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Investigating motivation in students learning English as a L2
and belonging to a level equal to or greater than the B1

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the aspect of motivation in students learning English as a L2 and belonging to a level equal to or greater than the Threshold level (B1) according to the CEFR. For this purpose, adults who have studied English as a L2 in the past year at an English language school in Liverpool, U.K. were asked to take part in this survey. Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire sought to determine which type of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) sustained the language learning process of students studying English in a native English-speaking country; additionally, the questionnaire investigated the different factors affecting student intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the same context. Furthermore, this paper focuses on the literature published on the topic of motivation in foreign and second language learning, both in the past and in recent years. A more in-depth discussion on the classroom environment concerning the teacher's influence on the learner, the classroom setting, and the students' learning styles, intelligences and personalities altogether is also provided. Finally, the new challenges and needs encountered in modern languages teaching and learning by both students and teachers are explored.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study seeks to investigate student motivation in a L2 learning context. Specifically, we decided to focus on the aspect of motivation in students who belong to a level equal to or greater than the B1, according to the CEFR. This includes students belonging to the English language levels B1, B2, C1, and C2. In order to carry out this research, a questionnaire was administered to 88 students aged 18-64 years old who have studied English as a L2 in an English school in Liverpool during the past year. The questionnaire aimed to determine whether the type of motivation sustaining the students' L2 learning process was of intrinsic or extrinsic nature. Furthermore, the questionnaire investigated the factors affecting student motivation in the same L2 learning context. The research hypothesis posed at the beginning of the study were 2. In the first one, we hypothesize that the type of motivation supporting the students' L2 learning process is both of the intrinsic and of the extrinsic type, in accordance with the findings of Berges-Puyo (2018) and Gardner and Smythe (1985), from whose surveys part of the questionnaire has been adapted. In the second hypothesis, instead, we hypothesized that the factors positively affecting motivation in a L2 context are the following: classroom environment, group cohesion, positive relationship with the peers, and effort in communicating with native speakers.

This paper comprises a total of four chapters. In the first chapter, we decided to provide an overview of the literature published on the topic of motivation. Indeed, the main focus is on the role of motivation in foreign and second language learning. Overall, it seems fair to affirm that different studies, approaches, and the change of perspectives on motivation throughout the years are all explored in the first chapter.

In the second chapter of this paper, we provided a more in-depth analysis of the formal context in which students learn a FL or a L2: the classroom. In order to do so, we took into consideration the factors that are traditionally considered to contribute to a favorable outcome in a FL and L2 learning context. The factors explored in the second chapter are those mentioned by Gardner: «the teacher, the class atmosphere, the course content, materials and facilities, as well as personal characteristics of the students» (2010,p.3). We decided to investigate these factors for a quite simple reason. They cover a great importance for the purpose of the paper because, as Gardner affirms, they all directly influence students' learning motivation.

The third chapter focuses on the new challenges encountered in modern

language teaching and learning. An overview of the importance of plurilingualism, the concept of English as a Lingua Franca, and the formal and informal language acquisition setting (Krashen) is provided.

Finally, the fourth and last chapter of the paper is the actual core of this thesis: the study. In the chapter dedicated to the study, we outlined the investigation conducted in a quite rigorous way. First, we included a literary review, in order to provide a brief insight into the field of study related to the research. Secondly, we included a complete description of the purpose of the study, together with the research questions and research hypothesis, the type of methodology adopted, the participants investigated, the procedure, and the questionnaire administered to the students. Finally, we provided a data analysis and discussion of the results, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future researches.

CHAPTER ONE

What is Motivation?

1.1 What is motivation: a definition

Investigating motivation is a continuing concern within second and foreign language learning. In order to determine the importance that motivation holds within language learning and teaching, it is crucial to understand what motivation actually is, and therefore to give an accurate definition of the term. In fact, motivation plays a key role in language learning, and it has been proven to be essential for a successful learning both by scholars and by teachers, as well. As claimed by Dornyei, «Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the key factors that influence the rate and success of second/foreign language learning» (Dornyei, 1998, 117). For a better understanding of the term, we might need to return back to its roots: the word “motivation” comes from the Latin verb “*movere*”, that means “to move, to provoke, to accomplish”, as a primary force that pushes an individual to accomplish an action. In Psychology, as stated by Reeve (2017), motivation is a condition, a drive or a need that pushes a person towards the desire of a change either in the self, in the environment, or in both. In order to do so, the individual engages with the environment in an adaptive and flexible kind of way. This constant stimulation is energized by a goal-setting behavior and also by satisfaction in fulfilling the individual’s own goals, needs and desires. Although there is not a widely accepted agreement on a comprehensive and accurate definition of L2 motivation, it seems appropriate to deduce that motivation in language learning is a powerful force which provides the initial impulse to start learning a new language; it is also essential in order to sustain the whole learning process itself, which is a long one and can at times be tedious and difficult. Therefore, we can say that motivation is crucially related to L2 learning goals that are set to be accomplished through a long-term period of time, and it can also make up for certain deficiencies in the learning conditions and language aptitudes of the students (Dornyei, 1998). As affirmed by Dornyei (1998), the general assumption concerning motivation is that it is a complex, multi-faceted construct that seeks responsibilities in answering questions regarding human behaviors; thus considering the multi-faceted aspects of this field, we cannot expect it to be simple and straightforward. Instead, different human behaviors are psychologically explained

through different theories that have also tried to account for L2 motivation, so the vast availability and abundance of these theories complicate the definition of the term, rather than simplify it. Researches prior to 1990 have sought to determine the importance of L2 motivation by adopting the Social Psychological Approach, inspired by the studies of prominent scholars such as Robert Gardner, Wallace Lambert, Richard Clement, Peter MacIntyre and Kim Noels. Starting from 1990, in the so-called *revival of interest* in motivation, several attempts have been made by researchers in trying to provide new paradigms that could better describe L2 motivation in a more adequate way. During the '90s revival, researchers have been analyzing different branches of Psychology in order to find already existing constructs and structures that could enable them to schematize and conceptualize L2 motivation. As a matter of fact, according to scholars Pintrich and Schunk (1996), in recent years a considerable amount of literature has been published on the field of motivation. These studies include psychological theories that have progressively been incorporating cognitive concepts and variables with the aim to focus the attention on the learners, and thus prioritizing their own perception of the events taking place in the learning process, together with the role that their own beliefs, cognitions, and values play in achieving goals in different contexts (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Researchers Pintrich and Schunk have also given a new interpretation for the notion of “motivation”, defining it primarily as process-oriented: «Motivation is the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained». (Patrick & Schunk, 2002, p.5) Although the idea of a process-oriented motivation is solid and has been widely accepted, questions have been raised about the nature of the mental processes that are involved in motivation, how they work, how they influence learning and how can they be enhanced and sustained throughout the process of language learning.

1.2 The Social-Psychological Approach

Researchers Gardner and Clément (1990) have reported that a considerable amount of literature on L2 motivation has been explored in several studies by social psychologists, therefore reiterating the fact that there is an undeniable mutual relationship between language learners and the social community shared by the target language group of speakers. To further investigate the reason why L2 motivation has received considerable critical attention by social psychologists, we should firstly

understand what the main areas of interest in the field of social psychology are. The key points regarding the history of social psychology have been summarized by Gardner and Clément (1990) as follows:

Social psychologists are concerned with understanding the behavior of individuals that results because of their membership in a cultural group. Social psychology is concerned with such things as the development of attitudes, relationships among members of the same and different ethnic, political, or social groups; individuals' feelings about various groups; and characteristics of individuals that influence interpersonal relationships. It thus is quite reasonable to expect social psychologists to be interested in a situation where individuals of one ethnic group are learning the language of another. (Gardner & Clément, 1990, p.495).

The aspects outlined above clearly show the reasons why Social Psychology has been interested in investigating L2 motivation by means of displaying how social psychology can be applied to language learning. Because of the social nature of foreign and second language learning (Dornyei,1998) that involves individuals' identities, behaviors, aptitudes, and desires. Also, the language learning process cannot be compared to the learning process of any other subjects that are typically studied in schools, universities, or courses (e.g.: physics geography, etc.). In fact, «learning a foreign or second language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being» (Dornyei,1998). According to this consideration, the importance of L2 motivation as a fundamental part of the language learning process is enhanced as it gains a social dimension and social value. Surveys such as that conducted by Gardner and Lambert (1959) in Montreal showed the social-psychological nature of the relationship existing between different variables related to aptitude and the degree of achievement in second language learning. The study included a battery of tests presented to high school anglophone students -approximately aged 17- including assessments regarding language aptitude and attitudinal/motivational characteristics. The research also integrated evaluations made by teachers on the student's French speaking and listening abilities. The conclusions obtained from this survey showed two main factors

which affect a fruitful L2 learning achievement. The first factor refers to the cognitive skills of the students, and therefore it suggests that students who possess a higher degree of language aptitude (e.g.: a greater development of language abilities) had a better rate of success in second language learning than the students whose the same abilities were less developed. The second factor indicated that the students who aimed to learn French in order to be able to communicate with French-speaking Canadians, had a better and more positive attitude towards French-Canadians people as well, at the same time putting more effort into the ultimate goal of learning the target language - French in this case. (Gardner et al.,1956). Following this study, many other researches have been conducted in order to further address and thus explain the notion of attitudinal variables related to L2 motivation in a social-psychological perspective. The general conclusions report that «a sustained motivation to acquire a second language was related to attitudinal characteristics of the students» (Gardner, 1976, 199).

1.3 Self-Determination Theory

In accordance with the findings outlined above, Gardner introduced in 1966 in his article *Motivational Variables in Second Language Learning* a new notion named Integrative Motivation, which refers to a particular attitudinal/motivational configuration. Although there is a widespread disagreement on the actual definition of the term because of the vast number and differences in studies that have adopted it, the distinctive characteristic of Integrative Motivation in L2 or Foreign language learning is that it reveals a personal affinity between language learners and the social group belonging to the target language. This affinity results in a higher drive by students to achieve their learning goal, and therefore they are further motivated in learning the second language in order to be able to effectively communicate with the L2 group of people. Instrumental motivation is the second factor that is part of the dichotomy Integrative/Instrumental motivation outlined by Gardner. The concept of Instrumental motivation in L2 and Foreign language learning refers to the fact that an individual learns a language in order to to achieve an aim that is typically external to the learning itself, e.g. passing an exam in order to obtain a new car as a present, or studying for the sake of avoiding a punishment. Thus, the ultimate goal of successfully learning a

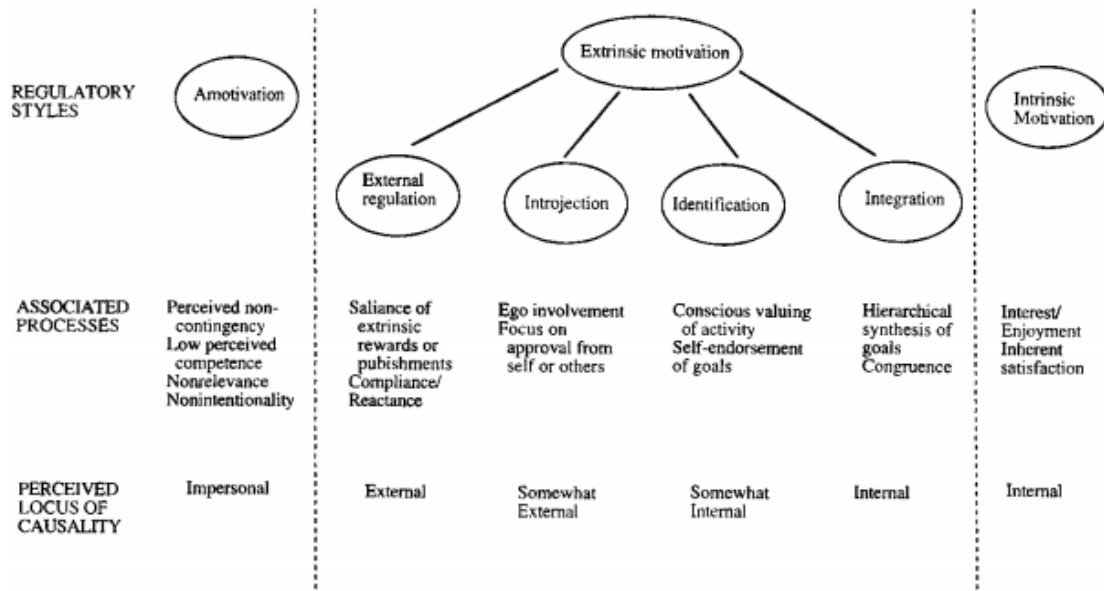
language does not lie in a pleasant learning process or in an eventual aim of learning in order to fulfill the student's ambition, but it is instead identified with unrelated, external factors. In 1985, Gardner further suggested that Integrative motivation could overpower Instrumental motivation, because of the importance of the goal-orientedness nature of the learners' behavior of the first over the latter. However, as stated by Dornyei (1994, p.274), we must note that «Gardner's theory and test battery are more complex and reach beyond the instrumental /integrative dichotomy». In fact, as seen in paragraph 1.1, the ultimate definition given of motivation is substantially that of a sophisticated, complex, multifaceted, and dynamic theory, and therefore such a dichotomy would be too static and reductive. Indeed, if we think about the fact that learners might want to learn a second or foreign language in order to better themselves e.g. in the perspective of obtaining a new job, to progress in their career, or again to have an educational experience abroad that can enrich their CV, we can easily see as an Instrumental motivation is not always detrimental to the learner, but instead it can be an effective and efficient source of motivation.

In 1985, researchers Deci & Ryan suggested in their pioneering book *Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior* a new theory that was the result of a deeper analysis and development of the intrinsic/extrinsic paradigm: the Self-Determination theory. Firstly, we should provide a brief overview of the intrinsic/extrinsic paradigm. Intrinsic motivation relates to an individual engaging in an activity or behavior for the sake of doing it, because it is pleasant and gratifying for the person who is achieving it; while Extrinsic motivation refers to the accomplishment of an action or of a set goal in order to obtain something that is desired or to avoid a punishment. This concept is effectively explained by Deci and Ryan (2000) as follows: «Motivation is hardly a unitary phenomenon. People have not only different amounts, but also different kinds of motivation» (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p.54). Therefore, in their 2000 study, the researchers confirm that both different levels and different types of motivation exist. In specific contexts, it is not the amount of motivation that varies, but rather it is the nature of it. To better explain this concept, Deci & Ryan mention as an example a hypothetical student doing his or her homeworks. He or she might do it for different reasons: for example, it could be out of interest, or, in order to please the teacher or a parent, or again to avoid a punishment. Another aim might be because the student realizes that the new set of skills that he or she might potentially be learning serve a « potential utility or value, or because learning the skills will yield a good grade

and the privileges a good grade affords» (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p.55). In the lines above, researchers Deci & Ryan underline the concept that not only there are different *kinds* of motivation, but there also are different *levels* and *types* of motivation that influence learners in their behaviors, therefore affecting their learning process. In their thorough theory of Self-Determination, scholars Deci & Ryan were able to distinguish between different types of motivation; this distinction was based on the diverse causes that are the factual impulses behind a behavior or an action. Over the past decades most research in the extrinsic/intrinsic motivation paradigm has emphasized how the learning experience and consequently the performance can largely differ when an individual's behavior is dictated by intrinsic or extrinsic reasons. (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Although a number of studies have suggested that extrinsic motivation might be detrimental to a successful learning if compared to intrinsic motivation, questions have been raised about the adequacy of this statement, which seems to be excessively simplified.

Traditionally, scholars have addressed the extrinsic/intrinsic motivation paradigm by defining extrinsic motivation as lacking in depth, labelling it as a pale and impoverished type of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) when compared to intrinsic motivation. Nonetheless, researchers Deci & Ryan tried to overcome this dichotomy by introducing the Self-Determination theory. In fact, the Self-Determination theory affirms that it is indeed true that students act and behave moved by their motivational impetus, and that their actions can be pursued either with positivity, determination, excitement and ambition, or on the contrary with disinterest, animosity or annoyance. However, Ryan & Deci developed and introduced a new idea which indicates that there are different types and degrees of extrinsic motivation which slightly or largely differ among them; so, if the primary motivational impulse can vary, even if it still belongs to the range of extrinsic motivation taxonomy, then the students' attitude towards the learning process must be different as well. We can therefore rightfully affirm that the «Self-Determination theory makes an important additional distinction that falls within the class of behaviors that are intentional or motivated» (Deci et al, 1991, p. 326). In relation to the different types of Extrinsic motivation and to Intrinsic motivation, please see the overview in the following table on the classification of human motivation provided by Deci & Ryan. From left to right, we can see how motivation is categorized from being further to the self (e.g. at the far left we can notice amotivation, that is a state consisting in a sense of detachment and alienation), to

motivation being fully internalized (e.g. the intrinsic motivation which includes the fundamental elements of interest, enjoyment, pleasure and satisfaction).



Tab. 1

In the central section of the tab we find the other degrees of motivation. The concept in the first branch starting from the left is external regulation, that is accomplishing something in order to achieve recognition or to avoid a punishment. Introjection, instead, relates to doing something with the purpose of avoiding disapproval from others or sense of guilt from the self, or on the contrary, to gain approval, acceptance and to increase self-esteem (therefore why the ego involvement). Identification refers to an individual doing something for the sake of respecting their own values (because they attribute a specific sense of importance to something), or in order to fulfill their own purposes. The last degree of motivation comprised in the central section of the tab is integration, which refers to an individual doing something either in order to satisfy his or her own needs and fulfill their desires and aspirations, or because accomplishing that set goal is part of their way of being. The different nature of the specific types of motivation summarized in the tab is situated in the perceived locus of causality (DeCharms, 1968). In order to better understand this concept, we can refer

to the APA to give a definition of the term *locus of causality*. According to the APA Dictionary of Psychology, the locus of causality is an « attribution of the causes of an event to sources internal or external to the self, which may influence subsequent behavior in relation to that event.» According to this definition, we can rightfully assert that there are different degrees of internalization in motivation, and this difference lies in the locus of causality perceived by the learner, that is, where the motivational element is positioned in correlation with the self. Furthermore, the self is able to recognize the importance of motivation in correspondence to their own system of values. So, if an individual recognizes the importance of accomplishing an action or a behavior for their own selves, they are able to act according to a certain degree of self-determination. The Self-Determination theory therefore suggests that it is possible for the learner to develop a “good” type of extrinsic motivation, where “good” simply indicates that the motivation is sustainable and internalized enough in the learner for him or her to purposefully act and behave as a self-determined being, when they recognise the importance of achieving the set goal rigorously for their own sake and interest.

1.3.1 The Cognitive Evaluation Theory

In 1985 Deci and Ryan re-elaborated and presented the Cognitive Evaluation Theory, a sub theory within their pioneering Self-Determination Theory, which was originally introduced by Deci, Cascio and Krusell in 1975 in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. The Cognitive Evaluation Theory accounts for the traditional motivational system paradigm of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation but attempts to investigate and explain the effects and reactions that external factors have on intrinsic motivation. This study provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding on the topic of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, because the researchers tried to explore which social and environmental factors facilitate versus undermine intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In other words, they state that intrinsic motivation can thrive only on certain specific circumstances. In order to better understand and analyze the concepts addressed in the Cognitive Evaluation Theory, it might be useful to read the following extract taken from the paper *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions* by researchers Ryan and Deci:

CET further specifies that feelings of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless they are accompanied by a sense of autonomy or, in attributional terms, by an internal perceived locus of causality (IPLOC; deCharms, 1968). Thus, people must not only experience perceived competence (or self-efficacy), they must also experience their behavior to be self-determined if intrinsic motivation is to be maintained or enhanced. Stated differently, for a high level of intrinsic motivation people must experience satisfaction of the needs both for competence and autonomy. (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p.58)

Ryan and Deci (2000) therefore state that learners have three different innate needs: the need for relatedness, the need for competence and the need for autonomy. The need for relatedness (that is, relatedness according to an individual's own desires and needs) implicates that students need to be provided with communicative situations that are significant, so that intrinsic motivation can be sparked and maintained because of the learners' own goals, needs and desires. Another way to further work on relatedness is that of catering students with activities that have a beneficial and valuable feedback, allowing them to see that what they are learning is useful and that therefore they can benefit from its use in numerous circumstances in real life. Additionally, according to researchers Deci and Ryan (2000), students must also experience their behavior as self-determined for intrinsic motivation to be in evidence. The need for competence involves different factors, that are: individuals' goals, expectations, encouragement, self-efficacy and self-attributions. Significant to the area of competence is the Attribution Theory presented by Heider in 1958 in the social-psychology field. The Attribution Theory suggests that people tend to attribute different causes to explain significant experiences of success or failure. The different reasons that people search in order to account for their own successes or failure are going to produce an emotional reaction and consequently a specific future behavior. Therefore, the learners' motivation is going to change according to their capacity of determining the causes of their own success or failures. For this reason, the different attribution that we give to our achievements or failures consistently change our motivation. Furthermore, effectively achieving a set goal increases both self-efficacy and the sense of

competence that learners develop when they are given adequate opportunities of success. This is the reason why it is extremely important to present students attainable and realistic goals and to work on realistic expectations, including encouragement and support for difficult tasks: these are all elements which affect a student's motivational sphere and consequently their behavior. The last need described in the Cognitive Evaluation Theory is the need for autonomy. Providing learners with autonomy means allowing them to have more control on the learning process and on the learning contents. Prior studies have (e.g. Ryan, Grolnick 1986) noted the importance of autonomy over control, i.e. teachers who support and instill autonomy in their students allow them to develop powerful intrinsic motivation, and students are therefore likely to learn more effectively than students who learn in a more controlling environment.

1.4 The '90's Educational Shift to the Learner

As stated in section 1.1, prominent researchers from different parts of the world participated in the so-called *revival of interest* in 1990 on the topic of Motivation in the attempt to provide new paradigms that could better describe L2 motivation. The literature published during those years mainly investigated three different issues; one was an attempt to respond to 1966 Gardner's Integrative Model by re-elaborating concepts that were widely accepted in Psychology and adjusting them to L2 motivation research. As previously mentioned in section 1.1, studies such as that of Pintrich & Schunk (1996) claimed that the researchers' attention needed to focus on the learners, as they felt the need to prioritize the learners' role in the learning process, and most especially the students' own values, beliefs, goals and aspirations. The second issue explored was that of attempting to conceptualize motivation in order to examine specific situation-related behaviors and attitudes. Regarding this second theme, the pioneering researcher who firstly investigated the relationship between tasks and motivation was Julkunen in 1989 with his study published as *Situation- and task-specific motivation in foreign-language learning and teaching*. Julkunen classified four different aspects belonging to tasks that makes them *motivating* tasks. He indicated that, in order to be motivating, tasks need to possess the following characteristics; first, they should be enjoyable enough so that students can take pleasure in carrying them out, at the point that they could even forget that the tasks they are completing are required by a teacher in a class environment. Secondly,

students should be presented tasks that encourage them to answer using the target language. The third aspect mainly applies to students who naturally are high-achievers and who have competitive traits in their personality, but it can also be applied to all the other students in a class: a task is further motivating when it sparks a healthy competition between the learners. The fourth and last characteristic that makes a task *motivating*, according to Julkunen, is when it is seen by the learners as challenging, consequently stimulating their curiosity because they are aware that by fulfilling that task their knowledge progresses. As reported by Dornyei, in the third major theme investigated during the 90's revival, the «main focus shifted from social attitudes to looking at classroom reality and identifying and analyzing classroom-specific motives» (Dornyei, 1998, p.125).

One of the most relevant studies on motivation is the one conducted by researchers Crookes and Schmidt in 1991; they suggested that, even if the social dimension of L2 motivation is undeniable, there also are other definitions that could be applied to L2 motivation which do not belong to the social psychological approach but instead belong to the field of Education. They also assessed how most previous studies on L2 motivation have not dealt with differentiating between the learner's attitude regarding the target language culture and motivation itself. It might be useful to read the findings observed in Crookes and Schmidt's study directly from the source: «The failure to distinguish between social and motivation has made it difficult (1) to see the connection between motivation as defined in previous studies and motivation as discussed in other fields, (2) to make direct links from motivation to psychological mechanisms of SL learning, and (3) to see clear implications for language pedagogy from such previous research» (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, pp. 501-502). Because of the unclear nature of the findings, Crookes & Schmidt affirm that, in their study, they have adopted a perspective of motivation «in terms of choice, engagement, and persistence, as determined by interest, relevance, expectancy, and outcomes» (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, pp. 501-502). Crookes and Schmidt concluded their study by expressing their hopes that future researches in Second Language motivation would concentrate more on language learning processes and language pedagogy, at the same time striving to include the language teachers' view on the matter of motivation. Traditionally, prior to the 90's, it had been argued mainly by Gardner (1985) that the social dimension of L2 motivation was a fundamental element of motivation itself. Although researchers cannot deny the importance of a social dimension, a number of

studies have attempted to explain that there might also be other dimensions which have the same relevance in L2 motivation. Fundamental to this issue is the work conducted by Clement et al. published in 1994 with the name *Motivation, Self-Confidence, and Group Cohesion in the Foreign Language Classroom*, in which they analyzed motivation in an environment where the social dimension of motivation itself was significantly reduced. The approach adopted in this research was the social-psychological perspective, meaning that Clement, Dornyei and Noels considered «the role of orientations and attitudes as effective correlates to L2 behaviors and proficiency» (Clement et al., 1994, p.419) as well as estimating «the role of linguistic self-confidence including language anxiety» (Clement et al., 1994, p.419). The participants of the experiment were 301 Hungarian speakers aged 17 who studied English as their target language. The difference in the setting was that the students were learning in a context in which they had little to no contact with the social group belonging to the target language (i.e. to English-speaking people). This project provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of motivation. The findings observed in this study revealed that there are three factors on which motivation is constructed, which are: the integrative motive factor, the self-confidence factor and the learning environment i.e. the classroom context. The researchers also determined that anxiety is not correlated to the perception that the students have of either the teacher or of the course (excluding the course difficulty which might actually have an impact on motivation, because learners might feel discouraged at first). Regarding the self-confidence component, the researcher identified it to directly influence L2 proficiency. Finally, the third major component is the classroom environment. Clement et al. determined that group cohesiveness is fundamental to the students' perception of a positive learning environment.

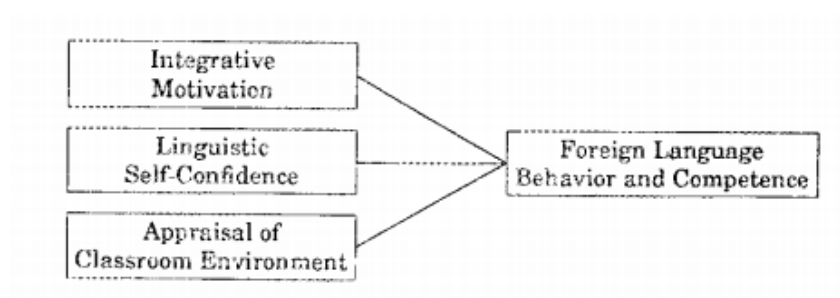
As a consequence of this new wave of interest toward L2 motivation, starting from the '90s, the field of Education was also further investigated and went through a change where the main focus shifted from the learning process to the learner. The result was a new educational organization model which primarily takes into account learners and how they learn, by placing students at the center of the learning process, and thus making them the main protagonists. Fundamental to this matter is the work by Stephen Krashen published in 1994 with the name "*The pleasure hypothesis*". This study took into account and examined a central hypothesis referring to language acquisition: certain activities that are functional for language acquisition are also

perceived as “good” by learners, while other activities which are considered to be distressing and unpleasant for students are instead less useful for the language acquisition process. Krashen then proceeds to list the activities which are considered to be “unpleasant” by students, that are: forced speech, especially in front of the other students in the class, considering the fact that it can easily trigger anxiety; corrections made by the teacher, which, in contrast with the ultimate purpose of them, actually do have a small effect on language acquisition and, instead, often leave students with a sense of uneasiness; grammar study, since, as concluded by Krashen, «studies claiming to show the effectiveness of grammar instruction have succeeded only in showing a short-term effect» (Krashen, 1994, p. 305); and at last reading out loud, in view of the fact that numerous prior studies (Mason & Blanton 1971, Wells 1985, Trelease 1985) determined that students would rather be read to than read out in first person. At a first glance, it might seem that the reason behind the identification of these (figuratively) painful activities could simply be a practical method to recognize and label the least effective activities related to language acquisition. However, the fact that this innovative study took into consideration the students’ emotions and perspectives is crucial, because it emphasizes and validates the students’ point of view, at the same time demonstrating that the focus of the attention is on the students themselves. The final conclusions described by Krashen draw upon the entire hypothesis, tying up the theoretical and empirical strands. He stated that certain activities such as those that have been previously listed, i.e. conscious learning, continuous corrections made by the teacher, studying grammar and repetitively completing exercises, are all perceived by the brain as being part of «an unnatural process» (Krashen, 1994, p. 317) when it comes to language learning. Therefore, it would be unnatural for FL or L2 students to develop a linguistic competence solely based on the activities mentioned. In addition to this, said activities are not only perceived by the learners as unnatural, but also (most of the times) as unpleasant and tedious, and thus they can consequently undermine the students’ motivation.

1.5 The Framework of Motivation in Language Learning

The purpose of this section is to review the research conducted in the mid and late ‘90s on the framework of motivation in language learning, and more precisely in L2 learning. As reported in section 1.4, an important contribution to the outline of the

framework has been given by Clement et al. in 1994. The researchers identified three different factors which are fundamental to the topic of motivation in language learning, resulting in a three-sided construction composed of three different factors, which are: the integrative motive factor, the language self-confidence factor and the classroom context. The so-called tricomponent approach (Clement et al, 1994) has been summarized in the study using a schematic representation as follows:



Tab 2

As we can see from Tab 2, the three factors flow into the Foreign Language Behavior and Competence area, meaning that they all influence Second and Foreign Language learning. In the same year, Dornyei has attempted to give a synopsis of the L2 motivation construct in his study called *Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom*. Following the tricomponent approach disclosed by Clement et al, in which Dornyei himself actively took part in, he was able to delineate a conceptualization of three different levels of motivation. This newly identified framework managed to connect in a way the three newly established levels of motivation to the three elementary spheres of the L2 learning process, i.e. the fundamental components around which the whole learning process is built: the L2 itself, the L2 learner and the L2 learning context to three levels of motivation. The three levels of motivation identified by Dornyei are the Language Level (related to the L2 component), the Learner Level (related to the L2 learner), and finally the Learning Situation Level (related to the L2 learning environment). According to Dornyei (1994), these levels epitomize three different degrees of language learning, that are the social, personal and educational dimension. In order to better exemplify Dornyei's framework, it might be useful to provide the actual tab drawn by the researcher:

FIGURE I
Components of Foreign Language Learning Motivation

LANGUAGE LEVEL	Integrative Motivational Subsystem Instrumental Motivational Subsystem
LEARNER LEVEL	Need for Achievement Self-Confidence * Language Use Anxiety * Perceived L2 Competence * Causal Attributions * Self-Efficacy
LEARNING SITUATION LEVEL	
<i>Course-Specific Motivational Components</i>	Interest Relevance Expectancy Satisfaction
<i>Teacher-Specific Motivational Components</i>	Affiliative Drive Authority Type Direct Socialization of Motivation * Modelling * Task Presentation * Feedback
<i>Group-Specific Motivational Components</i>	Goal-orientedness Norm & Reward System Group Cohesion Classroom Goal Structure

Tab 3

The different sub-elements pertaining to the three levels of L2 motivation are clearly highlighted above in table 3. The Language level, that is the broadest level of the framework, encloses «orientations and motives related to various aspects of the L2, such as the culture it conveys, the community in which it is spoken, and the potential usefulness of proficiency in it» (Dornyei, 1994, p.279). The Language level also contains two sub-elements: the Integrative Motivational Subsystem and the Instrumental Motivational Subsystem. The first causally relates to 1966 Gardner’s Integrative Model of Motivation, referring to the learners’ personal affinity and inclination towards the target L2 social group. The latter concerns Garner’s Instrumental Motivation theory, according to which learners achieve their L2 learning goal because of outside factors that are external to the learning process (e.g. they study in order to either obtain something, for example to pass a test or to receive a prize, or to avoid a punishment). The second level that we find in the framework is the Learner Level, which encloses two different sub-components inherent to motivation: the Need

for Achievement and Self-Confidence. The Self-Confidence factor encompasses four additional sub-factors, that are: the Language Use Anxiety, which embraces different features of anxiety within the learners when studying or using a Foreign or Second language; the Perceived L2 Competence, that is the learners' self-perceived capabilities when using the L2; the Causal Attributions, namely the internal perceived locus of causality (IPLOC; deCharms, 1968) recognized by the learners amid past experiences; and ultimately Self-Efficacy, signifying the learners' ability to succeed in a specific situation or set goal. In 1994, psychology Albert Bandura popularized the term Self-efficacy by describing it as «people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives» (Bandura, 1994, p.71) and further defining that «Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave» (Bandura, 1994, p.71). The third and last level in Dornyei's Motivational framework is the Learning Situation Level. At a first glance, this level might appear to be the most complicated one because of its structure: it is in fact divided into three major areas which incorporate different motivational conditions into several sub-components. The first area comprises the Course-Specific Motivational Components, including Interest (which is part of intrinsic motivation, and it can be described as the intense desire to learn about a certain topic), Relevance (when learners feel that the task is connected not only with their interests, needs, and goals, but also with the real world outside of the classroom), Expectancy (the learners' perceived probability of accomplishment) and Satisfaction (made of both extrinsic elements, such as rewards or approval, and intrinsic element, such as pleasure and fulfillment). The second area contains the Teacher-Specific Motivational Components, which are: the Affiliative Drive, a behavior that, according to social psychology, consists in an inner drive which urges the learners to engage with and please the teacher; the Authority Type, the type of authority embodied by the teacher in the classroom (researchers French and Raven in 1960 have identified five types of authority: legitimate, reward, expert, referent and coercive); and at last the Direct Socialization of Motivation divided once again into Modelling, Task Presentation and Feedback. Finally, the third area comprises the Group-Specific Motivational components, which consist of Goal-orientedness (the person's will to achieve a set goal or to carry out a given task), Norm & Reward System (external factors), Group Cohesion (already recognized as a crucial component by Clement & al, including Dornyei, in 1994) and Classroom Goal Structure. Anderman

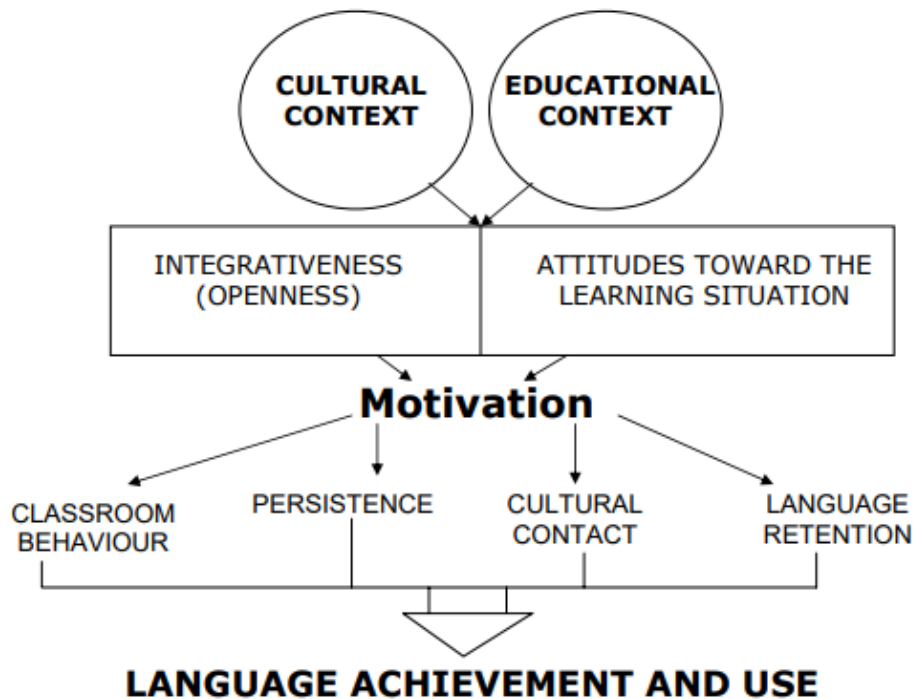
et al. have given an extensive definition of the term Classroom Goal Structure in their 2006 study named *Classroom Goal Structure, Student Motivation, and Academic Achievement* by labeling it as the «precursors of students’ personal goal orientations, which are thought to have a more proximal influence on motivation and achievement patterns» (p.495). Another Motivational framework was presented by Williams and Burden in 1997 with the pursuit of giving an extensive outline of the motivational components. The researchers provided a thorough classification including both internal and external factors affecting motivation. Part of the Internal factors are the Intrinsic interest of activity, the Perceived value of activity, the Sense of agency, Mastery, Self-Concept, Attitudes, Other affective states (such as confidence, anxiety, and fear), Developmental age and stage and Gender. In the External factors, Williams and Burden listed Significant others (meaning parents, teachers, and peers), The nature of interaction with significant others, The learning environment and the Broader context. See Tab 4 below for a more detailed illustration of the framework.

Internal factors	External factors
Intrinsic interest of activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arousal of curiosity • optimal degree of challenge Perceived value of activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personal relevance • anticipated value of outcomes • intrinsic value attributed to the activity Sense of agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locus of causality • locus of control RE process and outcomes • ability to set appropriate goals Mastery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feelings of competence • awareness of developing skills and mastery in a chosen area • self-efficacy Self-concept <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realistic awareness of personal • strengths and weaknesses in skills required • personal definitions and judgements of success and failure • self-worth concern learned helplessness Attitudes language learning in general <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the target language • to the target language community and culture Other affective states <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidence • anxiety, fear Developmental age and stage Gender	Significant others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parents • teachers • peers The nature of interaction with significant others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mediated learning experiences • the nature and amount of feedback • rewards • the nature and amount of appropriate praise • punishments, sanctions The learning environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comfort • resources • time of day, week, year • size of class and school • class and school ethos The broader context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wider family networks • the local education system • conflicting interests • cultural norms • societal expectations and attitudes

Tab 4

1.6 The Process Model of L2

A relatively recent L2 Motivation Model has been provided by researcher Gardner in 2010 in his published paper named *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition*, where he indicates the impact that both the Cultural context and the Educational context have on L2 Motivation. In his analysis, he stated that there are two different constructs of motivation in L2 acquisition: one is referred as language learning motivation, while the other as classroom learning motivation. The difference between the two constructs resides in the fact that the language learning motivation is a more general kind of motivation, and it is consistent with any context related to second language learning; as Gardner states, it is «a general characteristic of the individual that applies to any opportunity to learn the language» (2010, p.2); while the classroom learning motivation is, as its name suggests, directly related to the classroom environment. It has been defined by Gardner as «influenced by a host of factors associated with the language class. Thus, it is clear that the teacher, the class atmosphere, the course content, materials, and facilities, as well as personal characteristics of the students [...] will have an influence on the individual's classroom learning motivation» (2010, p.3). A tripartite framework of classroom learning motivation has been indicated by Dornyei and Otto (1998) in their prominent Process Model of L2 motivation. The researchers identified three chronological stages of motivation, divided into: 1) pre-actional motivation, in which learners choose to study a FL or L2 and start to set their own goals, ambitions and desires. Important in this stage are the students' expectations, their attitudes towards the target language social group, and the personal and social purposes of learning a L2 2) actional motivation, which comprises all the learning and teaching tasks and techniques to preserve, sustain and maintain motivation throughout the whole language learning process 3) the post-actional phase, which involves the learners' retrospection on the learning process just concluded and the final considerations on the learning outcome. In order to discuss the origin of motivation in a L2 classroom learning context, we should consider the Cultural context and the Educational context. To provide a clearer description of the subject, I am going to refer to Tab n.5 added below.



Tab 5

First, we should acknowledge the fact that studying a Foreign or Second language is essentially different from any other subjects studied in school. FL and 2L, in fact, involve a whole series of aspects and features which belong to a cultural context (the target language's society and lifestyle) that is typically different from the students' culture. Secondly, it is important to claim that the students' culture and background is evident from their personality traits and characteristics, and it is expressed through their behavior and attitudes. All of these elements flow into the Cultural Context area. According to a definition provided by Gardner, the term Educational Context is used to identify an «educational system in which the student is registered, and specifically to the immediate classroom situation [...] focus[ing] on the expectations of the system, the quality of the program, the interest, enthusiasm, and skills of the teacher, the adequacy of the materials, the curriculum, the class atmosphere, etc.» (2010, p.7). The Cultural and the Educational Contexts are equally important, and both need to be taken into account when discussing the topic of motivation in 2L learning. Gardner's hypothesis supports the idea that the two contexts described co-operate and affect two typical features belonging to the students: the Integrativeness (often referred as Openness or Cultural Identification, because it reflects the aspects associated with the Cultural system) and the Attitudes towards the Learning Situation, which are the variables related to the educational system. Tab n.5 above clearly show how

Integrativeness and the Attitudes towards the Learning Situation directly affect the students' motivation to learn a language. If we further analyze Tab 5, we can see the four arrows pointing from motivation to four other elements, meaning that motivation itself influences: the Classroom behavior, the students' Persistence, the Cultural Contact and the Language Retention. As Gardner states, «The major point is that motivation plays a role in a number of different ways. » (2010, p.8).

1.7 More recent studies on Motivation

Over the past decades most research in the Educational and Psychological field has emphasized the crucial importance of Motivation in successfully learning a Foreign or a Second Language. As we have seen, there is a large volume of published studies that have been trying to investigate and describe the role of Motivation and the factors affecting Language learning, which led to identifying different types of motivation alongside with different approaches, models and frameworks in order to better define the concept of FL and L2 motivation. In this section, I am going to review two of the most recent and significant studies on the composition and conceptualization of L2 Motivation: *Integrative motivation in a globalizing world* by Lamb (2004) and *The L2 Motivational Self System* by Dornyei (2005-9).

1.8 Integrative motivation in a globalizing world by Lamb

In 2004, Lamb published his research project *Integrative motivation in a globalizing world*. The aim of this study was to shine new light on the debates on L2 motivation and integrative orientation by considering as a key factor the learners' identity in the scenery of a newly globalized world. The study was conducted in the form of a survey, with data being gathered via both direct observation and a questionnaire, containing closed and open items, administered in an Indonesian junior high-school; the participants were 219 children aged 11-12 studying English as a foreign language. The findings indicated that, independently from the students' current proficiency in the language, English was very much part of the students' lives, and they attributed great significance and emphasis on the importance of having an English knowledge for their own future. The children also expressed a «general need for English – a need strong enough that they express pleasure in satisfying it, even though

the process itself (their lessons) may sometimes be boring» (Lamb, 2004, p.9). Lamb speculated that the children had probably been exposed to a pro-English environment and discourse, not only in the school context by their teachers, but also in real life in the outside world: media, news, articles etc. had all seemingly been pointing out the importance of learning and knowing English for a successful future. Lamb's study is based on a survey administered to young students, that were in fact still children: even so, they were fully aware of their internalized importance of knowing English in order to develop a stronger identity. Lamb, in fact, suggested that the primary form of motivation driving the students to usefully studying English was their aspiration of acquiring a «bicultural identity»; this new identity reflected their language and cultural dichotomy, which made each student «a global or world citizen», as quoted by Ushioda et al. (2009 p.4), and at the same time gave them a sense of national affinity with their own Indonesian social group. It seems consistent with Lamb's findings to argue that the students were aiming to be part of a bigger (and surely more international) social group or community. The researcher also found that, in the observed context, the traditionally distinct constructs of integrative and instrumental orientations were no longer separable: by some open answers in the questionnaire, Lamb was able to determine that the children had the desire of not being left out of the English speakers community, and that some of them wanted to learn English not only in order to go abroad, but for themselves and their own interests, and to be seen as competent enough in the language.

1.9 The L2 Motivational Self-System by Dornyei

In 2005, Dornyei published a paper named *The L2 Motivational Self System*. In this study, Dornyei conceptualizes and re-frames the L2 motivation by dividing the concept into three distinct components in the relation to the learners' self, thus endowing motivation with a Psychological perspective. Dornyei identified a Motivational Self-System which consists of: 1) The ideal L2 self: that is, what we would like to be and what we would like to do in the future as L2 speakers, the «vision» that we have of ourselves as future students, travelers, professionals, businesspeople etc. The difference between our actual self and our future or ideal self creates a tension, which drives us to change, thus constantly aiming at bettering ourselves as learners. There is a deep and strong connection between what we study and what we are or

would like to be. To this first component belongs the traditional integrative and instrumental motives. 2)Ought-to-L2 self: that is, the perceived feeling of what we “should” become, according to the other people (parents, teachers, society, etc.). This second component suggests a sense of obligation and liability felt by the learner, which could lead them to refrain from a possible negative outcome, instead of seeking a positive and successful outcome. The Ought-to-L2self, described by Dornyei, coincides with the more extrinsic (external, «less internalized») types of instrumental motivation. 3)The last motivational component is the L2 learning experience which Dornyei claims to concern «situated, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience». Factors that are relevant to the L2 learning experience and directly impact it are the teachers and their teaching method, the classroom environment, the peers, the materials used and the students’ past experiences of failures and successes in a learning context.

CHAPTER 2

The Classroom Context in Language Teaching and Learning

In the second chapter, this paper will discuss and focus on the classroom environment. In order to do so, this paper will be taking into consideration the different classroom-related factors that contribute to a successful outcome in a Foreign and Second language teaching and learning context. As we have previously mentioned in section 1.4, Clement et al. published their pioneering study in 1994 named *Motivation, Self-Confidence, and Group Cohesion in the Foreign Language Classroom* with the aim of analyzing motivation in a significantly reduced social environment. In their findings, Clement et al. disclosed the existence of the so-called Tricomponent approach upon which motivation is constructed; the last factor belonging to this theory is the learning environment i.e. the classroom context. The great importance of all the factors influencing the learning environment in the classroom is undeniable. This chapter will therefore be moving on from the theories and studies made on motivation and analyzed in Chapter 1, to provide a more in-depth focus on the actual context in which students learn new languages: the classroom. The factors relevant to the language learning experience that will be investigated in chapter 2 are roughly those suggested by Gardner: «the teacher, the class atmosphere, the course content, materials and facilities, as well as personal characteristics of the students» (2010,3); a special attention will be aimed at these factors because, as Gardner stated, they all « [...]have an influence on the individual's classroom learning motivation» (2010,p.3).

2.1 The Importance of a positive classroom environment

There is a large volume of published studies drawing attention to the issue of language anxiety in a foreign language classroom. Language anxiety can have different aspects; it has a negative effect at the level of input, output and throughout the whole learning process. Not knowing a language produces feelings of insecurity, thus creating anxiety, and at the same time anxiety prevents students from speaking and learning the language: it can easily become an endless circle. To have a favorable outcome in language learning, anxiety needs to be reduced at its maximum possibility.

The main issue with anxiety is that it “steals” resources to our brain; in fact, anxiety is naturally a defense mechanism. In the brain, the first manifestation related to anxiety is fear, and the reaction is that of escaping the situation from which anxiety arises; there is no time to think, and avoidance is seen as the first and easiest solution. Therefore, the brain makes a huge effort when trying to handle anxiety, and by doing so, it “steals” resources from the communicative needs; this complex process leads to a series of negative behaviors and attitudes, such as avoidance of the situation, procrastination, etc. The main question is: can we work on anxiety? There are two existing types of anxiety: anxiety as a personality trait, a stable characteristic typical of people who experience anxiety in different occasions in their daily life (for example, social anxiety), and anxiety as a transient state, where anxiety is seen as a response to a provoking momentum (Horwitz, 2001). It is possible to work on the transient anxiety state that develops specifically in the foreign or second language classroom. We can, in fact, reduce language anxiety by manipulating the classroom environment. There are different strategies that can be used to decrease language anxiety; these strategies are working on group cohesion, creating an environment perceived as “safe” by the students, bettering the human relationships, and adopting teaching methods that are not too formal by modelling them directly on the students’ needs. It is of great importance that the teacher firstly recognizes the existence of a specific foreign or second language anxiety; to facilitate this task, teachers can look for and notice the typical behaviors caused by anxiety. Teachers should develop a special sensitivity and attention toward the group dynamics; students need to feel accepted and protected inside the classroom, by both the teacher and their peers. In fact, in every social group, members tend to create their own roles; taking into consideration the different personalities in the classroom helps to manage the group in the best possible way. The classroom could be associated with a social experiment: it is a complex, dynamic system with different variables that influence one another.

In 1991, Young investigated in her research *Creating a Low-Anxiety Classroom Environment: What Does Language Anxiety Research Suggest?* both the potential sources of anxiety and the evident signs of stress and anxiety in students in order to make them more recognizable. Young argued that, although a considerable amount of studies on language learning anxiety had been conducted over the years, researchers had been considering such different interpretations and variables in their studies (e.g. personalities, self-confidence motivation, age and skills of the students,

etc.) that such researches simply lacked a common ground. Young then proceeded to mention that the first «to treat foreign language anxiety as a separate and distinct phenomenon particular to language learning» (Young, 1991,p.427) were Horwitz, MacIntyre and Gardner; their empirical investigation supported the theory of the existence of an anxiety that is specific to language learning. As previously mentioned, in her analysis of language anxiety, Young identified six probable language anxiety sources: 1) Personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) Learner beliefs about language learning; 3) Instructor (teachers) beliefs about language teaching; 4) Instructor-learner (teacher-learner) interactions; 5) Classroom procedures; and finally 6) Language testing. To the first source belong the issues of low self-esteem and competitiveness; in fact, individuals who have a low self-esteem tend to compare themselves either to other people e.g. in the classroom environment of their peers, or to an internalized, ideal image of the self. In an “unstable” context that is one of language learning, this constant comparison leads to anxiety. In fact, students are not only formally examined by the teachers, but also by their peers from a social point of view. A poor impression can have a huge impact on the social image of the students, and learners who have a low self-esteem are perfectly aware of that. Therefore, the main issue is that insecure students would rather try to save their social image than reaching their learning goals, because the preservation of their social image is seen as a priority. Furthermore, unpleasant experiences not only make speaking a language harder because of the Affective Filter (Krashen), which has a huge influence on the learning process and on the students’ performances as well, but they also make learning the language an emotionally painful process. According to Krashen, one of the subconscious strategies to lower the Affective Filter used by students is to consider themselves part of a “group membership”, e.g. a feeling of belonging or affinity to the target language social group. When you consider yourself a member of a group, you feel included in that said group and you are less scared of using the language, and consequently you are less scared of making mistakes, because you don’t perceive your position in that group as unstable. The second source of anxiety identified by Young is the Learner beliefs about language learning. Learners, in fact, are demonstrated to hold unrealistic beliefs about the learning process which do not find validation in reality. For example, thinking that formality is the most important factor when learning a new language, while communicating is much more important instead; or thinking that mistakes are obstacles, while in fact they are now considered as strategies. The main issue is that,

if students hold unrealistic beliefs about the language learning process, then they are most likely to have unrealistic expectations that will be unmet; and this generates frustration and anxiety. The third source of anxiety described by Young is the Instructor (teachers) beliefs about language teaching. This factor is an insidious one, because it can be hard to eradicate certain views and assumptions from teachers, especially from those who have been using their method for a long time. Commenting on the teachers' beliefs about language teaching, Young stated that

Instructors who believe their role is to correct students constantly when they make any error, who feel that they cannot have students working in pairs because the class may get out of control, who believe that the teacher should be doing most of the talking and teaching, and who think their role is more like a drill sergeant's than a facilitator's may be contributing to learner language anxiety. (1991, p.428)

In fact, the social climate that instructors establish in the classrooms has great repercussions on the learners. A deeper insight into the teachers' influence on the learner and on the language learning process will be provided in the next section (2.1). Another source of anxiety is identified in the Instructor-learner (teacher-learner) interactions. Anxiety mainly stems from error corrections that are perceived to be harsh, severe, continuous and that can damage the social image of the students in front of their peers. The teachers' behavior is fundamental, because their approach to correcting errors makes a huge impact on the students' anxiety; as we have previously mentioned, mistakes are often used by students as a form of strategy. It seems evident and therefore fair to assume that a positive environment in the classroom starts from the instructor's conduct. Classroom procedures and Language testing are the two last sources of anxiety pointed out by Young. One of the main issues in second and foreign language classroom is that of having to speak in the target language in front of the peers; the classroom is a specific social group, and if a student feels judged, examined or embarrassed, the Affective Filter will go up and will block and prevent the student from speaking correctly, even if he or she is proficient at the language

level asked by the teacher. Oral production is a crucial factor in foreign and second language learning; this is why it is extremely important to give the students "safe", stress and anxiety free situations to successfully communicate. In order to do so, teachers could, for example, provide interesting topics which might entertain and hold the attention of the students. This is a way of overcoming anxiety by increasing the learners' self-efficacy. Regarding the language testing as an anxiety factor, Young mentioned that «learners experience more apprehension when the situation is novel, ambiguous, or highly evaluative. In language testing, the greater the degree of student evaluation and the more unfamiliar and ambiguous the test tasks and formats, the more the learner anxiety produced» (Young, 1991,p.429); thus suggesting that the students' language anxiety derives from specific methodologies used by the teachers. In her study, Young then proceeded to indicate the characteristics that are evident manifestations of language anxiety in learners. As Horwitz et al. argue, similarities have been found between social anxiety and language anxiety. Therefore, Young proposed a view of social anxiety suggested by the psychologist Mark Leary and adapted it to the classroom context. In 1982, Leary identified a list of different types of behaviors originating from social anxiety and classified them into three categories: 1) Arousal-mediated responses; 2) Disaffiliative behavior; 3) Image-protection behavior. According to Leary, behaviors stemming from the first category are those that don't provide any social function but are side-effects of the stimulation of the individuals' nervous system. In order to better describe the anxiety-manifesting behaviors that are part of the Arousal-mediated responses category, Young directly quotes Leary: [anxious individuals] «squirm in their seats, fidget, play with their hair, clothes, or other manipulable objects, stutter and stammer as they talk, and generally appear jittery and nervous» (1982, p.110). Disaffiliative behaviors, which are part of the second category, are actions aimed at avoiding any social interactions. Individuals who suffer from social -and language- anxiety manifest disaffiliative behaviors when they prefer not to initiate any conversations, and tend to communicate by using fewer silence breaks when asked to speak in front of an audience (e.g. a classroom), in order to end the speaking process as soon as possible. The last category identified by Leary is that of Image-protection behavior. Behaviors part of this group are those directed to trying to please others; e.g. smiling often,

nodding, and frequently giving short, affirmative answers. Individuals who suffer from social anxiety and manifest Image-protection behaviors strive to protect their social self-image, and tend to depict themselves as «agreeable, polite, interested, and even sociable, without incurring any social risks» (Leary, 1982, p. 114). Young then indicates which manifestations of foreign or second language anxiety are recognizable in the classroom environment: for example, these phenomena can resurface under the students' inability to discriminate sounds and inability to reproduce the correct rhythm, inflection, and intonation of the target language. (Young, 1991) Students who feel excessively anxious tend to freeze when they are asked by the instructors to perform: they might either temporarily forget how to construct sentences in the target language, or again, they might forget the words that should be used in that specific context (even if they are consciously aware of knowing them). «At a subtle, perhaps subconscious level, language learners may actually resist learning the language» (Young, 1991, p.430). In her work, researcher Young also mentions the fact that, when students feel anxious, they tend to avoid speaking and therefore using the target language. This happens because the Affective filter builds up, and students tend to freeze; in these situations, the main feelings perceived by the learners are panic and nervousness. The instinctive reaction is that of avoiding and refraining from the situation that is causing anxiety: the language learning class. For the same reason, anxious students are inclined to avoid carrying out activities and tasks in class. Young concludes her paper by stating that foreign and second language anxiety seemingly is «a result of unnatural classroom methods» (1991, p.434). Although it is important that teachers are able to recognize the stress and anxiety-related signs in students, it is also fundamental that they create a positive classroom environment that benefits learners, especially the most anxious ones. The main goals for foreign and second language teachers should be that of freeing their students of language-related anxiety (at the greatest extent possible), and at the same time they should be creating a «more effective language learning and to instill in students increased interest and motivation to learn another language» (Young, 1991, p.434). A recent study by Dornyei (2007) investigated the concept of a positive, motivational classroom environment with the intention of achieving the most favorable outcome attainable in FL and L2 language learning. Dornyei's assumptions in his paper concern the idea that, in order to sustain a long-learning

process such as that of learning a new language, students need an educational context that is pleasant and enjoyable. Only an entertaining and gratifying classroom environment can help learners to sustain motivation throughout their whole learning experience; and not only that, but positive experiences can also encourage students to maintain their language learning commitment outside of the classroom, thus making it a life-long process. One of the first, important features that should be present in a motivating classroom environment is a high degree of group cohesion. In fact, as Dornyei states, «the quality of teaching and learning is entirely different depending on whether the classroom is characterized by a climate of trust and support or by a competitive, cutthroat atmosphere» (Dornyei, 2007, p.640). Regarding this aspect, Dornyei points out two types of intermember relations occurring within students in a classroom: the attraction type and the acceptance type. The first type, attraction, refers to an immediate interest between individuals based on certain specific factors: perceived competence in the subject, physical attraction, analogous personalities and similarities in occupations, sport, preferences, etc. The second type is acceptance, which «involves a feeling toward another person which is non-evaluative in nature, has nothing to do with likes and dislikes» (Dornyei, 2007, p.640), and rather depends on an unconditional and free of judgement recognition of other individuals. Acceptance covers a fundamental role in the group dynamics and allows the development of a “good group” of students. The most important feature of a good group is group cohesiveness, that is an inner force which pulls the group closer and maintains it united. Therefore, as Dornyei suggests, teachers should attempt a promotion of both acceptance and group cohesiveness through specific varieties of FL and L2 teaching methods. Dornyei then points out 14 factors that influence group cohesiveness. The first factor is “Learning about each other”, and it represents the very first step toward acceptance. In fact, acceptance can only happen when individuals know each other quite well and can accordingly be tolerant of the other members of the group. The second factor includes “Proximity, contact and interaction”, and they refer to situations where learners feel safe and confident enough to communicate instinctively. These aspects are causally related to the class setting (which will be discussed in depth in section 2.3), and to different work methodologies e.g. working in couples or in small groups. The third and fourth factors are “Difficult admission” and

“Shared group history”; the first referred to the exclusiveness of certain groups considered to carry an high importance and value, while the latter is a deep bonding element upon which members can build friendship. The fifth factor is “The rewarding nature of group activities”, and concerns the enjoyment and gratification deriving from the achievement of set goals, carrying out an activity or a task, etc. The sixth factor is the “Group legend”, and it has to do with the fact that cohesive groups tend to create “tradition” for themselves, including giving a name to the group, establishing a specific dress code and rituals, symbols, etc. The seventh factor is the “Public commitment to the group”, to which belong guidelines that set a specific way of conduct, common rules and goals set and respected by the members. The main purpose is that of showing to the outsiders the members’ “loyalty” and commitment to the other members of the group. The eighth and ninth factors are similar and deal with “Investing in the group”, e.g. investing a considerable amount of time in the success of the common goals of the group, and “Extracurricular activities”, that are positive experiences shared by the members of the group which help building up positive relationships. The tenth and eleventh factors are “Cooperation toward common goals” and “Intergroup competition”. The first refers to the collaboration of all the members of a group in a mutual effort in order to achieve specific set goals. The latter concerns, instead, activities to be carried out in small groups; students often perceive said challenges as amusing and entertaining. It would be ideal to both create groups including individuals who usually do not collaborate together, and also to mix the groups up regularly, so that everyone cooperates with each other. The twelfth factor is “Defining the group against each other”, and it deals with an alarming discrimination between the members of one group and other individuals who are not part of that group. It can somehow be exploited positively if the students in a classroom are able to identify the perks of attending that specific class; the students’ views can vary from being grateful to be participating in a course because they see its usefulness outside of the school, or from being able to spend time with their peers. The thirteenth factor is “Joint hardship and common threat”; it involves bonding over some shared adversities. This results in an increment of the group cohesiveness. The last factor, the fourteenth, is “Teacher’s role modeling”. This factor refers to the way of conduct of the teacher; an instructor who shows interest and empathy toward the students, and

a deep passion and motivation for the subject, is more likely to set a positive classroom environment, and to directly affect the students in a constructive way.

«The classroom peer ecology, or the social environment of classroom peers in interaction with each other, is one of the most important proximal environments for students' social and academic development (Hendrickx et al, 2016, p.30)». Individuals in social groups, independently from the context, follow rules and norms which restrain and limit a state of lawlessness and utter confusion. There are some specific rules that apply indistinctly to everybody in every situation: these are group norms. There also are other sets of rules, which are instead specific to limited circumstances: these are called group roles. In every educational environment there are classroom norms that have been established either by the teachers of a course, or by the school itself. (Dornyei, 2007) However, our daily life is regulated by implicit norms that are not systematically specified; yet they are still recognized as valid by all of us as a social group. These implicit norms are not less powerful than the explicit laws; they are in fact respected and they evolve and become strengthened over time. As Dornyei claims, «the significance of classroom norms, whether official or unofficial in their origin, lies in the fact that they can considerably enhance or decrease students' academic achievement and work moral.» (Dornyei, 2007, p.642). Dornyei then suggested that one of the most important norms in a foreign and second language learning context is that of tolerance. This is crucial since «the language classroom is an inherently face-threatening environment because learners are required to take continuous risks as they need to communicate using a severely restricted language code» (Dornyei, 2007, p.643). For this specific reason, the classroom climate should be tolerant and positive, so that students do not feel unnecessarily embarrassed or judged either by their teacher or peers. Mistakes should be seen as part of a natural learning process. In 1997, researchers Dörnyei and Malderez suggested in their study *Group dynamics and foreign language teaching* a procedure to present potential norms to the members of a foreign or second language classroom. These norms should be mutually accepted by everyone in the classroom, and the consequences of norms violation should be made clear, too. Commenting on this concept, Dornyei argues: «these class rules can then be displayed on a wall chart. Our norm-building effort will really pay off when someone breaks the norms, for example, by misbehaving or not

doing something expected» (Dornyei, 2007, p.643). Furthermore, according to researcher Dornyei, it has been observed that group norms tend to be respected more by the learners when instructors spend their time setting and modeling them. Another interesting phenomenon is that, when norms are set and explained, the class group itself is more likely to discipline the students who do not behave accordingly. (Dornyei, 2007) In his 2007 paper, Dornyei also analyzes group roles. He starts by giving a definition of the term Group role; it «originally comes from sociology and refers to the shared expectation of how an individual should behave» (Dornyei, 2007, p.643). Roles are used to specify what each member of a social group is supposed to do in order to maximize the expected results. On the matter, Dornyei writes: «an inappropriate role can lead to personal conflict and will work against the cohesiveness and effectiveness of the group» (Dornyei, 2007, p.643). Therefore, in order to be balanced in their performances, a class group should demonstrate both «complementary and constructive student roles» (Dornyei, 2007, p.643). The researcher then proceeds to give an account of the various roles usually found in a classroom; these include «the leader, the organizer, the initiator, the energizer, the harmonizer, the information-seeker, the complainer, the scapegoat, the pessimist, the rebel, the clown, and the outcast» (Dornyei, 2007, p.643). These roles usually emerge naturally in the classroom social group. It is also possible that teachers might (either consciously or unconsciously) encourage the rise of alternative roles, different from the roles that are usually assumed by the learners, that can be more effective in the improvement of the class dynamics. Dornyei concludes by affirming that students can be encouraged to take specific roles by the instructors in the following ways: first, when teachers manage to realize even the smallest attempt to assume a new role inside the classroom on the student's part, they should always support it and reinforce it. Secondly, instructors should also be capable to emphasize themselves the roles that individuals who find themselves at the social margins of the classroom might assume.

As an alternative to this, instructors could also assign different and distinct roles to their students for specific activities, so that everyone has the opportunity to give their contribution and to put effort into the activity itself. This might also have a positive repercussions on the learning process, too. By pushing students out of their comfort zone, they are able to experience learning from a

different point of view, and therefore they might be capable of crossing the boundaries that they had set for themselves.

2.1.1 Teacher's influence on the learner

The classroom is a dynamic and complex social system; as mentioned before, it is a social group whose members should be cohesive in order to work. To keep the attention high and to make sure to involve all the individuals in the classroom is not an easy task, however it is necessary; teachers can directly intervene on the group dynamics by establishing a few group norms. These norms could also be suggested by the students themselves, for example regarding the tests' assessments; these suggestions could, for instance, concern keeping a transparent method of evaluation, providing realistic course objectives, and evaluating final exams while taking into consideration all the effort put in the course and all the accomplishments reached by the students thus far. As mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, teachers should be able to maintain an anxiety-free classroom environment by setting the example, and thereby creating a positive climate where errors are not judged harshly, but rather corrected while at the same time considered as strategies. Teachers have a huge impact and influence on the classroom climate; a specific management of the classroom itself contributes to create a productive and enjoyable atmosphere. For example, teachers should remember all of their students' names; they should show interest in their students, participate in and cherish their progress, and demonstrate that they have their best interests at heart. Teachers should be the primary motivational example for their students, and they should strive to build a relationship based on mutual trust. As we have been suggesting in this section of the paper and in the previous one, the figure of the teacher is the actual foundation necessary for a positive classroom environment. In fact, instructors who are empathic, sensitive, engaging, interested, stimulating, friendly, and who are respectful of different personalities and identities, set the ground for every successful learning process, and their influence has a long life and lasts in time. Teachers should present activities and course-objectives that are consistent with their students' self-image and way of being, so that their social image (which covers a great importance) is not damaged, but it is instead preserved. Activities that are compatible with the students' self should always be present, so that even introverts and shy students can feel at ease and carry out their tasks at the best of

their possibilities. Teachers should fight against certain views and assumptions about pre-established roles that some students may have, especially those who have a more formal approach to language learning; these type of convictions can negatively affect the students' openness and responsiveness to certain activities, especially when they are different from the activities carried out in their past educational experiences. As argued by Dornyei in his study on how to create a motivational classroom environment, «language teachers are by definition group leaders and as such they determine every facet of classroom life. The study of various leadership styles and their impact has a vast literature, but all the different accounts agree on one thing: leadership matters» (Dornyei, 2007, p.644). But are all leaderships the same? Do they have the same impact on the students? And, again, are they all effective in a foreign and second language learning and teaching context? Certainly not. In 1974, researchers French and Raven re-elaborated their 1960 theory in which they examined different classroom interactions and outlined five different types of teacher authority, while previously they had identified four. The authority types are: Attractive/Referent, Expert, Reward, Coercive and Position/Legitimate. Attractive authority is used by the teachers when they build a relationship with their students based on mutual interests; it is developed by becoming better acquainted with the students, and at the same time involving them emotionally. Usually, the Attractive authority derives from teachers whose demeanor is considered to be good-natured and charismatic. The type of climate that develops in the classroom is similar to those dynamics found in social groups outside of the classroom, e.g. in groups of friends, or situations depicted in movies; students are attracted to people (in this case, teachers) who have certain characteristics that they consider appealing. Therefore, authority is built on the foundation of the teachers' characteristics that are both physically and emotionally attractive. The Expert authority involves the perception of the teacher as an informed, sophisticated specialist on the matter. As the name itself suggests, teachers who build authority in this way manage to be respected by the classroom using the fascination of the expert. This authority is compelled by the students' desire and aspiration to become proficient in the subject. The Reward authority concerns rewarding the students with external rewards in different ways, e.g. by promising higher marks, prizes and privileges, in exchange for their effort and good results in the subject. Rewards are effective, but they can't be the only method used. If rewards are handed regularly and to students who do not put much effort in the class, instead of inspiring students to do their best,

it frustrates and discourages them, because they do not feel rightfully recognized by the teacher. Another issue is that students might work hard because they are aimed at receiving a reward, rather than studying for the sake of learning. The Coercive authority regards teachers who affirm their power by disciplining harshly their students, e.g. by handing punishments. It implies that consequences will happen if or when students will behave against the norms established by the teacher. Coercive authority can be productive only when it is not taken to an extreme, otherwise it will bring an adverse and inhospitable climate in the classroom. When used properly, this type of authority can help to outline rules and boundaries that the students should respect. The last authority type identified by French and Raven is the Position/Legitimate authority. It implies that teachers should be naturally respected solely because of their position of teachers. Since teachers are, according to the classroom norms, the guides and leaders, then their authoritative power simply exists. It is a type of authority that is not obtained or cultivated. Each of these five authoritative types described by French and Raven and mentioned thus far produce different outcomes when used in a classroom. Teachers should build their own authority type based on their personalities and teaching goals, but they unquestionably cannot forget about the students' needs. In his 2007 study named *Creating A Motivating Classroom Environment*, Dornyei examines which authority is better suitable for a foreign or second language learning classroom. In order to do so, he mentions the findings obtained by Lewin et al. in a study conducted in 1939 in the United States of America. Lewin et al. observed three different types of group leadership in a summer camp for children. The different styles of leadership noticed were three: 1) Autocratic, e.g. an instructor who is controlling and thoroughly in charge of the group. 2) Democratic, e.g. where the instructor manages his or her power by sharing some of it with the members of the group; this includes involving them in making decisions, and in helping maintain the situation under control. 3) Laissez-faire, e.g. an instructor who leaves a great degree of freedom to the students and does not use his or her power to discipline the group. The most outstanding outcome derived from the democratic leadership, whose members of the group showed a better performance, better results and a better organization; they would also carry on working, even when the leader was absent. Dornyei concludes his observation by writing that «Although leadership studies have moved a long way since this pioneering research, the main conclusion that a democratic leadership style offers the best

potential for school learning is still widely endorsed» (Dornyei, 2007, p.644). A metaphor that has been influentially used to describe instructors using a humanistic perspective, is that of seeing them as not only leaders, but also as facilitators, guides, managers, and tutors (Dornyei, 2007, p.644).

In 1997, Lessard-Clouston published his paper named *Language Learning Strategies: An Overview For L2 Teacher*; in one of its sections, he provided a synopsis of the importance of the teaching context. In order to present an adequate understanding of the matter, we shall now directly quote Lessard-Clouston words: «it is crucial for teachers to study their teaching context, paying special attention to their students, their materials, and their own teaching. If you are going to train your students in using LLS, it is crucial to know something about these individuals, their interests, motivations, learning styles, etc.» (Lessard-Clouston, 1997, p.5). Lessard-Clouston also underlined the importance of choosing significant materials for the learners. In fact, learners should be (when possible) directly involved by the instructor in the choice of the course's content; by doing so, students would be made the main protagonists of the learning process, and their autonomy would increase, too. When the topic is considered to be interesting and stimulating by the students, the learning process will be pleasant, gratifying and at the same time the set goals will be reached almost effortlessly. Using only one source of material is not enough: materials should be integrated, personalized, and transformed to fit the class's needs and curiosity. Presenting personalized material to the students makes a huge difference, because it shows that teachers truly have at heart their students' success and best interest. Choosing the appropriate materials also means taking into consideration relevancy, e.g. to provide communicative situations that are significant for the students, because they stimulate the students' intrinsic motivation, while acknowledging and respecting their interests, aspirations, needs and goals. Teachers could work on relevancy by presenting activities that have a clear effect on the outside world. For these specific reasons, relevant materials are able to capture and maintain the students' interest; in fact, according to neuroscience, the human brain has the power to select only the information that possesses a position of interest for us. To summarize this point, when teachers select materials that are relevant for their students, they are exerting leverage on their own students' aspirations, goals, desires, and ambition by showing them the possible outcome that they can have in real life outside of the classroom. Teachers should provide achievable and realistic goals by working on the students' expectations.

Indeed, accomplishing a set goal or making aspirations come true are powerful tools to increase the students' self-efficacy. In 2016, Hendrickx et al. published their study in an article named *Social Dynamics In The Classroom: Teacher Support And Conflict And The Peer Ecology*, in which they provided an overview and analysis of the figure of the teacher and of the peer ecology. Peer ecology is a concept that «is rooted in ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), which describes how an individual is nested within social settings, like families or classrooms» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p. 31). Classroom peer ecologies have three aspects that have been identified and examined by Hendrickx et al., and these are: 1) the richness of interpersonal ties; 2) social structure or status hierarchy; and at last 3) patterns of social behaviors exhibited by classroom peers.

The richness of interpersonal ties includes both positive and negative relationships and feelings occurring between the members of a classroom. Having positive connections between students helps prevent wrong and distressive behaviors e.g. bullying, verbal abuses, etc.; they also create a positive climate where students are more likely to feel accepted and less anxious and stressed.

To quote Hendrickx et al.'s words, social structure or status hierarchy «refers to the degree to which social status in the classroom peer ecology is structured in an egalitarian versus hierarchical manner» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p. 31). An egalitarian distribution means that each member of a classroom has a similar social status; a hierarchical distribution of power, instead, implies that a small number of members retain a higher social status than the other members, and this disproportioned and unbalanced distribution makes them predominant. Hendrickx et al. affirm that there are two social aspects that reflect the peer status: likeability and popularity. Likeability could be defined as the degree to which an individual is liked by the other members of a group, in this case a classroom, while popularity indicates a student's acceptance, reputation and prominence. Hendrickx et al. then conclude this second aspect of peer ecology by mentioning a 2005 study conducted by Schafer et al. on bullying behaviors, which pointed out that «with a more pronounced status hierarchy, there was more negative behavior than in classrooms where social status was distributed more equally» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p. 31).

The third and last factor of peer ecology is patterns of social behaviors exhibited by classroom peers. This aspect is characterized by the social behaviors that are results of daily interactions between members of a classroom. These social

behaviors, as mentioned before, could either be positive (or prosocial) or negative behaviors. Cooperating and helping are examples of prosocial behaviors, while excluding others, spreading rumors, or even hitting are negative, aggressive behaviors. Because both these types of behaviors, prosocial or aggressive, are contagious in a small social group such as that of an educational setting, there should be specific classroom norms established by the teachers that strive to set a positive example to follow. In fact, the necessity of a fair management of the classroom performed by the teacher is remarked by Hendrickx et al.: «given the importance of the classroom peer ecology as a social context for students' development, it is necessary for teachers to understand how they may, unwillingly or deliberately, affect these ecologies» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p. 31). Regularly, teachers interact and create relationships with both students as individuals, and the whole classroom as a social group. Studies such as that of Ladd et al. (1999) state that conflicts with the teacher adversely connected with academic achievement. Teachers' relationship with their students can build up on two different levels: teachers who focus more on the individuals, can be more likely to extend this kind of support to the rest of the classroom, while teachers who are friendly, pleasant and helpful with the whole classroom can struggle to shift that same attention and bond to single students. Hendrickx et al. identified two mechanisms that account for the teacher support and conflict in peer ecology: modeling and social referencing. In fact, «teachers' general social practices in class can be a model for peer interactions and peer relationships» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p. 32). Peers, therefore, try to emulate the teacher's way of conduct. To better understand this concept, we shall quote Hendrickx et al.'s direct words: «when teachers generally show support and have positive interactions, the modeling perspective assumes that students are likely to emulate that behavior» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p. 32). The modeling perspective outlined by Hendrickx et al. means that, if teachers show friendly, welcoming and overall warm behaviors in the classroom, then students are more likely inclined to imitate them, and to shift and adapt those same behaviors toward the other peers. In the same way, teachers who instead show adverse, negative, and controlling behaviors are more likely to transfer them to the classroom group. (Hendrickx et al., 2016) For these specific reasons just mentioned, «the modeling perspective emphasizes how students take in their teachers' general support and conflict as implicit lessons for how to behave themselves» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p.32).

The social referencing concept, instead, deals with the students' implicit learning of how to evaluate and create a relationship with the other students in the classroom, based on the teachers' supporting or conflicting behavior. Hendrickx et al. concluded their study by affirming that teacher support and conflict and peer ecologies are not individual elements, but rather they are deeply interrelated with each other. Furthermore, teachers serve as social models; students, in fact, tend to learn social interactions and relationships with their peers from their instructors. For this reason, it is crucial that teachers are aware of the importance of their role, so that they can «deliberately use their everyday interactions with students as network-related teaching strategies» (Hendrickx et al., 2016, p.39).

2.1.2 The classroom setting

Recently, an increasing number of studies have highlighted the importance of the role of a classroom design that is functional and appropriate for second and foreign language learning, in order to promote and maximize the student engagement and achievement. A study published in 2017 and conducted by Rands et al., mentioned and analyzed the research done thus far, while taking into account the specific relationships existing between classroom spaces and design with student engagement. First, Rands et al. provided the definition of the concept of “Active learning” by quoting a 1991 study by Bonwell and Elison; Active learning refers to any learning strategies that implicate «students doing things, and thinking about the things they are doing» (Bonwell et al, 1991, p.2). Secondly, Rands et al. listed the main characteristics concerning the learning strategies involved in Active learning by quoting a previous investigation conducted by Bonwell & Elson: «students are involved in more than listening, are encouraged to share thoughts and values, and are asked to engage in higher-order thinking such as analysis and synthesis rather than memorization (Bonwell & Eison)» (Bonwell et al., 2017, p.26). According to the researchers, there also are instructional strategies. Instructional strategies support all the activities that can support active learning: e.g. small group discussion, peer questioning, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, simulations, journal writing, and case-study teaching, among others» (Bonwell et al., 2017, p.26). Previous research has indicated that Active learning approaches contribute to the production of a high degree of student engagement, which then results in an increased learning and competence in the subject.

Investigating classroom design seems to be crucial, since it has been identified as a major contributing factor that can deeply influence student engagement, either in a positive or in a negative way. In their study, Rands et al. redesigned a traditional-looking classroom by rearranging the disposition of the chairs, and thus creating a flexible, different layout with a small group format; the researchers also added small, portable whiteboards so that each group could work together and cooperate while carrying out the activities. Rands et al. observed that «the flexible, open design of the ALC afforded student and instructor movement, and intellectual and social interaction, in the classroom. The mobile chairs/desks enabled students to interact with other students in order to ask questions and clear up misunderstandings» (Rands et al., 2017, p.29). The researchers were also able to detect that the different classroom layout «made students feel valued as co-constructors of knowledge, due to the design of the ALC “erasing the line” between students and instructors» (Rands et al., 2017, p.29). These findings could be easily applied to a foreign or second language learning classroom, as well. In fact, social interactions between students and teachers should be encouraged for mainly two reasons: because they result in an increased use of the target language which leads to proficiency, and also because positive relationships between classroom members can significantly lower language related anxiety, and create instead a positive, beneficial classroom environment.



Fig. 1. On the left, we can notice the traditional-looking classroom prior to redesign by Rands et al. On the right, instead, we can see the new classroom configuration which encourages social interaction and cooperation between students, and between students and the teacher.

Another recent study conducted by Cheryan et al. (2014) focused on the importance of the classroom environment and considered the relationship between classroom design and student achievement. Cheryan et al. analyzed the classroom's structural environment by taking into consideration specific factors, such as: lighting, acoustics, temperature, air quality, and accessibility. Regarding lighting, the researchers quoted previous studies (Edwards et al. 2002, Tanner 2008) which affirmed that students exposed to natural light had better performances than students who carried out tasks in more artificial lights. The presence of natural light should be incorporated into the classroom design, however it should be a cautious inclusion, because sometimes excessive lighting can have negative effects; in fact, it might increase the classroom's temperature and cause visual discomfort. The second factor considered to influence student achievement in classrooms is acoustics. Cheryan et al. employed different sources and indicated that

Excessive external noise hinders learning (Klatte, Bergstroem, & Lachmann, 2013). The source of classroom noise can vary, but commonly includes heating and ventilation units (U.S. Architectural Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, 2002), airplane flight paths (Evans & Maxwell, 1997), and road traffic (Woolner, Hall, Higgins, McCaughey, & Wall, 2007). Classrooms with greater external noise are more likely to have lower student achievement.(Cheryan et al., 2017, p.5)

In fact, classrooms in which external noises are present display a high degree of distraction and disturbance. In a foreign and second language classroom, in which new words and their correct pronunciations are introduced every day, acoustic disturbance can be specifically detrimental. Not only students might not be able to discriminate the new words and sounds, but their attention can also be exponentially decreasing for the same reason. External noises are also specifically damaging for students who have attention deficits or hearing problems. Another factor which covers great importance is the temperature of the classroom. According to Cheryan et al., the ideal temperature should be in the range of 20°C - 23°C (68 °F - 74°F). Both an excessive heat and a severe cold are perceived to be unsatisfactory by students and to cause them stress. Air

quality is reported to be another factor that can significantly affect both students and teachers inside the classroom. As Cheryan et al. state, «Exposure to low-quality air is related to decreased student attendance and affects teachers' abilities to teach well». (Cheryan et al, 2017, p. 2) The last factor mentioned in the paper *Designing Classrooms to Maximize Student Achievement* by Cheryan et al. is accessibility. In view of this last aspect just mentioned, the researchers argued that it is crucial to guarantee an overall appropriate structural quality, especially for students with disabilities (Cheryan et al, 2017). To support their thesis, Cheryan et al. indicated a study conducted in 2012 by Guardino & Antia which investigated the classroom physical environment, and which changes could be brought to facilitate students with disabilities. The 2012 study reported that, by changing the classroom physical conditions, «(e.g., acoustic quality, seating arrangements, visual stimulation, and classroom organization) improved academic engagement for deaf and hard-of-hearing students» (Cheryan et al, 2017, p.6). However, Guardino & Antia were not able to determine which were the actual factors which provided such a difference. Another issue mentioned by Cheryan et al. is the presence of «structural barriers and lack of assistive technologies [which] impede accessibility and inclusion for students with physical disabilities in colleges and universities» (Cheryan et al, 2017, p.6).

Other factors are also thought to be influencing the student engagement and achievement in the classroom environment. In their study, Cheryan et al. mentioned «the importance of the symbolic classroom» (Cheryan et al., 2017, p.6) by quoting a previous research conducted by Guardino & Fullerton in 2011. To prove the significance and the effective consequences of having a specific classroom design, Guardino & Fullerton redesigned the layout of a traditional classroom; they rearranged the disposition of the desks and the chairs, they created designated areas so that students could work in small groups, and, finally, they added objects such as plants and inspirational posters. As a direct result of these (minimal) changes, «students showed sustained improvements in engagement and reduced disruptive behavior »(Cheryan et al., 2017, p.6). Giving these findings, it seems fair to assume that how furniture is arranged has a considerable impact on the students: it has been demonstrated that their interactions improve, and they feel more at ease and less anxious. Specific classroom layouts, such as those proven to be effective by Guardino & Fullerton, should be the only ones used in FL or L2 courses, considering how much second or foreign language anxiety can affect and influence learners. In their study

taken into consideration, Cheryan et al. also further analyzed the presence of objects and decor in the classroom. Although they suggest that «adding symbolic objects to a classroom can positively affect student performance» (Cheryan et al., 2017, p.7), they also advise against an excessive use of such exposure, as they affirm that «everyday objects displayed in a school or classroom can be detrimental when they distract from learning» (Cheryan et al., 2017, p.7). Specific objects displayed in the classroom might also move further from being classified simply as “pleasant” but can also serve the role of influencing the learners’ curiosity and academic choices and decisions. An explanation to this phenomenon is given by Cheryan et al. as follows:

Stereotypically masculine objects in the classroom undermine many female students’ career aspirations (Cheryan, Plaut, Davies, & Steele, 2009). Objects in the environment signaled who “belonged” in the space. [...]To feel like they belong, students must also be able to relate to the other people who commonly seem to inhabit a space or pursue a type of career (Cheryan et al., 2017, p.7).

According to Cheryan et al.’s view, objects are able to create feelings of belonging to students who participate in a classroom. Together, these studies outlined above provide important insights into the relationship between classroom design, symbolic features and student achievement, and at the same time they promote a deep reflection on the synergy between an educational setting (e.g. the classroom) and the individuals who occupy it: students. The educational setting in fact is, as we have seen in this section of the paper, an essential element that directly influences student engagement, student achievement, and overall student effective learning. Giving a fundamental relevance to the classroom means creating a setting that is thoughtful of the learners and of their learning needs and objectives. Flexible and open-space areas, such as those created by Guardino & Fullerton in 2011 and Rands et al. in 2007 and mentioned in this section, are settings that are supportive and encouraging for the students, and they also are favorable to effective learning. As we have seen from the studies analyzed in this section, a specific classroom design can increase the quality of the student performances and improve the interactions between students and between students and

teachers. This is because classrooms which display a certain configuration of the desks and chairs (thus creating a small group format), which include symbolic objects (Cheryan et al.), and also which respect the basic factors of the classroom structural environment identified by Cheryan et al. (lighting, acoustics, temperature, air quality, and accessibility), support and promote cooperation, interactions, mutual relationships, and engage the internal cognitive, emotional and motivational resources of the students. The educational setting should be open, flexible, student-centered, functional, and practical. This is extremely important especially in a foreign or second language learning classroom, because languages need to be performed, practiced, and overall used whenever possible. In order to do so, students should be able to move around the classroom, to work with each other, to look at each other, to communicate and to collaborate. In an educational context, the development of a linguistic competence takes place in a physical and social space, e.g. the classroom, where both practical teaching and emotions and attitudes are involved; the environment should be specifically designed to include all these aspects. Characteristics that are specific of the students, such as their personality, their aspirations, their emotions, and creativity should not be ignored. Instead, the layout of the classroom should be able to respect them, inspire and incorporate them, thus covering the important function of deeply supporting the students while they carry out their tasks and activities. Ideally, a classroom that is designed to support the students during their second or foreign language learning process, empowers the learner; in this view of the humanistic approach, students cover a central role, and they are seen as the main protagonists of the language learning process. The humanistic approach (also called humanistic theory) is an approach that developed in the field of Psychology in the decades between 1940 and 1970. According to the APA dictionary, humanistic psychology «focuses on individuals' capacity to make their own choices, create their own style of life, and actualize themselves in their own way. Its approach is holistic, and its emphasis is on the development of human potential through experiential means rather than the analysis of the unconscious or the modification of behavior» (<https://dictionary.apa.org/humanistic-psychology>). Therefore, it seems correct to assume that there is an undeniable, deep correlation between the humanistic approach and a new open, flexible classroom design. As we have been mentioning in this section of the paper, this type of functional classroom has specifically been studied to substantially improve the students' learning experience while promoting integration

and cooperation between the students and the students and the teacher and facilitating mutual relationships. In this new scenario, the results produced are an increased motivation and a better performance, therefore respecting the goals of language education: acculturation, socialization, and auto promotion. The students' cognitive, sensorial, and emotional experience of learning a foreign or a second language results improved; classrooms that are designed with this intention cannot but strongly improve the learning condition of the students. The importance of the presence (or the absence) of symbolic objects in the classroom mentioned by researchers Cheryan et al. implies that even the aesthetic and creative elements should not be underestimated; there should rather be a synergy between design and functionality. Objects express beliefs and ideas, and they are able to inspire, to promote autonomy, and overall to facilitate the students' learning process. In this section, we have presented studies which claim that classrooms should be functional with regard to the students' learning objectives: teachers and students should be able to experiment different activities and different working methods, and the educational setting has to be suitable for everyone, with no exclusions.

2. 2 Considering the students' learning styles

In the past, several studies have been investigating the factors that are responsible of the differences between the students' peculiar ways of learning. Traditionally, it has been argued that students tend to respond and react to the stimuli presented to them in consistent ways while learning in educational contexts. In his pioneering works, Keefe was able to identify these consistent ways, and accounted for them by labeling them with a specific name: learning styles. Keefe outlines learning styles as «cognitive, affective, and physiological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment» (Keefe, 1979a, p. 4) Therefore, as suggested by Keefe, learners could be classified into specific, different groups according to their learning preferences. An additional definition of the term “learning styles” has been provided by Stewart and Felicetti in 1992, where they describe them as those educational conditions under which students are most probable to effectively learn. In order to detect these learning preference, or learning styles, systematic researches have been carried out in which surveys were administered to the students. Although there is no general agreement

about the effective reliability of these surveys, and also about the adequate ways through which learning styles could be detected (Coffield et al., 2004), the evidence presented is able to provide a valid evidence of the factual existence of learning styles, upon which there is a broad consensus. Some of the most influential studies have been conducted on children who attended school in the U.S.A. by Reinert (1976) and Dunn (1983-4). The researchers were able to identify the existence of four major groups of learning styles: the first one is 1) Visual learning. To this group belong students who are most likely to learn when they read or study using charts, tabs, images, etc. The second group is 2) Auditory learning; students expressed their preference in listening to lectures, discussions, debates, and audiotapes when learning a new subject. The third group is 3) Kinesthetic learning; to this group belong students whose constant way of learning is experiential learning, «that is, total physical involvement with a learning situation» (Reid, 1989, p.89). The final group identified is 4) Tactile learning; to this group belong students who are most likely to learn through practical experiences, e.g. attending laboratories, making experiments, etc. According to Reid,

research that identifies and measures perceptual learning styles relies primarily on self-reporting questionnaires by which students select their *preferred* learning styles [...] The research finding of the Dunns and their colleagues verify that most students do correctly identify their learning strengths, particularly when an element is strongly preferred or rejected. (Reid, 1989, p.89-90)

In Larkin & Budny's 2005 investigation on learning styles and student motivation, the researchers presented a new definition of learning styles; they describe the term as a «combination of affective, cognitive, environmental, and physiological responses [...] a function of heredity and experience, including strengths and limitations, and develops individually over the life span» (Larkin & Budny, 2005, p.1). The researchers also gave an overview of Dunn's 1992 study on learning styles. First, Larkin & Budny mention Dunn's claim that «each person is unique, can learn, and has an individual learning style» (Larkin & Budny, 2005, p.1). Secondly, they progress to reference Dunn's 1992 study *Learning styles network mission and belief statements adopted*, in which the analyst offered a few interesting key points on the relationship existing between learning styles and motivation. The points that are significant for

this paper are: 1) Individuals possess different learning styles, and they should all be recognized and accepted. 2) The way individuals process new information is different, however these processes can be further strengthened and developed with time and with specific intervention. 3) Learning styles are complex, multifaceted constructs. 4) Acknowledging the existence of different learning styles and knowing their own empowers learners. 5) Courses that are actually effective are developed while considering the different learning styles and personalizing the tasks and activities according to the students' learning preferences. 6) Teachers should always make sure that the activities and tasks administered to the students respect their learning preferences by monitoring them. 7) Students who are taught «through their learning style strengths improve [...] their achievement, self-esteem, and attitude toward learning» (Larkin & Budny, 2005, p.3-4). 8) Students have the right to receive instructions according to their learning style. According to Dunn, teachers should use appropriate instruments, for example surveys, to assess their students' learning styles. This action covers a crucial importance, because knowing the students' learning styles allows teachers to teach effectively. In fact, Larkin & Budny report that Dunn suggests that «a match between a student's style and a teacher's style will lead to improved student attitudes and higher academic achievement» (Larkin & Budny, 2005, p.3-4). In 1990, Price and Dunn & Dunn published their study called *Productivity Environmental Preference Survey: An Inventory for the Identification of Individual Adult Preferences in a Working or Learning Environment*. In their investigation, the researchers expressed notions that are meaningful for this paper. In fact, they affirm that students find themselves to be self-motivated when they have the opportunity to use their own learning preferences, and when doing so, they encounter a successful experience. This is not surprising if we think about the evidence which suggests that students experience a significant increase in learning and productivity, and overall, they give a better performance when they use their preferred learning style (Price et al., 1992; Larkin & Budny, 2005).

Elements that are strongly rejected, as mentioned previously in this section by Reid, might generate frustration in students who are forced to employ them; this is why it is extremely important to know and consider the different learning styles. Teachers who are inclusive and considerate of the learners' needs, goals and accomplishments should be able to recognize and value the heterogeneity of the individuals in a classroom. Therefore, teachers should consider the differences in

learning styles, personalities, and intelligences that are present in a classroom. The last two elements mentioned will be further analyzed in the next sections of this chapter.

It seems fair to emphasize the concept that, when researchers affirm that individuals do have different learning styles, it does not mean that they are classifying them into specific, strict compartments; it rather means that they are placing individuals in a specific point of a continuum. Learners can have one – or two - dominant learning styles, however, they can also be using different learning styles, even if much less often. According to Dunn & Griggs (1995), learning styles can also develop and change throughout the years. However, it is remarkable to notice that «an individual achieves most easily when taught with strategies and resources that complement those preferences» (Dunn & Burke, 2005, p.3). Dunn & Burke also specify that although it is possible for learners to acquire skills and actually learn even while using an incompatible learning style, students tend to be facilitated and learn more easily when they are able to use their preferred learning style. It is also important to remember that «no single style is better or worse than any other» (Dunn & Burke, 2005, p.3). Different learning styles simply exist for different individuals, and we all have our own ways of learning that we favor and feel more at ease with. In the past years, numerous investigations have been trying to account for the different learning styles while applying them to Second or Foreign language learning. In this section of the paper, we will be analyzing Reid's work *The Learning Style Preferences of ESL Students* published in 1987, and a more recent study by Oxford published in 2003.

In his 1987 study, Reid presented the findings of a survey administered to 1388 students, who were both English native speakers and non-native speakers, in order to determine their preferred learning styles. The researcher also focused on the differences recurring between learners studying English as a second language, that he determined were depending on the learners' different language backgrounds. In Reid's self-reporting questionnaire, the researcher administered the surveys through mail to 43 American universities that agreed to participate in the study. The survey measured the students' preferred learning styles through five randomly arranged statements. The learning preferences investigated were six (thus two more learning styles were added to Reinert and Dunn's original four groups): visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group learning and individual learning. Group learning refers to an individual's preference of learning in groups of two or three (or more) students together to carry out a task or

an activity; individual learning, instead, refers to an individual's preference of learning while practicing alone or solely with a teachers' aid. The university students to whom the questionnaire was administered belonged to a vast group of different faculties, but they all were non-native speakers (e.g. English was not their first language). In addition to these students, Reid involved 154 native English speakers who were graduate or undergraduate students at the Colorado State University. The findings were the following:

Generally speaking, the results of this study showed that ESL students strongly preferred kinesthetic and tactile learning styles. Most groups showed a negative preference for group learning. [...] Graduate students indicated a significantly greater preference for visual and tactile learning than undergraduates respectively; Graduate students indicated a significantly greater preference for visual and tactile learning than undergraduates [...] Both graduates and undergraduates strongly preferred to learn kinesthetically and tactilely. (Reid, 1987 p.94)

Reid's findings indicated age as a factor potentially influencing students' learning styles. In fact, the data collected through surveys revealed that older students registered higher learning preferences for visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile learning. (Reid, 1987) The different trends in learning styles might have different explanations: they could either depend on the fact that the students who answered the questionnaire were older, or possessed a higher language (English) proficiency; or also that the students investigated simply possessed a general learning approach that develops sensory-preferred learning modalities. Further research needs to examine more closely the links between age and preferred learning styles. Another two factors identified by Reid as having a potential influence on learning styles is length of time in the U.S.A., and length of time actually studying English in the U.S.A. In his paper, Reid mentions that his findings identified «that respondents selected kinesthetic and tactile major learning styles, and their negative learning style was group learning» (Reid, 1987, p.95). Even in this case, he highlighted a different trend in the auditory learning style. In fact, he quoted as follows: « the auditory learning style demonstrated an interesting trend: The longer students had lived in the United State, the more auditory their preference became. Students who had been in the U.S. more than three years were significantly

more auditory in their learning style preferences than those students who had been in the U.S. for shorter periods of time» (Reid, 1987, p.95).

Further research on the matter might want to explore whether the data collected showed this different trend because students have had more “in-country” experience as individuals living in America; or whether perhaps this trend suggests that foreign students who have studied longer in American schools shifted to an auditory learning preference, thus implicating that schools in the U.S. might favor an auditory learning style. It would be interesting to compare individuals within the same life experiences. Further investigation and experimentation into learning styles and how long individuals have both lived on the American soil and studied in American schools is strongly recommended. Additionally, Reid also found that

students who had studied English in the United States for more than 3 years were somewhat lower in their preference means for visual, kinesthetic, and group learning than all other student respondents. In addition, students who had studied English in the U.S. for more than 3 years were less tactile in their learning style preferences than students who had been studying English in the U.S. for shorter periods of time. (Reid, 1987, p.95-96)

Again, future research should investigate whether students who «have lived and studied for an extended time in the U. S., [...] adapt their learning styles to the demands of the educational system» (Reid, 1987, p.95-96). This would shed light on the topic of learning styles and could definitely prove that learning styles are subject to develop and to change accordingly to the environment. In his section called *Overview of ESL Learning Style Preferences* (1987), Reid accounted for the different nationalities’ expression of learning preferences; all the students analyzed were non-native speakers studying English as a second language. Reid’s findings have been summarized as follows:

- 1) ESL students often differ significantly in various ways from native speakers of English in their perceptual learning styles.

- 2) ESL students from different language (and by extension different educational and cultural) backgrounds sometimes differ significantly from each other in their learning style preferences.
- 3) Analysis of other variables, such as sex, length of time spent in the United States, major field, and level of education, indicates that they differ significantly in their relationship to various learning style preferences.
- 4) The data suggest that as ESL students adapt to the U.S. academic environment, some modifications and extensions of learning styles may occur. (Reid, 1987, p.99).

A more recent study on learning styles and learning strategies in foreign and second language learning environments has been published in 2003 by Oxford. The difference between learning styles and strategies is the following: the first term mentioned involves the different, consistent ways learners generally approach learning, e.g. the way they process and absorb new information (Dunn & Dunn 1992). The latter, instead, implies specific actions that students plan when they carry out a task, an activity, or when they study for tests. Oxford also provides different definitions for the terms “task” and “activity”: she suggests that the word task used «in the L2 field the term has come to mean a segment or work plan that is part of an educational curriculum [...] Tasks can be oriented toward fluency or accuracy, or a combination of both» (Oxford, 2003, p.273). Activity, instead, «refers to what students really do in response to the task that is presented» (Oxford, 2003, p.273). In the *L2 Learning Styles* section of Oxford’s paper, the researcher accounts for different preferences for sensory style dimensions, social style dimensions and cognitive style dimensions. Oxford claims that individuals can manifest visual, auditory or hands-on types of sensory style dimensions; individuals can also display different social style dimensions whether they are an introvert or extrovert. The cognitive style dimension displayed by Oxford considers an extensive study conducted in 1995 by Oxford and Anderson which takes into account the existence of 20 different style dimensions for learners. With the term cognitive styles, we indicate the prevailing method of elaboration and processing of the information received by an individual, which has a cognitive nature. Every time we can identify a tendency which is constant and recurrent in time while using a specific class of strategies, we are in the presence of a cognitive style.

The cognitive styles identified by Oxford and Anderson are: 1) global/analytic; analytic individuals prefer to classify information, while global individuals have a

better understanding of the concept when they view it in a more general, broader way.

2) Field dependent and field independent; students who are field dependents are easily distracted and disturbed by stimuli that are external to the educational setting. Field independent students, instead, are able to concentrate on the topic and on the learning process and are not affected by external stimuli.

3) Feeling and thinking styles; these cognitive styles are related to the global/analytic dichotomy. Students who are feeling-oriented are more likely to be sensitive to emotional and social factors. (Oxford & Anderson, 1995). «His or her decision-making is likely to be globally influenced by the feelings of others, the emotional climate, and personal and interpersonal values» (Oxford & Anderson, 1995, p.206). On the contrary, students who are thinking-oriented are more logical and analytic and are not affected by emotions or social issues related to the learning environment.

4) Impulsive-reflective styles. Students who are impulsive tend to be more global when approaching new information, while students who are reflective are more analytic (Oxford & Anderson, 1995).

5) Intuitive-random and concrete-sequential. «An intuitive-random learner tries to build a mental model of second-language information. He or she deals with the “big picture” in an abstract, non-linear, random-access mode» (Oxford & Anderson, 1995, p.207). Concrete-sequential learners, on the contrary, have a preference for linear, practical, and concrete experiences.

6) Closure oriented-open styles. Learners who are closure-oriented have a need for rules, and they prefer planning their language study sessions well in advance. Closure-oriented individuals «dislike ambiguity, uncertainty or fuzziness» (Oxford & Anderson, 1995, p.207). Open style learners, instead, tend to approach the language tasks and activity while perceiving them as an engaging game. «This type of student usually has a high tolerance for ambiguity, does not worry about comprehending anything, and does not feel the need to come to rapid conclusions about the topic» Oxford & Anderson, 1995, p.207). In her more recent study, (2003), Oxford claims that «we can locate ourselves somewhere on a continuum for each style dimension» (Oxford, 2003, p.203). Acquiring an exhaustive knowledge of the different learning styles and cognitive styles directly results in acquiring more information about individual differences when learning a foreign or a second language. This awareness can be used by teachers to support and facilitate their students in their language learning process and in their academic achievements, as well.

2.2.1 The Theory of Multiple Intelligences

The first serious discussions and analyses of the existence of multiple intelligences emerged during the 1970s-1980's with the work of the psychologist Howard Gardner. In his major work published with the name of *Frames of Mind* (1983), Gardner admitted the existence of multiple intelligence with his Multiple Intelligences Theory. According to Gardner, an intelligence is the «biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture»

(Gardner, 1999, p.28). It is important to notice that the researcher endowed his theory with a cognitive perspective. Gardner pointed to the existence of (at least) eight different types of intelligences, and each one of us individuals possess one or more of these intelligences, and we use them as a tool to explore the world and process information. In 1999, Gardner published a re-elaborated version of the Multiple Intelligences Theory in a book called *Intelligence reframed*; there, he listed the eight intelligences as follows: 1) linguistic intelligence 2) logical-mathematical intelligence 3) spatial intelligence 4) musical intelligence 5) bodily-kinesthetic intelligence 6) naturalistic intelligence 7) interpersonal intelligence 8) intrapersonal intelligence. Linguistic intelligence implies that individuals have highly developed skills that involve language and words, e.g.: speaking, reading, writing, debating, discussing. Individuals who possess a linguistic intelligence are more able to understand and appreciate the sociocultural implications of language. Logical-mathematical intelligence comprises individuals who need concrete patterns to understand daily life; they tend to systematically utilize logic, numbers, and schemes. Spatial intelligence involves individuals who have the ability to perceive and represent the world through depictions, images, shapes, designs, etc. Musical intelligence implies individuals who have an understanding of the world through a rhythmic pattern, e.g. through sounds, tones, music, beats, etc. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence comprises individuals who need concrete experiences to learn, and who tend to be “hands-on”. They experience the world through an actual participation and awareness of their body. Naturalistic intelligence involves individuals who have the capacity to profoundly understand and appreciate their encounters with the natural environment. They have a strong affinity with the natural world. Individuals who possess interpersonal intelligences are people who are instinctively driven to create bonds and relationships with other people. Their social skills are naturally developed and advanced, and they prefer to work in groups

or in a team, as that creates the best conditions for individuals who possess an interpersonal intelligence. Finally, intrapersonal intelligence involves individuals who are introspective, and possess great reflective skills. They have the propensity to appreciate and embrace their inner self with its mental states such as emotions, passions, values, desires, etc. In 1990, researchers Salovey & Mayer published an article significantly called *Emotional Intelligence. Imagination, Cognition and Personality*. In their study, Salovey & Mayer suggested an amplification to Gardner's original Theory of Multiple Intelligence, by adding a ninth intelligence to those already listed: emotional intelligence. According to Salovey & Mayer, emotional intelligence is the ability to control and express feelings and emotions, and it assumes a deep perception and recognition of other individuals' feelings and emotions, too. Individuals who possess an emotional intelligence are consciously able to evaluate, regulate, and use emotions, and this is how they approach the world (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). About a decade after *Frames of Mind* (1983), Gardner himself speculated about the existence of an additional intelligence: existential intelligence. According to the researcher, individuals who possess an existential intelligence have the cognitive ability to understand other individuals by using their own intuitiveness and principles, and to contemplate meaningful human topics such as life, love, death, etc. (Gardner, 2020). In his work, Gardner also mentioned the fact that, traditionally, schools have for decades been facilitating only the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence.

Therefore, the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence have been considered to be the only academic intelligences and perhaps "the most valuable"; but that is not the case. All the intelligences encompass the same degree of importance: they simply are different from one another. The concept of Multiple Intelligences is fundamental in an educational setting. The existing variety of intelligences in a classroom has to be taken into consideration by the instructors. Each one of the students possesses more than one type of intelligence, and schools should help them develop that specific type of intelligence, so that the learning process results to be facilitated and is more likely to result in success. In 2004, Arnold & Fonseca published an article in the *International Journal of English Studies* with the name of *Multiple Intelligence Theory and Foreign Language Learning: A Brain-based Perspective*, in which they applied Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory to language learning. In the first section of the paper, Arnold & Fonseca claim that a considerable progress has been made in the past decades in the Education field, when instructors took into

consideration learners' differences in learning styles, intelligences, and personalities. «Gardner's Cognitive model proposes that human beings are multidimensional subjects that need to develop not only their more cognitive capacities but also other abilities» (Arnold & Fonseca, 2004, p.121). As we have previously mentioned in this section, schools have been traditionally focusing on activities that rely on language and logical-mathematical intelligences. According to Arnold & Fonseca, Multiple Intelligence Theory is a «dynamic construct that understands intelligences as tools that are changeable and trainable (Arnold & Fonseca, 2004, p.121).

By affirming this concept, the researchers prove that, in fact, schools can play a key role in helping students to not only develop their own intelligence, but also to open up to other intelligences too, while always respecting their cognitive preferences. In their article, Arnold & Fonseca try this preconceived view of education by mentioning the work of Hannaford (1995). In her study, the neurophysiologist suggests that schools should start to incorporate a use of the body in their in-classroom activities: for example, she claims that teachers should present activities that involve movement, which indicated a greater brain-oxygenation, and overall trying to include physical experiences. If we think about learning second or foreign languages especially, we realize that tasks and activities carried out in classrooms do not respect the situations that learners encounter in the outside world. In fact, languages are alive concepts, and they are used by people who move, interact, and communicate in a space. Relegating students to be sitting in a chair, on a desk, means denying them of practicing the language in a realistic setting. Arnold & Fonseca's paper also includes a section on motivation and stimulus appraisal. As it has been exhaustively mentioned in chapter 1, motivation is a complex, multi-faceted construct, which represents the initial force that pushes students to start learning a new language (in a L2 perspective), and it is also essential in order to sustain the whole learning process itself. Researcher Schuman, in his 1999 study, tried to account for a way through which the process of motivation happens in our brain. He outlined how humans possess a system of neural mechanisms in their brains, which comprise: the nuclear complex of the amygdala, which manages emotions, and the orbitofrontal cortex, involved in the cognitive elaboration of the decisional processes. These neural mechanisms have the function to support and elaborate the evaluation process operated by the senses to the stimuli received.

In 1960, psychologist Magda Arnold presented the so-called Cognitive Theory (or Theory of Emotion). In her Theory of Emotion, Arnold was the first researcher to place the term appraisal side by side with the neural processes happening in human brains before eliciting emotions. Numerous studies have subsequently expanded the stimulus appraisal theory originally presented by Arnold: Frjida 1986, Ortony et al. 1988, Lazarus 1991, Scherer 2009, etc. It is undeniable that emotions play a key role in learning. Arnold's Cognitive Theory of the stimulus appraisal claims that there is a biologic answer to external stimuli; the human brain undergoes the rules of action-reaction. This means that every stimulus is elaborated and evaluated by the brain, and only after this process the brain is able to release an answer. The biggest the extent of the stimulus, the most likely it is that that same stimulus will remain imprinted. If the stimulus is associated with a specific emotion, the brain is indeed able to remember it more easily. Each stimulus is evaluated by the emotions; furthermore, the brain not only elaborates an answer, but it also organizes that same stimulus inside the brain's own system of values (e.g.: habits, values, tastes, aspects, traits, etc.). The theory of stimulus appraisal naturally includes the input provided to students in an educational setting. The stimuli received by the brain are evaluated according to five parameters: newness/unfamiliarity, pleasantness, relevancy, competency, and compatibility. Inputs that are new for our brain present both advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that they are able to capture an individual's attention, and at the same time to cause a cerebral activation. The disadvantages of new stimuli are, instead, that they do not last in time: therefore, a stimulus that is new, does not immediately guarantee to be learnt. New inputs can strategically capture the brain's attention and at the same time suscite emotions; but because this is not enough, other parameters are needed. Inputs can be pleasant in various ways: they can be pleasant at the content level, they can be presented through different channels of communication, they can provide variety, be relevant, etc. When learners have the power to choose the topics they are interested in, or even the materials, the learning process will definitely be a pleasant one; furthermore, with this method, even the students' autonomy results to be increased. Inputs that are relevant for the learners, e.g. that provide significant communicative situations, are able to stimulate intrinsic motivation by exploiting the students' interests, goals, objectives, and needs. The human brain has the power to select only the information we are interested in: therefore, relevant inputs are able to capture and to maintain the brain's attention.

Accomplishing a goal intensifies the sense of self-efficacy. When learners are provided with learning objectives, they should be realistic and reasonable. The same concept can be applied to expectations. Finally, inputs that are compatible with the students' idea of self and social image tend to be more satisfying. All the parameters mentioned should be taken into consideration in the learning environment. «Language learning can be supported by bringing in the musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, mathematical and naturalistic abilities as they constitute distinct frames for working on the same linguistic content» (Arnold & Fonseca, 2004, p.125). Students learn in the most effective way when they are presented with such a variety of frames. In his major work *The neurobiology of affect in language* (1997), Schumann introduced the concept of sustained deep learning. According to the researcher, the learning process can be portrayed as “sustained” because it extends during a long period of time, even years. This is especially true if we think about foreign and second language learning; language learning is, most of the time, even a life-long process. Schumann identifies learning as “deep” also because «when it is complete, the learner is seen as proficient or expert» (Schumann, 1997, p.32). A strong, driving force such a motivation is fundamental to sustained deep learning. It represents the impetus to start the learning process, and most importantly to preserve it over time. As a matter of fact, in his 1999 study Schumann affirms that sustained deep learning «is highly dependent on affect, emotion, and motivation » (Schumann, 1997, p.35). Including the Multiple Intelligences Theory into language teaching might be extremely beneficial to both the students and teachers. In fact, if learners are given adequate instruments to sustain the learning process, they will be able to appropriately express their different capabilities; this results in the perception of an increased self-efficacy, and chances of success will be exponentially growing.

2.2.2 Different Personalities in a Language Classroom

Although, at a first glance, taking into consideration the students' personalities might not seem to be crucial in an educational environment, it is instead a factor that covers great importance. In fact, students are, first of all, individuals. And individuals have different personalities from one another. Furthermore, personalities directly influence the way individuals achieve their goals and objectives, and fulfill their needs: for these reasons, personalities affect learning. Different personalities have different

impacts on the learning process, because they determine the way that individuals (in this case: students) behave and perform activities and tasks. The first researcher who undertook a deep analysis of personality from a non-reductive perspective was American Psychologist Gordon Allport (1937, 1955, 1965,1968). His theory on personality is considered to be one of the first humanistic theories because of his pioneering interpretation of the human being as an autonomous individual provided with a free will. According to Allport's view on personality, he promoted the belief that individuals are not only motivated to act according to instincts and stimuli, and the additional assumption that they are not controlled by the past. In his 1955 study *Becoming: Basic considerations for a psychology of personality*, Allport developed the concept of *proprium*. According to the psychologist, the notion of *proprium* refers to an essential segment of personality that covers a profound and visceral role in individuals. In other words, it is an internalized perception of the self. Allport identified seven functions within the *proprium*: 1) Sense of body 2) Self-identity 3) Self-esteem 4) Self-extension 5)Self-image 6) Rational coping 7) Propriate striving. Alongside with developing the original concept of *proprium*, Allport also presented the theories of personal traits and personal dispositions. Originally, in his studies Allport had started to use the term "traits"; however, this resulted in a misinterpretation of the term by the readers. In fact, scholars thought that by "traits" Allport meant certain personality characteristics that could be easily recognized by other individuals or determined by specific personality tests. Instead, Allport meant "traits" as «unique, individual characteristics within a person» (Boeree, 1998, p.5) , and therefore the psychologist changed the term "traits" to "personal dispositions" to make the concept he wanted to illustrate clearer and more straightforward. However, Allport's theory of personality traits and personal dispositions assume the same meaning outlined above of individual, singular characteristics specific to a person. In Allport's groundbreaking trait theory of personality, he identified a three-levels hierarchy of traits made of: 1)Cardinal traits 2)Central traits 3)Secondary traits. Cardinal traits are rarest than the other two, and usually develop later in life. These traits are so powerful that profoundly regulate and determine a person's behavior. Central traits are considered to be less pervasive, and they are present with different degrees in all people's personalities. They do not profoundly regulate and determine behaviors like the central traits do, but rather they influence it. Alternatively stated, central traits are relatively easy to identify and they represent the dominant personality traits in a person. Finally,

secondary traits are also present in all individuals. They immediately depend on the context, therefore being situation-specific that can be observed only under certain circumstances.

According to Allport, personality is a unique mix of traits (cardinal, central, and secondary) that is not repeatable. Some of these traits are inherited by the individuals' culture; others are innate; others depend on the individuals' interaction with the environment. This unrepeatable, unique mix of traits constantly changes and evolves based on the individuals' experiences, encounters, and interaction with the surroundings. Another way to define personality is to describe it as a set of personal dispositions that are individual, innate or inherited (e.g.: dispositions such as flexibility, introversion, extroversion, open-mindedness, impulsivity). This set of personal dispositions influence a person's perceptions, mental/emotional state, behavior, and social relationships.

In 1995, Costa & Mcrae published an empirical study named *The five-factor model of personality: Theoretical Perspective* that investigated personality traits and academic behavior. They took into consideration the Five Factors model advanced by Ernest Tupes and Raymond Christal in 1961. The five factors reveal foreign language aptitude predictions by dividing learners into gifted and non-gifted, e.g. whose students were facilitated by specific inner factors in a second or foreign language learning process. (Biedron, 2011) These five factors mentioned are: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism and they had been identified in previous self-reports, questionnaires, and peer rating scales conducted. The five factors are part of the so-called Trait or Dispositional Theory, an approach that investigates human personality. The APA dictionary defines personality traits as «relatively stable, consistent, and enduring internal characteristic[s] that [are] inferred from a pattern of behaviors, attitudes, feelings, and habits in the individual» (<https://dictionary.apa.org/personality-trait>). The Trait theory supposes that personality traits differ for each individual, do not change over the years, and therefore are relatively stable. However, there is not a widespread agreement on the matter: in fact, some scholars do believe that traits are not necessarily characteristics that individuals either possess or not, but rather they are placed in a continuum. Now, we are going to give a brief definition for each of the five factors, also known as the "Big Five" personality based on the 1995 Costa &

Mcrae study and 1991 Barrick & Mount investigation. Openness to experience refers to two separate traits, although they are strongly linked to each other: openness to experience and intellect. They are considered as cognitive traits, and individuals who possess the openness to experience traits have specific behavioral tendencies: they are inventive, curious, imaginative, innovative. etc. They are also creative, and they are equipped with a strong artistic and aesthetic sense. «They tend to be unconventional, independent in their judgment and willing to question authority and discover new political, social and aesthetic ideas» (Biedron, 2011, p.470). Individuals who possess traits belonging to Conscientiousness are able to intensely focus on their set goals. The behavioral tendencies are inclined towards being hard-working, self-disciplined, strong-willed, goal-oriented, efficient, organized, and persistent (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Biedron, 2011). Extraversion is «connected with positive emotions, surgency and the tendency to seek out stimulation and the company of others» (Biedron, 2011, p.471). This factor can be measured by assessing a person's social skills (e.g. being loquacious, sociable, etc.). Agreeableness alludes to the concern for social harmony (Biedron, 2011), and to the different sources taken as an example to deduce behavioral norms. «Agreeable individuals are friendly and helpful and generally assume that other people represent similar virtues» (Biedron, 2011, p.471). The behavioral tendencies correlated to agreeableness are being compassionate, sympathetic, tolerant, sincere, generous, altruistic etc. (Barric & Mount 1991). At last, neuroticism refers to the amount of stimuli that a person can endure before eliciting negative emotions. The behavioral tendencies correlated with neuroticism are being resilient, sensitive, anxious, angry, etc. (Barric & Mount, 1991).

In her 2011 study named *Personality factors as predictors of foreign language aptitude*, Biedron considered the Five Factor model in relation to second language acquisition. Biedron specifically linked the Five Factor model to the concept of foreign language aptitude. According to Carroll, an American Psychologist and Psychometrician and the creator of a test to assess language aptitude in adults (MLAT), foreign language aptitude is «an individual's initial state of readiness and capacity for learning a foreign language, and probable facility in doing so [given the presence of motivation and opportunity]» (Carroll, 1981, p.86). Stated differently, it is the talent or the ability to learn a foreign or a second language. (Biedron et al., 2017) Essentially, any individual has the ability to learn a second or a foreign language; however, some individuals are inclined to be more facilitated in the same learning process, e.g. they

tend to learn at a faster rate than their peers under the same conditions. Foreign language aptitude is a «concept deeply rooted in educational psychology and its interpretation in applied linguistics is unavoidably affected by developments in the neighboring fields of education and psychology» (Biedron et al., 2017, p.2). In his investigation on foreign language aptitude, Carroll was able to outline a test that could assess language aptitude in adults, called Modern Language Aptitude Test, or MLAT. The MLAT created by Carroll was based on the researchers' four components of language aptitude, which are four abilities that are identified to regulate language aptitude, aside from motivation. The four components are: phonetic coding ability, the ability to perceive, associate and remember symbols and sounds; grammatical sensitivity, the ability to observe and understand grammatical constructs; rote learning ability, the ability to learn new words and to associate them with their meaning; and inductive learning ability, «the ability to infer or induce the rules governing a set of language materials, given samples of materials that permit such inferences» (Carroll, 1981, p. 105). The score resulting from the analysis of these four factors in the MLAT test reveal how long it will take for an individual to achieve a learning objective (while supposing the presence of motivation). As we have previously mentioned in this section, Biedron linked the five factors model to language aptitude in her 2011 study. The researcher examined «the level of the Five Factors in two groups of learners: gifted and nongifted» (Biedron, 2011, p.475) and tested «whether personality traits are predictors of foreign language aptitude as measured by two foreign language aptitude tests» (Biedron, 2011, p.475). Biedron's two hypotheses suggested that: 1) Gifted learners would score a higher result on Openness and Conscientiousness, in respect to the non-gifted learners (Biedron, 2011). 2) That some specific personality traits will be affecting variance in foreign language aptitude: «Openness and Conscientiousness will have a positive effect on foreign language aptitude, whereas Neuroticism will have a negative effect on foreign language aptitude» (Biedron, 2011, p.475). The study participants were Polish native speakers divided as such: 44 gifted learners aged 20-35 (31 female and 13 male), whose definition of "gifted" was based «on proficiency scores, the number of languages they had learned, language learning history, recommendation of their teachers, the MLAT (Carroll and Sapon, 2002) score and the Language Ability Test [...] score» (Biedron, 2011, p. 476); and 46 non-gifted learners (39 females and one male). The non-gifted learners were students aged 20-23 learning English as a foreign language, and their only language known was Polish. Biedron

(2011) investigated whether the five factors (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) affect foreign language aptitude. In her findings, Biedron noticed that there was no correlation between foreign language aptitude and personality traits in the gifted group (Biedron,), however, the correlation was significant in the non-gifted learners. There were two specific personality factors that directly affected foreign language aptitude: Openness to Experience and Extraversion. The first one had a positive effect on language learning, while the second one affected the learning negatively. Therefore, Biedron observed a partial confirmation of hypothesis 1. In fact, «no statistically significant differences in personality factors between the gifted and the nongifted L2 learners were observed, although both Openness and Conscientiousness were lower in the nongifted sample» (Biedron, 2011, p.482). The second hypothesis was instead fully confirmed.

CHAPTER 3

New Challenges in Modern Languages Teaching and Learning

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in re-defining a common framework that could better adapt to the new challenges and needs that we encounter in modern languages teaching and learning. The need to learn an additional second - or even third, fourth or more- language has been increasing, and this importance resides in the lifestyles that we lead in the modern world. The tendency to travel abroad, both for personal or for academic reasons, the tendency to move from one country to the other in order to advance our career, to broaden our opportunities, to develop certain business skills, or even the desire to simply live life in a social and cultural environment that is different from our native one, has reached an historical peak; and this change in habits demands an educational change, too. Given these premises, it is easy to see how there currently is a strong, absolute need to communicate. In fact, we can only be part of this modern, multicultural world when we are able to efficiently communicate with all of the people who populate it, and when we are able to responsibly and deeply participate in all of its situations and engage with its members.

3.1 The importance of Plurilingualism

In 1996, the Council of Europe introduced a new educational approach named “plurilingualism”, which could better fulfill the new learning necessities that come with a multicultural world. The goal of this standpoint was that of promoting a plurilingual approach and education; more recently, in 2018, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages reaffirmed the importance of plurilingualism and of the plurilingual approach, following the 2009 study published by Coste et al. named *Plurilingual and Pluricultural Competence*. An obvious question arises: what is Plurilingualism? Plurilingualism is an individuals’ ability to learn more than one language, and the capacity to effectively use this competence by switching language to better adapt to the context and situation, in order to effectively communicate. Plurilingualism also aims to contrast any separations or boundaries between the languages (and the cultures) known by an individual; the languages are, in fact, able

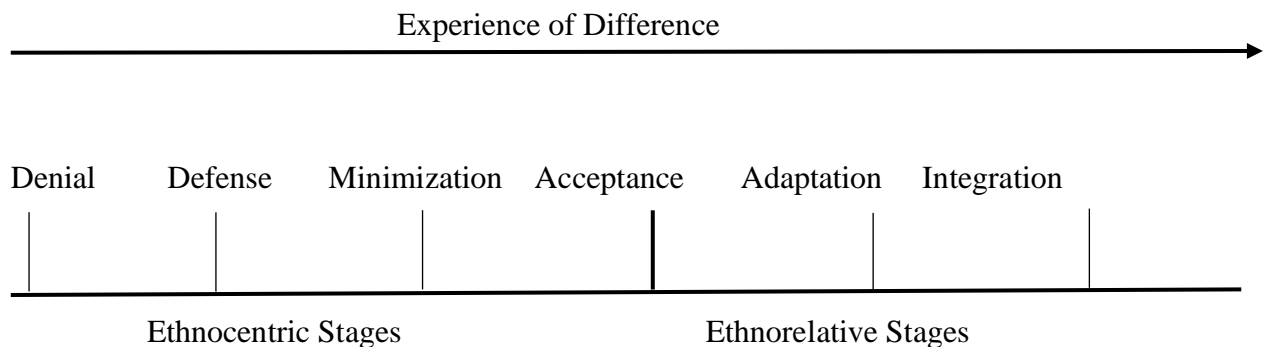
to coexist and to be referenced at all times. The following quote written by Coste et al. can better explain this concept:

It [plurilingualism] permits combinations and alternations of different kinds. It is possible to switch codes during a message, and to resort to bilingual forms of speech. A single, richer repertoire of language varieties and available options thus allows choices based on this interlinguistic variation when circumstances permit. This also means that the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence promotes the emergence of linguistic awareness, and even of metacognitive strategies, which enable the social actor to become aware of and to control his own "spontaneous" ways of handling tasks and, in particular, their linguistic dimension.

(Coste et al., 2009, p.1)

The aim of teaching and learning a modern language is therefore deeply changed: the ultimate goal is not that of learning one or multiple new languages and considering them as separate entities anymore, while having only the native speaker as the eventual model, but «the aim is to ‘develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place’(CEFR Section 1.3)» (Common European Framework Of Reference For Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2018). This means that languages are not subdivided and kept in separate compartments, but instead they are «interrelated and interconnected» (Common European Framework Of Reference For Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2018). Furthermore, the knowledge deriving from the languages and the related culture that are known to the individuals help them building up competence. The ultimate goal of the plurilingual approach, which is a lifetime goal, is that of mastering the ability to adjust one language or the other(s) to the appropriate communicative and social context. Two other important notions interconnected with plurilingualism are that of intercultural sensibility and intercultural intelligence. The first one is the complete acceptance of the general values of a foreign culture, while the latter is the ability to adapt to the situation when interacting with people from different cultures. Intercultural sensibility is the starting point which leads to developing an intercultural intelligence. They both are life-long

skills which allow us to navigate in life more easily. In 1986, Bennett introduced the so-called «Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity», which aimed to divide into six stages the different ways of experiencing cultural difference. I have summarized the differences in stages as follows:



Tab 6

The Ethnocentric Stages (Denial, Defense and Minimization) are the three on the far left, and they adopt the concept of Ethnocentrism, that is the inclination to judge other cultures by depicting and evaluating them solely on the criteria of our own culture, and projecting on the said criteria our views and opinions on the concept of progress, development and wealth of the other culture, that are therefore based on a one-sided view. Everything that withdraws from the cultural, known norms is considered to be “not normal” or “odd”. The Denial stage, also known as the «Denial of difference», derives directly from isolation and occurs when an individual doesn’t have any encounters with other cultures, so they don’t have any representations of cultural differences. An aspect of the Denial stage is Parochialism, which displays an extremely low contact with any cultural differences, which most likely happens in rural towns, where the population generally doesn’t have any (or extremely rare) encounters with different ethnicities; this condition often results in the population being highly narrowminded toward differences. The Defense stage reflects a perceived danger or intimidation to an individual’s culture and traditions coming from other cultures which are unknown to them. Since in order to be threatened by another culture, the cultural differences must be recognized first, Defense belongs to the one stage further from the Denial stage. The Defense stage also presumes feelings of cultural superiority. The last

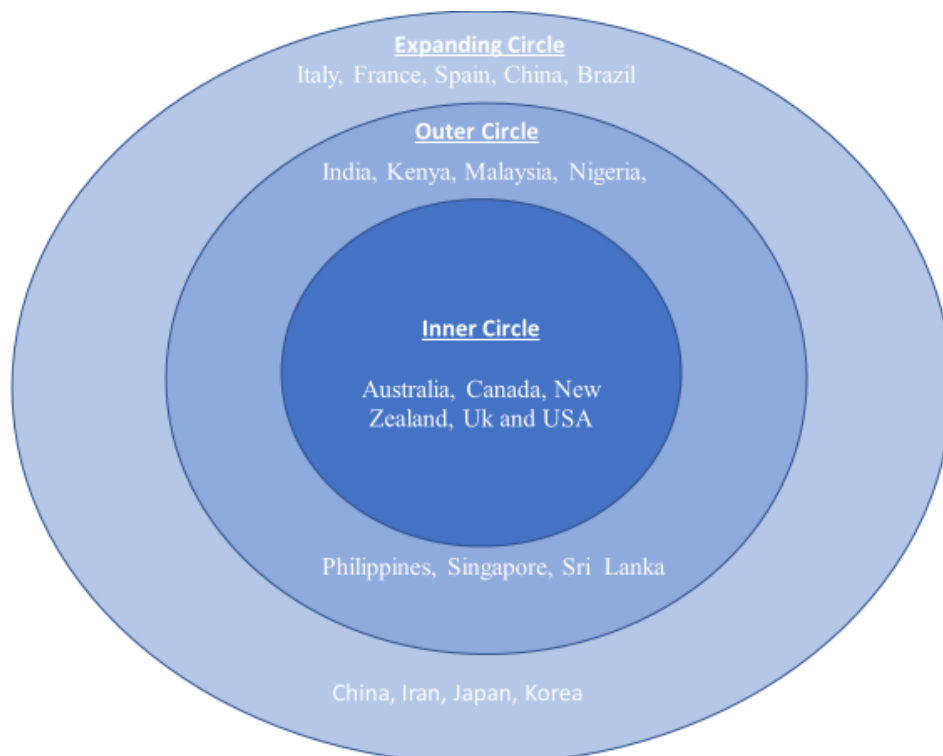
stage of Ethnocentrism is Minimization. As stated by Bennett, Minimization assumes a “burial” and a downplaying of cultural differences in order to preserve the centrality of an individual’s culture and world view. In this stage, there are not feelings of cultural superiority, but there rather is a trivialized and undervalued consideration of other cultures. The Ethnorelative stages (Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration) on the far right, instead, adopt the concept of Ethnorelativism that is the capability to consider other cultures and traditions in relation to the context, without judging different norms only by taking into consideration our own culture and knowledge. The Acceptance stage represents the very first stage of the Ethnorelative stages. To better understand the degree of cultural sensitivity that belongs to this level of acceptance, we can adopt Bennet’s own words: «At this stage, cultural difference is both acknowledged and respected. Difference is perceived as fundamental, necessary, and preferable in human affairs. Particular cultural differences are not evaluated at this stage-they simply exist.» (1986 p. 183). The next stage closer to Ethnorelativism is Adaptation, which is the capability to empathize with different cultures, and the ability, driven by genuine curiosity, to appropriately gather information about the cultural differences. The final and closest stage to Ethnorelativism is the Integration stage. Integration combines the two previous levels of Acceptance and Adaptation, where the social and cultural differences are completely accepted and assimilated into an individual’s identity. Reactions to integration can vary: in fact, people can either feel as they are lacking of a specific cultural identification, or as the other extreme, people can feel completely content with creating an “hybrid” identity which they can adapt according to the situation. In light of the meanings and the explanation about plurilingualism and intercultural sensitivity outlined above, we can clearly understand that there is a profound correlation between having a plurilingual competence and developing an intercultural sensitivity and intelligence. But what are the reasons that contribute to emphasize and stress the importance to promote the concept of plurilingualism? Knowing more than one language, and at the same time being able to use this competence in different contexts and situations allows you to communicate with a broader range of communities, and to create a deeper connection with people that are culturally different; in fact, if you are able to speak different languages, then you can efficiently communicate and connect on another level. The awareness of the existence of different contexts creates an individual who is flexible, tolerant, and open-minded, and whose world view can be significantly expanded. Additionally, being plurilingual

means having more independence and less limits. Having a plurilingual competence also prepares for change and allows individuals to improve their skills which result in having more and better opportunities in career paths and educational choices.

As it has been previously mentioned both in this section and in the first chapter of this paper, as a direct result of a modern and multicultural world, schools have been stressing the importance of learning a Foreign and/or a Second language; what is the exact difference between the two? The first is a language studied in a country where the language itself is not present; for example, studying English or Spanish in Italy equals studying a Foreign language. The latter, instead, has two different meanings depending on the contexts they are used in. It can either be a non-native language that is studied in another country where the language is actually spoken; for example, studying English in the UK corresponds to studying a Second language. Alternatively, it can also indicate a language that, differently from a native language, is studied later in a different stage of an individual's life. Thus, according to this meaning, a Second language is considered to be the equivalent of a Foreign language. If we consider the meaning of Second language as a non-native language that is studied in another country where the language is actually spoken, e.g. studying English in the U.K., then main difference between a Foreign and a Second language is the context. When students learn a Foreign language, the culture is basically only taught by the teacher; this is why we should be careful of the stereotypes which might derive from having only one source of input and information. Furthermore, the exposition to the target language is partial and it is mainly reduced to in-class activities; as a direct consequence, the learning rhythm develops at a much slower pace. When studying a Second language, instead, there is a more evident and detectable need; although, problems start to rise when students begin to realize that people around them can understand them, even if their language level is not necessarily high, and they are not autonomous speakers, yet. Motivation then becomes a fundamental tool for Second language students, in order to thoroughly progress with their knowledge in the target language. Pros of studying a Second language are that, when you are in the target-language speaking country, you have the opportunity to appreciate the culture first-hand, and you are also completely exposed to the target language outside of the classroom environment; everyday life activities are, in fact, permeated with the target-language. This makes the language learning process significantly faster.

3.2 English as a Lingua Franca

According to the British Council, lingua franca is «a common language between people who do not share the same native language». Given this definition, it seems easy to deduct that, in our times, the lingua franca used internationally is English. In 2001, researcher Barbara Seidlhofer presented her study *Understanding English as a lingua franca*, in which she examined the growth and expansion of English in the modern, global world. In her research, she first analyzed the theory of The Circle Model by Kachru (1985): in order to better understand Seidlhofer's work, we should now illustrate Kachru's theory. In 1985, Kachru developed an innovative model, called The Circle Model, with the purpose of dividing the varieties of English spoken in the world, and the subsequent countries in which those varieties are present, into three major groups (or circles).



Tab 7 – Kachru's 1985 Circle Model

In the first group, the Inner Circle, Kachru included the countries where the English language is the mother-tongue: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, U.K. and U.S.A. The second circle is the Outer Circle, and to this group belong the countries where the English language is not a native language, but it has vastly spread and has become a secondary language, and one of the main vehicle of communication, as well as the main language used by the institutions. The countries that are part of the Outer Circle are India, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, etc. It is important to note that most of the countries belonging to this second groups are territories that had been previously colonized by the United Kingdom or by the U.S.A. The third and final group is the Expanding Circle, and it includes the countries where English is only studied as a foreign language e.g. Italy, France, Spain, China, Brazil; Japan, Korea etc. In these countries, English is still considered to be of great importance, and it is acknowledged to represent the most used mean of communication internationally. This model might be helpful to identify the shades of differences between native and non-native speakers by taking into account historical and geopolitical factors as well as different contexts; however, Kachru's Model results to be over simplistic and not dynamic enough to accurately represent a fluid language like English in a world that is constantly changing. Rajadurai (2005), for example, stated that there are also grey areas which are difficult to schematize, and some countries would be left out in such a taxonomy, such as Jamaica or South Africa. In his theory, Kachru also stated that the countries belonging the Outside Circle cannot blend into the Inner Circle, but, because of how the world is developing, it can be hard to ask people to determine what they consider to be their first language; think about the Northern Europe countries. Finally, the model doesn't take into account the vast amount of migrations that people have been going through in the past decades. Another issue that is central to this model is that of identity; the dichotomy between English native and non-native speakers results to be overly simplistic and doesn't consider speakers who are just as efficient as natives but don't belong to the Inner Circle division. In her work mentioned above, Seidlhofer investigated the linguistic connotations that derive from Kachru's model, and especially from the last and biggest group, The Expanding circle. Seidlhofer perceives English as an extremely powerful vehicle of communication which covers the unprecedented role of being both a «result and reinforcement» (2001, p.83) of globalization, and that gets to be «transformed accordingly» (2001, p.83) in the process. To support her views, Seidlhofer adopted a

transformationalist view of the modern world over a hyperglobalist perspective. The transformationalist view affirms that globalization is a two-way process which involves both the Western cultural traditions and the culture belonging to the developing countries: both result to be not only transformed, but also enriched because of this cultural exchange. According to transformationalist, the result is that the Western and the developing world countries are able to adopt some selected traditions from the other cultural heritage. The outcome of this process, where a country adopts some cultural aspects which are part of another country, is called “glocalisation”. The hyperglobalist perspective, instead, is a standpoint which sees globalization as a positive element, because it aims to eliminate the cultural differences between the countries; this perspective also considers the globalization’s direct consequences to be democracy, equality, and wealth for all the countries involved. Another belief that hyperglobalists promote is that globalization might be able to spread around the globe, to the point where it can erase the traditional borders.

In her book, Seidlhofer gives a clear definition of the term English as a lingua franca (ELF), that is, English as a language spoken internationally. She defines it as «any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option» (2001, p. 7). That means that English is not only the most common, but mainly the solely medium of communication between people from different parts of the world. ELF is, therefore, the primary language that allows an effective communication in different contexts. In the same year, Seidlhofer also published a paper named called *Closing a conceptual gap: the case for a description of English as a lingua franca* in which she suggests that the existence of English as a lingua franca depends upon the current sociopolitical situation. By using the term ELF, Seidlhofer also refers to the existence of a “new”, global English that has been used worldwide by a huge community: that of non- native speakers. The perceived existence of a “global” English also has a powerful, direct impact on language teaching, because the idea of the ownership of the English language, traditionally held by the native speakers, is undermined. In this view, learners might be able to sympathize and relate more easily with non-native English teachers, thus in a way favoring the learning process. Also, as seen in section 2.1, there are new notions that need to be taken into consideration when preparing an education plan: such as plurilingualism, multiculturalism, etc. To better understand Seidlhofer’s view on the matter, it seems appropriate to report her own words:

... the notion of native speakers' "ownership of English" has been radically called into question (Widdowson 1994) and that a discussion has gathered momentum which highlights the potential special expertise "non-native" teachers have on the grounds that they know the target language as a foreign language, share with their students the experience of what it is like to try and make it their own, often through the same first language/culture "filter", and can represent relevant role models for learner. (2001, pp. 134-135)

The whole orientation of TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language), then, seems to have fundamentally shifted: from correctness to appropriateness, from parochial domesticity and exclusive native-speaker norms to inclusiveness and egalitarian license to speak in ways that meet diverse local needs. (2001, p. 135)

Seidlhofer also states that there has been a gap in the linguistic research field, and that the concept of English as a lingua franca, together with its community of non-native speakers, should be further investigated. In fact, she affirms that, because of the existing differences between the members of the English native-speakers community (considering the members involved belong not only to different countries, but to different continents as well, and each of them with their own historical events and culture), the reality of an existing English "behavior" to be spread alongside with the language just can't be valid in broad contexts such as that of lingua franca. A solution to this issue has been proposed by Seidlhofer, who states that

...we must overcome the (explicit or implicit) assumption that ELF could possibly be a globally distributed, franchised copy of ENL (English as a native language), and take on board the notion that it is being spread, developed independently, with a great deal of variation but enough stability to be viable for lingua franca communication. (2001, p.138).

Seidlhofer then went on to affirm that the English language, spoken and used by its native speakers, simply cannot meet the expectations of it being expanded globally and equally to all the learners without making any changes in order to adjust it to different contexts. Furthermore, this unrealistic intention of envisioning English as a “a language that fits all” could also be accused of «contextual inappropriacy, cultural insensitivity and political imposition» (Seidlhofer, 2001, p.151). Researcher Seidlhofer then suggested that an answer to this issue could be given by recognizing and accepting that there are different aspects and uses of the English language in different countries and contexts, and that, according to her point of view, English should be therefore seen and acknowledged as a «distinct manifestation of English, not tied to its native speakers» (Seidlhofer, 2001, p.151). Seidlhofer then concluded her paper by saying that the dichotomy between teachers who are native speakers and non-native speakers should be overcome, as it creates a pointless division which has no further reason to exist.

3. 3 The Formal and Informal Language Acquisition Setting

In the past decades, a number of researchers have sought to empirically determine which environment is optimal for foreign or second language students. (Krashen, 1981) In these investigations, there are mainly two different types of environment compared: «artificial, or formal environments, found for the most part in the classroom, and natural or informal environments» (Krashen, 1981, p.40). As Krashen and Seliger (1975) have observed, in specific educational settings, e.g. the classroom, there are specific techniques adopted to teach a foreign or a second language. These recurrent techniques are typical of formal environments, and they include presenting rules, grammatical constructs, and vocabularies presented to the students following a specific order; also, feedback (including error correction) is constantly given by the instructors. (Krashen, 1981) It is relevant to notice that these components mentioned are, instead, not present in an informal environment outside of a classroom (Krashen & Seliger, 1975). While several studies suggest that, in informal contexts, adult learners are more inclined to achieve a higher second language proficiency, others present evidence that an "exposure" does not have significant effects on the increase of adult second language proficiency. (Krashen, 1981) However, on regarding to this matter, Krashen affirms that «these studies are not

definitive» (Krashen, 1981, p.40) and that «formal and informal environments make contributions to different aspects of second language competence» (Krashen, 1981, p.41). In his 1981 study, Krashen argues that there are many different factors to take into consideration regarding achieving a second language proficiency. When considering students learning a second language in a foreign country (in this case, an English-speaking country), and therefore in an informal setting, Krashen claims that «Years spent in an English-speaking country" need not be equivalent to time spent in meaningful informal linguistic environment» (Krashen, 1981, p.45). Other factors to take into consideration are whether students take part in an active social life that include the target-language speaking group, whether they seek opportunities to communicate with native speakers, whether they are open to engage in a real communicative use of the language, and overall what is the primary purpose of their staying in an English-speaking country (academic, personal, etc.) (Krashen, 1981). Krashen's input hypothesis is a theory within the second language acquisition field and is part of the Five Krashen's Hypothesis. Krashen claims that language acquisition develops with an understandable input $i+1$ according to the natural approach, where "i" stands for intake, and it represents what the student already knows, while $+1$ is the challenge, e.g. what the student will acquire following the foreign or second language activities and tasks he will carry out. Consistently with the input hypothesis developed by Krashen, investigations conducted on second language acquisition in informal environments have found that an increased second language proficiency (especially the speaking ability) emerged when students spent a considerable amount of time in the target-language speaking country (Krashen, 1982); however, an increased proficiency in second language is only possible when the student has a sufficient understanding of the input and consequently an adequate chance to actually receive the input and to interact and communicate with native speakers. In his 1982 study *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*, Krashen illustrates the dichotomy between acquisition and learning. There is a subtle difference between the two concepts. Acquisition is spontaneous, unplanned, automatic, unstructured, and it takes place subconsciously through exposure to the language; the context is that of a second language. Learning, instead, is sequential, divided into unities, didactically structured according to an educational project, and it happens in formal environments such as the classroom. While it is true that acquisition has remarkable advantages (it is even faster than learned competence), even learning has its considerable importance,

as well. Learning and acquisition should not be seen as opposite concepts, but rather, we should consider them as aspects that complete each other. Learners both need learning and acquisition to reach language proficiency. Learning can also be identified as the so-called monitor within the Five Krashen Hypothesis (1982): the monitor is an internal control that regulates what we say in a second or foreign language. In a native speaker the monitor is automatic; in learners, instead, it is not, and it needs to be kept under control. This is why there is a considerable difference in the oral production between native speakers and non-native speakers; native speakers can both be fluent and correct at the same time, while non-native speakers are not able to do so. The more a non-native speaker is fluent, the bigger the possibility that he or she can make mistakes.

Informal environments do not always present an input that is sufficient for acquisition, and foreign or second language classrooms do not always provide an increased learned competence, either. (Krashen, 1981) In fact, «informal environments must be intensive and involve the learner directly in order to be effective» (Krashen, 1981, p.47). Informal environments can be distinguished between "exposure-type" and "intake-type" environments. (Krashen, 1981). The intake-type is the only type of environment that can provide «true input to the language acquisition device» (Krashen, 1981, p.47). On this matter, Krashen affirms that «the classroom may serve as an "intake" informal environment as well as a formal linguistic environment.» (Krashen, 1981, p.47). Therefore, informal environments that provide an intake-type of input can facilitate adult second language acquisition. (Krashen, 1981). Krashen concludes the section on formal and informal environment of his 1981 study by affirming that exposure-type environments are confirmed to be ineffective because of reports disclosing that there is no evident relationship between time spent in the country and a target language proficiency reached by non-native speakers (Krashen, 1981). Previously, in this chapter, we mentioned the difference between acquisition and learning, and we lingered on the fact that acquisition is typical of a second language context. While the foreign language is the language learnt at school, performed only in the classroom during the length of time established by the school itself, and it is not used outside of the formal environment of the classroom, the second language is the language learnt in the same language-speaking country where it is used for communicating. Between the two, a second language is more motivating than a foreign language, because there is a specific need to communicate. However, individuals who

are learning a second language might be tempted to stop the process when they have reached a sufficient language level that allows them to communicate to other people, including native speakers, to understand them, and to be understood by them. Because of this reason, students occasionally stop the second language learning process, because, according to them, they have reached a sufficient proficiency in the language. However, that is not often the case: this is why there is the need of a strong motivation to support the learning process. The aspect of motivation in learners studying a second language will be investigated in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

The Study

The aim of the fourth and last chapter of this paper is that of presenting a research project dealing with student motivation in a second language learning context. As we have briefly mentioned in chapter 3, communicative needs play an important role in the maintenance of motivation in second language learning. However, learners who have reached a sufficient language level (usually the B1) which allows them to communicate in the target language both with native speakers and with other people, quickly realize that their communicative needs are fulfilled. For this reason, motivation based on needs presents an evident limit: it only works until the need itself is satisfied. Therefore, it is fundamental that in a L2 learning context students possess a motivation powerful enough, and especially not solely based on needs, in order to sustain their L2 learning process. In this research project, we investigate which type of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) sustains the second language learning process in students studying English as a L2, and belonging to a language level equal to or greater than the Threshold level B1 (according to the CEFR). Furthermore, the factors affecting student motivation in the same L2 context are investigated in the paper. This forth chapter outlines the investigation conducted, thus including a thorough description of the research questions, the methodology adopted, the participants investigated, and of the procedure and instrument used. Finally, a data analysis and discussion of the results obtained is provided, together with recommendations for further investigations.

4. 1 Literary Review

As previously stated in chapter one, investigating motivation is a continuing concern within second and foreign language learning. Several studies investigating motivation have been carried out during the past decades, aiming to research which factors contribute to a successful foreign and second language learning. Motivation can be defined as a powerful, multifaceted, and complex force that provides the impetus to initiate studying a foreign or a second language; motivation also supports the whole language learning process, which surely is a long-term activity, and

sometimes a tedious one. There is a widespread agreement among scholars and researchers on the fact that motivation covers a key role in determining the success rate of second and foreign language learning. (Dornyei, 1998) Therefore, it can be argued that motivation is deeply related to FL and L2 students' learning goals. (Dornyei, 1998). Additionally, motivation is considered to be a force so powerful, that it can easily compensate for certain inadequacies in the learning context and for weaknesses in the language aptitude of the learners. (Dornyei, 1998). Given these premises, the importance of motivation seems to be undeniable, and justifies the reason why it has received considerable critical attention over the past years.

In 1972, Gardner and Lambert re-elaborated the theory of Integrative Motivation suggested by Gardner himself in 1966, and the researchers together presented a new concept: the dichotomy between integrative/instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation affirms that learners study a foreign or second language because of a personal affinity between themselves, and the culture of the social group belonging to the target language they are studying. Instrumental motivation refers to the phenomenon according to which learners are studying a second or foreign language in order to obtain a prize or to avoid a punishment; thus, it refers to factors that are external to the language learning process. However, the dichotomy elaborated by Gardner and Lambert seemed to be too simplistic to account for a sophisticated and complex construct such as that of motivation. Therefore, new studies attempted to conceptualize motivation using a cognitive perspective. In 1985, researchers Deci & Ryan presented their Self-Determination Theory. The theory suggested the existence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to individuals performing an activity or behavior because it is perceived by them as pleasant and gratifying; students who are driven by an intrinsic motivation tend to accomplish a goal simply for the sake of doing it. Extrinsic motivation refers to individuals accomplishing their goals because of external factors, e.g.: for recognition, for personal advantage, or to exempt from punishment .

Subsequently to this theory, numerous researches and investigations concerning the topic of motivation have been conducted. Central to the L2 student motivation investigated in this study is the tripolar model of motivation presented by Balboni in 1994. In his tripolar model, Balboni identified and described three different types of situations and the specific motivation related to them: 1)Duty/Obligation (I learn something because I have to), which does not result in a successful acquisition,

because the information received merely stays in the short-term memory (see section 3.1 for a more in-depth analysis of the dichotomy learning/acquisition); 2) Need (I learn something because I need it), which is a type of motivation linked to the left hemisphere of human brain, the side that is logic and rational. This type of motivation can be useful, but it is effective only until the need is satisfied. In a L2 context, the immediate need to communicate is quite evident. However, the need can solely be useful at the beginning of the second language learning process. In fact, when the basic communicative skills are fulfilled, and students realize that they can (more or less effectively) communicate with native speakers, they might think that what they have learnt is enough, and therefore they might feel unmotivated to further progress in the L2 learning process. For this specific reason, students should possess a strong motivation not only based on needs in order to sustain their learning process. Finally, the third type of motivation identified by Balboni is 3) Pleasure (I learn something because I like what I am doing), which represents the keystone component, because it involves the students' personality; it also includes the creation of a healthy challenge that allows students to enjoy the process while they are overcoming it. In his successive studies, Balboni re-elaborated his tripolar model of motivation by endowing it with a "continuum" perspective of the three factors: the duty/obligation motivation can evolve into a sense of duty, thus becoming motivating until the linguistic and communicative needs are fulfilled; then, once the needs are satisfied, they give pleasure to the students. According to this view, each of the three situations and their related motivations can develop into one another.

4.2 Purpose of study and research questions

The aim of this research is that of investigating which type of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) sustains the language learning process in students learning English as a L2 in the U.K., and belonging to a level equal to or greater than the B1 (according to the CEFR). Furthermore, this survey seeks to determine which factors influence student motivation in the same L2 learning context. For this purpose, in this study we aimed to address the following research questions:

- 1) Which type of motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) supports the learning process of the English language in non-native students learning English as a L2 in the

U.K., and belonging to a level equal to or greater than the B1 according to the CEFR?

- 2) Which factors influence intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in non-native students learning English as a L2 in the U.K., and belonging to a level equal to or greater than the B1 according to the CEFR?

Given these research questions, the study aims to offer extensive insights into L2 student motivation. As we have previously mentioned in section 4.1, communicative needs are quite evident for students who are learning a L2 in its native speaking country. However, a motivation that is based merely on communicative or linguistic needs is fleeting, and it shows its limits when the needs are satisfied; this usually happens when students attain a L2 level equal to or greater than the Threshold level B1. In order to progress and reach a higher proficiency in the language, L2 student motivation has to be powerful enough to sustain the (surely challenging) L2 learning process. In this study, we aim to investigate whether the motivation supporting the learning process in a L2 context is intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Furthermore, this study investigates which factors influence student motivation in the same L2 context. The factors investigated are those considered to directly contribute to a successful second language achievement. In order to do so, we explored both classroom-related factors, such as the classroom environment, group cohesiveness and student relationship with their peers, together with the factors mentioned by Krashen in his 1981 study, i.e. whether students communicated with native speakers, and what was the general purpose of their staying in the English native speaking country (personal goals, academic or career-related reasons, etc.). In this research, we hypothesize that the type of motivation sustaining the L2 learning process of students studying English in a native speaking country is both of extrinsic and intrinsic nature, in accordance with the findings of Berges-Puyo's (2018) and Gardner and Smythe (1985), from whose surveys part of the questionnaire has been adapted. Additionally, we hypothesize that the factors influencing intrinsic motivation in a L2 context are positive classroom-related factors, effective group cohesiveness, positive relationships with peers, and efforts to communicate with native speakers. We shall now give an accurate definition of the terms *second language*, *CEFR*, and *Threshold level* used in the fourth chapter of this paper. In this study, the term *second language (L2)* is used to outline a non-native language that is studied in another country where it is the official

vehicle of communication. The *Common European Framework of Reference* for languages is an international standard which describes language proficiency. It also presents a «set of common reference levels (A1-C2) defined in illustrative descriptor scales, plus options for curriculum design promoting plurilingual and intercultural education» (Common European Framework Of Reference For Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment, 2018, p. 25). The six levels of competence go from the lower level A1 (starter) to the highest level C2 (proficient/mastery over a language), and they aim to outline language competence and ability. The main purpose of the CEFR is that of objectively determining the linguistic ability of non-native speakers in a foreign (or second) language, while considering pre-established parameters common to all European languages. In fact, the CEFR does not only refer to English, but also to all the other languages that are part of the European Communities. The CEFR was first designed and drafted by the Council of Europe in 1996 as the main part of the project *Language Learning for European Citizenship*; finally, it was launched in 2001 by the Council of Europe. Another way to define the B1 level according to the CEFR is *Threshold level*. The B1 is defined as Threshold level because it represents the critical juncture between BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). BICS and CALP refer to different language competences and they have been described by Cummins in 1979. BICS is a competence with non-sophisticated interactions on common topics, while CALP is an elaborated, sophisticated competence with cognitive activities of higher order; it is the competence needed in a formal, academic context.

4.3 Method

A mixed method has been adopted to conduct this survey, which is explorative in nature. Adopting a mixed method (or mixed paradigm) means that a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was used in the investigation. The main advantage of using a mixed method is that it allows researchers to gather and analyze different types of data, which would simply not be possible when using only one of the two approaches. A quantitative research implies a specific type of data collection resulting in data that are numerical and quantifiable. (Dornyei, 2007). Numerical and quantifiable data are known as *hard data*, and they are interpreted by researchers using tabs, graphs, percentages, and statistical analysis. They also are standardized, objective

and measurable. A qualitative research, instead, involves data collection through open-ended questions, which results in data that are subjective, unorganized, and non-numerical. (Dornyei, 2007). This type of data is called *soft data*, as they express information related to opinions, perceptions, and human relationships through the use of words. This survey adopted both a quantitative and a qualitative approach when collecting data; however, the quantitative approach was the most used paradigm. In fact, the questionnaire used to gather information only includes one open-ended question at the very end. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used in the data analysis, too, in order to gain insights into L2 student intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, and into the factors influencing it. Indeed, the hard data obtained have been transformed into percentages and interpreted using tabs and graphs; however, hard data will still be described through words in the next sections, in order to make the findings clearer. The soft data resulting from the last open-ended question aim to give a more in-depth perspective of the student perception regarding the factors affecting L2 learning motivation. Therefore, it seems fair to state that this research has adopted a mixed method in the hope of providing a complete and thorough study, and that both hard and soft data were collected and analyzed for the same purpose.

4.4 Participants

For the purpose of this study, the participants recruited were adults aged 18- 64 who have studied English as a L2 during the past year in an English school in Liverpool, U.K. In this project research, we aim to determine whether an intrinsic or extrinsic type of motivation sustains the language learning process in L2 learners; furthermore, we explore which factors influence student motivation in the same L2 context. Therefore, criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows: the respondents to the questionnaire had to belong to an English language level that is equal to or greater than the B1 according to the CEFR (this includes the B2,C1, and C2 level). Because the participants selected for the study meet specific, *purposive* criteria, it seems fair to state that the type of sampling used in this research is a convenience or opportunity sampling. (Dornyei, 2007). Because of the great differences in the demographics being questioned regarding age range, time spent studying the L2 in the native speaking country (varying from one week to several months), and regarding the language level considered (B1, B2, C1, C2) factual questions were asked at the

beginning of the questionnaire to retrieve this information. However, no distinctions were made between gender, nationality, or ethnicity, as these details were not taken into consideration in the research. Eventually, 88 adults aged 18-64 years old who have studied English as L2 in Liverpool, U.K. during the past year participated in the present study.

4.5 Procedures

For the present study, we decided to administer the questionnaire to students who have studied English as a L2 at LILA*, an English school in Liverpool, during the past year. This specific English school was chosen because it is the workplace where I had completed my Erasmus+ Traineeship project, therefore I already knew the staff working there, and imagined they would give me the opportunity to conduct this research. Firstly, I contacted via e-mail the director of the school and I asked her permission to conduct such research, at the same time explaining the purpose of the study. Once received the approval from the director of the school, I e-mailed the school manager of LILA*, asking him to forward the questionnaire to the students who have studied English at LILA* during the past year and who belong to a level equal to or greater than the B1. For practical reasons, the questionnaire has been created using Google forms. Moreover, the questionnaire had to be sent from the school manager e-mail account, so that the privacy concerning the students' email addresses was assured. Due to the fact that the questionnaires had to be sent via e-mail, we inserted the following information in the first section of the questionnaire: we outlined what the study is about, the institution and the professors taking part in this research, and the purpose of study. Furthermore, general instructions on how to answer Likert scale questions were included. Finally, we assured the respondents that there are no right or wrong answers, and that the questionnaires are completely anonymous. My e-mail address was also provided, thus inviting the students to send an email for any additional information, doubts or questions concerning the questionnaire and the research project, or to know the results of the study.

4.6 Instrument

The instrument used in order to carry out this research is the questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises items that have been adapted from Berges-Puyo's survey, which is a further adaptation of the 1981 Attitude/Motivation Test Battery by Gardner and Smythe. The remaining items have been designed specifically for this study. The questionnaire consists of a total of 28 questions aiming to acquire different types of data about the participants. Four questions are *factual questions*, i.e. questions «used to find out about who the respondents are», (Dornyei, 2007, p.8) in order to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The remaining 24 questions are instead *attitudinal questions*, i.e. questions aiming to yield what the questionnaire respondents think and feel. Specifically, attitudinal questions are part of «a broad category that concerns attitudes, opinions, beliefs, interests, and values» (Dornyei, 2007, p.8). The items included in the questionnaire are mainly close-ended questions, with only one, last open-ended question. The close-ended questions used in this survey are of 3 different types:

-Multiple-choice items; -Likert scales; -Checkboxes.

Six out of 28 questions are multiple-choice items. The respondents had to mark the dot next to the answer they wanted to give; only one option was allowed.

Eighteen out of 28 questions are Likert-scales. Majority of the items included in the questionnaire are of this type because this is a method that is «simple, versatile, and reliable» (Dornyei, 2007, p. 36). As it has been previously mentioned in section 4.5, brief instructions on how to answer Likert-scales were included in the first section of the questionnaire. The respondents were informed that they were going to find a number of statements to which they could agree or disagree; they were then asked to indicate their opinion after each statement by selecting the dot that best indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with that statement. Each option is assigned a number from 1 to 5 in order to assess the scores that will be coded and tabulated.

Three out of 28 questions are checkboxes. This type of item allows the respondents to select more than one answer. The options consist in a list of descriptive terms, phrases or adjectives completing a sentence. (Dornyei, 2007). Close-ended questions do not require any writing; instead, they provide pre-designed answer options that participants can choose from. In this specific case, students had to fill in the appropriate dot next to the answer they wanted to give. The main advantage of

close-ended questions is that they provide objective, straightforward data that can be coded and tabulated using tabs, graphs, and statistical analysis (Dornyei, 2007). The only open-ended item included in the questionnaire is an *attitudinal question* and asks the participants to provide a personal, more in-depth insight into the factors influencing L2 student intrinsic/extrinsic motivation. Open-ended items allow survey participants to provide a personal response; for this purpose, there are no pre-designed answers, but instead, respondents have to fill in the blank space when giving their answers. In fact, the open-ended question included in the questionnaire allowed the students to write either a brief answer or a short paragraph; it aimed to detect other factors affecting L2 student intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which might have not been explored in the questionnaire. In fact, open-ended questions allow participants to give responses which contain a certain degree of freedom and which might cover different aspects; because researchers do not know the range of the potential answers, they simply cannot prepare pre-designed responses. (Dornyei, 2007). Furthermore, «by permitting greater freedom of expression, open-format items can provide a far greater "richness" than fully quantitative data» (Dornyei, 2007, p 47). However, one of the main disadvantages concerning open-ended questions is that they do not provide quantifiable data: in fact, they can be rather difficult to interpret. For this specific reason, we decided to include only one open-ended item in the questionnaire.

In the next section of this paper, the students' questionnaire will be thoroughly illustrated; furthermore, the items chosen will be fully explained, together with the purpose they are serving in the survey.

4.6.1 The Students' Questionnaire

In this section of the paper, a thorough account of the items chosen to be part of the questionnaire will be given. The questionnaire can be divided into three distinguished parts. The first part aims to acquire factual information on the demographic, and it comprises question 1-4. The second part seeks to determine whether the motivation supporting the L2 learning process of students learning English as a L2 and belonging to a level equal to or greater than the B1 is of intrinsic or extrinsic nature. This second part comprises question 5- 12. Finally, the third part aims to explore the factors influencing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of students learning a L2 and belonging to the same levels considered above (B1, B2, C1, C2).

The third part comprises question 13- 28.

Given these premises, we shall now specifically examine each one of the items chosen for the questionnaire.

1. What is your age range?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old

The first item of the questionnaire is a multiple-choice item. It seeks to determine the different age ranges to which the students investigated in the survey belong. This item has an impact on the findings concerning intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as we will see in section 4. 7 Data Analysis and Discussion

2. How long have you been studying English in Liverpool, U.K.?

- Between 1 and 2 weeks
- Between 2 weeks and a month
- More than a month
- More than 3 months
- More than 6 months
- More than a year

The second item of the questionnaire aims to investigate the amount of time spent in Liverpool, U.K., i.e. the native English-speaking country.

3. What was your English level (according to the CEFR) when you started your English course in Liverpool, U.K.?

- B1 - Intermediate
- B2 - Upper Intermediate
- C1 - Advanced
- C2 – Proficient

4. What was your English level (according to the CEFR) when you finished your English course in Liverpool, U.K.?

B1 - Intermediate

B2 - Upper Intermediate

C1 - Advanced

C2 – Proficient

Questions 3 and 4 serve a double purpose. First, they aim to ensure that the sample investigated effectively belongs to a level equal to or greater than the B1; this includes levels B1, B2, C1, and C2. This element is fundamental to the study because the research questions specifically seeks to investigate L2 student motivation of learners belonging to such language levels. Secondly, the data resulting from these questions also show the students' range of improvement in the second language. The first four items of the questionnaire are all multiple-choice items which aim to outline basic demographic data referring to the characteristics of the sample investigated.

5. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I want to communicate with people from other countries and cultures.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

The fifth item of the questionnaire is a Likert-scale item. This question is designed to investigate whether students decided to study English in a native speaking country in order to be able to communicate with people belonging to different countries and possessing different cultures and traditions. Particularly, this item is directly correlated with an extrinsic motivation of the integration type (Deci & Ryan 1985,2000). In fact, students who agree with the statement demonstrate to be seeking to achieve their own desires and aspirations in order to communicate with a broad, different range of people.

6. I decided to study English in Liverpool for academic reasons.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

This sixth question, a Likert-scale item, directly asks students if they are studying English because the language might be useful in an academic context. This question is related to the factual question n. 1. In fact, students who belong to higher age ranges

might be less likely to select the *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* option in this item, because they might be already working, and they might not need to further progress in their studies. This question is correlated to extrinsic motivation, specifically of the identification type (Deci & Ryan 1985,2000); in fact, students who *Strongly Agree* or *Agree* with this statement express the desire of studying English as a second language in order to fulfill their academic-related goals.

7. I decided to study English in Liverpool in order to better or advance my career.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 7 is a Likert-scale item. It aims to explore L2 student extrinsic motivation of the identification type (Deci & Ryan 1985,2000). Similar to the previous questionnaire item, student expressed their agreement on whether they studied English as a L2 in a native speaking country having in mind the improvement of their careers as their final goal. In fact, this item aims to determine whether students chose to study English as a because it would benefit their career. The questions apply equally to all age ranges investigated. In fact, the respondents to the questionnaire are all adults over the age of 18 years old. Therefore, they either might be already working, or they might be actively seeking or have the intention to look for a job.

8. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I want to be able to travel with more confidence.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

The eight question is, once again, a Likert-scale type of item. Question n. 8 is the last question of the questionnaire to investigate L2 student extrinsic motivation. In fact, aiming to feel confident when travelling and feel confident when communicating with other people (either people from different countries or native English speakers) while doing so, is an incentive that is external to the second language learning process itself. It subsumes an extrinsic motivation of the introjection type (Deci & Ryan 1985,2000), because it involves a desire to increase self-confidence and a correlated need for approval.

9. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always wanted to study the language in an English-speaking country.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 9, a Likert-scale item, is the first item of the questionnaire aimed to investigate intrinsic motivation. Students who agreed with this statement express the choice of studying English as a L2 because of the desire to eventually visit, live, and study, specifically in an English-speaking country.

10. I decided to study English in Liverpool because I have always loved the English language.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 10 is related to an innate love for the English language. This Likert-scale item investigates L2 student intrinsic motivation.

11. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I think that learning English is a pleasant and enjoyable process.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 11 investigates student intrinsic motivation. The respondents who agreed with this statement consider the process of learning English as a second language to be pleasant and gratifying for themselves. Therefore, students were asked to express whether they chose to study English as L2 mainly for the sake of doing it.

12. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always been interested in getting to know the British lifestyle.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 12 is the last item of the questionnaire exploring intrinsic motivation. This item aims to determine whether students chose to study English as a L2 because they have a genuine interest in their target language social group, and overall, towards the British cultural model. To sum up, the second part of the questionnaire described thus far seeks to determine whether the motivation sustaining the student language learning

process is of intrinsic or extrinsic nature. Specifically, questions n. 5 to 12 aim to determine the reasons why students decided to study English as a L2 in a native speaking country, in this case in Liverpool, U.K.

13. While I was studying English in Liverpool, I had the perception that my English level was improving quickly.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 13 seeks to investigate the perception that students had about the L2 learning process. In fact, learning a L2 in its native-speaking country should be faster than learning a FL. First, because of the immersion context. Secondly, because there is a total exposure to the language. However, students who belong to the higher levels of the CEFR spectrum (B1-C2) might not have the perception that their L2 level is improving quickly. This happens because students might experience feelings of amotivation due to the fact that they realize that they can (more or less) effectively communicate with native speakers and peers.

14. Answer this question ONLY if you think that your English level was improving quickly. You may select more than one answer. When I was in Liverpool, I had the perception that my English level was improving quickly...

- Because of my English teachers
- Because I tried to communicate in English with other fellow students
- Because I tried to communicate with native English speakers
- Because I found pleasure in studying English
- Because I kept my learning goals in mind
- All of the above
- None of the above

Question n. 14 is a checkbox item, and it is a clarification question. In fact, it aims to further elaborate question n. 13 by exploring the factors contributing to the students' perception of the L2 learning process. Respondents who think that their English level was improving quickly are asked to fill in the options next to the factors that have contributed to create such perception. The factors included in the options are those identified to be influencing L2 achievement by Krashen, both in a formal and in an

informal setting. Furthermore, options such as *all of the above*, and *none of the above* are included within the options. In this way, even students who address their L2 learning perception to other factors that are not mentioned within the options can still answer the question.

15. Answer this question ONLY if you think that your English level was NOT improving quickly. You may select more than one answer. When I was in Liverpool, I had the perception that my English level was NOT improving quickly...

- Because of my English teachers
- Because didn't try to communicate in English with other fellow students
- Because I didn't try to communicate with native English speakers
- Because I didn't find pleasure in studying English
- Because I didn't keep my learning goals in mind
- All of the above
- None of the above

Similar to the previous item of the questionnaire, question n. 15 is a checkbox item. Once again, it is a clarification question. In fact, it aims to further elaborate question n. 13 by exploring the factors contributing to the students' perception of the L2 learning process. Respondents who think that their English level was not improving quickly are asked to fill in the options next to the factors that have contributed to create such perception. The options included in the item are the exact same options of question n. 14.

16. When my English was progressing, I thought that it was happening because...

- Of me
- Of the English teachers
- Of me and of the English teachers
- Other
- My level did not progress

Questions n. 16 and n. 17 are multiple choice items, and they aim to determine the locus of causality perceived by the students regarding their progression in the L2. Particularly, in the sixteenth item, students are asked to indicate who they thought

was influencing their language achievement when their English level was progressing. This item seeks to investigate the different causes that students attributed to their successes (in this specific case) regarding the L2 progression. Options such as *other* and *my level did not progress* were included within the possible answers.

17. When my English level was NOT progressing, I thought that it was happening because...
- Of me
 - Of the English teachers
 - Of me and of the English teachers
 - Other
 - I never thought that my English level was not progressing

In this seventeenth item, we wanted students to indicate the causes that they perceived to have negatively influenced their L2 learning process. An *Other* option was included. Furthermore, we decided to add the option *I never thought that my English level was not progressing*, so that students who only had a positive experience regarding their English progression could express their opinion.

18. How would you describe the classroom environment established during your English course in Liverpool? You may select more than one answer.
- Positive
 - Friendly
 - Stimulating
 - Negative
 - Stressing
 - Anxiety-provoking

Question n. 18 is a checkbox item. It asks students to select one or more options (which are all descriptive adjectives) that they would use to describe the classroom environment encountered when studying English in Liverpool. The options concern three descriptive adjectives related to a positive classroom atmosphere (positive, friendly, stimulating), and three descriptive adjectives related to a negative classroom atmosphere (negative, stressing, anxiety-provoking). We decided to investigate the

classroom environment is one of the factors that are relevant to language achievement according to Gardner (2010).

19. I think that the classroom environment established during my English course in Liverpool affected my motivation in studying the language.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 19 is a Likert-scale item. This item is related to the previous question. It aims to investigate whether students perceived the classroom environment to be affecting their motivation in learning the L2. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to a statement affirming that the classroom atmosphere in Liverpool influenced their motivation.

20. While I was studying in Liverpool, I considered myself to be part of a cohesive group together with my classmates.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 20, another Likert-scale item, takes into consideration the students' group cohesion. Group cohesion is, as stated by Dornyei (2007), an important feature affecting both L2 motivation and L2 achievement. In fact, when students perceive to be part of a cohesive group, their classroom-related anxiety decreases. For this reason, learners tend to feel "safer", accepted, and do not have the desire to refrain from the language learning event. Students who feel like they are part of a group simply work better as a social system. This results in an overall better language learning experience, thus leading to a successful language achievement.

21. I think that the relationship I had with my classmates in Liverpool has directly influenced my motivation in learning English.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 21 is correlated with the previous item. This Likert-scale question seeks to determine whether students think that the relationship with their peers has affected their motivation in learning the L2.

22. When I was in Liverpool, the fact that I was able to communicate with English native speakers directly influenced my motivation in learning English.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 22 aims to investigate the students' relationship with English native speakers. This Likert-scale item asks the respondents to what extent they agree with a statement affirming that communicating with native speakers has directly affected their motivation in studying the L2. The context taken into consideration is the informal setting indicated by Krashen, i.e. the setting where individuals learn a L2 outside of the classroom.

23. When I was in Liverpool, my motivation in studying English increased when I realized that my English level was progressing.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 23 takes into account encouragement and self-efficacy, two features belonging to the need for competence, which is a concept developed by Deci and Ryan (2000). When students experience success or achieve a set goal like in this case (progressing in the L2), their subsequent behavior is directly affected by such a rewarding and positive experience. Therefore, the assumption is formulated as follows: if students accomplish one of their L2 learning goals, i.e. their English language level progresses, then their motivation is going to positively change and increase, as well.

24. Even if my English level was not progressing, I still tried to put effort into studying the language because I kept in mind my life goals.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 24 is correlated with the previous question. This Likert-scale item aims to unveil whether student motivation was enough to support their L2 learning process, even when the language level was not progressing. In fact, it asks the survey participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed to a statement affirming that they tried to put effort into studying the language because of their life goals, even when their English level was not progressing.

25. Even if English native speakers understood me, I still wanted to improve my English language level.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 25 is a Likert-scale item. This item starts from the assumption that students who belong to the highest level of the CEFR might feel unmotivated to further progress in the L2 learning process when they realize that native speakers understand them. However, this might not be true: if student motivation is not solely based on needs, but also on pleasure, then students should not perceive such feelings of unmotivation. Therefore, this item aims to investigate whether student motivation was independent from the communicative needs that specific to the L2 learning context. The following questions of the questionnaire n.26, n.27, and n.28 are all causally related to this item.

26. While I was studying English in Liverpool, there was a time when I felt unmotivated.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n.26 is a Likert-scale item. It aims to determine whether students have felt unmotivated while studying English in Liverpool. It is correlated with the previous question.

27. While I was studying English in Liverpool, I felt unmotivated because I thought I had reached a sufficient competency in the language and did not need to further progress.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither Agree or Disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

Question n. 27 is correlated with question n. 25. This Likert-scale item is written as a statement affirming that students felt unmotivated because of the fact that they are reached a sufficient English language level. The respondents had to express the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement. Because the respondents to the questionnaire all belong to the CEFR levels ranging from B1 to C2, feeling unmotivated might depend on the fact that they have reached a sufficient competency in the target language. Therefore, the assumption upon which this item has been selected is the same assumption expressed in question n. 25.

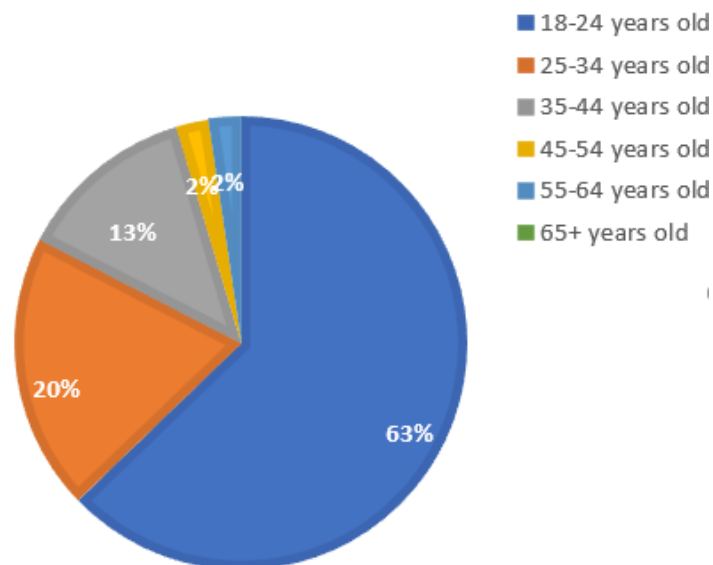
28. What were the factors that made you feel either motivated or unmotivated while studying in Liverpool? Please, be as descriptive as possible.

Question n. 28 is the only open-ended question in the whole questionnaire. Because of the difficulties in coding, tabulating, and analyzing open-ended questions, we decided not to include more items of this kind. This specific question asks students to fill in the blank space with the factors that made them feel either motivated, or unmotivated, when they were studying English as a L2 in Liverpool. The aim of this item is that of including new, different factors affecting L2 student motivation that have not been taken into consideration in the previous questions of the survey, and therefore have not been explored. The degree of freedom given to the respondents in this last question has been chosen in the hope to make up for the eventual factors that might have not been considered when creating the questionnaire.

4.7 Data Analysis and Discussion

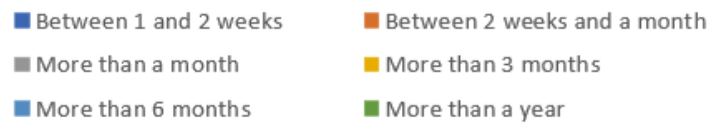
In this section of the paper, we will provide an overview of data results together with the correlated data discussion. Quantifiable, numeric data resulting from the close-ended questions belonging to the quantitative approach will be analyzed and presented through the use of graphs, tabs, and charts. Instead, answers to the only open-ended question belonging to the qualitative method will be addressed by displaying a summary of the results concerning common views, issues, and recurring broad themes expressed by the respondents. We shall now discuss the survey findings item by the item.

Question n. 1 What is your age range?



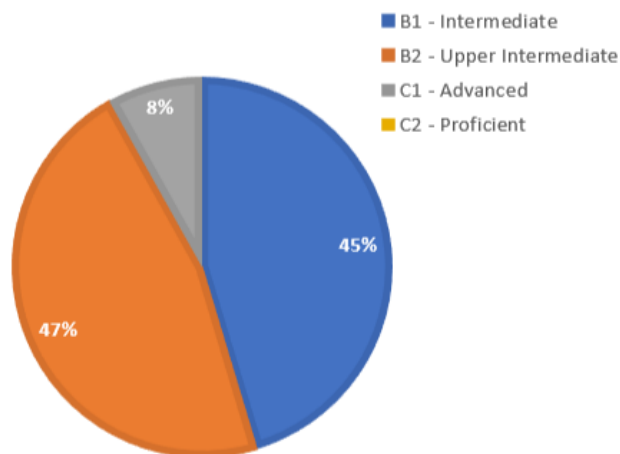
The pie chart above shows the different age ranges to which the students responding to the questionnaire belong. By the chart, it can be seen that majority of the respondents (63 %, i.e. more than half of the whole sample investigated) belong to the lowest age range of *18-24 years old*. The second most represented group is that of the age range *25-34 years old*, to which belong 20% of the respondents. The last age range showing significant representation (13%) is the one of *35-44 years old*, while only 2% of the sample belongs to the age ranges of *45-54 years old* and *55-64 years old*. No students belong to the highest age range. Data from this chart can be compared with the data results concerning intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; in fact, the different age ranges might have had an impact on the reasons why students chose to study English as a L2. For example, students who belong to higher age ranges might not have considered academic or school reasons as causes that affected their L2 learning choices.

Question n. 2 How long have you been studying English in Liverpool, U.K.?

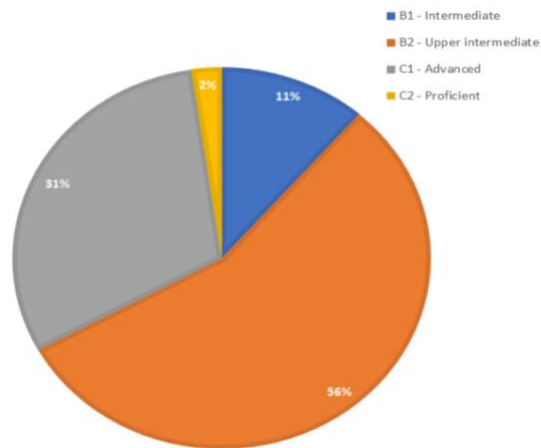


The pie chart illustrates the students' amount of time spent in Liverpool while studying English as a L2. From the data, it is apparent that two options showed similar results: 27% of the respondents stayed in Liverpool *between 1 and 2 weeks*, and 26% stayed *more than a month*. Furthermore, 23% of the students stayed *between 2 weeks and a month*, 14% stayed *more than 3 months*, 9% *more than 6 months*, and finally, only 1% stayed *more than a year*. It is evident that the results concerning the amount of time spent studying the L2 show a wide range of variance.

Question n. 3 What was your English level (according to the CEFR) when you started your English course in Liverpool, U.K.?



Question n.4 What was your English level (according to the CEFR) when you finished your English course in Liverpool, U.K.?

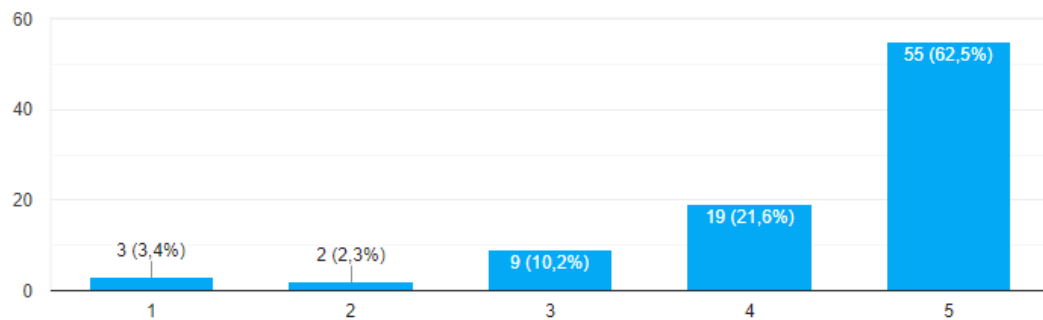


In items n.3 and n.4 of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their English level both at the beginning of their English course in Liverpool, and at the end of it. According to the key to the pie chart related to question n.3, only levels B1-C2 were taken into consideration. In fact, the research questions at the beginning of the study specifically required the sample to belong to a language level that was equal to or greater than the B1. As shown from the chart, majority of the students belonged to levels B1 (45%) and B2 (47%) at the beginning of their English course. Fewer respondents (8%) belonged to a C1, while none was completely proficient in the language (0% for C2). This makes sense, if we consider that students who are proficient in English simply would not need to take an English course. The results displayed in the chart related to question n.4 show the students' language progression at the end of the English course. Only 11% of the survey participants still belonged to level B1, while 56% of the survey participants progressed to level B2, and 31% to level C1. Finally, 2% reached language proficiency at level C2.

The following data results concerning questions 5-12 aim to determine whether the student's motivation sustaining the L2 learning process was of intrinsic or extrinsic nature. We shall now provide a brief insight into the questions taken into consideration. Questions 5-8 are Likert-scale items containing statements related to extrinsic motivation. Students who Strongly Agreed or Agreed with these items demonstrated to be driven mainly by an extrinsic type of motivation. Questions 9-12 are Likert-scale items similar to the previous ones; however, these questions are related to intrinsic motivation. Therefore, students who Strongly Agreed or Agreed with these statements indicated to be motivated mainly by an intrinsic type of motivation. First, we will provide an overview of the findings for each one of the items. Secondly, we will use a tab to show the statistical findings. The scores of the options *Strongly Agree* and *Agree*

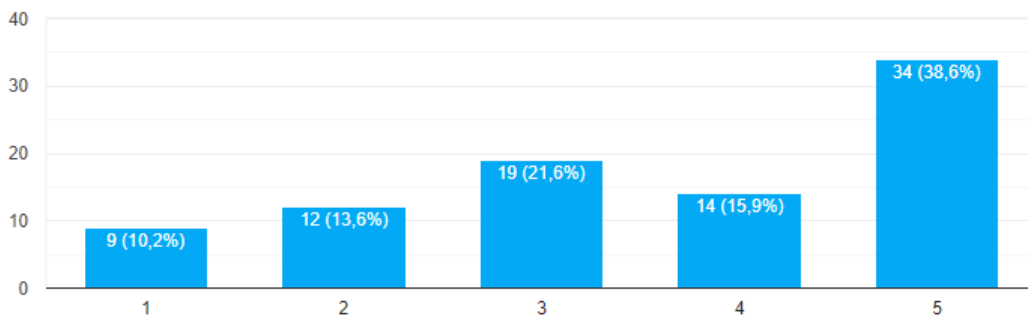
were added in the tab in numerical order, with the purpose of clearly displaying and emphasizing the type of motivation which supported the students' L2 learning experience. Furthermore, two graphs summarizing student motivation will be provided to compare the scores resulting from questions 5-8, thus showing data concerning extrinsic motivation, and questions 9-12, which, instead, involve data concerning intrinsic motivation. By providing different graphs and tabs to display the findings, we hope to present accurate data on the type of motivation that is relevant to students learning English as a L2 and belonging to specific language levels according to the CEFR (B1- C2).

Question n.5 I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I want to communicate with people from other countries and cultures.



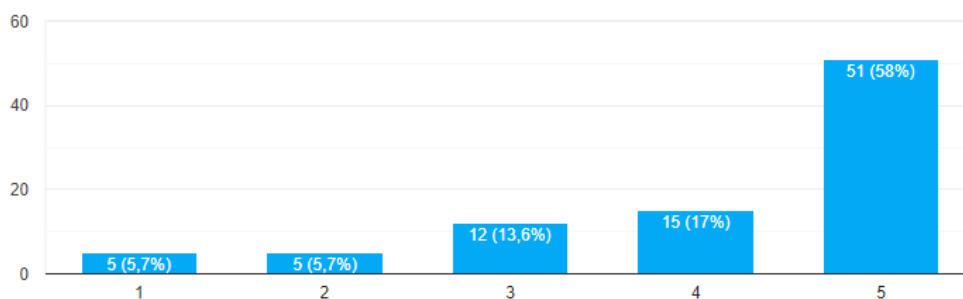
Item n. 5 investigated extrinsic motivation, specifically of the integration type. The histogram above illustrates the extent to which students agreed with the statement affirming that they decided to study English in Liverpool in order to communicate with other people. As it appears from the graph, the vast majority of the respondents Strongly Agree (62,5%) with the statement. Furthermore, 21,6% of the students Agree, and 10, 2% Neither Agree or Disagree. Respectively, only 2. 3% and 3.4% Disagree and Strongly Disagree. If we sum the percentages of students who both agreed and strongly agreed with item n.5, we can affirm that 84,1% of the respondents to the survey decided to study English as a L2 in order to communicate with people from other countries and cultures.

Question n.6 I decided to study English in Liverpool for academic reasons.



Item n.6 investigated extrinsic motivation of the identification type. The graph above shows the data results concerning students who agreed or disagreed with the statement affirming that they studied English in Liverpool for academic reasons. Before proceeding to discuss the findings, we shall mention that these data are correlated with the data of question n. 1, i.e. the item investigating students' age ranges. In fact, as we have previously mentioned in section 4.6, students who belong to higher age-ranges are most likely to have already ended their studies. Therefore, they might have not indicated school or academic reasons to be relevant to their decision of studying English as a L2. As can be seen from the histogram above, the question's data results show a high degree of variety. 38.6% of the respondents affirmed that they Strongly agree with the statement, i.e. they have decided to study English in Liverpool for academic reasons; 21,6% of the students Neither Agree or Disagree, while 15.9% Agree. Lower scores are shown for the Disagree 13,6% and Strongly Disagree 10,2% options.

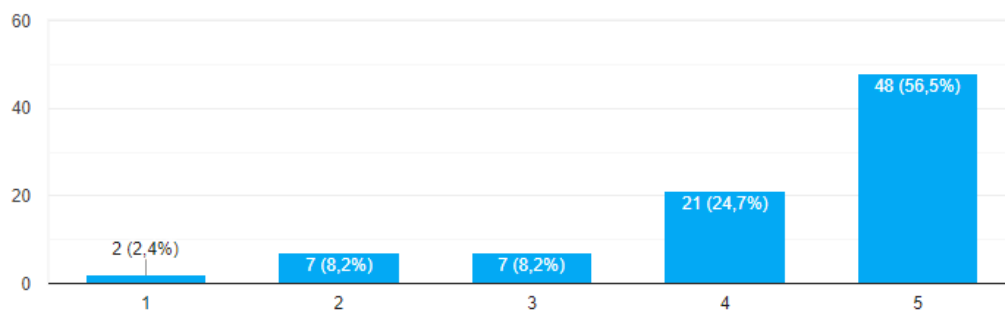
Question n. 7.I decided to study English in Liverpool in order to better or advance my career.



Item n. 7 explores student extrinsic motivation, once again of the identification type. As shown in the graph, majority of the students decided to study the language in an English native-speaking country in order to improve their employment status.

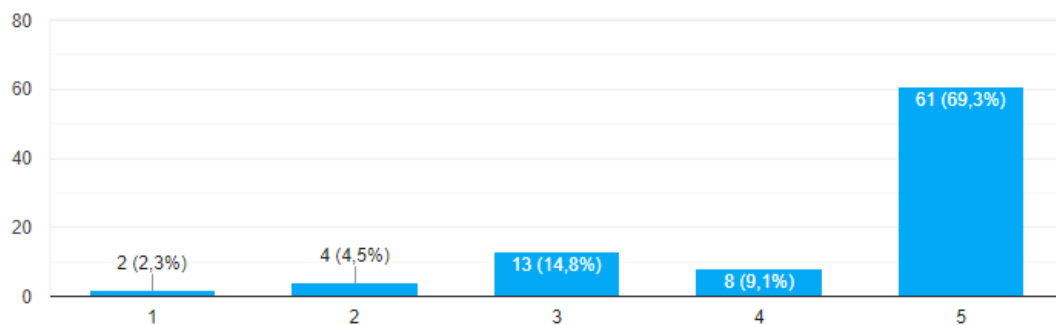
Differently from the previous question, these findings are not affected by any differences in age ranges. In fact, all the students belonging to the sample are at least 18 years old. Therefore, it is highly probable that they might be already working, or that they might be seeking for a job, or at least that they have the intention to look for one after the L2 learning experience. 58% percent of students Strongly Agree with the statement: this means that they chose to study English in Liverpool because of career-related reasons. 17% of the participants to the survey Agree, 13,6% Neither Agree or Disagree, and only 5.7% of the students both Disagree and Strongly Disagree with the statement.

Question n. 8 I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I want to be able to travel with more confidence.



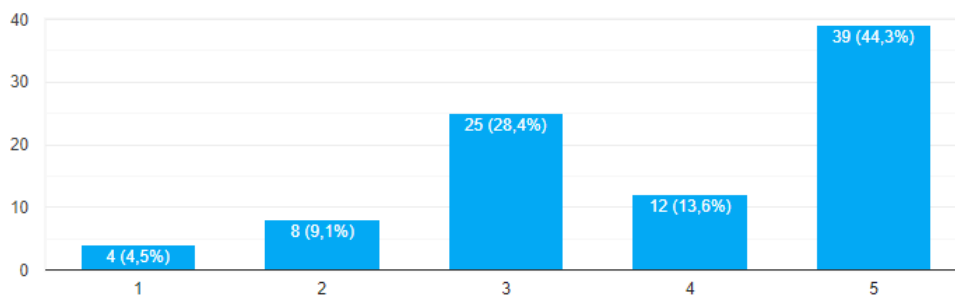
Item n. 8 is the last item of the questionnaire directly investigating student extrinsic motivation. Specifically, the extrinsic motivation explored by this question is the one of the introjection type. This Likert-scale item is expressed through a statement affirming that students decided to study English in Liverpool aiming to feel confident when travelling. From the graph above, we can see that majority of the survey respondents Strongly Agree with the statement (56,5%); 24.7% Agree, while 8.2% Neither Agree or Disagree and Disagree with it. Only two students (2,4%) Strongly Disagree.

Question n. 9 I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always wanted to study the language in an English-speaking country.



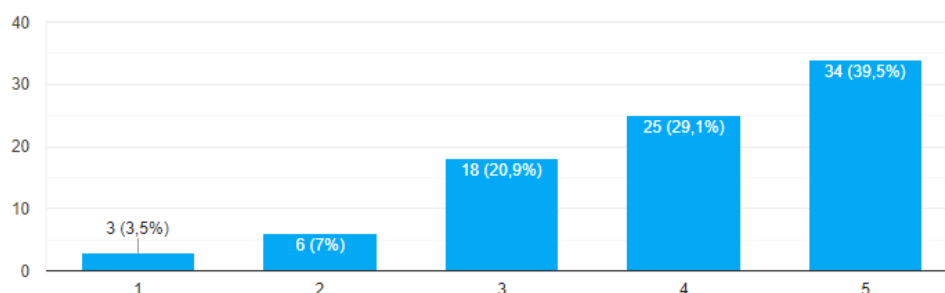
Item n. 9 investigates intrinsic motivation. Student were asked to express the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a statement asserting that they chose to learn English in Liverpool, because of the desire of studying the language in an English native-speaking country. It is evident from the histogram that the vast majority of students Strongly Agree with the statement (69,3%). Furthermore, 14.8% of the questionnaire respondents Neither Agree or Disagree, 9.1% Agree, 4.5% Disagree, and finally, only 2.3% of the students Strongly Disagree.

Question n. 10 I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always loved the English language.



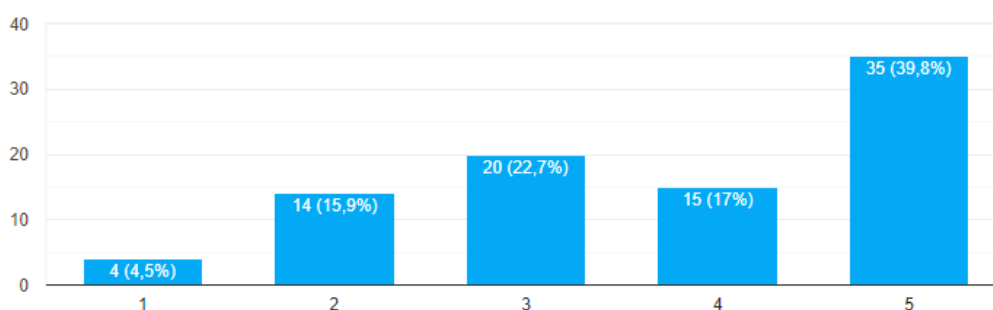
Item n. 10 investigates student intrinsic motivation. The results obtained provide insights into the students' innate love towards the English language. 44.3% of the respondents affirm that they Strongly Agree with the statement claiming that they decided to study English in Liverpool because of their love for the language itself. 28.4% of the students Neither Agree or Disagree; 13.6% Agree, 9.1% Disagree and, finally, 4.5% Strongly Disagree. It appears clear that the data display great variance within the scores.

Question n. 11. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I think that learning English is a pleasant and enjoyable process.



Item n.11 explores intrinsic motivation. The graph above illustrates the students' beliefs and opinions concerning the English language learning process. As we can see from the histogram, students mainly believe that learning English is pleasant and enjoyable. In fact, 39.5% of the students Strongly Agree with the statement; 29.1% Agree, and 20.9% Neither Agree or Disagree. Students who Disagree and Strongly Disagree displayed lower scores: respectively, 7% and 3.5% only.

Question n. 12 I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always been interested in getting to know the British lifestyle.



Item n. 12 is the last item which directly aims to provide insights into student intrinsic motivation. Respondents were asked whether they considered their interest in the target language social group, and overall, in the British cultural model, to be a relevant reason to study English in a native speaking country. 39,8% of the respondents to the survey Strongly Agree, 22,7% Neither Agree or Disagree, and 17% Agree. The percentage of students who Disagree with the statement is rather high (15.9%), while only 4.5% Strongly Disagree.

We shall now present a tab to better show the statistical findings related to student intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In order to create this tab, scores concerning

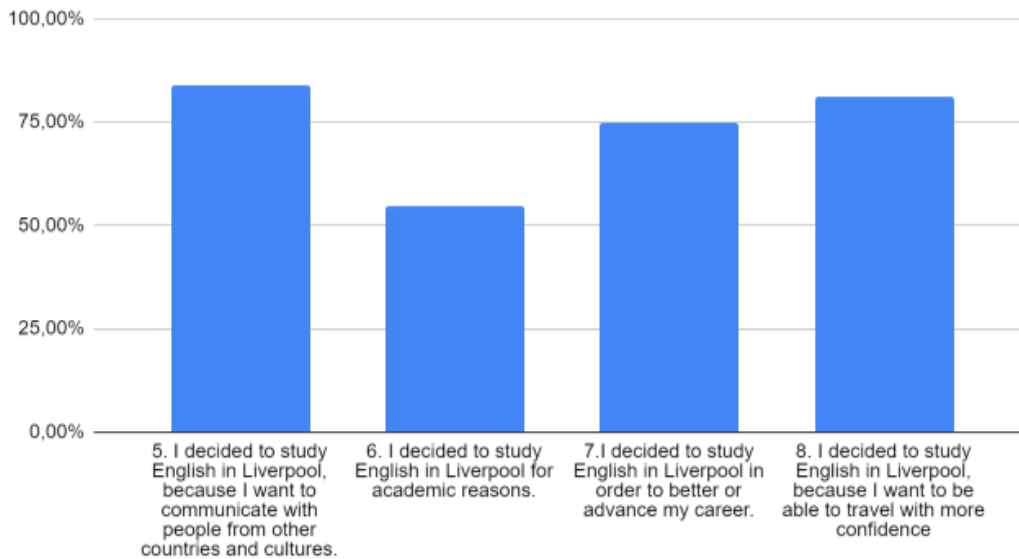
the options *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* were combined together. To make the findings more straightforward and of easier interpretation, we decided to present the scores in numerical order. Additionally, we divided the questions exploring extrinsic motivation, and those exploring intrinsic motivation, into two different columns. The main purpose of the following tab is to illustrate the percentages of agreement expressed by the survey respondents to the items related to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, we should be able to deduce which type of motivation supports the L2 learning process of students belonging to English levels B1-C2 according to the CEFR.

Extrinsic motivation	%	Intrinsic motivation	%
5. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I want to communicate with people from other countries and cultures.	84,1%	9. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always wanted to study the language in an English speaking country.	78,4%
8. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I want to be able to travel with more confidence.	81,2%	11. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I think that learning English is a pleasant and enjoyable process.	68,6%
7. I decided to study English in Liverpool in order to better or advance my career.	75%	10. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always loved the English language.	57,9%
6. I decided to study English in Liverpool for academic reasons.	54,5%	12. I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always been interested in getting to know the British lifestyle.	56,8%

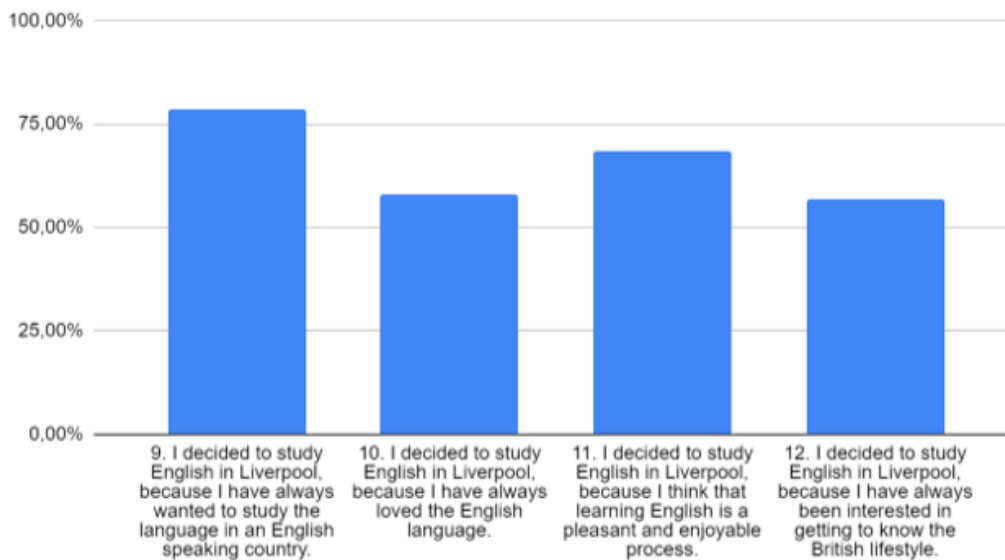
As can be seen from the table above, Extrinsic motivation exhibits higher percentages of students who Strongly Agreed and Agreed with the related Likert-scale items. This is true for almost all of the extrinsic and intrinsic items compared. The only exception concerns question n.6, which shows the lowest score not only within the extrinsic motivation data, but also within the intrinsic motivation data. This result might suggest that, as we had predicted, students belonging to higher age ranges might have already finished their studies, and therefore do not need to further progress. Of the items

exploring student extrinsic motivation, question n.5 *I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I want to communicate with people from other countries and cultures* and question n.6 *I decided to study English in Liverpool for academic reasons* showed the highest percentages of agreement, respectively 84,1% and 81,2%. If we compare these data to the data results of the items concerning intrinsic motivation, we can clearly see that items 5 and 6 exhibit the highest percentages of agreement within all the items taken into consideration. Question n. 7 *I decided to study English in Liverpool in order to better or advance my career* shows the 75% of agreement within the students, while question n.6 *I decided to study English in Liverpool for academic reasons of agreement* has 54,5% of agreement, the lowest value within all the items. Of the items related to student intrinsic motivation, question n. 9 *I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always wanted to study the language in an English speaking country* has the highest percentage of 78,4%, followed by question n.11 *I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I think that learning English is a pleasant and enjoyable process*, with a score of 68,6% of agreement within the respondents. Questions n. 10 *I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always loved the English language* and number 12 *I decided to study English in Liverpool, because I have always been interested in getting to know the British lifestyle*, respectively show 57,9% and 56,8%. Both these results, which are the lowest values related to intrinsic motivation, still exhibited higher percentages of agreement than extrinsic motivation item n. 6. From the data in the table above, it can be seen that Extrinsic motivation is the type of motivation to exhibit highest percentages of agreement within the students participating in the survey. However, intrinsic motivation did display values that are significantly high (some even higher than one item related to extrinsic motivation), and therefore it can be considered to be a type of motivation certainly relevant to students who are learning a L2. We are now going to compare two histograms summarizing the data collected from questions 5-8 (items that investigated L2 motivation of the extrinsic type), and questions 9-12 (which, instead, investigated L2 intrinsic motivation). Once again, scores concerning the options *Strongly Agree* and *Agree* were added together. The data in the following histograms are the exact same data displayed in the previous tab and discussed above. We decided to add graphs in order to better show the findings, with the intention of making them evident and more understandable also from a visual point of view.

Extrinsic motivation

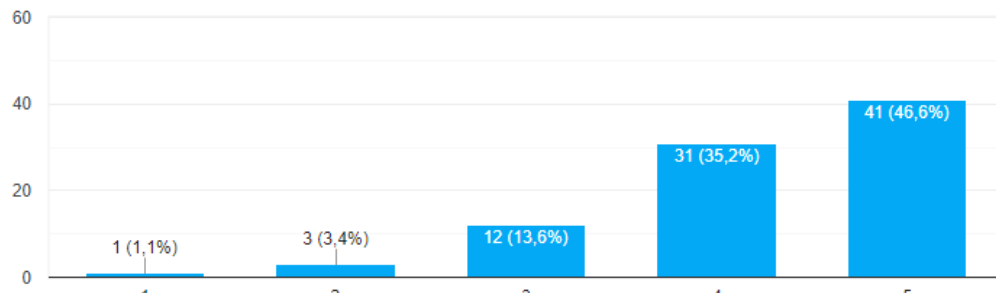


Intrinsic motivation



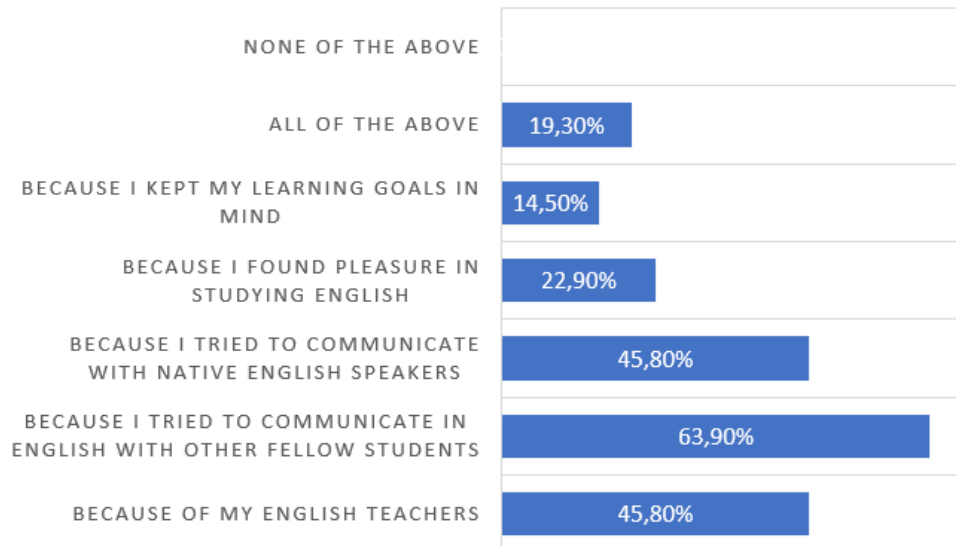
As we have previously mentioned, the data comprised in the two histograms have already been analyzed and discussed above. A visual comparison of the two graphs above reveals that extrinsic motivation supporting the L2 learning process of students who belong to English levels B1-C2 exhibits values that are overall higher than the intrinsic motivation ones. However, intrinsic motivation indeed showed significant results, which should not be overlooked. We can therefore affirm that, even if extrinsic motivation exhibited higher values of agreement within the survey respondents, intrinsic motivation still showed to have a significant impact in L2 student motivation.

Question n. 13 While I was studying English in Liverpool, I had the perception that my English level was improving quickly.



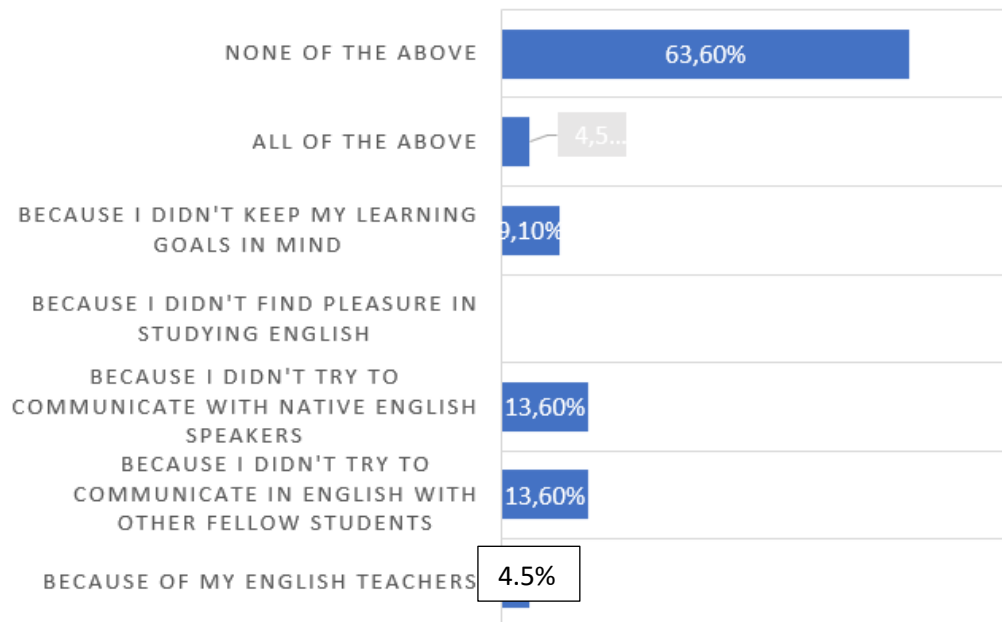
From the histogram above representing data related to item 13, we can clearly see that majority of the respondents either Strongly Agree or Agree with the statement, while extremely low values are attributed to the Disagree and Strongly Disagree options. In fact, 46,6% of the students Strongly Agree with Likert-scale item affirming that they thought their English level was improving quickly while in Liverpool. 35, 2% of the students Agreed with the same statement, and 13.6% neither Agree or Disagree. Furthermore, only 3,4% of the survey respondents Disagree, and only 1,1% Strongly Disagree. The findings should be interpreted taking into consideration the L2 learning context. In fact, students who study a L2 in its native speaking country tend to learn the target language faster than students who study a FL in their country. This happens due to the presence of two features, which are specific to the L2 context: 1. total exposure to the language; students who study a L2 experience a total exposure to the language, which is not only present in the classroom, but also in their daily activities, and 2.the students find themselves in an immersion context, i.e. they not only get to know the L2, but they also become familiar with the native-speakers social group, and with their cultural model.

Question n. 14 Answer this question ONLY if you think that your English level was improving quickly. You may select more than one answer. When I was in Liverpool, I had the perception that my English level was improving quickly...



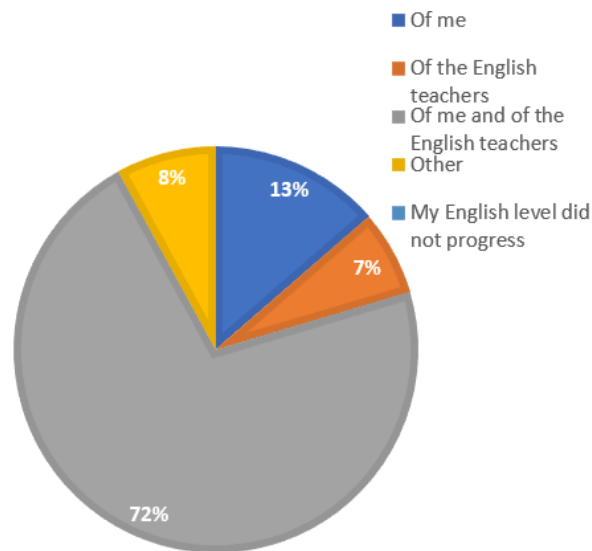
Item n. 14 is a checkbox item, which means that the respondents were allowed to select more than one option. The aim of this question was to investigate the factors that contributed to the students' perception of their English language learning process. Only students who had the perception that their English level was improving quickly while studying in Liverpool were asked to answer the question. The highest value (63,9%); was collected in response to the option *Because I tried to communicate in English with other fellow students*, which means that 53 students selected this factor because they considered it to be significantly contributing to their perception of the L2 learning process. 45.8% of the students (i.e. 38 students) selected the options *Because I tried to communicate with native English speakers* and *Because of my English teachers*. 22.9% of the survey respondents (i.e.19 students) selected the option *Because I found pleasure in studying English*. 19.3% of the respondents (16 students) selected the option *All of the above*. 14.5% of the respondents (12 students) selected the option *Because I kept my learning goals in mind*, while none of the students selected the option *None of the above*. From the data collected, we can therefore affirm that the majority of the respondents considered the factor I tried to communicate in English with other fellow students to be fundamental to their quick improvement in the L2, followed by the factors English teachers and I tried to communicate with native English speakers.

Question n. 15 Answer this question ONLY if you think that your English level was NOT improving quickly. You may select more than one answer. When I was in Liverpool, I had the perception that my English level was NOT improving quickly...



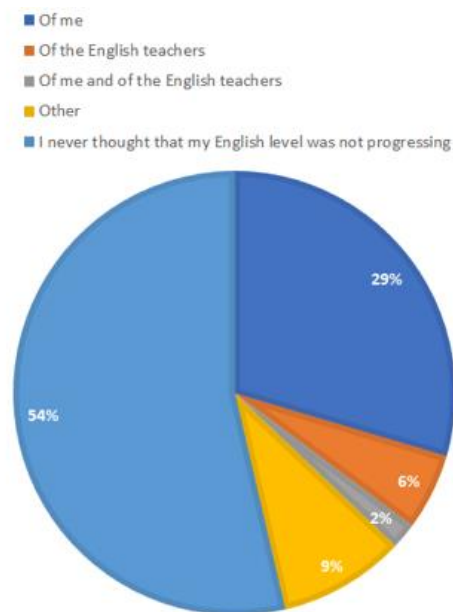
This question is similar to the previous item of the questionnaire. It is, once again, a checkbox item. The aim of this question was to explore the factors that were negatively influencing the students' perception of the L2 process; in fact, only students who thought that their English level was not improving quickly were asked to respond. The options were the same included in item 14. As expected, the response rate to this item was quite low. As shown in the graph above, the highest score registered is attributed to the option *None of the above*, with a 63.6%; however, even if the value is high, only 14 students selected the option. This means that other factors have negatively influenced their English learning language process, but students could not point them out, because they were not listed within the options. 13.6% of the respondents (3 students) selected two options: one is *Because I didn't try to communicate in English with other fellow students*, while the other is *Because I didn't try to communicate with native English speakers*. Two students (9.1%) selected the option *Because I didn't keep my learning goals in mind*, while 1 student (4.5%) selected respectively *Because of my English teacher* and *All of the above*. Finally, no students selected the option *Because I didn't find pleasure in studying English*.

Question n.16 When my English was progressing, I thought that it was happening because...



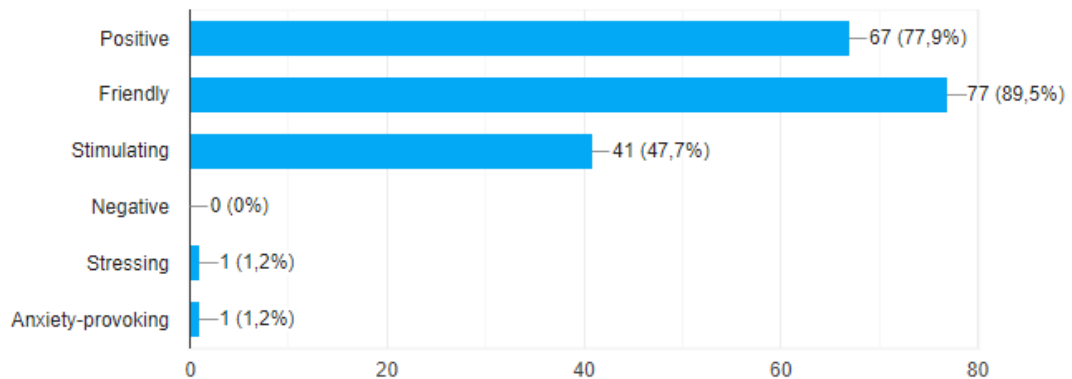
The aim of this item was to investigate the students' internalized locus of causality, i.e. to determine the factors that students considered to be the main reasons for their L2 learning achievements. The item was created as a multiple-choice item, which means that students could only select one option. In the graph above, we can see that the majority of the respondents (72%) selected the option *Of me and of the English teachers*. This means that 63 students out of 88 consider both themselves and the English teachers to be responsible for their successes in the L2. 13% of the respondents attributed the cause of their L2 successes only to themselves, 8% of the students attributed it to *Other* factors, and 7% (6 students) attributed it to their English teachers only. Finally, no students thought that their English level did not progress at all.

Question n. 17 When my English level was NOT progressing, I thought that it was happening because...



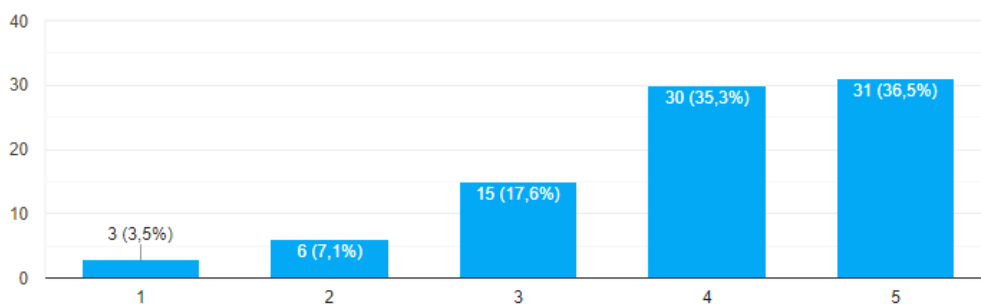
Question n. 17 is an item similar to the previous one. Its aim was to determine the causes that students perceived to be responsible for their failures in the L2 learning process, i.e. when their language level was not progressing. 54 students out of 88 answered this item. This might be explained by the fact that, even if we included the option *I never thought that my English level was not progressing*, students who thought that this item did not apply to them simply didn't read all the options thoroughly. In fact, it is evident from the graph that the majority of the respondents, 54%, selected the option that we have just mentioned, *I never thought that my English level was not progressing*. 29% of the students selected the option *Of me*, 9.3% selected the option *Other*, and 6% thought that the English teachers were responsible for their failures. Finally, only 1 student selected the option because *Of me and the English teachers* (2%).

Question n. 18 How would you describe the classroom environment established during your English course in Liverpool? You may select more than one answer.



Item n.18 is a checkbox item whose options consist of descriptive adjectives. It seeks to determine the type of environment established in the classroom and experienced by the respondents while studying English as a L2 in Liverpool. The highest values within the data collected refer to the positive adjectives used to describe the classroom atmosphere: Friendly 89.5%, Positive 77.9%, and Stimulating 47.7%. The scores related to the negative adjectives are extremely low: 1.2% for Stressing and Anxiety provoking (which means that only 1 student selected these options), and 0 for Negative. By the data displayed in the pie chart and discussed above, it appears clear that the students' perception of the classroom environment established during their English course is extremely positive.

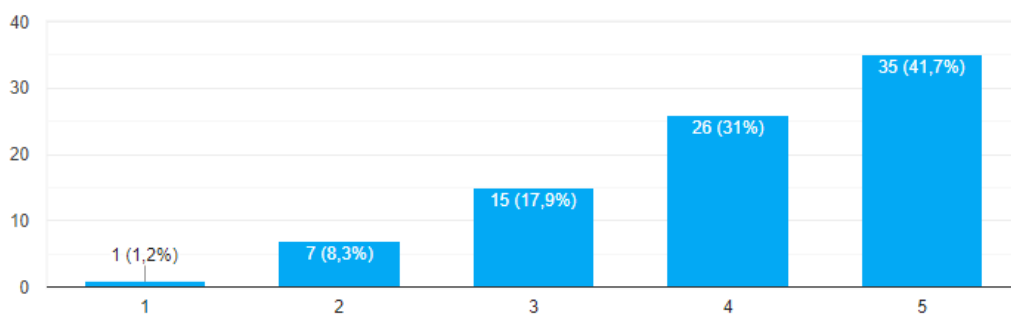
Question n. 19. I think that the classroom environment established during my English course in Liverpool affected my motivation in studying the language.



Item n.19 seeks to investigate whether students think that the classroom environment they experienced had affected their motivation. As we can see from the histogram above, the highest values are Strongly Agree (36.5%) and Agree (35.3%). This means that the majority of the students think that the classroom environment has directly

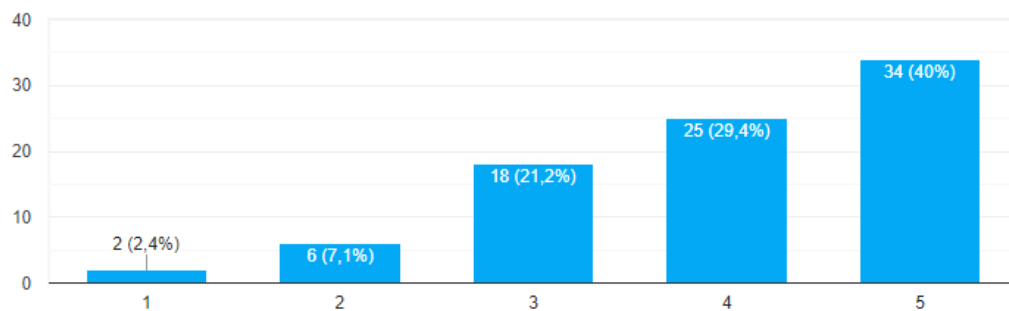
influenced their motivation in studying the L2. 17.6% Neither Agree or Disagree. Low scores were collected for the options Disagree and Strongly disagree, respectively 7.1% and 3.5%. If we compare these data results with the data collected in the previous item, we can claim that the positive classroom atmosphere experienced by the students who responded to the questionnaire has positively impacted their overall L2 motivation.

Question n. 20 While I was studying in Liverpool, I considered myself to be part of a cohesive group together with my classmates.



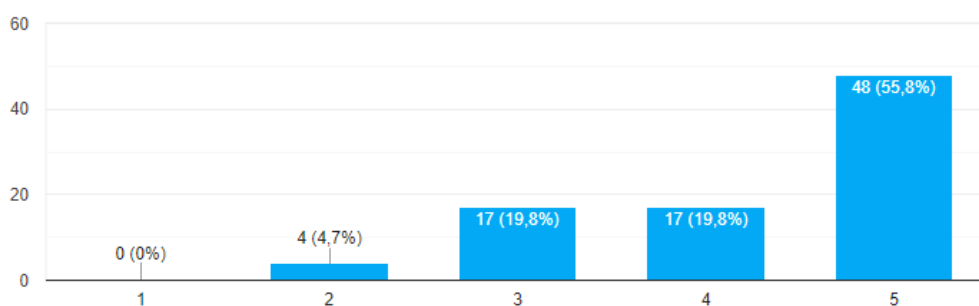
In this item, the factor explored is group cohesion. The findings displayed in the histogram above show that the values collected are similar to those exhibited in the graph related to the previous question of the survey. This Likert-scale item expresses a statement asserting that the students perceived themselves to be part of a cohesive group with their peers; the respondents could express the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with this statement. As shown in the graph above, the higher scores are attributed to the Strongly Agree (41.7%) and Agree (31%) options. 17.9% of the students Neither Agree or Disagree. Additionally, 8.3% of the respondents Disagree, while only one student (1.2%) Strongly Disagree. From the findings, it seems fair to deduce that the majority of the students felt like they were part of a cohesive group together with their peers.

Question n. 21 I think that the relationship I had with my classmates in Liverpool has directly influenced my motivation in learning English.



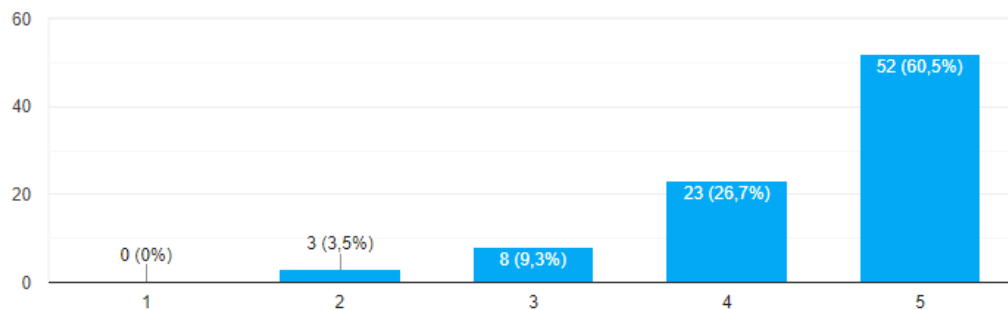
This item is correlated with the previous one. It aimed to determine whether students considered the relationship with their classmates to be a factor that directly impacted their L2 motivation. Once again, the data results were positive. In fact, 40% of the respondents to the questionnaire Strongly Agreed, meaning that they thought that the relationship they had with the other classmates influenced their motivation in learning the language. 29.4% Agree with the same statement, while 21.2% of the students Neither Agree or Disagree. Once again, low values are attributed to the Disagree (7.1%) and to the Strongly Disagree options (2.4%). As we have previously mentioned, this item was related to item n. 20. Therefore, when analyzing the findings, we also have to consider the data results of the previous item. Thus, we can safely affirm that the majority of the students considered themselves to be part of a cohesive group together with their peers; and the students also believe that the same positive relationship they had developed with their peers had positively affected their motivation in studying the English language.

Question n. 22 When I was in Liverpool, the fact that I was able to communicate with English native speakers directly influenced my motivation in learning English.



The findings displayed in the graph above refer to the respondents' ability to communicate with English native-speakers, and the subsequent impact that the communication had on their motivation in learning the language. As it can be seen from the histogram, 55.8% Strongly Agree with the fact that communicating with English native speakers has directly influenced their motivation, thus encouraging them to continue the L2 learning process. 19.8% Agree with the same observation. 19.8% of the respondents to the questionnaire Neither Agree or Disagree, 4.7% Disagree, and no students Strongly Disagree.

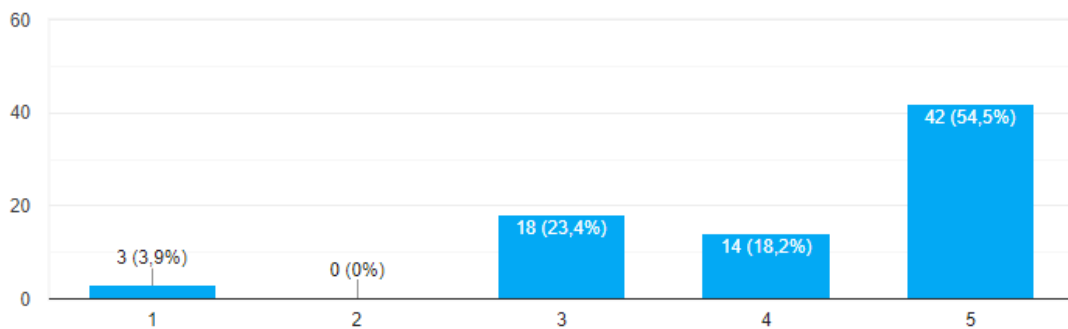
Question n. 23 When I was in Liverpool, my motivation in studying English increased when I realized that my English level was progressing.



The histogram exhibits data referring to a Likert-scale item statement claiming that students had an increase in motivation when they realized that their L2 level was progressing. As we can see from the graph, the data collected scored extremely high values for the options Strongly Agree, 60.5%, and Agree, 26.7%. This signifies that the majority of the students experienced a higher degree of motivation in correlation with the progression of their English level. 9.3% of the students Neither Agree or Disagree, while only 3.5% of the students Disagree. None of the respondents selected the option Strongly Disagree.

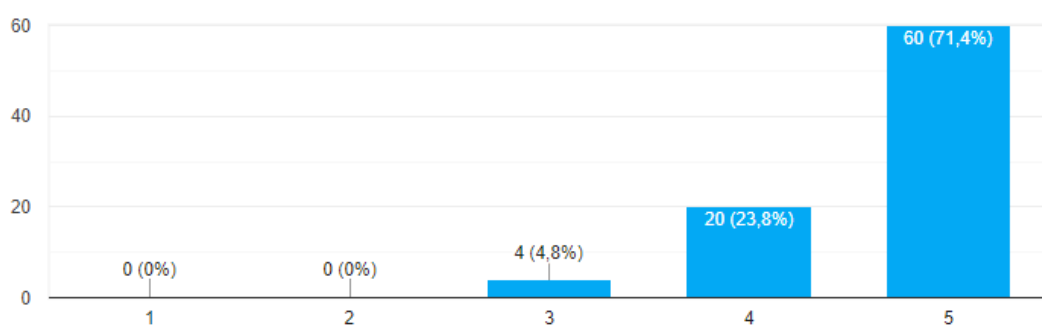
The findings are in accordance with the assumption that we had previously made in section 4.6. The supposition that has been confirmed by the data collected was based on the need for competence concept developed by Deci & Ryan: if students accomplish one of their L2 learning goals, i.e. their English language level progresses, then their motivation is going to positively change and increase, as well.

Question n. 24 Even if my English level was not progressing, I still tried to put effort into studying the language because I kept in mind my life goals.



In the histogram above, we can see the data collected from item n.24. Item n. 24 aimed to unveil whether the students' motivation was strong enough to sustain their L2 process, even when their English level was apparently not progressing. 54.5% of the respondents to the survey Strongly Agree, while 18.2% Agree. We can therefore affirm that the majority of the respondents put effort into studying the language because of the importance they gave to their learning goals, even when they could not see any improvements in the L2. 23.3% of the respondents Neither Agree or Disagree, no students Disagree (0%), while three students (3.9%) Strongly Disagree.

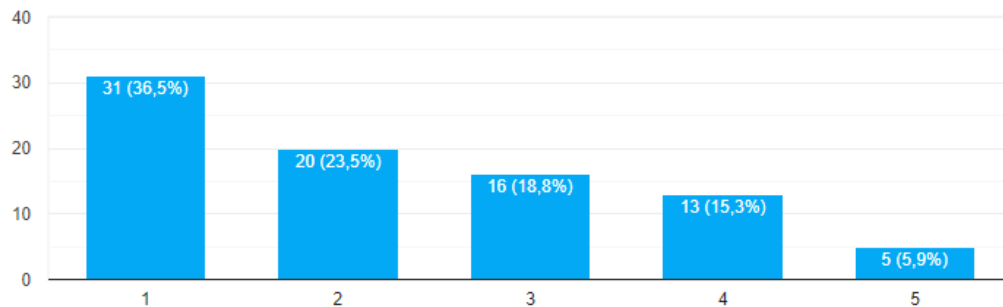
Question n. 25 Even if English native speakers understood me, I still wanted to improve my English language level.



The graph exhibits data about student motivation being independent from the communicative needs that are specific in a L2 learning context. The item asked students the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the sentence *Even if English native speakers understood me, I still wanted to improve my English language level*. The data collected showed a significant degree of agreement. 71.4% of the students Strongly Agree with the statement; 23.8% Agree, while only 4.8% of the respondents

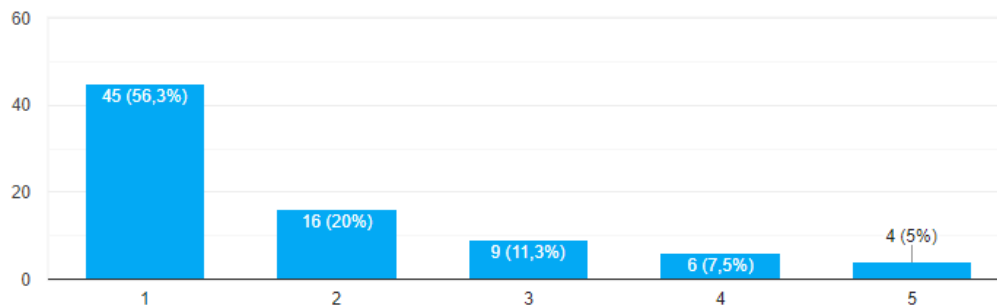
Neither agreed or disagreed. Finally, no students Disagree or Strongly Disagree, exhibiting an impressive 0% value for both of the options. This item, together with the following items n.26,27, and 28, were created on the assumption that some L2 students belonging to levels higher than the Threshold level B1, might feel unmotivated to further progress their language learning process when they realize that they can communicate with native speakers; this happens because their communicative needs, specific to a L2 learning context, are fulfilled. However, according to Balboni, students who don't base their motivation solely on needs, but also on pleasure, do not feel a degree of amotivation so strong; therefore, they don't refrain from the L2 learning process. The findings support Balboni's hypothesis. In fact, the respondents to the survey expressed their desire to improve the L2 even if they were able to communicate with English native speakers, thus demonstrating that their motivation was not based on needs, but on pleasure.

Question n. 26. While I was studying English in Liverpool, there was a time when I felt unmotivated.



Question n.26 aimed to unveil whether students encountered times of amotivation while studying English in Liverpool. The Likert-scale item was expressed through a statement. As it can be seen from the histogram above, the data results are as follows: 36.5% Strongly Disagree, 23.5% Disagree, and 18.8% Neither Agree or Disagree. The data collected show that the majority of the students did not feel unmotivated while learning the L2. 15.3% of the respondents Agree, while 5.9% Strongly agree. Exactly 24% of the students (see question n.2) have spent between more than three months to more than one year studying English in Liverpool. 21% of the students agreed with the fact that they have felt unmotivated at times; considering all the difficulties of living abroad and learning a L2, it seems fair that students who stayed longer would encounter more or less brief times of amotivation.

Question n. 27 While I was studying English in Liverpool, I felt unmotivated because I thought I had reached a sufficient competency in the language and did not need to further progress.



The histogram above shows data related to students' L2 competency and related feelings of amotivation. The Likert-scale item was expressed as a statement claiming *While I was studying English in Liverpool, I felt unmotivated because I thought I had reached a sufficient competency in the language and did not need to further progress.* 56.3% of the respondents Strongly Disagree, 20% Disagree, while 11.3% Neither Agree or Disagree. 7.5% of the students Agree, and 5% Strongly Agree. As we can see, the lowest values are attributed to the Strongly Agree and Agree options. The findings state that the majority of the students did not perceive any feelings of amotivation related to the fact that they thought they had reached a sufficient competency in English.

Question n. 28 What were the factors that made you feel either motivated or unmotivated while studying in Liverpool? Please, be as descriptive as possible.

Question n.28 is the only open-ended item of the whole questionnaire. The overall response rate to this question was sufficient. In fact, 47 out of 88 students responded to the question. We shall note that the majority of the themes identified in the responses are related to factors that were motivating for the students. Five broad themes emerged from the analysis of the data. We have observed that themes such as English teachers, classroom environment, classmates, studying the language in its native speaking country, and being able to communicate with native speakers recurred throughout the dataset within the factors that made the respondents feel motivated. We are now going to provide a few examples:

Interviewee A	During my English classes in Liverpool I felt very motivated because the atmosphere was really friendly and supportive, there was a lot of conversation and interesting things to know. I felt how much my English was improving and I was very happy about it and so motivated to continue that way!
Interviewee B	The factors that made me feel motivated were: -communication with the other students -teachers were very kind and wanted us to improve, it is very encouraging for students who are not confident at all.
Interviewee C	Motivated: because I could speak with students from other countries and native English speakers.
Interviewee D	Being able to speak with my classmates, my teachers and people in the street and manage to hold a conversation with them kept me pushing my English level and made me feel motivated and proud.

Factors related to student amotivation were not particularly prominent in the questionnaire data. The data collected concerning the students' feelings of amotivation were mainly related to personal or very specific issues: health issues, the weather, studying alone at home, and difficulties in understanding the Scouse accent, a very strong accent used in Liverpool and in the Merseyside. Other two issues were highlighted. For example, one interviewee affirmed that he felt frustrated and not motivated when he was placed in a wrong classroom which did not reflect his actual language level. Another interviewee stated that the stress of living in a foreign country caused him to feel anxious. However, differently from the data collected on the factors affecting student motivation, the findings related to student amotivation are not recurring themes; instead, they represent problems raised by individual students.

4.8 Study Limitations and Recommendations

The findings in this research are subject to at least three limitations. First, the instructors' teaching methods, and teaching materials used in the classroom could not be taken into consideration in the present study. This happened for a quite simple reason: there was no continuity of teaching during the students' English classes. In fact, not only students would change their teachers daily (each language level had 2 teachers assigned for the day); but also, teachers were set to change every other week, because they were continuously assigned to classrooms belonging to different language levels. However, we did feel confident enough to select the *classroom environment* as one of the factors considered to affect student motivation. This has occurred because, during my traineeship at the English school where the sample investigated studied, I had the chance to attend numerous English classes. All of the classes, independently from the language level, presented a recurrent feature: the classroom environment. The teaching materials and teaching methods used by the teachers would instead often vary. For instance, the materials used would range from the classic textbook, to videos (including film segments, brief pieces of TV programs, and YouTube videos), to audios, songs, and handouts. Therefore, considering the great variety, it would have been extremely difficult to provide insights into the teaching methods and materials provided by the teachers at the school taken into consideration in the present investigation.

Furthermore, the generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations. Firstly, the sample size might not be large enough to draw any general, broad conclusions. Secondly, the current study was unable to deeply analyze certain variables, such as differences in gender, nationalities, and foreign languages spoken by the participants to the survey.

Further research might be needed in order to include the teaching methods and teaching materials within the factors investigated. In fact, it would be interesting to assess the effects of these two additional elements on L2 student intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Another possible area of future research would be to further distinguish extrinsic and intrinsic motivation when investigating the factors affecting L2 student motivation. In fact, it might be interesting to research the factors influencing specifically intrinsic motivation, and those influencing specifically extrinsic motivation. The purpose of this study would be that of determining whether there are any relevant differences in the factors affecting the two types of motivation. Indeed,

more information on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter.

4.9 Conclusion

This present study set out to determine whether the type of motivation supporting the learning process of students learning English as a L2 and belonging to a level equal to or greater than the B1 is of intrinsic or extrinsic nature. Additionally, we aimed to determine the factors influencing intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in the same L2 context.

Returning to the hypothesis posed at the beginning of the study, it is now possible to draw certain conclusions. The data results of this research suggest that the first (1) hypothesis is confirmed. In fact, the findings highlighted that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation sustain the L2 language learning process of students belonging to a language level equal to or greater than the B1. Indeed, we have observed that the majority of the students responding to the survey expressed higher percentages of agreement on factors related to extrinsic motivation. However, intrinsic motivation still exhibited considerably high results, thus showing to be significantly relevant to students learning a L2. The second major finding was that the second (2) hypothesis has been confirmed, too. In fact, the elements positively affecting L2 student motivation emerged to be the following: positive, friendly classroom environment; group cohesiveness with the other classmates; good relationship with peers; and finally, communicating with native speakers. In fact, we have observed that these themes recurred numerous times throughout the dataset.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that there are also other factors affecting motivation that were not taken into consideration in the questionnaire items. Particularly, the open-ended question was able to offer further insights on the matter. Some factors negatively affecting L2 student motivation were pointed out by the survey respondents; these factors are not recurrent, but instead, they are issues raised by individual students. The different factors to emerge are personal issues, the weather, difficulties in understanding the Scouse accent used by the residents of Liverpool, being placed in the wrong level classroom, and anxiety resulting from living and studying abroad.

In general, therefore, it seems that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are

fundamental to sustain and support the language learning process of students studying a L2 and belonging to the higher levels of the CEFR (B1 to C2). Additionally, factors such as the classroom environment, group cohesiveness, relationship with peers, and communicating with native speakers proved to be positively influencing L2 student motivation in the same context. Overall, the present study aimed to contribute to existing knowledge on L2 student motivation, by providing further insights into the matter.

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