general* informal *language* learning and not only with *mobile* informal language learning. As a result, a more comprehensive and specific taxonomy should be taken into account in order to interpret data. In reviewing the literature, no taxonomy was however found which we viewed as suitable to this aim. Therefore, we attempted to create one ourselves, which largely draws on Halliday (1975)'s *language* functions.⁴¹ Being aware of the limitations of the present study, we attempted to develop a more suitable taxonomy, which could pave the way for further and, possibly, more extensive research. (see 2.3 and 4.3) The aim of this taxonomy is to differentiate activities related to technology on the basis of the *language function* they have and, thus, to understand whether the activities related to technology that were not chosen were rejected on the basis of the language function they entailed.

Table 64 illustrating Halliday (1975)'s language functions in informal language learning environments which involve the use of technology

Personal informal activities	The language employed through technology is used to express oneself
Interactional informal activities	The language employed through technology is used to interact with other people
Regulatory informal activities	The language employed through technology is used to alter other people's behaviour

³⁸ *Referential activities* are about 'the portability and mobility of handheld devices to provide access to content where learning activities occur.' (p.364). They may be either individual or collaborative.

³⁹ *Reflective activities* stimulate reflection. They can be individual, collaborative/distributed, or interactive.

⁴⁰ *Constructive activities* are classified into individual and collaborative/distributed. They have to do with 'activities in which learners create or construct knowledge'. (p.367)

⁴¹ The taxonomy we created centres more on language than on technology. After all, our study focuses on informal *language* learning.

Instrumental informal activities	The language employed through technology is used to express one's needs
Heuristic informal activities	The language employed through technology is used to obtain information about the environment
Imaginative informal activities	The language employed through technology is used to talk about an invented reality
Representational informal activities	The language employed through technology is used to describe the environment

Table 64 shows Halliday (1975)'s language functions in informal language learning environments which involve the use of technology. With reference to our results, it is striking that the students seem to engage exclusively in heuristic informal activities as far as German is concerned. Nevertheless, the students seem to engage in personal, interactional, heuristic, imaginative, and representational informal activities with regards to English. A possible explanation for this might be that the students perceive more English as a real life tool than German, as emerged in the course of our analysis in chapter 3. (see tables 44 and 57) As they seem to employ English for real life purposes much more than German, they tend to use many more language functions in English than in German. This seems to be also confirmed by tables 43 and 56, which show that the very large majority of the students are unlikely to perceive English as a mere school subject (table 43) while a substantial proportion of them are likely to perceive German as such (table 56).

With reference to the activities related to technology that are not done in any of the two languages, it might be assumed that they were *not* rejected on the basis of the functions presented in table 64 (as hypothesised earlier). For example, activity 20 (i.e. writing in English to get to know foreign pen friends through mobile apps) could be considered an interactional informal activity. Although interactional informal activities were shown to be popular among students as far as English is concerned, this activity was rejected even in English. The same happened with activities 22 (i.e. posting in English in Facebook groups which are useful to learn English), 23 (i.e. posting in English in Facebook groups to talk about a mutual interest which is not English), and 45 (i.e. skyping in English), which all involve some kind of technological interaction with other people. This discrepancy could

be attributed to the fact that the students engage in activities related to technology *not* on the basis of the language functions they entail, but on the basis of their *individual preference*, i.e. if they like a given activity or not regardless of its being related to technology but for its own sake. (see 4.1.3 for deeper implications on the issue) In contrast to earlier findings, no evidence of a specific *motivation* for activities related to technology in informal language learning environments seems to have been detected.⁴² If on the one hand these results are rather disappointing because they do not explain the occurrence of such activities, on the other they confirm their popularity among youngsters. Further research should be done to investigate this. (see 4.4)

In any case, what table 64 seems to reveal is that the students choose what informal activities related to technology to do according to the *language* employed. The students are more likely to engage in activities related to technology in English. This seems to be confirmed by items 18, where students could *freely* express other informal activities in their own words. While several students spontaneously engage in other English informal activities apart from some of those proposed in item 17, few students claim to do other German informal activities apart from those proposed in item 17. This takes us back to our previous speculation that the students engage in far fewer activities as far as German is concerned because they do not see it as useful in real life as English.⁴³ (see above) It can be hypothesised that this is also the reason why the very large majority of the students do not engage in any German informal activities at all.

4.1.2 Research Question 2

The second research question is '*What language skills do the students use outside school for both languages?*'. Our research hypothesis was that they mostly use reading and listening skills for both languages. (see 2.1) Nevertheless, the results of our study indicate that:

⁴² This is also corroborated by the fact that the present study does not centre on motivation and it does not incorporate the methodological instruments to make such a claim. (see 2.1) Further discussion on this issue is however provided in 4.1.3.

⁴³ The discrepancy in motivation between the two languages will be further explored in 4.1.3.

1) when the students engage in English informal activities, they primarily engage in activities entailing reading and listening; an appreciable proportion of the students undertake activities involving speaking as well, but only a minority does activities related to writing;

2) a small minority of the whole sample *does* German informal learning activities and this is why most of the students never use any kind of skills⁴⁴; however, if we consider the students of this minority, they primarily engage in activities entailing reading; most of them undertake activities related to speaking as well while more than half of them also do activities implying writing and listening. (see footnote 22: the discussion here will *not* consider German results in strict terms)

Receptive skills in informal language learning environments seem to be used more than productive ones. In reviewing the literature, no study was found which examined what skills *middle school* pupils use outside school as far as the *two* different languages they are taught at school are concerned. However, there are similarities between the present study and Menegale (2011)'s one. Menegale (2011) found that a large group of pupils aged from 11 to 18 primarily engage in activities entailing listening, reading, and writing in the target language. These results seem to partly confirm ours. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that Menegale (2011)'s study focuses on the development of *plurilingual* competences in the context of language learning autonomy. She does not make any rigid distinctions between the different target languages the students employ outside school, as we do. Nonetheless, it might be speculated that the students involved in Menegale (2011)'s study must be as exposed to English as the students in ours. After all, they come from the same area and seem to have a similar background. It can thus be suggested that middle school students, who have a lower level of English, mostly use receptive skills in informal language learning environments while older students can also use productive ones in an autonomous way. This could explain the discrepancy between our study, which only focuses on middle school students, and Menegale (2011)'s one, which takes into account both middle and high school students. Implicit in our discourse is the assumption that receptive skills are developed earlier than productive ones when learning a

⁴⁴ The discrepancy in motivation between the two languages will be explored in 4.1.3.

foreign language. This seems to be confirmed by psycholinguistic studies on the mental processes leading to language production. According to Warren (2013), external speech is only the tip of an iceberg underlying preliminary mental steps, i.e. conceptualisation, formulation (grammatical and phonological encoding), and articulation. Although some scholars still debate whether these mental steps occur sequentially or interactively, it is widely accepted that language production is the result of complex mental processes and it requires the subject to *actively* employ the grammatical and phonological structures informing the language he/she is going to speak. (Warren, 2013) Despite also receptive skills activating somewhat complex mental procedures⁴⁵, it is attested that productive skills however require the subject to *actively* employ his/her knowledge in order to externalise comprehensible output. This does not mean that receptive skills cannot be actively employed, but they can *also* be stimulated through *unintentional* exposition to the target language in informal language learning environments. This seems to accord with Vavoula et al. (2005), who claim that informal learning may be defined as either an intentional or an unintentional type of learning according to circumstances. (see 1.1.2.4) In fact, language production originates from an intention while language comprehension stems from perception, which might be unintentionally stimulated. (Vavoula et al., 2005; Warren, 2013) For this reason, language production is identified as a top-down process, i.e. ‘processing guided by information flow from higher levels (e.g. sentence interpretation) to lower levels (e.g. words)’ (Warren, 2013, p.5) while language comprehension is viewed as a bottom-up process, i.e. ‘processing based on information flow from lower levels of processing to higher levels, i.e. from the sensory input (the speech signal) to the lexicon (words).’ (Warren, 2013, p.5) Although Warren (2013) does not explicitly refer to *written* language production, writing seems to follow such mental procedures as those occurring with speaking. In this respect, Balboni (2012) claims that both oral and written language production originate from the same mental processes, i.e. conceptualisation, planning, and production. (p.181)

⁴⁵ e.g. ‘pre-lexical analysis of the input into recognition elements, mapping of these recognition elements onto entries in the mental lexicon, consequent activation of candidate words and access to information associated with these words’ for listening (Warren, 2013, p.137); ‘individual letter recognition, whole-word recognition, and the mapping between letters and pronunciation’ for reading. (Warren, 2013, p.156)

Moreover, it might be hypothesised that also listening is practised in English informal learning because of the popularity of English songs. The fact that English music is popular among students seems to be confirmed by our results, which show that ‘listening to English songs’ (activity 1) is the most done activity. This is supported also by the results in item 18, where the students were given the possibility to *freely* express other English informal activities they engage in, apart from those in item 17. Several students claimed to do other English informal activities related to music. These findings prove that music plays an important role in their lives. It can be thus suggested that it is music that largely expose them to oral English language. The fact that listening to music is not a common German informal activity might prevent students from extensively using listening skills in German. In fact, German songs are not as popular in Italy as English ones. This was confirmed also by the German Teacher when we interviewed her. (see 3.2) It is encouraging to compare these results with those found by Ala-Kyyny (2012). Focused on the role of English-language music in informal language learning environments, his study revealed that a group of Finnish high school students, who spent 2-4 hours listening to English music every day, felt that music had a high impact on their listening comprehension, apart from having an impact also on their pronunciation and vocabulary. This appears to accord with our earlier observations, which assumed that there is a special link between the popularity of English songs and the considerable use of listening skills in English. However, our results must be interpreted with caution since the students involved in the present study are younger than those in Ala-Kyyny (2012)’s one and, thus, have a lower level of English. In any case, it seems that, when music in a given language is popular among students, it enormously contributes to using listening skills in that language. As a result, the discrepancy between English and German in the use of listening skills may be attributed, on the one hand, to the popularity of English songs and, on the other, to the unpopularity of German ones. Among students, music seems to be the decisive factor for the use of listening skills. If music is neglected, listening is neglected too.

4.1.3 Research Question 3

The third research question is '*Is there a difference between English and German in the type of informal learning activities, in their frequencies, and in the skills used?*'. Our research hypotheses were the following:

1) there is a considerable difference between English and German in the frequency of informal learning activities;
2) the students engage more in English informal activities than in German ones;
3) there is not a big difference between the two languages in the type of informal learning activities and in the skills used. (see 2.1) The current study confirmed that:

1) there is a considerable difference between English and German in the frequency of informal learning activities⁴⁶;
2) the students engage more in English informal activities than in German ones.

However, the present study also showed that hypothesis 3 is likely to be disconfirmed⁴⁷:

- a small minority of the whole sample *does* German informal learning activities and this is why most of the students never use any kind of skills;
- however, if we consider the students of this minority, they primarily engage in activities entailing reading (as seen in 4.1.2);
- similarly, the students primarily engage in English informal activities involving reading and listening (as seen in 4.1.2), which is comparable with the use of skills

⁴⁶ In detail, the results showed that:

- of the students unwilling to do the activities in English, a quite large proportion never does the activities *tout court* while an appreciable proportion does them once a week (*vis-à-vis* of the students unwilling to do the activities in German, a very large majority never does them *tout court* while a small minority does them once a week);
- of the students willing to do the activities in English, the majority prefers doing them twice/three times a week and an appreciable proportion prefers doing them between four and six times a week while a small minority prefers doing them more than six times a week (*vis-à-vis* of the students willing to do the activities in German, the majority prefers doing them twice/three times a week, a small minority between four and six times a week, and another small minority more than six times a week). (see 3.1)

⁴⁷ At this point, we find it pertinent to recall the main conclusions we reached for research question 3 in the light of the results we had analysed. (see 3.1) The fact that the reader can find them all gathered here can help him/her to take stock of the situation emerged so far and to make his/her own considerations more easily. Furthermore, such conclusions will constitute the basis for our following discussion. However, it must be noticed that implicit in these conclusions are already some relevant speculations about the data analysed.

in German informal learning as far as we abandon a *rigid* analysis of data (otherwise, we should claim that no comparison is possible between the two languages; German should be strictly defined as a language not used informally *tout court* and, thus, not involving a considerable use of any skills; see footnote 22 for further methodological explanations as well as the corresponding paragraph in 3.1);

- as far as the differences between the two languages in the type of informal learning activities are concerned, it has been shown that:

- *when the students engage* in informal learning, they primarily engage in informal activities linked to technology for both languages. More than half of the sample also engages in activities connected to the linguistic landscape and journeys for both languages. (as seen in 4.1.1) However, while English music seems to play a prominent role in students' lives, this type of informal learning activity is non-existent as far as German is concerned. (as seen in 4.1.2) In any case, English informal learning seems more varied.
- as for the informal learning activities the students are likely to *engage in for one language but no for the other*:
 - it can be observed that there are only activities done by more than half of the sample *in English* which are some of the least done *in German*, but not the other way round (also see table 17);
 - despite being activities of the same type, activities 52, 38, 9, and 1 (i.e. related to technology) are overwhelmingly done by students in English while the same activities are largely avoided in German;
 - this suggests that students choose what informal learning activities to do according to the *language* to be employed apart from the type of activities;
 - if this were true, the difference between English and German would not lie, at least in this case, only in the *type* of informal learning activities, but also in the *language* to be employed in informal learning (see below for deeper implications);

- as for the informal learning *activities the students are unlikely to do in any of the two languages*, the activities unanimously rejected are of three principal types, i.e. activities related to online interactive oral activities (i.e. 45), activities related to online communities of practice (i.e. 23 and 22), activities related to writing (i.e. 16 and 15), and activities resembling a sort of linguistic landscape at home possibly related to technology (i.e. 11);
- with reference to the remaining activities least done *only* in German, the following observations may be made (vis-à-vis the corresponding English activities):
 - they are of four principal types, i.e. activities related to technology (i.e. 37, 19, 13, 36, 18, 3, 4, 53, 8, and 21), activities related to music (i.e. 36 and 14), activities related to printed readings (i.e. 42), interactive oral activities (i.e. 47), and activities related to reading and, possibly, also to technology (i.e. 41);
 - despite being activities of the same type, all these activities tend to be done more in English than in German;
 - in fact, 1) even when the corresponding English activities are done by a small minority of the sample (i.e. 47, 3, 14, 4, 53, 8, 21, and 41), they are always more commonly done in English than in German; 2) *some* of the corresponding English activities are *far* more common than in German (i.e. 37, 19, 13, 36, 42, and 18) while the same activities are all largely avoided in German (also see table 17);
 - this suggests two things: 1) when the students avoid the activities in both languages, it might be because they are not interested in the *type* of the activities proposed (i.e. they do not like the activity for its own sake, as seen in 4.1.1); 2) when the students avoid some activities in German but an appreciable proportion of them do the corresponding English activities, it might be because the students choose what informal learning activities to do according to the *language* to be employed apart from the type of activity (as

previously seen). Therefore, if they like the language, they will do the activity. If they do not like the language, they will not do the activity even though they like the type of activity.

Motivation in informal language learning seems a key theme. Our study does not focus on motivation in informal language learning environments and does not incorporate the methodological instruments to make claims linking the discrepancy showed above between the two languages to motivation. (see 1.2) Nevertheless, we know students' perceptions about English and German informal learning. The students perceive more English as a real life tool than German, which tends to be seen as a mere school subject. While many students perceive English informal learning as useful, fun, interesting, and cool, many of them find German informal learning useful but boring. (see 4.1.4 and 3.1)

On the one hand, it is somewhat surprising that the students lack motivation for German informal learning. In order to be defined as *informal*, German learning must be, first of all, spontaneous. At this point, our question is the following: *How can the students feel something they deliberately decide to do as boring?* Obviously, this can be justified by the fact that the majority of them do *not* decide to do any kind of informal activities in German. As a result, they do not even know what German informal learning actually is. However, some German informal activities *are* done, despite being few. (as seen in 4.1.1 and 3.1) For example, more than two thirds of the students engage in activity 26 (i.e. googling German words) *at least* twice/three times a week. Therefore, many students *are* somehow exposed to German informal learning. Thus, they must be able to correctly judge it as they somehow know it. If we take students' judgment about German informal learning as fully conscious, we should conclude that a type of informal learning exists which is not spontaneous. This would therefore defy the majority of the definitions of informal learning the literature has attempted to give so far, being spontaneity prominent in the definitions provided. In this respect, the findings of the current study would not support the previous research. For instance, Eshach (2007) distinguishes informal learning from formal and non-formal learning by virtue of the fact that informal learning is spontaneous while the other two are

usually prearranged. (see 1.1.1 and table 3) Also Callanan, Cervantes & Loomis (2011) think that informal learning is characterised by spontaneity. The less learning is deliberate, the more it tends to be informal. (see 1.1.2.6 and table 14) Nonetheless, caution must be applied, as ours are only speculations. As such, they are not strong enough to initiate a reevaluation of the definitions of informal learning that the literature has so far provided. Our question may remain unanswered at present. Future studies on the current issue are therefore recommended. (see 4.4)

On the other hand, it is not surprising that the students tend to engage more in English informal learning than in German informal learning. In the light of the results obtained for research question 4, it seems that two different kinds of motivation underlie the two types of learning. (see 3.1 and 4.1.4) While English is perceived as a global language playing the role of a *lingua franca*, German is seen as a widespread language which will be useful to find a job in the future. This appears to respectively echo the concepts of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivation*, which Ushioda (2008) reports as follows:

‘[...] the optimal kind of motivation from within is identified as *intrinsic motivation* – that is, doing something as an end in itself, for its own self-sustaining pleasurable rewards of enjoyment, interest, challenge, or skill and knowledge development. Intrinsic motivation is contrasted with *extrinsic motivation* – that is, doing something as a means to some separable outcome, such as gaining a qualification, getting a job, pleasing the teacher, or avoiding punishment.’ (p.21)

She also highlights that

‘there is a considerable body of research evidence to suggest that *intrinsic motivation* not only promotes *spontaneous learning behaviour* and has a powerful self-sustaining dynamic but also leads to a qualitatively different and more effective kind of learning than extrinsic forms of motivation.’ (p.21)

This seems to accord with Eshach (2007)’s study, which identifies informal learning as a type of learning characterised by intrinsic motivation promoting spontaneous learning. (see table 3 in 1.1.1) Nevertheless, the link between informal learning and intrinsic motivation that Eshach (2007) theorises does not seem to be confirmed by our study. In fact, German informal learning seems to be characterised by an extrinsic type of motivation. This apparently defies his

definition of informal learning as inherently characterised by intrinsic motivation. For this reason, our findings seem to have important implications for developing a less rigid and schematic conceptualisation of informal learning. (as proposed in table 3) In fact, a considerable body of research seems to be moving in a direction that sees informal learning as a more varied and hybrid concept. (as later shown in 1.1.1) In reviewing the literature, no studies were however found which compared the motivational aspects of learning two foreign languages informally. Balboni (2012) speculates that

[...] English is obviously a tool to further explore the world. This is why motivation increases – at least until the teenager does not think that his/her competences satisfy his/her needs [...] Regarding the foreign languages which are not English, the issue becomes more complex and the motivation is sustained by the fact that the student loves the foreign country – e.g. films, European exchange projects, news received by email, etc. become essential in order to fill the lack of perceiving French, German, etc. as useful – and by teachers' method and style [...] (p.96, this is our translation from the Italian original version)

Our results do not seem to support Balboni (2012)'s ideas. While Balboni (2012) appears to associate English learning with extrinsic motivation and German learning with intrinsic one, our findings seem to suggest that English informal learning is intimately linked to intrinsic motivation and German informal learning to extrinsic one. Our data must however be interpreted with caution because they specifically refer to *informal* learning, which is not explicitly mentioned in Balboni (2012)'s discourse. In this respect, Van Marsenille (2015)'s study is to our current knowledge the only study which has dealt with motivation in English informal learning. It proved that many of the students involved in her study, who were High Education students in Brussels, were extrinsically motivated while many others were intrinsically motivated. Her study produced results which differ from ours. Our participants seem to be only intrinsically motivated as far as English is concerned. This inconsistency may be due to the fact that the students involved in her study are much older than ours. Her students may recognise English as an international language which is pleasurable for its own sake, but they may also see it as a means to find a job (for real) in a near future. Hence, the presence of an extrinsic type of motivation even in English informal learning. Furthermore, the scholar inferred that

‘motivation is related to autonomy; [intrinsically] motivated students become more autonomous, reflect and control the language learning process (Dörnyei 2001c). In this research, the students who are really motivated by the pleasure of learning English, an international language, make progress and reflect in order to improve their foreign language skills [...]’ (pp.147-148)

This seems to accord with our results. Despite having a lower level of English, the students involved in our study tend to reflect more after doing English informal activities, which are apparently supported by intrinsic motivation, than after doing German informal activities, which seem to be supported by extrinsic motivation. (As revealed the results obtained for research question 4; see 3.1 and 4.1.4) At this point, we might hypothesise that the students involved in our study reflect more on English informal learning as a result of their being intrinsically motivated. Similarly, it might be inferred that they must be somewhat more autonomous in English informal learning because of their being intrinsically motivated. Hence, the reason why they actually engage in many more informal activities in English than in German. Nonetheless, these are mere speculations. Our findings cannot be extrapolated from the specific (different) context to which they belong and must therefore be interpreted with caution. Several questions remain unanswered at present. Further research should be done to investigate what differences lie between English and the other European language that Italian pupils must study at middle school in the type of motivation the two languages entail in informal language learning environments. (see 4.4)

4.1.4 Research Question 4

The fourth research question is ‘*What are students’ perceptions of informal language learning?*’. Our research hypotheses were the following:

- 1) the students generally perceive more English as a real life tool than German, which they perceive as a school subject;
- 2) for both languages, they do not engage in informal activities in order to acquire the language and they are unaware of their informal learning. (see 2.1) What the present research found is summarised in the following table:

Table 65 summarising our findings as far as research question 4 is concerned (see 3.1 for more details; see footnote 47, whose procedures are similarly adopted also for the present table)

Themes ⁴⁸ Implicit in Items 3-16	English Informal Learning	German Informal Learning
<i>Awareness of Informal Language Learning</i>	The students are somewhat aware of their English informal learning.	The students are somewhat unaware of their German informal learning.
<i>Intentionality of Informal Language Learning</i>	The students tend to do informal activities in order to learn English . However, they do not undertake such activities exclusively in order to improve English. Generally, improving English is one among many other goals .	The students tend to do informal activities in order to learn German . However, they do not undertake such activities exclusively in order to improve German. Generally, improving German is one among many other goals . Nevertheless, some do not engage in any German informal activities at all .
<i>Reflection on Informal Language Learning</i>	Many students generally reflect on how useful the English informal activities they do have been in order to improve their English. The majority of them have made it a usual habit . Nevertheless, many other students tend not to reflect on their English informal learning. Of these students, only rarely does the majority reflect on it.	The students generally reflect on how useful the German informal activities they do have been in order to improve their German. The majority of them have made it a usual habit . Nonetheless, many other students tend not to reflect on their German informal learning. Of these students, the majority does not engage in any German informal activities at all while many other students rarely reflect on such activities.
<i>Use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP)</i>	Nearly all the students are completely unaware of what ELP is.	Nearly all the students are completely unaware of what ELP is.
<i>Usefulness of Informal Language Learning</i>	The students find it somewhat useful to do English <i>informal</i> activities in order to learn English. Many of them think it is very useful . They find it somewhat more useful to do English informal activities than exclusively studying it for school in order to learn English.	The students find it somewhat useful to do German <i>informal</i> activities in order to learn German. Nonetheless, many of them find it only pretty useful . They find it somewhat more useful to do German informal activities than exclusively studying it for school in order to learn German.
<i>View of the Language</i>	The students are unlikely to perceive English as a mere school subject . They tend to perceive it as a real life tool . They perceive English as such	The students are likely to perceive German as a mere school subject . Paradoxically, many of them tend to think of German also as a real life tool .

⁴⁸ ‘Awareness of informal language learning’ corresponds to item 3; ‘Intentionality of informal language learning’ to item 4; ‘Reflection on informal language learning’ to item 5; ‘The European Language Portfolio (ELP)’ to items 6 and 7; ‘Usefulness of informal language learning’ to items 8 and 9; ‘How the language is viewed’ to items 10, 11, and 12; ‘The best type of learning to learn the language’ to item 13; ‘Current informal language learning as anticipating future informal lifelong learning?’ to items 14 and 15; ‘Perceptions about informal language learning’ to item 16 in both questionnaires.

	for two principal reasons: 1) because it is a global language ; 2) because it is a lingua franca .	They perceive German as such for three principal reasons: 1) because it is a widespread language ; 2) because it is a business language ; 3) because it is a tool to communicate with people .
<i>The Most Suitable Type of Learning in order to Learn the Language</i>	The students consider both formal learning and informal learning necessary in order to learn English.	The students consider both formal learning and informal learning necessary in order to learn German. However, many of them think that formal learning is more appropriate to learn German.
<i>Current Informal Language Learning as Reflecting Future Informal Lifelong Learning?</i>	The students tend to think that their English informal learning reflects the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults. Moreover, they define what we call informal lifelong learning as a spontaneous type of learning .	The students tend not to think that their German informal learning reflects the type of learning they will have to autonomously do when they are adults. Moreover, they define what we call informal lifelong learning as a spontaneous type of learning .
<i>Actual Perceptions about Informal Language Learning</i>	The students perceive English informal learning as useful . Many other students also find it fun, interesting, and cool . A small minority perceives it as <i>demanding</i> .	The students perceive German informal learning as useful . Many other students however find it boring . A small minority finds it <i>interesting</i> and <i>cool</i> . Some students think it is <i>fun</i> and <i>demanding</i> as well.

With reference to our above-mentioned hypotheses, table 65 reveals that:

1) the students generally perceive English as a real life tool and German as a mere school subject; paradoxically, they claim to view German also as a real life tool;
 2) generally, improving English or German while doing informal activities is one among many other goals. While the students are somewhat aware of their English informal learning, they are somewhat unaware of their German informal learning.

Hence, a possible reason for the paradox previously mentioned.

Awareness of informal language learning appears as the dominant theme underlying all the other themes. From table 65 the following paradoxes emerge with regards to German informal learning:

- *some* students claim not to do any German informal activities at all; nevertheless, we know that *a large majority* does not engage in German informal learning at all (as emerged from the results of research question 3; see 3.1 and 4.1.3).

- the students are likely to perceive German as a mere *school subject*; however, many of them tend to think of German *as a real life tool* at the same time;
- the students find it somewhat useful to do German *informal* activities in order to learn German; nonetheless, many of them think that *formal* learning is more appropriate to learn German.

These paradoxes seem to highlight a lack of awareness on the part of the students as far as German informal learning is concerned. This finding supports previous research into students' perceptions of foreign language learning. Similarly, Menegale (2013) noticed that

‘the different answers given by the subjects investigated by the questionnaire were not always consistent with each other: when asked with a general question whether they used [...] the target language outside school, only the 44,5% acknowledged using it usually or rather often. Then, when asked to specify what activities they usually performed [...] the percentages of the students using the foreign language outside school every day listening to song or doing homework raised respectively up to 84,4% and 53,1%. An evident discrepancy between the first and the second answer leads to *hypothesise* a lower level of learner awareness as to how much exactly students use the target language outside the classroom.’ (p.12)

Our results provide further support for Menegale (2013)'s hypothesis. In fact, the students involved in our study claimed themselves to be somewhat unaware of their German informal learning. (see table above) This is also confirmed by the German teacher, who is convinced that the students are generally unaware of the fact that they can improve their foreign language skills through informal activities. (see 3.2) Nonetheless, a distinction should be drawn between German informal learning and English informal learning. While the former seems somewhat unconscious, the latter appears somewhat conscious. Schugurensky (2000) proposes that ‘by using two main categories (intentionality and consciousness), it is possible to develop a taxonomy which identifies three forms (or types) of informal learning: self-directed learning, incidental learning and socialisation.’ (p.2)

Table 66 illustrating the three forms of informal learning (Schugurensky, 2000, p.3)

Form	Intentionality	Awareness <i>(at the time of learning experience)</i>
Self-directed learning	yes	yes
Incidental learning	no	yes
Socialisation (or tacit learning)	no	no

He defines the three forms of informal learning as follows:

‘Self-directed learning refers to 'learning projects' undertaken by individuals (alone or as part of a group) without the assistance of an 'educator' (teacher, instructor, facilitator), but it can include the presence of a 'resource person' who does not regard herself or himself as an educator. It is both intentional and conscious. It is intentional because the individual has the purpose of learning something even before the learning process begins, and it is conscious, in the sense that the individual is aware that she or he has learned something. [...]

Incidental learning refers to learning experiences that occur when the learner did not have any previous intention of learning something out of that experience, but after the experience she or he becomes aware that some learning has taken place. Thus, it is unintentional but conscious. [...]

Socialisation (also referred to as *tacit learning*) refers to the internalisation of values, attitudes, behaviours, skills, etc. that occur during everyday life. Not only we have no a priori intention of acquiring them, but we are not aware that we learned something.' (pp.3-4)

In the light of this taxonomy, we might speculate that the students involved in our study engage in an incidental type of English informal learning but in a tacit type of German informal learning. For both languages, students' informal learning tends to be more unintentional than intentional. In fact, improving English or German while doing informal activities is only one among many other goals. (see table above) However, while they appear somewhat aware of their English informal learning, they seem somewhat unaware of their German informal learning. (see table above) Nevertheless, it must be noticed that Schugurensky (2000) takes into account awareness *at the time of learning experience*. What about awareness *not* at the time of learning experience? Such a type of awareness could be interpreted as *subsequent* reflection on informal activities previously done. An instrument was illustrated in 1.2.1 which could help students to subsequently reflect on their informal learning, i.e. the European Language Portfolio (ELP). It might be argued that the students actually *reflect* on how useful the informal activities they do for both languages have been in order to improve their foreign language skills, as seen in table 65. Nonetheless, they seem to go

through this process mostly alone. Although most of the teachers involved in the present study claim to actively lead their students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school (see 3.2), they do not employ any sort of approved tool in their teaching which might help students to methodically reflect on the informal activities they have engaged in outside school (e.g. ELP). (see 3.2) In this respect, Van Marsenille (2015) argues that

‘in order to promote autonomy and reflection in the language learning process and to keep track of the activities students engage in outside class as well as their views about the activities, the use of a portfolio or a diary that is filled in by the learner on a regular basis might prove very useful. With these or similar tools, learners can report on the informal language activities they have engaged with, the way they consider they are making progress, their language learning strategies and intentions for future learning. [...] The ELP, as a portfolio, links informal to formal learning. It allows students to report on their informal learning activities and to write about their learning methods and strategies. Therefore, it helps them be aware of their language learning process and it helps teachers know what students do and how they learn in order to adapt their teaching and to consider students individually.’ (pp.80-83)

It might be hypothesised that the students are not aware of their German informal learning also because the German Teacher does not employ such a tool as ELP with them in order to make them reflect on their informal activities. Nevertheless, the students appear to be somewhat aware of their English informal learning although they do not use such a didactic tool as ELP. A possible explanation for this might be that the students are constantly exposed to English in real life, which does not happen with German. As a result, they must be somewhat aware of the fact that the language they are constantly exposed to, i.e. English, is an indispensable tool in our society having real communicative purposes. Nonetheless, some students conceive also German as a real life tool because it is a tool to *communicate* with people. (see 3.1) This might be due to the fact that: 1) the German Teacher employs a communicative approach in German teaching (see 3.2); 2) when the research project was conducted, the best students in the three classes had taken part in an intercultural exchange which had given them the possibility to go to Germany with their German Teacher and live in the family of a German peer for about a week. (see 2.2.1) In both cases, the students (or some of them) were shown that German can be used for real communicative purposes. Hence, the reason why some students conceive also German as a real life tool. Moreover, it might be inferred that many students think that *formal* learning is

more appropriate to learn German because they understand its utility, i.e. the fact that it can be a real life tool, only when guided by the German Teacher in *formal* contexts. Given that some of them find German informal learning demanding (see table above), they probably feel lost when they try and do German informal learning activities alone. This is confirmed by the German Teacher. She believes that the students need a guide in German informal learning environments and that that they need to be formally guided to German informal learning because students generally perceive German as a difficult language, which is not attested for English. (see 3.2) This seems to also accord with Casanave (2012)'s study. Working as an English instructor at a Japanese university, she attempted to informally learn Japanese by herself over the course of eight years. Unlike the students involved in our study, she was however adult, autonomous, and highly determined. At some point, she probably felt the necessity to integrate informal learning with formal learning, given the complexity of Japanese. In spite of claiming that she used to learn Japanese with fun, she actually resorted to learning Japanese also through informal activities which clearly resembled *formal* learning, e.g. studying Japanese ideograms and solitary dictionary study. This seems to corroborate the German Teacher's idea that informal learning and formal learning should be integrated in informal language learning environments, above all – we could add – if the language learnt is linguistically *very* distant from one's mother tongue, as in the case of German for the students having Italian as their mother tongue and all the other foreign students involved in our study. (see 2.2.1)

4.1.5 Research Question 5

The fifth research question is '*What do teachers think of students' informal language learning?*'. Our research hypotheses were the following:

- 1) teachers confirm that the students do not engage in informal activities in order to acquire the language and that they are generally unaware of their informal learning;
- 2) teachers think that the students see both languages as a mere school subject;

3) however, they do not know about students' informal activities very much and do not make the students reflect upon their informal learning. (see 2.1) The results of this study showed that:

1) except for English Teacher C, teachers confirm that the students do not engage in informal activities in order to acquire the language and that they are generally unaware of their informal learning;

2) teachers think that the students tend to see both languages as a mere school subject and that they perceive what is learnt in real life as something separated from what is learnt at school;

3) however, teachers do not know about students' informal activities very much, except for English Teacher C and the German Teacher. Moreover, they somehow make the students reflect upon their informal learning. In detail, they make the students reflect upon the fact that there is an underlying unity between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school. However, none of them employ the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in order to make them specifically reflect on their informal learning.

The use of technology in formal language learning environments in order to bridge the gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school, i.e. between informal and formal learning, could be recommended to the teachers involved in the present study. As emerged from research question 1 (see 4.1.1), the students prefer doing informal activities related to technology and music⁴⁹. It goes without saying that, in order to capture their attention, teachers could propose activities of this type in class. As a result, these activities will make formal learning more involving from students' perspective. According to Schumann (1997; 2004), emotions play a fundamental role in language learning. (see 1.2.2) The brain receives a stimulus, i.e. new input, and appraises it. According to appraisal theory, the brain decides whether to accept the stimulus or not. Stimuli are appraised

⁴⁹ It must be noticed that informal activities related to music generally involve the use of technology. For example, students might choose to listen to English songs through YouTube or their mobile or to sing karaoke through YouTube. In this sense, activities related to music and those related to technology are interrelated. As a result, the former does not exclude the latter. For this reason, from now onwards we will mention only activities related to technology in our discourse, considering activities related to music a subset of those related to technology.

according to five dimensions: 1) novelty; 2) pleasantness; 3) need significance; 4) feasibility; 5) self and social compatibility. (Schumann, 1998) Schumann's stimulus-appraisal theory might be traced when the students decide to engage in informal activities related to technology. They may find such activities interesting and stimulating. They may also perceive that language is employed for real communicative purposes, e.g. on the Web or in songs. Hence, the possibility for the students to become aware of the fact that there is an underlying unity between what they learn in real life and what they learn at school, i.e. between informal and formal learning. Nonetheless, teachers should be concerned with making the activities feasible according to students' level of the foreign language. The new input proposed in such activities, i.e. the new stimulus, should immediately follow the already acquired input according to a predetermined natural order in learning (i.e. Krashen's "*i+1*" formula). (Balboni, 2012; Krashen, 1981; see 1.2.2) As a result, the activities proposed should adequately challenge the students and the teachers should provide the students with scaffolding strategies, when needed, in order to make the activities feasible and not too challenging. (Balboni, 2012; Caon, 2008) The teachers should also choose activities implying topics that might actually stimulate students' interest and encourage social compatibility. (Caon, 2008) If they choose, for instance, to concentrate on types of music that the students hate, they will not attract their attention. Therefore, it seems important that the teachers become acquainted with students' interests beforehand. In accordance with our observations, several studies seem to confirm that technology could be actually employed in formal language learning environments in order to bridge the gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school, i.e. between informal and formal learning. According to Van Marsenille (2015)'s study, which dealt with a group of Higher Education students and teachers from Brussels, the teachers

'could also use more digital technology within formal learning and promote informal learning by applying "blended learning" [...] [given that] the Internet is much used by the students during informal learning activities. Teachers could take advantage of this: they could use the Internet in class on a more regular basis and they could suggest informal learning activities that students could practise on the Internet.' (pp.177-178)

Similarly, Menegale (2013) suggests that

‘computers, I-pods, smartphones, and all the multimedia applications that attract young learners’ attention serve as a means to acquire new knowledge through the vehicle of a foreign language; several studies show that such technological devices, while involving learners’ active participation, allow for authentic and enhanced language learning. [...] For many years, research on the use of ICT [i.e. Information and Communication Technologies] in school context has demonstrated the importance of technology in favouring meaningful learning and finer personalisation of the learning process – a condition that is of primary importance for the development of learner autonomy.’ (p.15)

Furthermore, Nee Nee (2016)’s study, which focused on how a group of Malaysian youngsters aged from 16 to 30 employed their mobiles to learn foreign languages, appears to provide further support for the issue. Certain that her findings ‘may yield new understanding that may prove useful to Malaysia and other countries as well especially in its implications for formal and informal learning’ (p.1), the scholar finally achieves the conclusion that ‘traditional classrooms could incorporate some of the informal learning habits such ‘learning on the go’⁵⁰ practices into their teaching and learning.’ (p.10) Given that ‘[...] educators and teachers could influence [informal] learning through the design of homework and projects [...]’ (p.10), teachers can decide to include activities related to technology in their formal teaching and, thus, to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning through the use of mobile apps which are used by students in out-of-school contexts. As a result, formal learning will encompass informal learning elements making the former more ‘self-directed and learner-centred’ (p.1-2) and actually resemble ‘language learning in everyday environments’ (p.1). Moreover, Brebera & Hlouskova (2012)’s study, which was about the impact of technology in bridging the gap between formal and informal language learning at the Language Centre of the University of Pardubice (Czech Republic), proved that technology can bridge the gap between formal and informal language learning, at least when it takes the form of social networking platforms, e-learning, internet forums, and online games. The results, however, revealed that bridges between formal and informal language learning through the use of technology can occur only if

‘learning is promoted or enhanced when students are actively involved in the learning, when assignments reflect real-life contexts and experiences and when critical thinking or deep learning is promoted through applied and reflective activities [...]’ (p.4)

⁵⁰ ‘*Learning on the go*’ is often used as a synonym for ‘mobile learning’ in the literature.

Having considered all these studies, we wonder whether all the considerations so far illustrated are generalisable also to our study, which involves third-year middle school pupils. In fact, all the articles do not focus (exclusively) on middle school pupils, but mostly on Higher Education students. Further research should thus be done in order to investigate if all these findings can be extrapolated and applied also to students having low competences in the target language(s). (see 4.4)

4.2 Comparison between Teachers' and Students' Viewpoints

In the current paragraph, teachers' point of view will be compared with students' one in order to have a broader overview of the issue investigated (i.e. middle school pupils' informal language learning with reference to the two languages they study at school) and a possible interpretation of this will be put forward. The following table allows a broad comparison between teachers' and students' viewpoints:

Table 67 illustrating a broad comparison between teachers' and students' viewpoints (see 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1 for more details)

Topics⁵¹ Underlying Research Questions	Students' Viewpoint⁵²	Teachers' Viewpoint
<i>1a) Types of English Informal Learning Activities Preferred by the Students</i>	They primarily engage in activities related to technology and music. They also engage in activities related to the linguistic landscape and journeys.	They think that the students primarily engage in activities related to technology and music.
<i>1b) Types of German Informal Learning Activities Preferred by the Students</i>	They primarily engage in activities related to technology. They also engage in activities related to the linguistic landscape and journeys.	They think that the students primarily engage in activities related to technology, tourists, journeys, sport, and relatives speaking German.

⁵¹ Students' viewpoints are taken from the results obtained for research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4. Topics 1a) and 1b) cover research question 1; topics 2a) and 2b) cover research question 2; topics 3a), 3b), and 3c) cover research question 3; and topic 4) covers research question 4. Teachers' viewpoints are all extrapolated from teachers' interviews *as much as possible*. (see 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1 for more details; see appendix C for the transcripts of teachers' interviews; see 4.3 for the limits of the present study)

⁵² Both for the students and the teachers, general tendencies are shown. For more details, see 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1. It must be noticed that in chapter 3 we were very analytical. Now, we mean to understand what the main tendencies are in order to have a broad overview of the issue and, thus, to arrive at our conclusions. Conclusions will explicit what the main trends are, considering the participants as a whole.

2a) Language Skills Used Outside School for English	They primarily use reading and listening.	They seem to think that the students primarily use listening.
2b) Language Skills Used Outside School for German	The small minority actually doing German informal learning activities engages in activities primarily involving reading.	They seem to think that the students primarily use listening.
3a) Differences between English and German in the Type of Informal Learning Activities	The students prefer doing activities primarily related to technology for both languages. Above all, they: 1) google English words, read English words on social networks and websites, or listen to music through electronic devices (see footnote 49); 2) read German words on websites, use online dictionaries in order to consult some German words, or google German words. It must be noticed that only English music plays a prominent role in students' lives. Similarly, only videogames in English are somewhat popular among the students. Furthermore, the students avoid activities of various types for both languages. It seems that: 1) when the students avoid the same activity in both languages, it is because they are not interested in the type of activity proposed; 2) when the students avoid an activity in German but do it in English, it is specifically because they like English (apart from the type of activity).	They think that the students do not listen to German music. Besides, English music is believed to be popular among the students. Furthermore, the teachers seem to think that the most popular English informal learning activity connected to technology has to do with videogames while the most popular German one is using Google translator.
3b) Differences between English and German in the Frequency of Informal Learning Activities	Considerable difference, i.e. the majority of the students do English informal learning activities twice/three times a week while a very large majority of them never do German informal learning activities <i>tout court</i> .	They think that the students are continuously exposed to English outside school while they are little exposed to German.
3c) Differences between English and German in the Skills Used	Broadly speaking, the only difference is the fact that listening is not used for German as much as it is for English. Strictly speaking, only a small minority actually <i>does</i> German informal learning	It is believed that the students often play videogames in English. Unfortunately, the teachers do not specify what skills the students could use when they engage in this activity. They are likely to

	<p>activities. Unlike English, German could be considered a language not used informally. In this sense, it does not involve a considerable use of any skills.</p>	<p>think that the students must write or read in videogames. Similarly, the German Teacher seems to believe that her students must also write in German when they consult online dictionaries. However, it is listening that emerges as the skill that the teachers seem to believe that their students use the most for both languages.</p>
<p><i>4) Perceptions of Informal Language Learning</i></p>	<p>Generally, the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are aware of English informal learning, but unaware of German informal learning; - do both informal learnings more unintentionally than intentionally; - usually reflect on how useful the activities they do have been in order to learn the target language; - do not use ELP at school; - view English as a real life tool more than German, which is generally perceived as a mere school subject; - consider both formal and informal learning necessary to learn the target language, but formal learning is viewed as more appropriate for German and informal learning for English; - find English informal learning fun, interesting, and cool; - find German informal learning useful but boring. 	<p>Generally, the teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are aware of students' informal opportunities to learn the target language; - seem to know about their students' informal activities, but not all of them have an effective communication with their students, which makes their being aware of their students' informal learning disputable; - believe that the students are unaware of the fact that they can improve their foreign language skills through informal activities; - agree that formal and informal learning are complementary to each other; - agree that guiding the students to bridging their gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school is a school responsibility; - do not employ ELP in class due to lack of time; - think that informal learning is useless for middle school students in order to learn the target language; - conceive the language they teach as a real life tool; - conceive formal learning as the most suitable type of learning to be employed in class, except for the German Teacher, who clearly adopts a communicative approach involving role plays that may occur in real life; - find both formal and informal learning incomplete kinds of learning which should be integrated with each other; - think that informal learning should be controlled and adult-

		driven in order for middle school students to be useful; - find informal learning hard in the beginning but satisfactory in the end; - find formal learning rigid but essential.
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All in all, the discrepancies between students' and teachers' viewpoints do not seem to be many. According to Menegale (2013), 'the studies which show the gap that exists between what teachers pursue and what their students perceive are quite numerous.' (p.15) In this sense, our study is not consistent with previous research.

In fact, the main discrepancies that we found are only four:

- 1) while the teachers seem to think that their students do informal activities involving listening, the students actually do informal activities mostly entailing reading;
- 2) while the teachers are convinced that videogames in English play a prominent role in students' life, this activity *is* somewhat popular among the students but it is not the most done;
- 3) while the teachers think that the students are unaware of informal language learning, the students claim to be aware of English informal learning;
- 4) while the teachers generally believe that informal learning is useless for middle school students in order to learn English or German, the students argue that informal learning is more appropriate than formal learning in order to learn English.

These discrepancies might be due to the fact that:

- 1) not all the teachers have an effective communication with their students (in particular, English Teachers A and B; see 3.2);
- 2) none of the teachers employ the European Language Portfolio (ELP) in class in order to make their students systematically reflect on their informal learning and to become personally acquainted with it.

Although English Teacher C and the German Teacher *have* an effective communication with their students (see 3.2), they do not employ any kind of approved tool in their teaching (e.g. ELP) in order to help their students to methodically reflect on the informal activities they engage in outside school. In

the light of our results, we are encouraged to claim that informal conversations cannot substitute the use of approved tools in language teaching, which rigorously permit both the student and the teacher to become aware of the type of informal learning the student has engaged in outside school. Therefore, the non-use of such tools in class might be the principal cause for the above-mentioned discrepancies. As cited in Menegale (2013), Nunan (1995) observes that ‘when the teacher is busy teaching one thing, the learner is very often focusing on something else.’ (p.15) Informal conversations, which the teachers we interviewed seem to have with their students, can be useful in order to come to know students’ informal activities – which seems to be confirmed by table 67 where few discrepancies all in all were found – and to improve the relationship with them. However, learners are continuously changing habits, as Nunan (1995) underlines. They are continuously directing their attention to new interests, probably much more than teachers can imagine. For this reason, the systematic use of such an approved tool as ELP could rigorously fulfil the function of coming to know what students’ informal activities actually are – up to the point where informal conversations cannot. Nonetheless, all the teachers involved in our study refuse to employ ELP due to lack of time. On the one hand, they complain because they have few hours in class (three for English, two for German) and they are busy teaching and resolving ordinary logistical issues. On the other hand, they think that bridging students’ gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school is a school responsibility. They complain because the students are unaware of their informal language learning and do not see the underlying unity between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school. They seem to be conscious of the importance of coming to know students’ informal activities but, in fact, evade this responsibility. In this sense, our study does not accord with Menegale (2013)’s one, which put forth the possibility that the teachers involved in her study were *not* fully aware of the fact that their students should be guided in the process of bridging their gap between formal and informal learning. Our teachers appear *to be* aware of the fact that students should be guided in this process and that the students are likely to be ‘unable to recognise language learning opportunities around them, so that they regularly manage activities that require the use of a

foreign language without being conscious of doing them'. (Menegale, 2013, p.16) However, showing the link between informal language learning and plurilingualism as well as between informal language learning and lifelong learning (see 1.2.1), the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) clearly recommends that ELP be employed by teachers in order not only for *reflection* upon (see 4.1.4) but also for implications⁵³ of informal language learning activities to be enabled in language learners:

‘[...] once it is recognised that language learning is a lifelong task, the development of a young person’s motivation, skill and confidence in facing new language experience out of school comes to be of central importance. The responsibilities of educational authorities, qualifying examining bodies and teachers cannot simply be confined to the attainment of a given level of proficiency in a particular language at a particular moment in time, important though that undoubtedly is. The full implications of such a paradigm shift have yet to be worked out and translated into action. The recent developments in the Council of Europe’s language programme have been designed to produce tools for use by all members of the language teaching profession in the promotion of plurilingualism. In particular, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) provides a format in which language learning and intercultural experiences of the most diverse kinds can be recorded and formally recognised. For this purpose, CEF [i.e. the Common European Framework] not only provides a scaling of overall language proficiency in a given language, but also a breakdown of language use and language competences which will make it easier for practitioners to specify objectives and describe achievements of the most diverse kinds in accordance with the varying needs, characteristics and resources of learners.’ (Council of Europe, 2001, p.5)

4.3 Limitations of the Study

In this paragraph, the limitations of our study will be presented. Firstly, the sample of the students involved in our research project is very small. Moreover, it has very specific features: it mirrors the reality of a multi-ethnic city very close to Venice. Out of 45 students, only 26 are in fact Italian. (see 2.2.1) Furthermore, unlike students living in rural cities, the students involved in our study can often be exposed to various foreign languages and cultures in the city where they live, being this part of a highly tourist area. Therefore, the conclusions

⁵³ i.e. the development of plurilingual competences and of lifelong learning strategies. In this sense, informal language learning is viewed as facilitating plurilingualism and lifelong language learning. As seen in 1.2.1, plurilingualism is, in fact, embedded in real life. It might thus be claimed that plurilingual competences are mostly developed through informal learning. Moreover, compulsory schooling lasts much less in a lifetime than *informal* lifelong learning does. If it is true that lifelong learning is mostly informal, it will thus be useful to reflect on the potential of informal learning in order to acquire (informal) lifelong learning strategies. For these reasons, informal language learning could be seen as a key factor possibly enabling plurilingualism and lifelong learning to develop.

that the present study reaches are not easily generalisable to other contexts. Secondly, from a methodological point of view students' questionnaires could have been limiting in the way they were formulated. Especially in item 17, the students had to tick a frequency value for each of the 56 activities that *we* had deliberately chosen. In fact, they all were closed questions. The students could not have a say in the series of activities that *we* proposed them in item 17. They just had to mechanically complete them. Although item 18 attempted to resolve the rigidity of our questionnaires by letting the students *freely* write down the type of activity they wished, the overwhelming majority of them did not however write anything else in item 18. Perhaps, they did engage in other significant informal activities, apart from those we proposed them in item 17, but were unaware of the fact that other activities they used to do could be considered informal. Perhaps, they were tired to go on reflecting after completing so many gaps in item 17. (see 2.4.1) So, they left item 18 blank. In any case, we might have chosen some wrong informal activities in item 17. If this were true, we would have somehow influenced our results. By choosing the wrong activities, i.e. activities that had nothing to do with students' actual interests, we might have discarded many other activities that they frequently did. Speculating on this, we might even hypothesise that the students appeared to do very few German informal learning activities because *we* proposed them the wrong ones. Thirdly, the comparison between students' and teachers' viewpoints in 4.2 is limited. We attempted to extrapolate teachers' viewpoint from their interviews as much as possible for all the topics in table 67. Nonetheless, the interviews actually provided direct answers only for topic 4 in the table. If on the one hand the teachers actually expressed some opinions also about topics 1-3 – which enabled us to complete the table –, on the other the interview guide employed during the interviews only tacitly covered these topics and did not intend to openly discuss them with the teachers. The reason for this is that we changed our mind in the course of the research project. In fact, our research questions do not involve a comparison between teachers' and students' viewpoints. Or to put it in another way, the present study initially aimed at comparing only students' and teachers' *perceptions* of informal language learning (i.e. research questions 4 and 5). Due to the fact that – as Croker (2009)

claims – ‘qualitative research is more simultaneous, nonlinear, and iterative [than quantitative one]’ (p.10), we finally realised that a somewhat broader comparison had to be however included. Only in this way could the *triangulation process* (see 2.3), on which we had based our research project since the beginning, emerge and we could thus have a broader overview of the issue. Fourthly, we had to find criteria to choose which of the 56 activities in item 17 to analyse in chapter 3. We could not analyse them all also for space issues. (see 2.6.1) Perhaps, this limited further considerations on the issue investigated. For the same reason, students’ interviews aiming at confirming from a more qualitative perspective what resulted from questionnaires were finally avoided, which also prevented us from acquiring precious details to be subsequently discussed. Fifthly, it must be noticed that the subjectivity of the researcher might have somehow interfered with the present research. Some methodological choices might appear disputable; some topics in chapter 4 might be seen as chosen at the expense of others possibly considered more important by some members of the scientific community. Nevertheless, as Croker (2009) puts it,

‘[...] when researchers go into research settings, they also take their own intellectual baggage and life experiences with them. Inevitably, their gender, age, ethnicity, cultural background, sexual orientation, politics, religious beliefs, and life experiences – their worldview – are the lens through which they see their research. This may colour their perceptions of the research setting and also the construction of the reality that they develop with the participants.’ (p.11)

4.4 Further Research

In the current section, suggestions for future studies will be put forward. Apart from those already mentioned in the course of 4.1, i.e.:

- research into understanding in what contexts the taxonomy that we proposed in table 64, which transposes Halliday (1975)’s language functions to informal language learning environments involving the use of technology, is actually applicable – it was not applicable to our specific context, albeit seeming theoretically valid (see 4.1.1);

- research into the exact nature of the motivation leading (at least our) middle school students to engaging in activities related to technology in informal language learning environments (see 4.1.1);
- narrative inquiry into middle school students' exact perception of German informal learning as an unspontaneous type of learning (see 4.1.3);
- research into the differences between English and the other European language Italian pupils must study at middle school in the type of motivation the two languages entail in informal language learning environments (see 4.1.3);
- research into the use of technology in formal language learning environments in order to bridge the gap between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school, i.e. between informal and formal learning, with specific regard to students having low competences in the target language(s), such as primary and middle school students (see 4.1.5);

the following other suggestions can be made:

- narrative inquiry into the exact degree of awareness of informal language learning among middle school students and into what differences lie between English and the second European language Italian pupils must study at middle school;
- ethnographic research into whether a link exists between the nationality of a group of foreign students from the same country and the quality of their informal language learning *vis-à-vis* the quality of informal language learning of their Italian classmates;
- longitudinal research into how informal language learning qualitatively develops from the first to the third year of middle school;
- longitudinal (action) research into understanding whether a group of students using the European Language Portfolio (ELP) to reflect upon their informal language learning gradually become more aware of and more autonomous in their informal learning than another group of students who are not administered ELP.

To summarise, it is recommended that further research be conducted in the following areas: middle school students' informal language learning, primary school students' informal language learning, and bridging the gap between informal and formal language learning through the use of ELP.

CONCLUSION

The current research project should be viewed as an attempt to fill a wide research gap in the field of applied linguistics, i.e. middle school students' informal language learning as far as the two different foreign languages they are taught at school are concerned. It has been shown that that the third-year middle school students involved in our study engage much more in English informal learning activities than in German ones. For both languages, they primarily engage in activities related to technology, especially those entailing Google and online dictionaries. They also do informal activities connected to social networks, the linguistic landscape where they live and the journeys they go on. Nonetheless, their English informal learning is much more varied. It also includes informal activities related to music and videogames. In particular, English music appears to play a prominent role in students' lives. Interactive oral activities, activities related to tourists, activities related to printed readings, and activities involving face-to-face communities of practice are also somewhat popular in English informal environments. Furthermore, the students primarily use reading for both languages in informal language learning contexts, except for English which also involves listening. It must also be noticed that a very large majority of the sample never engages in German informal learning activities *tout court*. Moreover, the students seem to be more aware of their English informal learning than of their German one. They perceive the former as fun, interesting, and cool and the latter as useful but boring. The teachers interviewed largely confirm what their students claim. However, some discrepancies between the two viewpoints emerged. Providing a possible interpretation for this, we finally arrived at the conclusion that these discrepancies, albeit relatively few, might exist because none of the teachers employ the European Language Portfolio (ELP) – or any other similar approved tool – in class in order to make their students systematically reflect on their informal language learning and to become personally acquainted with it. To conclude, notwithstanding being limited, the present study somehow extends our knowledge of an issue, i.e. informal language learning, on which little research

seems to have been done in the field. Exploring the general aspects of it, this study therefore paves the way for further and more extensive research.

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APPENDIX A: Students' Questionnaire 1

QUESTIONARIO 1
SULL'APPRENDIMENTO INFORMALE
NELL'EDUCAZIONE LINGUISTICA (INGLESE)
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali Comparati
Laurea Magistrale in Scienze del Linguaggio
Marco Bellini

Questi due questionari fanno parte di un progetto di ricerca di tesi di laurea magistrale presso l'università Ca' Foscari di Venezia. I dati che saranno raccolti verranno trattati in pieno anonimato degli studenti e della scuola tutta. Alcune generalità verranno richieste con il solo scopo di potere analizzare con maggiore precisione i dati raccolti e discernere le diverse tipologie di utente all'interno del campione di indagine. I due questionari sono stati progettati al fine di capire quali sono le attività riguardanti l'inglese (Questionario 1) e il tedesco (Questionario 2) che gli studenti svolgono di loro spontanea volontà fuori dalla scuola. Essi intendono quindi ricavare informazioni su quali siano le abilità linguistiche che gli studenti maggiormente utilizzano fuori dalla scuola. Inoltre, i questionari tenderanno di esplorare la percezione che gli studenti hanno dell'apprendimento informale nell'educazione linguistica. Si cercherà quindi di capire se esista una differenza tra l'utilizzo dell'inglese e del tedesco fuori dalla scuola per quanto riguarda il tipo di attività svolte, la frequenza di queste ultime e il tipo di abilità linguistiche utilizzate. Si noti, inoltre, che verrà richiesta la formulazione di un nickname da parte dello studente all'inizio del primo questionario che lo studente dovrà riportare senza modifiche all'inizio del secondo questionario. Dato che i due questionari verranno somministrati in due occasioni diverse, questo ci permetterà di ricondurre i due questionari allo stesso studente che li ha completati, garantendo in questo modo il suo pieno anonimato.

Prima di cominciare

1. Indica la tua **sezione** di appartenenza: 3^ ____.
2. Crea il tuo **nickname** (**che dovrai riportare**, senza modifiche, anche **nel secondo questionario** da completare in un'altra occasione e che ti consigliamo quindi di **annotare sul tuo diario scolastico alla data di oggi**):

Esempio: [nome del tuo gatto/cane/band preferita/canzone preferita... + tre cifre] → nickname:
RIHANNA713

Il tuo nickname: _____

Percezione dell'apprendimento informale dell'inglese

3. Dai un occhio al **quesito 17** dove ti vengono presentate molte attività che puoi svolgere quando sei **fuori dalla scuola** e decidi di praticarle **di tua spontanea volontà** (**ATTIVITÀ NON IMPOSTE O ORGANIZZATE DALLA SCUOLA**). **Ti sei mai accorto** che ci sono così tante attività che potresti fare fuori dalla scuola in inglese?
 - Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
4. Generalmente, quando compii attività in inglese fuori dalla scuola di tua spontanea volontà le fai **intenzionalmente per imparare l'inglese**?
 - Sì, le compio unicamente per migliorare il mio inglese.
 - Sì, migliorare l'inglese è uno dei miei obiettivi principali.
 - Sì, migliorare l'inglese è uno dei miei tanti obiettivi.
 - No, migliorare l'inglese non è uno dei miei obiettivi.
 - No, non mi pongo obiettivi quando compio attività extrascolastiche.
 - Non saprei perché non svolgo attività in inglese fuori dalla scuola.

5. **Dopo** avere compiuto attività extrascolastiche in inglese di tua spontanea volontà, **rifletti** mai su quanto queste attività ti possano essere state utili al fine di migliorarlo?
- No, mai
 - Solo raramente
 - Di solito sì
 - Sì, sempre
 - Non saprei perché non compio attività extrascolastiche in inglese.
6. Sai cos'è il **portfolio linguistico europeo**?
- No
 - Sì
7. **Se sì**, quanto spesso l'hai usato alla scuola media per **riflettere** sul tipo di apprendimento che hai compiuto attraverso questo tipo di attività?
- Mai
 - Solo raramente
 - Di solito
 - Sempre
 - Non saprei perché non compio questo tipo di attività.
8. Secondo te, quanto è **utile** usare l'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?
- Moltissimo
 - Molto
 - Abbastanza
 - Poco
 - Pochissimo
 - Per niente
9. Secondo te, fare attività extrascolastiche in inglese di propria iniziativa è **più utile al fine di impararlo** rispetto al solo studiarlo per la scuola?
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
10. Per te, **l'inglese** equivale semplicemente a una **materia scolastica**?
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
11. Secondo te, **l'inglese** è parte integrante della **vita reale**?
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
12. **Se sì**, perché lo è? Dai una breve risposta:
-
13. Segna l'affermazione che ritieni più vera per te:
- L'inglese si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi.
 - L'inglese si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale.
 - L'inglese si impara mediante l'integrazione dei due punti precedenti perché nessuno dei due da solo basta.

14. Secondo te, **apprendere l'inglese fuori dalla scuola** in attività che *tu* scegli di fare rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che dovrai compiere **da adulto senza l'appoggio della scuola?**
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
15. **Se sì**, come definiresti questo **tipo di apprendimento** che continua anche quando **non ci sono dei professori che ti obbligano** a studiare? Definiscilo in non più di sei parole:
 “Apprendimento _____”.
16. Come trovi **l'apprendimento dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola**? Descrivilo usando tre **aggettivi**:

L'apprendimento informale dell'inglese

17. Segna nella seguente lista la frequenza con cui svolgi le seguenti attività quando sei **fuori dalla scuola** e decidi di praticarle **di tua spontanea volontà (ATTIVITÀ NON IMPOSTE O ORGANIZZATE DALLA SCUOLA)**:

ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA	ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA
1. Ascolto canzoni in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	2. Guardo video su YouTube in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
3. Guardo film in streaming in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	4. Guardo la televisione in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
5. Uso applicazioni nel cellulare che emettono audio in inglese per impararlo (Duolingo, Memrise, Babbel, ecc.)	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	6. Ascolto videogiochi che parlano in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
7. Ascolto i turisti parlare in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	8. Guardo programmi televisivi che hanno lo scopo di insegnare l'inglese divertendosi (Divertinglese, Magic Wonderland, ecc.)	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
9. Guardo programmi televisivi che non hanno lo scopo di insegnare l'inglese, ma che comunque utilizzano parole inglesi	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana	10. Visito siti internet che emettono audio in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana

(film, sitcom, pubblicità, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
11. La mia sveglia riproduce parole in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	12. Ascolto le persone parlare inglese quando visito paesi di lingua inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
13. Scrivo hashtag sui social network in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	14. Scrivo canzoni in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
15. Scrivo poesie in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	16. Scrivo brevi racconti in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
17. Scrivo in inglese nelle conversazioni su WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	18. Scrivo frasi in inglese nella sezione "info" di WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
19. Scrivo in inglese il mio stato sui social network (Facebook, Twitter, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	20. Scrivo in inglese per conoscere amici di penna stranieri attraverso applicazioni del cellulare (HelloTalk, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
21. Scrivo in inglese per conoscere amici di penna stranieri attraverso l'uso del computer (PenPal World, InterPals, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	22. Scrivo in inglese in gruppi di Facebook utili per imparare l'inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
23. Scrivo in inglese in gruppi di Facebook per parlare di una passione comune al gruppo (che non è l'inglese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana 	24. Ricopio le parole inglesi che sento o leggo su un mio quaderno (scelgo io di ricopiarle e non me lo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	<u>impone in alcun modo la scuola)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
25. Ricopio le parole inglesi che sento o leggo su un mio dispositivo elettronico (cellulare, tablet ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	26. Cerco su Google parole in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
27. Scrivo in inglese sui videogiochi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	28. Scrivo parole inglesi sul mio diario personale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
29. Leggo parole in inglese sui siti internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	30. Leggo parole in inglese sui social network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
31. Leggo scritte in inglese nei videogiochi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	32. Leggo parole in inglese nei cartelli per strada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
33. Leggo parole in inglese al supermercato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	34. Leggo scritte in inglese in bus, tram, ecc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
35. Leggo nomi di auto inglesi quando sono per strada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	36. Faccio karaoke con canzoni inglesi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
37. Condivido immagini con scritte in inglese sui social network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana 	38. Condivido immagini con scritte in inglese sullo stato di WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
39. Leggo le istruzioni in inglese che si trovano nella parte posteriore di alcuni oggetti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	40. Leggo le istruzioni in inglese che si trovano nella parte posteriore di alcuni alimenti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
41. Leggo poesie in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	42. Leggo brevi racconti in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
43. Leggo le parole inglesi che compaiono in televisione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	44. Leggo le parole inglesi che compaiono sui giornali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
45. Parlo in inglese su Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	46. Canto in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
47. Gioco con giochi di società che implicano che dica parole inglesi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	48. Utilizzo parole inglesi per parlare coi miei amici di una passione comune (il calcio, gli anime, le serie tv, i fumetti ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
49. Parlo in inglese quando visito paesi di lingua inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	50. Parlo con chi conosco in inglese perché mi piace l'inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana ○ Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana ○ Più di 6 volte alla settimana
51. Parlo coi turisti in inglese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana 	52. Parlo inglese quando utilizzo alcune applicazioni del cellulare che non sono pensate per fare imparare una lingua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mai ○ 1 volta alla settimana ○ 2/3 volte alla settimana

	<input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	(Shazam, Siri, video Instagram/Facebook, ecc.)	<input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
53. Invio audio su WhatsApp in cui dico delle parole in inglese	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	54. Faccio esercizi in più di inglese <u>che scelgo io di fare (e che non mi impone in alcun modo la scuola)</u>	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
55. Uso il dizionario online per cercare parole inglesi <u>che scelgo io di usare (e che non mi impone in alcun modo la scuola)</u>	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	56. Studio nuovi argomenti di inglese <u>che scelgo io di studiare (e che non mi impone in alcun modo la scuola)</u>	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana

18. Ci sono altre attività **che non sono state menzionate nella domanda precedente** che compii quando sei **fuori dalla scuola** e che pratici **di tua spontanea volontà (ATTIVITÀ NON IMPOSTE O ORGANIZZATE DALLA SCUOLA)**? Se sì, scrivi qui di seguito quali sono ricordandoti di segnare con che **frequenza** le pratici:

ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA	ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA
.....	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
.....	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana

Alcune Generalità

19. Indica la tua **età** in cifre: ____.

20. Qual è la tua **nazionalità**?

- Italiana
- Bengalese
- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

21. Qual è la tua **lingua madre** (o quali sono)?
Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Italiano
- Bengalese

- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

22. Quale **lingua** (o quali lingue) normalmente parli in **famiglia**?
Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Italiano
- Bengalese
- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

23. Quale **lingua** (o quali lingue) normalmente parli coi tuoi **amici**?
Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Italiano
- Bengalese
- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

24. **Rispondi solo se non sei di nazionalità italiana**

Segna l'affermazione che ritieni più vera per te:

- Non parlo affatto italiano.
- Parlo poco italiano.
- Parlo italiano bene.
- Parlo italiano molto bene.
- Parlo italiano da madrelingua.

25. In quali **altre lingue** te la **cavi** (almeno ad un livello A2)?
Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Inglese
- Tedesco
- Francese
- Spagnolo
- Altro: _____.

APPENDIX B: Students' Questionnaire 2

QUESTIONARIO 2
SULL'APPRENDIMENTO INFORMALE
NELL'EDUCAZIONE LINGUISTICA (TEDESCO)
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali Comparati
Laurea Magistrale in Scienze del Linguaggio
Marco Bellini

Prima di cominciare

1. Indica la tua **sezione** di appartenenza: 3^ ____.
2. Senza apportare modifiche, riporta **lo stesso nickname che hai utilizzato per il precedente questionario:** _____

Percezione dell'apprendimento informale del tedesco

3. Dai un occhio al **quesito 17** dove ti vengono presentate molte attività che puoi svolgere quando sei **fuori dalla scuola** e decidi di praticarle **di tua spontanea volontà (ATTIVITÀ NON IMPOSTE O ORGANIZZATE DALLA SCUOLA)**. **Ti sei mai accorto** che ci sono così tante attività che potresti fare fuori dalla scuola in tedesco?
 - Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
4. Generalmente, quando compi attività in tedesco fuori dalla scuola di tua spontanea volontà le fai **intenzionalmente per imparare il tedesco**?
 - Sì, le compio unicamente per migliorare il mio tedesco.
 - Sì, migliorare il tedesco è uno dei miei obiettivi principali.
 - Sì, migliorare il tedesco è uno dei miei tanti obiettivi.
 - No, migliorare il tedesco non è uno dei miei obiettivi.
 - No, non mi pongo obiettivi quando compio attività extrascolastiche.
 - Non saprei perché non svolgo attività in tedesco fuori dalla scuola.
5. **Dopo** avere compiuto attività extrascolastiche in tedesco di tua spontanea volontà, **rifletti** mai su quanto queste attività ti possano essere state utili al fine di migliorarlo?
 - No, mai
 - Solo raramente
 - Di solito sì
 - Sì, sempre
 - Non saprei perché non compio attività extrascolastiche in tedesco.
6. Sai cos'è il **portfolio linguistico europeo**?
 - No
 - Sì
7. **Se sì**, quanto spesso l'hai usato alla scuola media per **riflettere** sul tipo di apprendimento che hai compiuto attraverso questo tipo di attività?
 - Mai
 - Solo raramente
 - Di solito
 - Sempre
 - Non saprei perché non compio questo tipo di attività.

8. Secondo te, quanto è **utile** usare il tedesco fuori dalla scuola **al fine di impararlo**?
- Moltissimo
 - Molto
 - Abbastanza
 - Poco
 - Pochissimo
 - Per niente
9. Secondo te, fare attività extrascolastiche in tedesco di propria iniziativa è **più utile al fine di impararlo** rispetto al solo studiarlo per la scuola?
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
10. Per te, **il tedesco** equivale semplicemente a una **materia scolastica**?
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
11. Secondo te, **il tedesco** è parte integrante della **vita reale**?
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
12. **Se sì**, perché lo è? Dai una breve risposta:
_____.
13. Segna l'affermazione che ritieni più vera per te:
- Il tedesco si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi.
 - Il tedesco si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale.
 - Il tedesco si impara mediante l'integrazione dei due punti precedenti perché nessuno dei due da solo basta.
14. Secondo te, **apprendere il tedesco fuori dalla scuola** in attività che *tu* scegli di fare rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che dovrai compiere **da adulto senza l'appoggio della scuola**?
- Decisamente sì
 - Più sì che no
 - Più no che sì
 - Decisamente no
15. **Se sì**, come definiresti questo **tipo di apprendimento** che continua anche quando **non ci sono dei professori che ti obbligano** a studiare? Definiscilo in non più di sei parole:
"Apprendimento _____".
16. Come trovi **l'apprendimento del tedesco fuori dalla scuola**? Descrivilo usando tre **aggettivi**:
_____.

L'apprendimento informale del tedesco

17. Segna nella seguente lista la frequenza con cui svolgi le seguenti attività quando sei **fuori dalla scuola** e decidi di praticarle **di tua spontanea volontà (ATTIVITÀ NON IMPOSTE O ORGANIZZATE DALLA SCUOLA)**:

ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA	ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA
1. Ascolto canzoni in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	2. Guardo video su YouTube in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
3. Guardo film in streaming in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	4. Guardo la televisione in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
5. Uso applicazioni nel cellulare che emettono audio in tedesco per impararlo (Duolingo, Memrise, Babbel, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	6. Ascolto videogiochi che parlano in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
7. Ascolto i turisti parlare in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	8. Guardo programmi televisivi che hanno lo scopo di insegnare il tedesco divertendosi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
9. Guardo programmi televisivi che non hanno lo scopo di insegnare il tedesco, ma che comunque utilizzano parole tedesche (film, sitcom, pubblicità, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	10. Visito siti internet che emettono audio in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
11. La mia sveglia riproduce parole in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	12. Ascolto le persone parlare tedesco quando visito paesi di lingua tedesca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
13. Scrivo hashtag sui social network in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	14. Scrivo canzoni in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana

15. Scrivo poesie in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	16. Scrivo brevi racconti in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
17. Scrivo in tedesco nelle conversazioni su WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	18. Scrivo frasi in tedesco nella sezione "info" di WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
19. Scrivo in tedesco il mio stato sui social network (Facebook, Twitter, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	20. Scrivo in tedesco per conoscere amici di penna stranieri attraverso applicazioni del cellulare (HelloTalk, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
21. Scrivo in tedesco per conoscere amici di penna stranieri attraverso l'uso del computer (PenPal World, InterPals, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	22. Scrivo in tedesco in gruppi di Facebook utili per imparare il tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
23. Scrivo in tedesco in gruppi di Facebook per parlare di una passione comune al gruppo (che non è il tedesco)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	24. Ricopio le parole tedesche che sento o leggo su un mio quaderno (<u>scelgo io di ricopiarle e non me lo impone in alcun modo la scuola</u>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
25. Ricopio le parole tedesche che sento o leggo su un mio dispositivo elettronico (cellulare, tablet ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	26. Cerco su Google parole in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
27. Scrivo in tedesco sui videogiochi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	28. Scrivo parole tedesche sul mio diario personale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana

29. Leggo parole in tedesco sui siti internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	30. Leggo parole in tedesco sui social network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
31. Leggo scritte in tedesco nei videogiochi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	32. Leggo parole in tedesco nei cartelli per strada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
33. Leggo parole in tedesco al supermercato	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	34. Leggo scritte in tedesco in bus, tram, ecc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
35. Leggo nomi di auto tedesche quando sono per strada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	36. Faccio karaoke con canzoni tedesche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
37. Condivido immagini con scritte in tedesco sui social network (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	38. Condivido immagini con scritte in tedesco sullo stato di WhatsApp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
39. Leggo le istruzioni in tedesco che si trovano nella parte posteriore di alcuni oggetti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	40. Leggo le istruzioni in tedesco che si trovano nella parte posteriore di alcuni alimenti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
41. Leggo poesie in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	42. Leggo brevi racconti in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana

43. Leggo le parole tedesche che compaiono in televisione	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	44. Leggo le parole tedesche che compaiono sui giornali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
45. Parlo in tedesco su Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	46. Canto in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
47. Gioco con giochi di società che implicano che dica parole tedesche	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	48. Utilizzo parole tedesche per parlare coi miei amici di una passione comune (il calcio, gli anime, le serie tv, i fumetti ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
49. Parlo in tedesco quando visito paesi di lingua tedesca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	50. Parlo con chi conosco in tedesco perché mi piace il tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
51. Parlo coi turisti in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	52. Parlo tedesco quando utilizzo alcune applicazioni del cellulare che non sono pensate per fare imparare una lingua (Shazam, Siri, video Instagram/Facebook, ecc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
53. Invio audio su WhatsApp in cui dico delle parole in tedesco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	54. Faccio esercizi in più di tedesco <u>che scelgo io di fare (e che non mi impone in alcun modo la scuola)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
55. Uso il dizionario online per cercare parole tedesche <u>che scelgo io di usare (e che non mi impone in alcun modo la scuola)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana 	56. Studio nuovi argomenti di tedesco <u>che scelgo io di studiare (e che non mi impone in alcun modo la scuola)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana

18. Ci sono altre attività **che non sono state menzionate nella domanda precedente** che compi quando sei **fuori dalla scuola** e che pratici di tua **spontanea volontà** (**ATTIVITÀ NON IMPOSTE O ORGANIZZATE DALLA SCUOLA**)? Se sì, scrivi qui di seguito quali sono ricordandoti di segnare con che **frequenza** le pratici:

ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA	ATTIVITÀ	FREQUENZA
.....	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana
.....	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana	<input type="radio"/> Mai <input type="radio"/> 1 volta alla settimana <input type="radio"/> 2/3 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Da 4 a 6 volte alla settimana <input type="radio"/> Più di 6 volte alla settimana

Alcune Generalità

19. Indica la tua **età** in cifre: ____.

20. Qual è la tua **nazionalità**?

- Italiana
- Bengalese
- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

21. Qual è la tua **lingua madre** (o quali sono)?
Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Italiano
- Bengalese
- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

22. Quale **lingua** (o quali lingue) normalmente parli in **famiglia**?
Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Italiano
- Bengalese
- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

23. Quale **lingua** (o quali lingue) normalmente parli coi tuoi **amici**?
Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Italiano
- Bengalese
- Cinese
- Altro: _____.

24. **Rispondi solo se non sei di nazionalità italiana**
Segna l'affermazione che ritieni più vera per te:

- Non parlo affatto italiano.
- Parlo poco italiano.
- Parlo italiano bene.
- Parlo italiano molto bene.
- Parlo italiano da madrelingua.

25. In quali **altre lingue** te la **cavi** (almeno ad un livello A2)?

Puoi indicare più di una risposta.

- Inglese
- Tedesco
- Francese
- Spagnolo
- Altro: _____.

APPENDIX C: Transcripts of Teachers' Interviews

English Teacher A

Marco	Gentile docente, le porrò alcune domande riguardanti l'apprendimento informale nell'educazione linguistica, ossia le attività che si compiono in contesti extrascolastici di propria iniziativa e che non sono in alcun modo organizzate o imposte da istituzioni educative. Partiremo da alcune domande che io ho premeditatamente pensato e che saranno la nostra bussola. Tuttavia, lei potrà benissimo ampliare, qualora lo ritenga opportuno, per esprimere al meglio il suo pensiero. Prima di iniziare le ricordo inoltre che questa registrazione sarà utilizzata al solo scopo di ricerca nell'ambito della mia tesi di laurea magistrale e verrà eliminata non appena trascritta in word. I dati saranno trattati in pieno anonimato suo e della scuola tutta. La invito quindi a non temere di esprimere le sue idee riguardo questi temi. Non vi è una risposta giusta o sbagliata da dare, ma solo la sua idea che potrà esprimere liberamente affinché io possa basarmi su dati il più possibile veritieri. L'intervista durerà massimo 25 minuti da ora.
Teacher	Bene!
Marco	Le consegno la scheda perché possa vedere queste attività che verranno proposte nei questionari per gli studenti, attività informali, extrascolastiche, che possono fare di propria iniziativa... Ne ho trovate diverse.
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Dopo aver letto la griglia di attività extrascolastiche proposte nel questionario per gli studenti, le pongo la seguente domanda: si è mai resa conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese?
Teacher	Sì, sicuramente!
Marco	Quindi, lei già sapeva che c'erano queste diverse possibilità di apprendimento informale fuori dalla scuola?
Teacher	Io penso che i ragazzi siano immersi in una realtà in cui compare spesso la lingua inglese perché ascoltano musica, giocano con la playstation e con i videogiochi... A volte scopro casualmente che conoscono frasi, parole o espressioni che derivano sicuramente non dal libro di testo. Secondo me, però, almeno alla scuola media, non riescono ancora a compiere la fusione tra quello che è l'inglese della vita reale e quello che è l'inglese all'interno dell'aula scolastica.
Marco	Interessante, sì!
Teacher	E non riescono nell'aula scolastica a trovare, o spesso a dimostrare o manifestare, la motivazione e, di conseguenza, la partecipazione che invece li vede coinvolti in attività extrascolastiche dove magari a livello non consapevole, non conscio, registrano comunque informazioni in lingua inglese.
Marco	Quindi c'è una sorta, diciamo di... dislivello del fatto che non riescono a coniugare questi due tipi di apprendimento, quello più scolastico e quello extrascolastico.
Teacher	Forse non ne sono proprio consapevoli.
Marco	Infatti la mia prossima domanda era questa: secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività?
Teacher	Sì e no. Più no che sì. Uno: secondo me non ne sono tanto consapevoli. Due: continuano a tenere separata la sfera della vita reale, del mondo reale, delle attività che compiono come personaggi reali da quelle che si svolgono nell'aula scolastica perché quando mi capita di far loro notare questa cosa restano stupiti oppure dicono: "Ah, sì, è vero!".
Marco	Cioè trovano questo collegamento tra questi due tipi di realtà, scolastica e non scolastica, quando lei glielo fa notare, diciamo, la maggior parte delle volte.
Teacher	Sì, sì!
Marco	In quel momento si stupiscono.

Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Perché riescono a ritrovare che è un puzzle che si completa in un qualche modo.
Teacher	Sì, una bella immagine! Esatto! Credo che loro tendano a vedere la scuola come un luogo accademico.
Marco	E forse a se stante, che non ha a che fare con la realtà. E questa è una delle domande del questionario, se percepiscono l'inglese come una materia scolastica o come uno strumento di vita reale. La mia domanda, a questo punto, è, ma già mi ha anticipato: lei è a conoscenza delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontanea volontà? Se sì, di quali? Ne parla con loro?
Teacher	No, poco. Manca il tempo e poi soprattutto si potrebbe fare in una situazione ideale, che <i>non</i> è reale, con gruppi classe motivati e interessati. Invece, nella realtà succede che di un gruppo classe un terzo potrebbe essere interessato e partecipare, collaborare in attività di questo tipo. Un terzo ne è assolutamente indifferente. Un terzo disturba.
Marco	Quindi, il fattore motivazione è cruciale.
Teacher	Ma anche maturità. È una fascia d'età questa abbastanza bassa. Infatti, io noto, ho notato, che in prima media sono molto più motivati e interessati. Dimostrano più entusiasmo per imparare in prima media, quando sono più piccoli, che non in seconda o in terza. In seconda e in terza aumenta il gap tra i bravi e i non bravi ed è difficile avere quella fascia di mezzo.
Marco	Lei mi aveva anticipato che alla fine è anche il livello che uno ha, se ho capito bene, di inglese che può spingerli poi a compiere questo tipo di attività fuori dalla scuola. Però mi pare di capire che non sia tanto il livello, cioè non è una questione di prima media, seconda media, terza media... Perché una prima media dovrebbe essere più motivata?
Teacher	Perché sono più piccoli, perché arrivano dalla scuola elementare, perché hanno più entusiasmo. Non è che siano motivati ad apprendere, hanno più entusiasmo. Piace probabilmente apprendere, la novità della scuola media, questo sistema che li fa sentire più maturi.
Marco	Questo sistema li spinge a compiere attività di loro iniziativa fuori dalla scuola?
Teacher	Ah beh, questo ha ragione, non lo so, perché io sto sempre pensando alla realtà scolastica. Fuori dalla scuola... Avevo perso di vista il punto! Fuori dalla scuola, mi è difficile dirlo perché, avendo classi da dover gestire nello spazio orario di un'ora con i compiti da correggere, il programma da svolgere e controllare eccetera eccetera, resta pochissimo tempo per fare dell'altro.
Marco	Però potremmo concludere dicendo che ok, lei non è a conoscenza molto delle attività che i suoi studenti possono fare fuori dalla scuola, però comunque pensa che il fattore entusiasmo iniziale del primo anno della scuola media sia incisivo in un qualche modo anche nel compiere queste attività fuori dalla scuola, anche se comunque lei non è veramente a conoscenza poi delle loro attività... Però il fattore entusiasmo della prima media secondo lei comunque incide in questo processo.
Teacher	Non so se ho capito bene, l'entusiasmo incide nella partecipazione e nell'interesse.
Marco	Nell'interesse che però potrebbe riflettersi anche fuori dalla scuola!
Teacher	Partecipazione che poi va scemando in seconda. In terza generalmente si crea una situazione per cui un gruppo di ragazzi che pensano di proseguire gli studi in scuole di livello buono o alto sono più responsabili e quindi si applicano di più. Per cui alcuni danno degli ottimi risultati. Mentre per la maggior parte, è semplicemente una materia scolastica e, anzi, non sempre piace, la trovano difficile, la dimenticano perché non usandola non memorizzano né il lessico né le funzioni comunicative.
Marco	Anche di questo non ne siamo sicuri perché ha detto che non è a conoscenza veramente se usano la lingua o no fuori dalla scuola.
Teacher	Sì, però se resta a livello inconscio che conoscono venti termini collegati a un gioco di ruolo non è che sia tanto utile. In prima sono, secondo me, almeno secondo la mia esperienza e da quello che vedo, troppo piccoli e hanno una conoscenza troppo limitata per guardare la televisione o programmi televisivi o

	scrivere canzoni in inglese o racconti in inglese. Già sarebbe difficile che le leggessero, figuriamoci scriverle...
Marco	Quindi il livello incide! Le pongo un'altra domanda: pensa che questo tipo di apprendimento che avviene fuori dalla scuola di loro spontanea volontà sia antitetico rispetto a quello più propriamente scolastico? Sono due tipi di apprendimento opposti tra di loro o che potrebbero, diciamo, coniugarsi, completarsi?
Teacher	Non sono sicura di capire bene... Secondo me, l'apprendimento deve completarsi e integrarsi! Però un adulto lo fa consapevolmente, coscientemente. Ecco, in questa fascia d'età è più difficile che sia consapevole. Da quello che posso dire io, nel corso degli anni è diminuita la capacità di attenzione o la scolarizzazione così come la intendevamo una volta. Sono sicuramente bombardati dall'inglese e da messaggi che continuamente dicono loro che è importante conoscere questa lingua, ma secondo me non riescono a vivere spesso la scuola o quello che imparano a scuola come un ponte verso il domani, verso il futuro o verso il mondo esterno.
Marco	Quindi ritorniamo al discorso di prima. Detto in altri termini, secondo lei, fare attività extrascolastiche in inglese/tedesco di propria iniziativa è più utile al fine di impararlo rispetto al solo studiarlo per la scuola? Da quello che ho capito, in verità forse abbiamo già risposto, i ragazzi non ne sono consapevoli, non sono consapevoli, diciamo, della lingua, di quello che imparano a scuola come un ponte verso la vita reale. Quindi, direi che comunque, mi sembra di capire da quello che dice, che sono due tipi di apprendimento, dentro la scuola e fuori dalla scuola, allo stesso modo importanti secondo lei. Solo che bisogna avere quella capacità, quella maturità per saperli gestire e coniugarli nel modo più giusto. Forse questo è il suo pensiero, mi sembra di aver capito. Quindi, il ruolo della scuola qual è: è quello di privilegiare uno a sfavore dell'altro? O pensa che la scuola debba concentrarsi più sugli aspetti grammaticali, appunto, sull'apprendimento più propriamente scolastico perché comunque fuori dalla scuola sarebbe difficile apprenderlo? Qual è il compito della scuola secondo lei?
Teacher	Il compito della scuola è innanzitutto formativo secondo me: io come insegnante sarei soddisfatta del mio lavoro se sapessi che almeno un terzo dei miei studenti avesse maturato l'interesse e la curiosità all'apertura mentale e alla consapevolezza che imparare non solo è utile, ma è anche bello e interessante... dà di più! Insegnare è una parola grossa, cioè io posso dire: "Insegno le regole", però delle regole da sole non se ne fa niente nessuno! D'altra parte, se non hanno uno scheletro grammaticale di base, poi anche se sono brillanti, fantasiosi, hanno lessico, hanno iniziativa e entusiasmo, alle superiori crollerebbero perché comunque il sistema scolastico è sempre basato su un binario molto rigido! Cioè se tu non sai o non esegui correttamente... allora è vero che a livello europeo, a livello teorico parliamo tanto che si apprende una lingua per il saper fare, ma la scuola fa tanta fatica ad adeguarsi. Forse oggi giorno che cominciano a portare all'università... e agli ultimi anni del liceo sono molto più coinvolti, sono molto più interessati.
Marco	Diciamo che, se ho capito bene, tornerebbe a sfavore degli studenti il fatto di non studiare in modo propriamente scolastico a scuola. Cioè se io portassi in classe quello che è l'apprendimento informale, cioè fare queste attività per imparare una lingua che le ho mostrato nel questionario al posto di dare alcune nozioni di grammatica, tornerebbe a sfavore degli studenti proprio nel processo di istruzione perché anche le scuole seguenti, le scuole superiori, richiederebbero invece probabilmente sempre un apprendimento più propriamente scolastico.
Teacher	No, attenzione. Tutte queste attività, loro le svolgono saltuariamente o per periodi brevi e credo che tutto sommato saranno le più semplici quelle che saranno segnate di più. Quindi è... un corollario! È qualcosa in aggiunta, è qualcosa che portato in classe, una canzone, YouTube, un video... portato in classe può sicuramente aumentare l'attenzione in quel momento, non so quanta ricaduta abbia o la ricaduta è più sull'aspetto generale... dell'approccio che non sull'apprendimento. E la difficoltà... perché non si può fare questo? Perché la scuola è impostata su un

	metodo grammaticale e alla fine insegna poco o forse anche molto poco potremmo dire? Perché loro fuori dalla scuola non vivono in una realtà inglese: in realtà non sentono l'inglese, non parlano l'inglese... anche i loro contatti di internet, di YouTube, di videogiochi sono molto circoscritti a quell'utilizzo, al tempo libero che ci dedicano magari con quel gruppo ristretto di amici, ma resta non parte della loro vita ma un'attività del tempo libero... Tipo "Oggi vado a calcio, poi vado a catechismo, poi faccio il videogioco". Non so se mi spiego... Non è naturale!
Marco	Le pongo un'altra domanda allora visto che siamo già entrati in tema... Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare? È l'apprendimento di cui parlava... Mi ricollego al fatto che lei concepisce la scuola da un punto di vista formativo e non solo nel trasmettere delle nozioni. Io penso che questo abbia a che fare con il fatto che poi, appunto, i suoi studenti nel corso della loro vita dovranno comunque sentire sempre questo tipo di... avere questo atteggiamento nei confronti anche di cose che impareranno durante tutta la loro vita. Quindi, penso si rifaccia molto a quello che ha detto. Quindi, come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare, cosa che fanno da adulti?
Teacher	Beh, quello che in teoria facciamo noi!
Marco	Esatto!
Teacher	Quello che fanno gli esseri umani!
Marco	Che tipo di apprendimento potrebbe essere? Quale aggettivo potrebbe dare?
Teacher	Esperienza!
Marco	Quindi sì, esperienziale! Dell'esperienza.
Teacher	Esperienza mi viene da pensare come primo termine per indicare un apprendimento che si accumula. L'esperienza non è apprendimento. E soprattutto l'esperienza non è apprendimento di nozioni, di concetti... non è un migliorare le proprie conoscenze.
Marco	Perché non è un migliorare le proprie conoscenze l'esperienza?
Teacher	Perché non miglioro le mie conoscenze... ehm... ad esempio di musica... migliorano se io ho una passione e la seguo, ma altrimenti non è che l'esperienza... ehm... della vita insegna... Sì, sono termini che a volte si presentano con significati diversi. Allora potremmo definire l'esperienza che accumuli nelle cose che ti piacciono, nelle cose che fai... che ti portano ovviamente a sapere di più!
Marco	Ma non nelle cose più serie diciamo... Perché secondo lei si imparerebbe fuori dalla scuola magari in un modo un po' più frammentato, questo intende? Si potrebbe imparare ad esempio di musica ma senza mai raggiungere un certo livello?
Teacher	Ma perché no? Però è tutto molto molto limitato alle singole persone, ai singoli individui perché ci sono persone curiose nei confronti del mondo e della vita e che amano imparare o che imparano anche senza rendersene conto e persone che non imparano mai niente.
Marco	Però appunto poi torniamo al discorso entusiasmo, motivazione e al fatto che magari la scuola, se ho capito bene, deve lasciare proprio questo negli studenti per la loro vita: il fatto di avere sempre quella curiosità di imparare, quindi magari questa è anche l'accezione di quando diceva ruolo formativo, compito formativo della scuola.
Teacher	Sì, sì!
Marco	Alcune domande per concludere: lei conosce il portfolio linguistico europeo?
Teacher	Sì!

Marco	L'ha mai fatto usare ai suoi studenti? Sa che si potrebbero registrare in questo portfolio le esperienze fatte fuori dalla scuola per poi riflettere sul loro apprendimento... L'ha mai fatto usare?
Teacher	No, non mi è chiaro!
Marco	Si potrebbe usare il portfolio linguistico europeo perché gli studenti possano riflettere proprio su queste attività che svolgono fuori dalla scuola. Lei lo conosce e la mia domanda è: l'ha mai fatto usare questo strumento? Pensa che sia utile?
Teacher	No, allora forse non so se ho risposto correttamente prima... Conosco il portfolio nel senso di acquisizione di funzioni comunicative che portano a dei livelli certificati a livello europeo.
Marco	Sì, però c'è anche un tipo di portfolio, appunto, dove possono registrare le esperienze fatte fuori dalla scuola per poi riflettere su queste.
Teacher	No. Allora questo non lo conosco.
Marco	Ok, stiamo per concludere. Alcuni brevi domande... Qua mi ha già risposto... Al fine di imparare l'inglese è importante anche l'aspetto dell'apprendimento informale? Qua mi ha già risposto, appunto, e mi ha detto che dipende dalla maturità e altri fattori per poi coniugare questi due mondi, scolastico e non scolastico. Scelga l'affermazione con cui più è in sintonia e la giustifichi: 1) l'inglese si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi, 2) l'inglese si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale; 3) serve una integrazione dei due punti precedenti per imparare il tedesco perché nessuno dei due da solo basta. In verità mi ha risposto prima!
Teacher	Sì.
Marco	L'integrazione data la maturità e l'entusiasmo dello studente, la curiosità... Due domande secche e poi abbiamo finito: come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola? Lo descriva usando tre aggettivi.
Teacher	Essenziale, molto motivante e di grande soddisfazione per i ragazzi se ne sono consapevoli.
Marco	E come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola? Con tre aggettivi.
Teacher	Noioso per la maggior parte di loro.
Marco	Ma lei come lo trova? Abbiamo capito che per gli studenti può risultare noioso... Al fine di imparare una lingua come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese in classe?
Teacher	Comunque positivo... bisogna cercare, secondo me, di attirare la loro attenzione, di avere la loro attenzione per avere qualcosa e poi puoi farli concentrare sull'esecuzione degli esercizi, delle attività.
Marco	Quindi mi dice che pecca di qualche mancanza se mi dice così? Quindi è un po', diciamo, difettoso? Potrebbe essere un aggettivo? Dato che non è totalmente utile.
Teacher	Non sarà mai totalmente utile perché non avremo mai classi ideali in cui tutti i ragazzi sono motivati all'apprendimento. La maggior parte di loro non è interessata e tu di fronte a un ragazzino disinteressato, svogliato, distratto non hai armi... Cosa fai?
Marco	Per cui questo apprendimento in certe situazioni potrebbe risultare noioso, causa di distrazione e così via.
Teacher	L'apprendimento scolastico basato sullo svolgimento del programma e sul libro di testo al 70-75% credo risulti un po' noioso e un po' faticoso per tutti finché non li riesci a coinvolgere da un punto di vista un po' personale.
Marco	Ok, la ringrazio!
Teacher	Grazie a lei!

English Teacher B

Marco	Gentile docente, le porrò alcune domande riguardanti l'apprendimento informale nell'educazione linguistica, ossia le attività che si compiono in contesti extrascolastici di propria iniziativa e che non sono in alcun modo organizzate o imposte da istituzioni educative. Partiremo da alcune domande che io ho premeditadamente pensato e che saranno la nostra bussola. Tuttavia, lei potrà
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	benissimo ampliare, qualora lo ritenga opportuno, per esprimere al meglio il suo pensiero. Prima di iniziare le ricordo inoltre che questa registrazione sarà utilizzata al solo scopo di ricerca nell'ambito della mia tesi di laurea magistrale e verrà eliminata non appena trascritta in word. I dati saranno trattati in pieno anonimato suo e della scuola tutta. La invito quindi a non temere di esprimere le sue idee riguardo questi temi. Non vi è una risposta giusta o sbagliata da dare, ma solo la sua idea che potrà esprimere liberamente affinché io possa basarmi su dati il più possibile veritieri. L'intervista durerà massimo 25 minuti da ora.
Teacher	Ok!
Marco	Allora le faccio vedere una parte del questionario per gli studenti dove ci sono queste attività. Mi interessa che veda la tabella, dia un occhio! Sono, appunto, attività che i ragazzi potrebbero fare fuori dalla scuola di loro spontanea volontà per quanto riguarda l'inglese... o il tedesco che sia. Dopo aver letto la griglia di attività extrascolastiche proposte nel questionario per gli studenti, le pongo la seguente domanda: si è mai resa conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese?
Teacher	Sicuramente! L'unico, diciamo, problema è che questi sono ragazzini molto giovani.
Marco	Sì, come sa però i questionari verranno somministrati in tre classi di terza.
Teacher	Sì, comunque sono ancora giovani e, in generale, i ragazzi, parliamo sempre in generale, sono abbastanza immaturi... ma anche per quanto riguarda un'autonomia di ricerca, di interessi... hanno sempre bisogno di essere guidati. Allora... il loro unico interesse è chattare, piuttosto che Facebook... hanno degli interessi molto mirati... ehm... qui vedo, appunto... si parla anche di giochi del computer, con il computer no? Eh... lì non sanno cosa vuol dire quello che... non so... il nome del gioco! Oppure quali sono, come si dice... ehm... come si procede nel gioco! Non ho mai giocato a un giochino del computer, quindi le mie informazioni...
Marco	Le istruzioni potrebbero essere in inglese!
Teacher	Certo! Ma loro, magari perché giocano con qualcun altro che può magari aver chiesto... non fanno come ricerca spontanea! Ce ne sarà uno su 500 che guarda! Perché poi scopro che, ad esempio, il verbo "fight" ... io dico: "Guardate che questo sapete sicuramente che cosa vuol dire perché lo trovate!" Ci sono vari verbi "send"... no? ... che possono trovare, ma non hanno fatto una ricerca precedente! E anche il fatto di... ehm... loro guardano programmi americani ma in italiano! Non sono neanche consapevoli che siano americani tra l'altro!
Marco	E la mia domanda, appunto... si sta ricollegando a una domanda che volevo farle: secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività?
Teacher	Non sono consapevoli!
Marco	Secondo lei, non lo sono!
Teacher	Nella maggioranza dei casi non sono consapevoli! Loro l'aspetto utilitaristico, ad esempio, appunto a questo livello... tranne veramente pochi... ehm... lo fanno soltanto perché magari piace quella cantante o quel cantante... allora provano magari a cantarla in inglese e... pochi hanno la curiosità di...
Marco	Approfondire?
Teacher	Di approfondire che cosa vuol dire... "Ah, conosco questa parola"!
Marco	Ma secondo lei, il fatto che siano esposti a queste attività in lingua inglese alla fine non è molto utile al fine di apprendere l'inglese?
Teacher	Loro...ehm... è come no? ... la differenza tra "hear" e "listen"... Loro sentono, ma non ascoltano!
Marco	Senza attenzione! E rileva, inoltre, da quanto ho capito, una mancanza di interesse generale...
Teacher	Cioè, questo... non per l'inglese... Se, oggi, chiedessi... ehm... così... "Avete saputo che è tornato Nespoli?" Penso che quelli di terza media, forse ce ne sarà uno che sa, io saprei già chi è... no? Perché è un ragazzo che è sempre molto attento all'attualità. Ma gli altri mi guarderebbero... "Tornato da dove? È andato a

	fare un viaggio?” Vivono poi quasi una realtà parallela loro, no? Sappiamo benissimo quel...
Marco	Però la mia domanda allora, a questo punto, è ha conoscenza delle attività che i suoi studenti effettivamente fanno di loro spontaneità fuori dalla scuola? Cioè ne parla con loro?
Teacher	Attività con l'inglese o in generale?
Marco	Con l'inglese! Cioè... ne parla con loro?
Teacher	Allora io so di qualcuno... perché... parliamo sempre di ragazzi di terza... perché è particolarmente... allora, intanto dipende anche dal contesto familiare per quanto riguarda gli italiani. Ma può valere anche per gli stranieri... Allora, per quanto riguarda gli italiani, vale sicuramente il contesto familiare, se anche i genitori hanno un'attività e un livello culturale di un certo livello, sono quasi indirettamente motivati a... ad interessarsi all'inglese. Poi, c'è qualcuno che comunque...ecco... Per quanto, riguarda gli stranieri, noi abbiamo la realtà non tanto dei cinesi che sono un mondo davvero molto difficile da penetrare, veramente tutto da scoprire... per quanto riguarda i bengalesi, magari il background culturale della famiglia...
Marco	Quindi diciamo che ne ha parlato con le famiglie più che con i ragazzi o mi sbaglio?
Teacher	No, no! Magari qualche genitore che può chiedermi: “Ma, secondo lei, mio figlio guarda dei film in inglese con il sottotitolo...” Anche a me piacerebbe farlo a scuola, però... finché loro lo fanno a casa, i responsabili sono i genitori dei contenuti... A scuola è molto difficile, si rischia di sbagliare. È un'attività interessante, però ... ehm... dovrebbe essere molto controllato il linguaggio, i contenuti...
Marco	E forse anche guidati nell'apprendimento?
Teacher	Certo! Non so... A casa è una cosa molto libera...
Marco	Quindi, lei, diciamo, è un po'... scettica, potremmo dire, su questa... sull'apprendimento informale nell'educazione linguistica?
Teacher	A quest'età!
Marco	A quest'età sì!
Teacher	Cioè, secondo me... alcune di queste domande non sono tarate per ragazzini di quest'età, sono attività a un livello...
Marco	Sì, sono d'accordo... Alcune, è vero come ad esempio “scrivere brevi racconti”, ero consapevole... però volevo provare... magari c'è il genio nella classe che lo fa!
Teacher	Ehm... c'è troppa poca esposizione...ehm... come si dice?... consapevole all'inglese!
Marco	Consapevolezza... Quindi, lei comunque con i suoi ragazzi non ha mai avuto occasione... ehm... magari di... sì, appunto non si è mai creata l'occasione di parlare di cosa possano fare fuori dalla scuola per la lingua inglese...
Teacher	Per l'inglese, allora, ci sono... quelli che magari fanno qualche cosa sempre di, tra virgolette, scolastico.
Marco	Di loro spontanea volontà?
Teacher	Eh... ehm... A quest'età ci sono i genitori! Vanno, tipo, seguono un corso della Oxford, ma non di ... ehm... una ripetizione... ecco... di approfondimento... di approfondimento!
Marco	O per preparare una certificazione magari?
Teacher	Sì, ma non è proprio mirata alla certificazione... perché l'hanno sempre fatto, l'hanno cominciato magari quando avevano cinque anni come un gioco... ehm... e sono contenti di far... contenti... sì, insomma... contenti di farlo, ecco!
Marco	Diciamo che comunque lei ha parlato... cioè ha avuto più occasione magari di parlare con le famiglie che con gli studenti riguardo quello, appunto, che, appunto, possono... se ho capito bene!
Teacher	Ma io so! Ma in realtà, io so! Perché magari loro me lo raccontano e mi dicono: “Eh, ma io vado alla Oxford” Quell'altro dice: “Io ascolto... sì, vedo film in

	inglese!” Però, nella maggioranza dei casi, è i giochini, i giochini... i giochini in inglese!
Marco	A questo punto, però, la mia domanda è: lei pensa che questo tipo di apprendimento, cioè apprendere fuori dalla scuola di propria spontanea volontà sia antitetico rispetto a quello...?
Teacher	No... assolutamente no!
Marco	Che relazione esiste, cioè... fare attività extrascolastiche in inglese di propria iniziativa è più utile al fine di imparare l'inglese? Qual è la relazione fra questi due tipi di apprendimento? Cioè si completano questi due...?
Teacher	Non sono assolutamente antitetici. Quello fuori dalla scuola potrebbe essere molto utile anche perché è fatto senza imposizione e quindi di solito le cose fatte... che non vengono imposte ma per scelta... sono... ehm... accolte... non sono accolte... sono poi... come si può dire? ... apprese, ricordate molto di più!
Marco	Ed è più utile secondo lei al fine di imparare l'inglese? Cioè mettendolo su una bilancia...
Teacher	Ehm... Potr... Torno a dire... Devono...Dev'essere a quest'età... a tutte le età... ma a quest'età in particolare o anche quelli più piccoli... ci dev'essere una motivazione... una soddisfazione! Cioè ci dev'essere uno scopo!
Marco	Uno scopo... Cosa intende per “soddisfazione”?
Teacher	“Ho capito! Ho capito!”
Marco	Lei obietta che non potrebbero capire completamente ora in ambito extrascolastico e quindi non sono soddisfatti!
Teacher	No, ma loro sono, cioè...ehm...Loro si accontentano anche di ascoltare una canzone in inglese...
Marco	Ma non di capirla fino in fondo?
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Quindi non essere soddisfatti!
Teacher	Può essere il video che a loro piace, il video abbinato a quella canzone, ma essere contenti così! Però quanto davvero serve per un vero apprendimento...
Marco	Attratti dal video più che dalla lingua inglese in sé?
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Ok, un'altra domanda: il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola. Conosce questo strumento?
Teacher	No!
Marco	Quindi se non lo conosce non l'ha fatto usare.
Teacher	No... Ma anche perché... ehm... la teoria è una cosa, la pratica è un'altra! Ecco! Cioè, si può portarli ad un certo livello indipendentemente dall'aver detto: “Guardate che adesso c'è questo percorso che faremo”... ecco!
Marco	Però, magari, lei prima diceva che sarebbe utile che loro fossero più consapevoli...
Teacher	Certo!
Marco	Questo strumento li farebbe riflettere perché consiste, appunto, questo tipo di portfolio nel fargli registrare le esperienze che hanno fatto fuori dalla scuola.
Teacher	Sì, allora... lei che ha visto nella realtà com'è... come sono le classi... alcune sono delle classi considerate buone, responsabili, gestibili... ecco! Ehm, vedrà come scappano via le tre ore settimanali... Di queste... ehm... non sono tre ore! Si riducono certe volte a due ore e mezza! Per... come si dice? ... intralci di vario di vario tipo, dai ritardi all'insegnate che si arrabbia perché l'alunno non ha fatto i compiti... intralci di vario tipo! Allora, si cerca anche di ottimizzare al massimo il tempo e forse, appunto, questa riflessione dovrebbero farla loro a casa!
Marco	Per questioni, dice, di logistica?
Teacher	Di logistica! Perché altrimenti... ehm... queste due ore e mezzo si ridurrebbero ulteriormente... no? Fino a qualche tempo fa, mi ero un po' interessata, però non lo so se ancora sia vero questo: in prima media, c'era la possibilità all'iscrizione di

	scegliere l'opzione di cinque ore di inglese, cioè l'inglese potenziato e di non fare la seconda lingua straniera, però non so se sia ancora valido! [...] ⁵⁴
Marco	Più ore di apprendimento formale servirebbero quindi?
Teacher	Secondo me, queste cinque ore potrebbero essere anche tre ore di insegnamento, chiamiamolo, normale e due ... insegnante affiancato da un madrelingua... cioè, qui nella scuola media viene molto trascurato il discorso madrelingua che secondo me è indispensabile! Perché noi possiamo spiegare la grammatica...
Marco	A proposito di grammatica, adesso le chiedo una cosa: facendo un attimo il punto della situazione, da quanto ho capito, attività scolastiche di propria iniziativa in lingua inglese non sono più utili, per lei, che lo studio, diciamo, più formale al fine di imparare la lingua? Sono due apprendimenti che si completano, quindi?
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Quindi, arriviamo alle ultime domande. Come concepisce la lingua che insegna: più come una materia scolastica da fare apprendere fine a se stessa o come qualcosa di vivo a cui gli studenti possono essere esposti oltre la scuola o persino per tutta la loro vita?
Teacher	Secondo, ovviamente, la seconda opzione! Come dicevo prima, per me il fattore tempo e motivazione sono indispensabili, tempo e motivazione. Io spesso li sollecito ad uscire dal loro microcosmo che può essere anche soltanto girare per l'Italia piuttosto che... cioè, intanto conoscere qualcosa, conoscere quello che è diverso da noi.
Marco	Sì, bene! Sono d'accordo anch'io!
Teacher	E quindi, conoscere anche la vita... andare in Australia piuttosto che andare in Gran Bretagna o.... ma comunque vedere nonostante loro siano più fortunati perché hanno culture diverse nella loro quotidianità... però viverlo veramente è un'altra cosa! Quindi, è sicuramente un'esperienza... Quella della scuola è un'esperienza, appunto, un po', come si dice... inamidata!
Marco	Quindi, da quanto ho capito, secondo lei serve, appunto, un'integrazione tra questi due mondi, quello più formale e quello informale...
Teacher	Eh, certo!
Marco	Anche se, mi corregga se sbaglio, pur... anche se lei, appunto, dà importanza all'apprendimento informale, al fatto di essere esposti alla lingua fuori dalla scuola, lei dice: "A quest'età, per mancanza di interesse, autonomia (e altri fattori che mi ha già detto) è più importante però che prevalga l'aspetto dell'apprendimento formale per dare una base solida affinché possano essere più autonomi proprio all'esterno"?
Teacher	Certo, proprio così!
Marco	Ok, ultimissime domande... Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare...in non più di sei parole... È un apprendimento...? Mi dica un aggettivo.
Teacher	Allora, nella gran parte dei casi penso sia utilitaristico finalizzato a.... Beh, io sono un po' rovinata dal fatto che i miei figli all'università... le loro materie molto spesso con la tesi di laurea venivano fatte in inglese... ma quelle sono materie scientifiche... quindi ovviamente... però, è chiaramente utilitaristico!
Marco	Ok, come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola? Con tre aggettivi... Mi dia tre aggettivi!
Teacher	Ma in generale?
Marco	Sempre riguardo l'inglese.
Teacher	Sì, ma in generale?
Marco	Sì, sì!

⁵⁴ Some sentences are omitted for ethical issues.

Teacher	Ma indipendentemente dall'età del discente?
Marco	Sì, indipendentemente dall'età del discente... al fine di imparare una lingua, ecco!
Teacher	Allora... Devono essere in ordine di importanza?
Marco	No, come vuole!
Teacher	Può essere fatico... la prima fase sarà faticosa. Ci sarà la fase faticosa, poi diventerà una fase piacevole, ecco... perché all'inizio...ehm... può essere faticoso, però può essere anche più o meno faticoso, ecco... non è detto che sia un ostacolo da... molto alto da superare, dipende!
Marco	Quindi, diciamo, che alla fine, come diceva prima, poi invece porta soddisfazione...
Teacher	Certam... Sicuramente!
Marco	Ultima domanda: l'apprendimento dell'inglese in classe. Tre aggettivi. Sempre generalmente parlando...
Teacher	Ma parlando a questo punto di ragazzi di quest'età?
Marco	Veda lei, se vuole farmi una distinzione.
Teacher	Perché arlare con un diciott... uno che fa il liceo linguistico piuttosto che con uno...
Marco	Allora faccia pure come prima... Le tre fasi quali potrebbero essere?
Teacher	Allora, se partiamo dalla scuola primaria...ehm... mi viene un aggettivo sciocco...scimmiesco... Nel senso... la mancanza di...
Marco	Ludico?
Teacher	Sì, mancanza di consapevolezza. Ma questo vale anche per gli italiani perché insegna la grammatica italiana.
Marco	Ma in generale magari come lo definirebbe? Al di là dell'età dei... perché la domanda è: come trova l'apprendimento... non specifico l'età apposta. È proprio in generale... in classe?
Teacher	È difficile definire... non parliamo di adulti?
Marco	Non le chiedo la percezione dei suoi studenti... Le chiedo: al fine di imparare una lingua come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese in classe?
Teacher	Ah, ho capito... Quindi, che potrebbe essere anche un "adeguato", "inadeguato"? Ehm... io dico... parzialmente adeguato perché secondo me, come dicevo prima, manca quell'aspetto di... intanto la scarsità di esposizione alla lingua e questo vale soprattutto per la scuola media dove non è istituzionalizzata la figura del lettore...
Marco	Sì... Ecco qua che ritorniamo quindi al fatto che, forse, l'apprendimento formale è compensato proprio da quello informale. Quindi, per qualche verso, potrebbe essere definito, se ho capito bene, un po' incompleto anche...
Teacher	Quello della scuola?
Marco	Sì!
Teacher	Certo!
Marco	Perfetto, la ringrazio!
Teacher	A lei!

English Teacher C

Marco	Gentile docente, le porrò alcune domande riguardanti l'apprendimento informale nell'educazione linguistica, ossia le attività che si compiono in contesti extrascolastici di propria iniziativa e che non sono in alcun modo organizzate o imposte da istituzioni educative. Partiremo da alcune domande che io ho premeditatamente pensato e che saranno la nostra bussola. Tuttavia, lei potrà benissimo ampliare, qualora lo ritenga opportuno, per esprimere al meglio il suo pensiero. Prima di iniziare le ricordo inoltre che questa registrazione sarà utilizzata al solo scopo di ricerca nell'ambito della mia tesi di laurea magistrale e verrà eliminata non appena trascritta in word. I dati saranno trattati in pieno anonimato suo e della scuola tutta. La invito quindi a non temere di esprimere le sue idee riguardo questi temi. Non vi è una risposta giusta o sbagliata da dare, ma solo la
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	sua idea che potrà esprimere liberamente affinché io possa basarmi su dati il più possibile veritieri. L'intervista durerà massimo 25 minuti da ora.
Teacher	D'accordo!
Marco	Allora, come lei sa, somministrerò due questionari agli studenti in cui chiedo che tipo di attività extrascolastiche fanno, se fanno attività, di loro iniziativa, appunto, fuori dalla scuola e io gliene propongo qualcuna e gli chiedo con che frequenza le fanno. Dia un occhio, non serve che le legga tutte... Solamente un occhio per vedere quali potrebbero essere, appunto, queste... Ad esempio, possono leggere su siti internet, giocare ai videogiochi, ascoltare canzoni, usare YouTube, scrivere stati sui social o hashtag...ehm... questo ecco! Dia un occhio e dopo aver letto la griglia di attività extrascolastiche proposte nel questionario per gli studenti, le pongo una domanda: si è mai reso conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese? Ne era consapevole?
Teacher	Sì, sì... Assolutamente consapevole!
Marco	Lei è a conoscenza delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontaneità fuori dalla scuola? Cioè, ne parlate o non si è mai creata un'occasione per questo scambio di informazioni?
Teacher	Io personalmente ne parlo con gli studenti e li invito spesso a praticare queste attività. Per esempio, li invito a leggere il testo della canzone in inglese che più gli piace e provare a guardare la traduzione italiana e a volte faccio intenzionalmente dei riferimenti a dei titoli oppure a degli elementi che conosco...
Marco	A cui possono incuriosirsi quindi?
Teacher	Sì! E li invito a loro volta a chiedermi se trovano magari nei videogiochi o in cose simili... se trovano dei termini che non capiscono... non con regolarità però abbastanza di frequente e questo spesso diventa spunto per ampliare il discorso lessicale intorno a un particolare argomento.
Marco	In un qualche modo, mi pare di capire, che lei diventi quasi una sorta di guida, quasi, perché fa da ponte tra questi due tipi di apprendimento, più scolastico ed extrascolastico...
Teacher	Sì! Questo è dovuto al fatto anche che sono convinto che con le tre ore settimanali che sono affidate al docente sia molto difficile riuscire a costruire un bagaglio completo, quindi incito sempre i ragazzi ad ampliare autonomamente.
Marco	Secondo lei, però, gli studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività? A quest'età sono consapevoli?
Teacher	A me è capitato di parlarne con alcuni di loro in alcune classi e loro, sì... ne sono consapevoli! Magari ci scherzano su, però...
Marco	Ma anche dalla prima?
Teacher	Anche in prima mi dicono: "Questo l'ho sentito in quel videogioco!", "Questo l'ho imparato in quel video!"...
Marco	Quindi sono consapevoli del loro apprendimento dell'inglese?
Teacher	Qualcuno sì! Non tutti, ovviamente, però qualcuno sì! Più fatica, invece, fanno con i film! Perché sono lunghi e sono impegnativi! Però capita che qualcuno alla cinquantesima volta che guarda il suo film preferito in italiano, la cinquantunesima decide di guardarlo in inglese. Però spesso è uno spunto dato anche dai genitori, questo qui dei film!
Marco	Lei ha parlato con le famiglie magari anche di quello che possono fare fuori dalla scuola?
Teacher	Ma nella mia esperienza di quest'anno o in generale?
Marco	In generale!
Teacher	Sì, ne ho parlato! Sì, sì... ne ho parlato spesso!
Marco	E quest'anno invece? C'è stata meno occasione?
Teacher	Quest'anno meno occasione... sì perché ho incontrato più raramente i genitori!
Marco	Ok! Pensa che questo tipo di apprendimento, cioè quello extrascolastico fatto di propria spontanea volontà fuori dalla scuola, sia antitetico rispetto a quello più propriamente scolastico? Che relazione c'è secondo lei fra questi due tipi di

	apprendimento? Si completano o uno è più importante dell'altro al fine di imparare una lingua?
Teacher	Secondo me, sono complementari! Soprattutto perché... il livello di difficoltà di comprensione base di una lingua è dettato dal lessico, non tanto dalla grammatica... ehm... quello che ci dà la comprensione immediata è conoscere il significato delle parole della frase e, quindi, per costruire il loro bagaglio lessicale io sono convinto che sia importante fare anche questo tipo di attività.
Marco	Quindi...ehm... l'apprendimento... diciamo... informale, cioè attività extrascolastiche fatte di propria iniziativa fuori dalla scuola, è quello che, appunto, come lei ha spiegato, è complementare a quello scolastico?
Teacher	Sì, io credo questo!
Marco	E il compito della scuola è, secondo lei, privilegiare di più quello propriamente scolastico o si potrebbe anche, magari... in un qualche modo... approfondire in classe alcune attività che potrebbero essere svolte fuori? Cioè, qual è il compito della scuola? Insegnare solo la grammatica e nozioni di studio o... o potrebbe, non so... ha qualche critica? Qual è, secondo lei, il compito della scuola?
Teacher	Secondo me, quello della scuola è il compito di creare un ponte fra la realtà, come abbiamo detto prima... fra la realtà che loro vivono tutti i giorni perché io gli ripeto quotidianamente che loro senza accorgersene sono immersi nell'inglese... dalla televisione a tutti i mezzi di comunicazione, le pubblicità! E quindi io li soffermo spesso a riflettere su...ehm... proprio il collegamento che c'è fra la realtà scolastica e la realtà esterna... Magari se c'è un argomento di interesse mediatico magari li soffermo a riflettere che quello che c'è sul libro è la stessa cosa che si vede in quella pubblicità e loro non ci arrivano da soli... bisogna guidarli in questo collegamento. Quindi, io credo che il percorso... l'obiettivo della scuola debba essere un po' quello... perché la grammatica da sola non basta!
Marco	Ok, ok! Anche se comunque, non so se lei condivide, magari la scuola dà quelle basi che, ad esempio anche di grammatica... che non potrebbero trovar fuori, proprio utili poi a capire di più quello che fuori fanno...
Teacher	Sì questo è vero per la maggior parte delle lingue. In inglese, in particolare, io credo che, avendo la grammatica inglese delle strutture piuttosto semplici, sia molto importante...ehm... forse più importante concentrarsi su proprio il vocabolario e di riconoscimento delle parole dall'orale allo scritto che non sempre avviene perché i ragazzi a volte trovano una parola sul libro, la vedono, poi la sentono e non la riconoscono come stessa parola! Sto parlando degli apprendenti italiani, insomma...che sono di madrelingua italiana! Quindi, è necessario fare questo ulteriore passaggio.
Marco	Mentre per quelli stranieri è un caso diverso, dice, adesso che quest'anno ci sono molti ragazzi bengalesi o cinesi?
Teacher	Ehm... io credo sia ancora più difficile per loro...
Marco	Più difficile?
Teacher	Sì, a meno che uno non abbia una esperienza di contatto diretto con la lingua inglese... loro devono fare addirittura un passaggio in più. Spesso, a livello fonetico, fanno fatica a riconoscere la fonetica italiana dal punto di vista orale... a tradurlo poi in scritto e in inglese fanno ancora più fatica! Anche perché magari vengono da lingue altre che hanno un alfabeto completamente diverso.
Marco	Ok, andando avanti... Il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola. Conosce questo strumento?
Teacher	Sì, sì, sì!
Marco	Ha mai avuto occasione di farlo usare...ehm... non so, magari si tratta anche... mi diceva prima una sua collega, magari, anche di cose utili ma difficili da mettere in pratica, proprio perché mancano le ore...
Teacher	Sì, certo...
Marco	Quindi non l'ha mai fatto usare? Non ha avuto occasione, ecco... Ma lo conosce!

Teacher	No... io lo conosco, lo applico io come punto di riferimento per quello che faccio io. I ragazzi no!
Marco	Non a livello a scritto ma più come metodo...
Teacher	Sì, diciamo che lo tengo come punto di riferimento, come traguardo di solito o punto di partenza per il mio lavoro con loro... Ma no, non ho mai fatto riflettere i ragazzi su questo.
Marco	Lo fa a voce, diciamo?
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Quindi, potremmo sintetizzare che è utile imparare l'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine, appunto, di impararlo e... ehm... però, appunto, deve essere complementare anche all'apprendimento scolastico... ok, giusto per sintetizzare. Quindi sono due apprendimenti che sono in una relazione complementare tra di loro.
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Come concepisce la lingua che insegna: più come una materia scolastica da fare apprendere fine a se stessa o come qualcosa di vivo a cui gli studenti possono essere esposti oltre la scuola o persino per tutta la loro vita? Qual è la sua visione della lingua?
Teacher	Beh, io spiego sempre ai ragazzi che l'inglese non è una disciplina... L'inglese è uno strumento, è una chiave.
Marco	Le faccio questa domanda perché il rischio potrebbe essere che, appunto, gli studenti la possano vedere come una materia. Per lei, però appunto è qualcosa di vivo e cerca, appunto, da quello che ho capito di farglielo capire.
Teacher	Sì! Gli faccio capire che attraverso l'inglese possiamo affrontare altre discipline come la storia, l'arte, la geografia che si possono tutte rivedere in chiave inglese, per esempio... Quindi a me piace proprio fargli capire che è un mezzo di comunicazione.
Marco	Il CLIL?
Teacher	Sì, esatto!
Marco	Ok, quindi, appunto...ehm...
Teacher	Ho un altro esempio: io a volte gli faccio delle domande sulla loro vita quotidiana e in inglese e loro fanno fatica a rendersi conto che quella è lezione perché per loro la lezione è aprire il libro, scrivere sul quaderno... Invece, il bello dell'inglese è che anche semplicemente chiacchierando del più e del meno...
Marco	Di tutte le lingue direi io anche...
Teacher	Sì, di tutte le lingue, certo! La mia esperienza è riferita all'inglese! Però, il bello di tutte le lingue è che sono, appunto, degli strumenti che tu puoi usare in diversi ambiti.
Marco	Certo! E quindi, appunto, mia ha anticipato... lei vede la lingua come qualcosa di vivo e molte volte ci sono anche questi interventi da parte sua in cui lo dimostra che la lingua è qualcosa di vivo, appunto, con questi interventi che ha detto... Quindi, appunto, per imparare l'inglese o qualsiasi altra lingua serve un'integrazione dei due apprendimenti, scolastico ed extrascolastico.
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Ok. Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare? Proprio in poche parole, in non più di sei parole. Mi dia un aggettivo, è un apprendimento...?
Teacher	Spontaneo direi!
Marco	Un apprendimento spontaneo! Ok, ultimissime due domande. Come trova l'apprendimento fuori dalla scuola in tre aggettivi? Intendo, appunto, per apprendere una lingua... in generale... al fine di imparare una lingua!
Teacher	Caotico, direi, per l'incredibile quantità di mezzi. Caotico e... concreto, quello sicuramente! E immediato.

Marco	E invece l'apprendimento dell'inglese in classe come lo descrive? Al fine di imparare una lingua, con tre aggettivi!
Teacher	Strutturato, rigido anche a volte... e comunque efficace anche quello!
Marco	Ok, grazie, abbiamo finito. Grazie!
Teacher	Grazie a lei!

German Teacher

Marco	Gentile docente, le porrò alcune domande riguardanti l'apprendimento informale nell'educazione linguistica, ossia le attività che si compiono in contesti extrascolastici di propria iniziativa e che non sono in alcun modo organizzate o imposte da istituzioni educative. Partiremo da alcune domande che io ho premeditatamente pensato e che saranno la nostra bussola. Tuttavia, lei potrà benissimo ampliare, qualora lo ritenga opportuno, per esprimere al meglio il suo pensiero. Prima di iniziare le ricordo inoltre che questa registrazione sarà utilizzata al solo scopo di ricerca nell'ambito della mia tesi di laurea magistrale e verrà eliminata non appena trascritta in word. I dati saranno trattati in pieno anonimato suo e della scuola tutta. La invito quindi a non temere di esprimere le sue idee riguardo questi temi. Non vi è una risposta giusta o sbagliata da dare, ma solo la sua idea che potrà esprimere liberamente affinché io possa basarmi su dati il più possibile veritieri. L'intervista durerà massimo 25 minuti da ora.
Teacher	Ok!
Marco	Dopo aver letto la griglia di attività extrascolastiche proposte nel questionario per gli studenti, le pongo la seguente domanda: si è mai resa conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese? E per quanto riguarda il tedesco cosa può constatare magari invece? Perché hai i tuoi colleghi ho chiesto dell'inglese e magari sono di più si potrebbe pensare.... Per quanto riguarda il tedesco, cosa potrebbe constatare in merito a queste attività?
Teacher	Allora, quando all'inizio della prima media chiedo ai ragazzi se hanno già avuto dei contatti con la lingua tedesca...ehm... spesso mi raccontano che durante le vacanze magari in spiaggia c'era una famiglia tedesca vicino nell'ombrellone vicino oppure se hanno... ehm... cioè se sono stati in montagna c'erano dei corsi di sci hanno sentito parlare un po' di tedesco in Italia e questo serve molto a me anche per motivare i ragazzi che capiscono che non è necessario viaggiare, andare lontano per parlare la lingua tedesca dato che hanno avuto questo contatto... i maschi a volte sono interessati al calcio per cui sanno già pronunciare un po' i nomi di calciatori tedeschi, per esempio...ehm... Alcuni hanno dei parenti che conoscono il tedesco e quindi sono orgogliosi di quelle poche parole che già conoscono... ehm... è vero che per il tedesco non ci sono le canzoni che si sentono facilmente in inglese e quindi la conoscenza è di parole isolate normalmente o di qualche nome.
Marco	Avrebbe qualche critica magari da fare a questo... a questa griglia di attività perché effettivamente io che l'ho scritta riconosco che magari per l'inglese sono più magari accessibili, più immediate queste attività da poter svolgere... Per il tedesco cosa pensa in merito a questa griglia?
Teacher	Sembra che sia una buona griglia, che tiene conto...
Marco	Anche se forse i ragazzi non sono magari esposti quanto con l'inglese...
Teacher	Ma ehm... Evidentemente questo risulterà poi dalle loro risposte e sarà un dato interessante.
Marco	Ok. Lei è a conoscenza, ma mi ha già anticipato, delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontanea volontà... fuori dalla scuola? Ne parlate? Da quello che ho capito sì... cioè... ci sono delle occasioni in cui parlate...

Teacher	Allora, il vantaggio secondo me di insegnare una lingua straniera alla scuola media è che i ragazzi possono parlare molto di se stessi, appunto della propria famiglia, dei propri interessi e questo lo trovo motivante per loro.
Marco	Quindi ci sono state occasioni di scambio con i suoi studenti in cui ha saputo... è entrata in conoscenza della... cioè ha saputo, ecco, che attività possono fare fuori dalla scuola per il tedesco?
Teacher	Si parla sempre, appunto, degli hobby e questa cosa dello sci, per esempio, dove hanno imparato qualche parola perché mi dicono: "Il maestro di sci parla in inglese con gli altri del corso... ho sentito un po'." A volte, il problema è che dicono: "Ho cercato delle parole con Google traduttore." magari autonomamente...
Marco	In tedesco?
Teacher	Sì, in tedesco. Ma sappiamo che non sono in grado di utilizzare bene poi le informazioni... Per esempio, chiunque studi un po' le lingue straniere e usi Google traduttore vede che se io cerco il verbo "salutare" non risulta il verbo "salutare", ma qualcosa che è salutare nel senso che fa bene alla salute. E quindi, non riescono a usare bene questi strumenti.
Marco	Dovrebbero essere guidati probabilmente...
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Comunque, anche fuori dalla scuola!
Teacher	Non solo i ragazzi... anche gli adulti si affidano a dei mezzi tecnologici che non sono ancora in grado di dare tutte le informazioni richieste!
Marco	Secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività? O non lo sono? Le compiono di loro spontanea volontà, ma non si preoccupano di imparare il tedesco facendole?
Teacher	Diciamo che qualcuno se ne rende conto ma pochi... Decisamente pochi!
Marco	Pensa che questo tipo di apprendimento, appunto, fuori dalla scuola, sia antitetico rispetto a quello più propriamente scolastico? Cioè che relazione esiste tra apprendimento formale e informale? Appunto, qual è la relazione? È una relazione complementare tra questi due tipi di apprendimento o uno deve prevalere sull'altro secondo lei?
Teacher	Allora, quello che cerco di trasmettere è proprio che non si tratta di una materia scolastica ma di qualcosa da usare nella vita di tutti i giorni. Per questo, simuliamo fin dall'inizio dei piccoli dialoghi di conoscenza e la situazione che si cerca di immaginare è proprio quella di... magari: "Sono in spiaggia, devo comunicare con il ragazzino vicino. Cosa potrei chiedere?" Quindi cerco di tenere questi piccoli dialoghi vicini a un'esperienza reale.
Marco	Quindi il compito della scuola, se ho capito bene, è quello di fare da ponte tra questi due tipi di apprendimento...
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola, cioè vanno a scrivere in questo portfolio specifico le esperienze fatte fuori per poi riflettere su queste esperienze... Lei conosce questo strumento? L'ha mai fatto usare? Ha mai avuto l'occasione?
Teacher	Conosco questo strumento, ma non l'ho fatto usare.
Marco	Un suo collega mi ha detto che l'ha fatto suo e magari è come se lo usasse oralmente, cioè fa un "portfolio orale" coi suoi studenti, un po' li fa riflettere in qualche occasione, ma non lo fa usare.
Teacher	Ehm... no, in effetti no, con due ore settimanali e il tentativo di far parlare i ragazzi, simulare situazioni reali... non ho usato il portfolio. Ho visto com'è strutturato, ma non l'ho usato.
Marco	Forse mi ha già anticipato, la mia prossima domanda era: quanto è utile usare il tedesco fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo? Mi pare di capire che sia utile se non fondamentale dal suo punto di vista... Mi sbaglio o secondo lei forse prevale l'aspetto, appunto, extrascolastico per imparare la lingua tedesca?

Teacher	Allora, no... no, non penso che prevalga... Allora, sono consapevole di dover dare delle buone basi anche per quanto riguarda la struttura, le strutture linguistiche...ehm... tenendo conto che ci sono ragazzini che dovranno solo comunicare oralmente, ma ci sono dei ragazzi che si preparano ad affrontare un liceo classico, hanno bisogno anche di capire anche che cosa siano i casi... accusativo, dativo, quindi... secondo me la struttura della lingua tedesca... riconoscere alcune regole è fondamentale e ho visto nel tempo che questo dà sicurezza ai ragazzi... quando si rendono conto che c'è una regolarità loro si possono affidare a questo per comunicare. Non si trovano a dover costruire tutto da zero ogni volta, ma hanno dei riferimenti ben precisi...
Marco	Sì, quindi il compito è quello di rendere complementari, come abbiamo detto prima, questi due tipi di apprendimento. Sì, non deve prevalere uno per imparare una lingua. Mi ha già anticipato: la lingua che insegna la concepisce come qualcosa di vivo, questa era appunto la mia domanda, mi ha già risposto, e questa visione che ha della lingua come qualcosa di vivo io vedo, appunto, che alla fine... la trovo, appunto, posso dire? È un giudizio personale... La trovo coerente con il tipo di apprendimento che predilige. Alla fine, lei pensa che la lingua sia qualcosa di vivo, uno strumento di vita reale, appunto... ehm... penso che il metodo, appunto, che lei ha esposto sia coerente con questa visione della lingua. Quindi, appunto, sì... in verità mi ha già risposto!
Teacher	Sì, vorrei solo dire che stiamo parlando, tra l'altro, di scuola media, scuola secondaria di primo grado. E quindi qua, proprio in questo contesto, punto più sull'uso, sulla comunicazione che fa parte della formazione anche della personalità dei ragazzi nella loro apertura al mondo, alle persone diverse di culture diverse... Questo è qualcosa che, secondo me, va trasmesso adesso. L'aspetto più formale, più magari legato alla letteratura, analitico forse prevale poi nella scuola secondaria di secondo grado.
Marco	E secondo lei è giusto che prevalga di più nella scuola secondaria... cioè, è giusto che ad un certo punto prevalga di più o dovrebbe continuare sempre sulla scia di un... della comunicazione? Oltre alla scuola media, diciamo. Cosa pensa lei?
Teacher	Credo che in generale...Vedo che viene trascurato l'aspetto della comunicazione anche nella scuola superiore e molti ragazzi poi si sentono insicuri, in particolare nell'esposizione orale...
Marco	Al fine di imparare una lingua è importante curare entrambi gli aspetti in poche parole, mi sembra di capire. Quindi serve un'integrazione di questi due tipi di apprendimento.
Teacher	Sì!
Marco	Siamo quasi al termine dell'intervista. Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre il tedesco, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare, proprio in poche parole. Mi dica, anche solo un aggettivo. Che tipo di apprendimento...come potremmo definirlo questo tipo di apprendimento che anche gli adulti svolgono che continua, appunto, anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che ci obbliga a studiare?
Teacher	Un apprendimento permanente basato sulla motivazione... che può essere l'utilità pratica per il lavoro, ma può essere anche un interesse culturale, però ci deve essere la motivazione...
Marco	Nel farlo...
Teacher	Sì, alla base.
Marco	Come trova l'apprendimento del tedesco fuori dalla scuola? Con tre aggettivi. Vorrei me lo qualificasse con tre aggettivi. Al fine di imparare una lingua, non per i suoi studenti!

Teacher	C'è la premessa che abbiamo fatto prima che ci sono poche occasioni di sentire il tedesco fuori dalla scuola...
Marco	Però al di là di quello, proprio in generale per imparare il tedesco, al di là degli studenti, cioè... come trova questo tipo di apprendimento?
Teacher	Ci sarebbe tanto da dire perché il tedesco è visto come una lingua difficile al di fuori della scuola... Solo quando gli allievi vengono guidati e riconoscono che il tedesco non è così difficile come sembra ci può essere una...
Marco	Soddisfazione?
Teacher	La soddisfazione, sì! Se non c'è questa base data da un docente o comunque da una guida, da un contatto con la lingua tedesca, può essere difficile l'approccio con la lingua tedesca. Alcune persone mi dicono: "La pronuncia è dura!" E quindi, viene vista come una lingua dura, ma il passo successivo è che le persone mi dicono: "Appena conosco una persona tedesca mi rendo conto che non è così... cioè le persone non sono 'dure'." Quindi, il contatto con il tedesco può inizialmente sembrare difficile anche a causa di alcuni pregiudizi che ci sono ancora sulle persone di lingua tedesca. Può sembrare impegnativo...
Marco	Sulle persone di lingua tedesca o sulla lingua tedesca sono i pregiudizi?
Teacher	Entrambi, su entrambi! Sulla difficoltà della lingua perché non è stata usata finora molto come comunicazione, ma viene sempre evidenziato l'aspetto grammaticale. Allora...
Marco	Potremmo dire che pone delle clausole l'apprendimento del tedesco fuori dalla scuola?
Teacher	Allora, aggettivi non... è un po' difficile! Impegnativo, però...ehm... sempre più gratificante, più ci si... più si conosce la cultura e il mondo di lingua tedesca.
Marco	E più si è, diciamo, avviati verso un prec... si è fatto prima uno studio un po' formale che magari possa inserire meglio...
Teacher	Sì e... soddisfacente nel senso che le regolarità della lingua poi danno anche sicurezza, quindi dei punti di riferimento certi che a mio modo di vedere l'inglese poi non ha: più si studia più si trovano delle eccezioni o meno punti di riferimento. Se confronto, ad esempio, il futuro in inglese e il futuro in tedesco, credo che sia più impegnativo, più difficile usare bene il futuro in inglese che in tedesco, quindi...
Marco	Sì, capisco quello che ha detto anche perché abbiamo fatto la premessa che pone delle clausole l'apprendimento del tedesco, nel senso che, come ha detto, ci devono essere gli strumenti per poi godere questo tipo di apprendimento extrascolastico. Ultimissima domanda: come trova l'apprendimento del tedesco in classe al fine di apprenderlo? Sempre con tre aggettivi.
Teacher	Eh... con questi aggettivi però io valuto anche il mio insegnamento, è quella la mia difficoltà.
Marco	No, le posso chiedere comunque in generale... non le sto chiedendo sul suo insegnamento, dico: al fine di apprendere una lingua come trova l'apprendimento in classe? Cioè, appunto, ritorniamo al discorso di prima, probabilmente me l'ha già detto, nel senso che lo trova fondamentale, potrebbe essere un aggettivo forse, per poi avviarsi all'apprendimento extrascolastico, quindi questo forse potrebbe essere un aggettivo: fondamentale, utile...
Teacher	Fondamentale sì, per capire che si possono affrontare...ehm... delle sfide, diciamo, qualcosa che le persone all'esterno ritengo difficile, quando i ragazzi si rendono conto che invece sono in grado di farlo è molto gratificante anche perché loro dicono: "Io parlo già un po' di tedesco! Gli altri dicono che è difficile!"
Marco	E necessario?
Teacher	Gratificante per i ragazzi perché non è sempre affrontando qualcosa di facile, anzi è il contrario...se affronto qualcosa che viene considerato difficile la soddisfazione è maggiore!
Marco	Quindi è consapevolizzante e quindi gratificante?
Teacher	Sì, diciamo così! E rafforza forse anche un po' l'autostima dei ragazzi.
Marco	Quindi sicuramente fonte, appunto, di motivazione. Benissimo, grazie!
Teacher	Grazie!

APPENDIX D: An Example of Analysis of a Teacher's Interview

ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW WITH ENGLISH TEACHER A		
Questions	Transcriptions	Categories of Analysis
1) <i>Si è mai resa conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Sì, sicuramente [le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese]!’ • ‘Io penso che i ragazzi siano immersi in una realtà in cui compare spesso la lingua inglese perché ascoltano musica, giocano con la playstation e con i videogiochi [...]’ • ‘Sono sicuramente bombardati dall'inglese e da messaggi che continuamente dicono loro che è importante conoscere questa lingua [...]’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of students’ informal opportunities to learn English • Students’ immersion in a reality continuously exposing them to English
2) <i>Lei è a conoscenza delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontanea volontà?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘No, [parlo] poco [con i miei studenti delle attività extrascolastiche che compiono di loro spontanea volontà]. Manca il tempo e poi soprattutto si potrebbe fare in una situazione ideale, che non è reale, con gruppi classe motivati e interessati. Invece, nella realtà succede che di un gruppo classe un terzo potrebbe essere interessato e partecipare, collaborare in attività di questo tipo. Un terzo ne è assolutamente indifferente. Un terzo disturba. [...] [Marco: Quindi, il fattore motivazione è cruciale.]Ma anche maturità. È una fascia d'età questa abbastanza bassa. Infatti, io noto, ho notato, che in prima media sono molto più motivati e interessati. Dimostrano più entusiasmo per imparare in prima media, quando sono più piccoli, che non in seconda o in terza. In seconda e in terza aumenta il gap tra i bravi e i non bravi ed è difficile avere quella fascia di mezzo.’ • ‘In prima sono, secondo me, almeno secondo la mia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor communication with students about their informal activities • Lack of time, students’ immaturity and class heterogeneity in motivation as factors interfering in teacher-student communication and, thus, in becoming acquainted with students’ informal activities • First-year students’ enthusiasm for learning and absence of knowledge gap between

	<p><i>esperienza e da quello che vedo, troppo piccoli e hanno una conoscenza troppo limitata per guardare la televisione o programmi televisivi o scrivere canzoni in inglese o racconti in inglese.’</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Fuori dalla scuola, mi è difficile dirlo [se la scuola media spinge gli studenti a compiere attività di loro iniziativa] perché, avendo classi da dover gestire nello spazio orario di un’ora con i compiti da correggere, il programma da svolgere e controllare eccetera eccetera, resta pochissimo tempo per fare dell’altro.’</i> • <i>‘[...] per la maggior parte [degli studenti], è semplicemente una materia scolastica e, anzi, non sempre piace, la trovano difficile, la dimenticano perché non usandola non memorizzano né il lessico né le funzioni comunicative.’</i> • <i>‘Io penso che i ragazzi siano immersi in una realtà in cui compare spesso la lingua inglese perché ascoltano musica, giocano con la playstation e con i videogiochi [...]’</i> • <i>‘Tutte queste attività [extrascolastiche], loro le svolgono saltuariamente o per periodi brevi [...]’</i> • <i>‘A volte scopro casualmente che conoscono frasi, parole o espressioni che derivano sicuramente non dal libro di testo.’</i> 	<p>students as factors contributing to class homogeneity in motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second- and third-year students’ lack of enthusiasm for learning and increased knowledge gap between students as factors affecting class heterogeneity in motivation • First-year students’ limited knowledge of English as a factor precluding them from doing a large amount of informal activities • Slight acquaintance with students’ informal activities • Unpostponable institutional tasks as a factor contributing to lack of time and interfering in teacher-student communication and, thus, in becoming acquainted with students’ informal activities • Assumption about students’
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		<p>non-use of English outside school given the poor communication with students about their informal learning activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption about occasional students' use of English in some informal activities given the poor communication with students about their informal learning activities • Occasional chance discoveries of students' knowledge of some English expressions unavailable in the school book
<p>3) Secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Sì e no [riguardo al fatto che gli studenti siano consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso attività extrascolastiche]. Più no che sì. Uno: secondo me non ne sono tanto consapevoli. Due: continuano a tenere separata la sfera della vita reale, del mondo reale, delle attività che compiono come personaggi reali da quelle che si svolgono nell'aula scolastica perché quando mi capita di far loro notare questa cosa restano stupiti oppure dicono: "Ah, sì, è vero!".' • 'Forse non ne sono proprio consapevoli [del dislivello del fatto che gli studenti non riescono a coniugare questi due tipi di apprendimento, quello più scolastico e quello extrascolastico].' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student's acute unawareness of the fact that they can improve their English through informal activities • Students' rigid separation between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school • Teacher's active role in leading her students to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Sì, una <u>bella immagine!</u> [<u>del puzzle che si completa</u> quando gli studenti trovano il collegamento tra questi due tipi di realtà, scolastica e non scolastica, quando l’insegnante glielo fa notare] Esatto! Credo che loro tendano a vedere la <u>scuola come un luogo accademico.</u>’ • ‘Sì, però <u>se [la lingua] resta a livello inconscio</u> che conoscono venti termini collegati a un gioco di ruolo non è che sia tanto utile.’ • ‘E non riescono nell’aula scolastica a trovare, o spesso a dimostrare o manifestare, la motivazione e, di conseguenza, la partecipazione che invece li vede coinvolti in <u>attività extrascolastiche</u> dove magari <u>a livello non consapevole, non conscio, registrano comunque informazioni</u> in lingua inglese.’ • ‘Però un <u>adulto</u> lo fa <u>consapevolmente,</u> coscientemente [<u>l’integrazione e il completamento dell’apprendimento</u>]. Ecco, <u>in questa fascia d’età è più difficile che sia consapevole.</u>’ • ‘Secondo me, però, almeno alla scuola media, <u>non riescono ancora a compiere la fusione</u> tra quello che è <u>l’inglese della vita reale</u> e quello che è <u>l’inglese all’interno dell’aula scolastica.</u>’ • ‘[...] per la maggior parte [degli studenti], è semplicemente una <u>materia scolastica</u> [...]’ 	<p>seeing the underlying unity between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students’ astonishment at the teacher’s showing them the underlying unity between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school • Students’ full unawareness of their inability to integrate formal learning with informal learning • Students’ consideration of school as an academic place • Students’ unconscious knowledge of English acquired through informal activities • Adults’ conscious integration of formal learning with informal learning • Students’ unconscious integration of formal learning with informal learning • Students’ inability to
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrate English as a real life tool with English as a school subject • Students' consideration of English as a mere school subject
<p>4) Qual è la relazione tra questi due tipi di apprendimento (formale e informale) per apprendere al meglio una lingua?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Secondo me, <u>l'apprendimento deve completarsi e integrarsi!</u>'</i> • <i>'Sì, una <u>bella immagine!</u> [del <u>puzzle che si completa quando gli studenti trovano il collegamento tra questi due tipi di realtà, scolastica e non scolastica</u>, quando l'insegnante glielo fa notare] [...]'</i> • <i>'Secondo me, però, almeno alla scuola media, [gli studenti] non riescono ancora a compiere la <u> fusione tra quello che è l'inglese della vita reale e quello che è l'inglese all'interno dell'aula scolastica</u>.'</i> • <i>'Sì e no [i miei studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso attività extrascolastiche]. Più no che sì. Uno: secondo me non ne sono tanto consapevoli. Due: <u>continuano a tenere separata la sfera della vita reale, del mondo reale, delle attività che compiono come personaggi reali da quelle che si svolgono nell'aula scolastica</u> perché quando mi capita di far loro notare questa cosa restano stupiti oppure dicono: "Ah, sì, è vero!"</i> • <i>'Da quello che posso dire io, nel corso degli anni è <u>diminuita la capacità di attenzione o la scolarizzazione così come la intendevamo una volta</u>.'</i> • <i>'[L'apprendimento formale è] Comunque positivo [al fine di imparare una lingua]... <u>bisogna cercare</u>, secondo me, di <u>attirare la loro attenzione</u>, di avere la loro attenzione per avere qualcosa e poi puoi farli concentrare sull'esecuzione degli esercizi, delle attività.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complementary nature of the relationship between formal and informal learning • Assumption that the separation between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school is to be avoided in favour of a fusion between these dimensions • Formal learning as a concept that has changed over time and that now seems to exhibit a decreased academic trait • Informal activities as an unquestionable

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>‘L’apprendimento scolastico basato sullo svolgimento del programma e sul libro di testo al 70-75% credo risulti un po’ noioso e un po’ faticoso per tutti finché non li riesci a coinvolgere da un punto di vista un po’ personale.’</u></i> • <i><u>‘Tutte queste attività [extrascolastiche], loro le svolgono saltuariamente o per periodi brevi e credo che tutto sommato saranno le più semplici quelle che saranno segnate di più. Quindi è... un corollario! È qualcosa in aggiunta, è qualcosa che portato in classe, una canzone, YouTube, un video... portato in classe può sicuramente aumentare l’attenzione in quel momento, non so quanta ricaduta abbia o la ricaduta è più sull’aspetto generale... dell’approccio che non sull’apprendimento.’</u></i> 	<p>solution to capture students’ attention when performed in class and, thus, to keep formal learning going and make it more involving from students’ perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible short-term effectiveness and possible aimlessness of informal activities when performed in class to improve the quality of formal learning
<p>5) Qual è il ruolo della scuola: deve prediligere un tipo di apprendimento rispetto all’altro?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>‘Il compito della scuola è innanzitutto formativo secondo me: io come insegnante sarei soddisfatta del mio lavoro se sapessi che almeno un terzo dei miei studenti avesse maturato l’interesse e la curiosità all’apertura mentale e alla consapevolezza che imparare non solo è utile, ma è anche bello e interessante... dà di più! Insegnare è una parola grossa, cioè io posso dire: “Insegno le regole”, però delle regole da sole non se ne fa niente nessuno! D’altra parte, se non hanno uno scheletro grammaticale di base, poi anche se sono brillanti, fantasiosi, hanno lessico, hanno iniziativa e entusiasmo, alle superiori crollerebbero perché comunque il sistema scolastico è sempre basato su un binario molto rigido! Cioè se tu non sai o non esegui correttamente... allora è vero che a livello europeo, a livello teorico parliamo tanto che si apprende una lingua per il saper fare, ma la scuola fa tanta fatica ad adeguarsi. Forse oggi giorno che</u></i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The formative aim of school, i.e. stimulating students’ interests, awakening students’ curiosity, arousing students’ open-mindedness, making students aware that learning is not only useful but also interesting for its own sake, as the primary responsibility of school • Uselessness of grammar from a long-term perspective given the formative aim of school

	<p><i>cominciano a portare all'università... e agli ultimi anni del liceo sono molto più coinvolti, sono molto più interessati.'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Tutte queste attività [extrascolastiche], loro le svolgono saltuariamente o per periodi brevi e credo che tutto sommato saranno le più semplici quelle che saranno segnate di più. Quindi è... un corollario! È qualcosa in aggiunta, è qualcosa che portato in classe, una canzone, YouTube, un video... portato in classe può sicuramente aumentare l'attenzione in quel momento, non so quanta ricaduta abbia o la ricaduta è più sull'aspetto generale... dell'approccio che non sull'apprendimento.'</i> • <i>'[L'apprendimento formale è] Comunque positivo... bisogna cercare, secondo me, di attirare la loro attenzione, di avere la loro attenzione per avere qualcosa e poi puoi farli concentrare sull'esecuzione degli esercizi, delle attività.'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessity of basic grammar to face high school • Uselessness of motivation and enthusiasm to face high school if not accompanied also by a solid knowledge of English grammar • The school system as a rigid system where grammar correctness is highly requested to be known and pure notions are considered more important than competences above all from high school onwards • The inability of the school system to adapt itself to the European guidelines on valuing competences more than pure notions • Dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school • Informal activities in class as a mere preliminary
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		<p>phase to arouse students' attention and to introduce formal learning which seems to be considered the real lesson</p>
<p>6) Il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola. Conosce questo strumento? Se sì, ha mai fatto usare questo strumento ai suoi studenti per farli riflettere sul loro apprendimento?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'No, allora forse non so se ho risposto correttamente prima... Conosco il portfolio nel senso di acquisizione di funzioni comunicative che portano a dei livelli certificati a livello europeo.'</i> • <i>'No, Allora questo <u>non lo conosco.</u>'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELP as an unknown tool to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning • Dichotomy between the theoretical European guidelines on learning and actual learning in school
<p>7) Secondo lei, quanto è utile usare l'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'[...]Perché la scuola è impostata su un metodo grammaticale e alla fine insegna poco o forse anche molto poco potremmo dire? Perché loro <u>fuori dalla scuola non vivono in una realtà inglese:</u> in realtà non sentono l'inglese, non parlano l'inglese... anche i loro contatti di internet, di YouTube, di videogiochi sono <u>molto circoscritti a quell'utilizzo, al tempo libero</u> che ci dedicano magari con quel gruppo ristretto di amici, ma <u>resta non parte della loro vita ma un'attività del tempo libero</u>... Tipo "Oggi vado a calcio, poi vado a catechismo, poi faccio il videogioco". Non so se mi spiego... <u>Non è naturale!</u>'</i> • <i>'Sono sicuramente bombardati dall'inglese e da <u>messaggi</u> che continuamente dicono loro che è <u>importante conoscere questa lingua</u> [...]'</i> • <i>'<u>In prima</u> sono, secondo me, almeno secondo la mia esperienza e da quello che vedo, troppo piccoli e hanno una <u>conoscenza troppo limitata</u> per</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uselessness of informal learning due to the fact that students are not immersed in an authentic English-speaking world out of school • Limited and superficial nature of informal learning • Subjective and arbitrary nature of informal learning • Unnaturalness of informal learning

	<p><i>guardare la televisione o programmi televisivi o scrivere canzoni in inglese o racconti in inglese.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Sì, però <u>se [la lingua] resta a livello inconscio</u> che conoscono venti termini collegati <u>a un</u> gioco di ruolo <u>non è che sia tanto utile.</u></i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persuasive nature of informal learning in conveying the message that knowing English is important • Limited knowledge of English as a factor making informal learning useless • Uselessness of students’ unconscious knowledge of English acquired through informal activities
<p>8) <i>Come concepisce la lingua che insegna: più come una materia scolastica da fare apprendere fine a se stessa o come qualcosa di vivo a cui gli studenti possono essere esposti oltre la scuola o persino per tutta la loro vita?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘[i miei studenti] <u>continuano a tenere separata la sfera della vita reale, del mondo reale, delle attività che compiono come personaggi reali da quelle che si svolgono nell’aula scolastica</u> perché quando mi capita di <u>far loro notare</u> questa cosa restano stupiti oppure dicono: “Ah, sì, è vero!”.’</i> • <i>‘Secondo me, però, almeno alla scuola media, non riescono ancora a compiere <u>la fusione</u> tra quello che è <u>l’inglese della vita reale</u> e quello che è <u>l’inglese all’interno dell’aula scolastica.</u>’</i> • <i>‘Secondo me, <u>l’apprendimento deve completarsi e integrarsi!</u>’</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption that the separation between what is learnt in real life and what is learnt at school is to be avoided • Teacher’s attempts to show students that English is more than a mere school subject • Necessity of integrating what is learnt in real life with what is learnt at school
<p>9) <i>Pensa che la visione che ha della lingua che insegna (materia scolastica/strumento di vita reale) sia coerente con il tipo</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Fuori dalla scuola, mi è difficile dirlo [se la scuola media spinge gli studenti a compiere attività di loro iniziativa] perché, avendo classi da dover gestire nello spazio orario di un’ora <u>con i compiti da correggere, il</u></i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal learning as the predominant type of learning due to lack of

<p>di apprendimento che predilige in classe (formale/informale)?</p>	<p><u>programma da svolgere e controllare eccetera eccetera, resta pochissimo tempo per fare dell'altro.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '[L'apprendimento formale è] Comunque positivo [al fine di imparare una lingua]... <u>bisogna cercare</u>, secondo me, di <u>attirare la loro attenzione</u>, di avere la loro attenzione per avere qualcosa e <u>poi puoi farli concentrare sull'esecuzione degli esercizi, delle attività.</u> • '[...] [Gli studenti] continuano a tenere separata la sfera della vita reale, del mondo reale, delle attività che compiono come personaggi reali da quelle che si svolgono nell'aula scolastica perché quando mi capita di <u>far loro notare</u> questa cosa restano stupiti oppure dicono: "Ah, sì, è vero!"]' 	<p>time and unpostponable institutional tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption about informal learning as something 'other' from the real lesson • Informal activities in class as a mere preliminary phase to arouse students' attention and to introduce formal learning which seems to be considered the real lesson • Teacher's active role in leading her students to seeing the underlying unity between real life and what is learnt at school
<p>10) Scelga l'affermazione con cui più è in sintonia e la giustifichi: - L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi. - L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale. - Serve una integrazione dei due punti precedenti per imparare il tedesco perché nessuno dei due da solo basta.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<u>Secondo me, l'apprendimento deve completarsi e integrarsi!</u>' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessity of integrating what is learnt in real life with what is learnt at school
<p>11) Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '<u>Esperienza</u> mi viene da pensare come primo termine per indicare un apprendimento che si 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal lifelong learning as an

<p>secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese/il tedesco, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare?</p>	<p>accumula. <u>L'esperienza non è apprendimento.</u> E soprattutto l'esperienza non è apprendimento <u>di nozioni, di concetti... non è un migliorare le proprie conoscenze.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Perché non miglioro le mie conoscenze... ehm... ad esempio di musica... <u>migliorano se io ho una passione e la seguo,</u> ma altrimenti non è che l'esperienza... ehm... della vita insegni... Sì, sono termini che a volte si presentano con significati diversi. Allora potremmo definire <u>l'esperienza che accumuli nelle cose che ti piacciono,</u> nelle cose che fai... che ti portano ovviamente a <u>sapere di più!</u> • [Marco: Ma non nelle cose più serie diciamo... Perché secondo lei si imparerebbe fuori dalla scuola magari in un modo un po' più frammentato, questo intende? Si potrebbe imparare ad esempio di musica ma senza mai raggiungere un certo livello?] <u>Ma perché no?</u> Però è tutto molto molto <u>limitato alle singole persone,</u> ai singoli individui perché ci sono persone curiose nei confronti del mondo e della vita e che <u>amano</u> imparare o che <u>imparano anche senza rendersene conto</u> e persone che non imparano mai niente.' 	<p>experiential type of learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential learning as an antithesis of learning • Experiential learning as a type of learning not leading to the acquisition of new notions • Passion-driven nature of experiential learning as the condition to learn through experiential learning • Passion-driven experiential learning as the specific type of experiential learning resulting in effective learning and leading to the acquisition of new notions • Subjective nature of passion-driven experiential learning • Unconscious side of passion-driven experiential learning
<p>12) Come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '[L'apprendimento informale è] <u>Essenziale, molto motivante e di grande soddisfazione</u> per i ragazzi <u>se ne sono consapevoli.</u>' • 'Tutte <u>queste attività</u> [extrascolastiche], loro le svolgono saltuariamente o per periodi brevi e credo che tutto sommato saranno le più semplici 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal learning as an essential and highly motivating kind of learning which brings

	<p>quelle che saranno segnate di più. Quindi è... un corollario! È <u>qualcosa in aggiunta</u>, è <u>qualcosa che portato in classe</u>, una canzone, YouTube, un video... portato in classe <u>può sicuramente aumentare l'attenzione in quel momento</u>, non so quanta ricaduta abbia o la <u>ricaduta</u> è più sull'aspetto generale... <u>dell'approccio che non sull'apprendimento</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secondo me, <u>L'apprendimento deve completarsi e integrarsi!</u> 	<p>much satisfaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of informal learning as the condition to take advantage of it • Informal activities as an unquestionable solution to capture students' attention when performed in class and, thus, to keep formal learning going and make it more involving from the students' perspective • Additional nature of informal learning in class • Possible short-term effectiveness and possible aimlessness of informal activities when performed in class to improve the quality of formal learning • Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning
<p>13) Come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese in classe al fine di impararlo?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '[L'apprendimento formale è] <u>Noioso</u> per la maggior parte di loro.' • '<u>Comunque positivo</u> [al fine di imparare una lingua]' • 'Non sarà <u>mai totalmente utile</u> perché non avremo <u>mai classi</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boring nature of formal learning from students' perspective

	<p><i><u>ideali</u> in cui tutti i ragazzi sono motivati all'apprendimento. La maggior parte di loro non è interessata e tu di fronte a un ragazzino disinteressato, svogliato, distratto non hai armi... Cosa fai?'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>'Da quello che posso dire io, nel corso degli anni è <u>diminuita</u> la capacità di attenzione o <u>la scolarizzazione così come la intendevamo una volta.</u></i> • <i>'L'apprendimento scolastico <u>basato sullo svolgimento del programma e sul libro di testo</u> al 70-75% credo risulti <u>un po' noioso e un po' faticoso per tutti</u> finché non li riesci a <u>coinvolgere</u> da un punto di vista un po' <u>personale.</u>'</i> • <i>Secondo me, <u>l'apprendimento deve completarsi e integrarsi!</u>'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive nature of formal learning • Formal learning as a never completely useful kind of learning • Formal learning as a completely useful kind of learning only in idealised classes • Formal learning as a concept that has changed over time and that now seems to exhibit a decreased academic trait • Incomplete nature of formal learning which needs to be integrated with informal learning in order to become more involving from students' perspective • Tiring nature of formal learning • Necessity of integrating formal learning with informal learning
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APPENDIX E: Interview Guide for Teachers' Interviews

	Topics to be covered	Possible Questions
1.	<i>Awareness of students' informal opportunities to learn English/German</i>	Dopo aver letto la griglia di attività extrascolastiche proposte nel questionario per gli studenti, le pongo la seguente domanda: si è mai reso/a conto che potenzialmente le opportunità di apprendimento che gli studenti possono compiere al di fuori della scuola di loro spontanea volontà sono molte, soprattutto per l'inglese? (E per quanto riguarda il tedesco cosa può constatare?)
2.	<i>Acquaintance with the activities done by their own students</i>	Lei è a conoscenza delle attività extrascolastiche che i suoi studenti compiono di loro spontanea volontà (attraverso cui, più o meno intenzionalmente, possono migliorare il loro livello di inglese/tedesco)? Se sì, di quali? Ne parla con loro? Se sì, in che occasioni? Se no, perché?
3.	<i>Perception of students' awareness of learning when doing them</i>	Secondo lei, i suoi studenti sono consapevoli che possono migliorare il loro livello di lingua attraverso queste attività?
4.	<i>Relationship between formal and informal learning</i>	Qual è la relazione tra questi due tipi di apprendimento (formale/informale) per apprendere al meglio una lingua? Pensa che questo tipo di apprendimento sia antitetico rispetto a quello più propriamente scolastico? O com'è? Perché?
5.	<i>School responsibility in promoting which kind of learning</i>	Qual è il ruolo della scuola: deve prediligere un tipo di apprendimento rispetto all'altro? Perché? Qual è il compito della scuola nell'apprendimento delle lingue (insegnare la grammatica e nozioni da studio o anche altro oltre il mero studio formale)? Giustifichi.
6.	<i>ELP: Known? Used? Useful?</i>	Il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue consiglia di utilizzare il portfolio linguistico europeo a scuola al fine di fare riflettere gli studenti sulle esperienze linguistiche che hanno compiuto fuori dalla scuola. Conosce questo strumento? Ha mai fatto usare questo strumento ai suoi studenti per farli riflettere sul loro apprendimento? Perché non promuoverne l'utilizzo? Pensa possa essere utile? Perché?
7.	<i>Benefit from using English/German out of school in order to learn it</i>	Secondo lei, quanto è utile usare l'inglese/il tedesco fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo? Perché? Secondo lei, fare attività extrascolastiche in inglese/tedesco di propria iniziativa è <i>più</i> utile al fine di impararlo rispetto al solo studiarlo per la scuola?
8.	<i>Perception of the language taught: as a mere school subject or as a real life tool?</i>	Come concepisce la lingua che insegna: più come una materia scolastica da fare apprendere fine a se stessa o come qualcosa di vivo a cui gli studenti possono essere esposti oltre la scuola o persino per tutta la loro vita?
9.	<i>Coherence between how language is conceived and the type of learning promoted in class</i>	Pensa che la visione che ha della lingua che insegna (materia scolastica/strumento di vita reale) sia coerente con il tipo di apprendimento che predilige in classe (formale/informale)?
10.	<i>Ideal learning to learn a language</i>	Scelga l'affermazione con cui più è in sintonia e la giustifichi: - L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo a scuola studiando e facendo esercizi. - L'inglese/il tedesco si impara solo fuori dalla scuola in contesti autentici di vita reale. - Serve una integrazione dei due punti precedenti per imparare il tedesco perché nessuno dei due da solo basta.
11.	<i>Personal definition of 'lifelong learning'</i>	Apprendere una lingua in contesto extrascolastico di propria iniziativa, secondo il Quadro Comune Europeo di Riferimento per le Lingue, rispecchia il tipo di apprendimento che da adulti i suoi studenti compiranno in contesti di vita reale per imparare molte altre cose, anche oltre l'inglese/il tedesco, quando non dovranno più studiare obbligatoriamente per un'istituzione. Lei

		come definirebbe questo tipo di apprendimento che continua anche quando non c'è un'istituzione che obbliga a studiare (in non più di sei parole).
12.	<i>Perception of informal learning</i>	Come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese/del tedesco fuori dalla scuola al fine di impararlo? Lo descriva usando tre aggettivi.
13.	<i>Perception of formal learning</i>	Come trova l'apprendimento dell'inglese/del tedesco in classe al fine di impararlo? Lo descriva usando tre aggettivi.