Universitat de Lleida

An exploration of English language learners' emotions and beliefs in a Catalan context: Insights from self-reported experiences and observed classroom practices

Irati Diert-Boté

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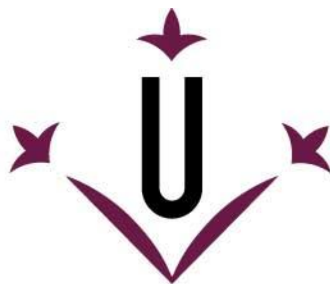

TESI DOCTORAL

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Irati Diert-Boté

Memòria presentada per optar al grau de Doctor per la Universitat de Lleida

Programa de Doctorat en Patrimoni, Territori i Cultura

Director/a

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Tutor/a

Xavier Martin-Rubió

2021

Al meu pare ♡

Acknowledgements

The elaboration and completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the help and love of many individuals, so I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to all of them.

First and foremost, I would like to express my infinite gratitude to my supervisor and friend: Xavi, durant aquests anys n'hem viscut de tots colors però tu sempre has cregut en mi i mai has dubtat que seria capaç d'arribar fins al final. Sense el teu suport i la teva confiança aquest viatge no hauria estat el mateix. Com tu sempre em dius... you are the best! Moltes gràcies... i seguim!

I am deeply indebted to all the students participating in the Plurelf project, as well as to the colleagues from the research team. Without their participation and collaboration, the realization of this dissertation would not have been possible. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the members of the Cercle de Lingüística Aplicada (CLA) and to the whole Departament d'Anglès i Lingüística for their support and companionship.

Special thanks to the Universitat de Lleida for funding my research and my three-month research stay in Graz, Austria, at the Institut für Anglistik under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Mercer. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Sarah for hosting me and helping me widen my research horizons and deepen my knowledge of language learners' emotions and beliefs. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your wisdom and helpful pieces of advice which have been –and continue to be– genuinely useful for my academic career. Thanks to the rest of the colleagues from the Institut für Anglistik for welcoming me and making me feel at home while I was in Graz… and danke schön for the good time we had in Strobl!

At a more personal level, I am extremely grateful to my boyfriend and my friends who have lived this thesis almost as intensely as me. Amor, gràcies per estar sempre al meu costat tant en els moments bons com en els no tan bons. Gràcies pel teu suport infinit i

per les teves paraules reconfortants, que sempre m'han fet treure una rialla, fins i tot en les etapes més fosques. La teva fortalesa és contagiosa. T'estimo. To my longlife friends: Ari, despite being far away, I treasure every minute we've spent together. Now you won't be able to ask me: "haven't you finished your thesis yet?" ☺. Jordi, des de sempre i per sempre. What would I do without our endless talks and without our Sunday afternoon scary movies? Míriam, has viscut molt de prop la meva aventura amb la tesi, dubtosa de si tu també començar la teva pròpia... gràcies per escoltar-me i compartir amb mi part d'aquesta experiència. Montse, ¿qué te puedo decir? Me has escuchado incansablemente durante miles de tardes y noches en el Marley, las cuales me han dado mucha más vida de lo que crees durante todos estos años. Te quiero. A les preciositats del 3.42: you know for sure that during all this time we've been much more than office mates or work colleagues, because in you I found one of my greatest friendships. Balbi, Judith, Leyre, Maite, Vasi i Inesa, sou de lo milloret de la uni! You are the people who have understood me best during all the stages of this rollercoaster, so thank you for your true love, encouragement and unconditional support. I love you!

And last but not least, I would like to say thank you to all my family, to those who are still here and to those who have already left. If it weren't for you, I wouldn't be who I am now and I am sure I wouldn't have been able to get this far. Mare, sé que aquests anys no han estat fàcils, però sempre m'has aconsellat des del cor i m'has donat suport en totes les decisions que he pres, i per això t'estimo tant. Finally, to all the people who I have not mentioned but who have nonetheless listened and helped me at some point of this long journey: thank you.

This thesis has been financially supported by a three-year pre-doctoral scholarship Jade Plus I was awarded in November 2016 by the Universitat de Lleida (acord núm. 218/2016). Likewise, I was able to collect data for my thesis and to present my research in several national and international conferences thanks to the grants from Ministerio de

Economía y Competitividad (MINECO) (ref. FFI2015-67769-P) and from Suport als Grups de Recerca de Catalunya (SGR) (ref. 2017-SGR-1522).

Abstract

In the past decade, the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has witnessed an 'emotional turn' (Pavlenko, 2013), thanks to which closer attention has been devoted to the role that emotions and related processes such as (self-)beliefs play in foreign or second language learning. With the advent of Positive Psychology in SLA, scholars have increasingly analyzed how language learners flourish and thrive in times of adversity (see Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), a principle which has become the point of departure of this dissertation.

The aim of this doctoral thesis is to (a) explore the English language learning experiences of first-year university students in a Catalan context through their (self-)beliefs and emotional experiences, as well as to (b) analyze how these two constructs are interconnected and constantly constructed (Barrett, 2017a) through the ongoing interplay between the learner and the social world. In light of initial findings, close attention was devoted to the beliefs and emotions students displayed and had constructed in relation to (i) the teaching methodology and the type of tasks (particularly oral tasks), and (ii) the role of the teacher and student-teacher relationships. A qualitative approach has been adopted in four independent yet intertwined studies in which both observational (classroom audio/video-recordings) and non-observational (interviews, focus groups and open-ended items) data have been analyzed.

Findings indicate that many students have constructed insecure self-concepts with interrelated dysfunctional (self-)beliefs and negative emotional experiences –especially regarding speaking tasks– largely due to a tradition of grammar-based approaches and scarce oral production. The analysis shows that change towards more positive mindsets is possible but the adaptation process involves difficult periods of transition for those students who appear to feel more insecure with their language abilities. During this process, the role of the teacher has been proven to be crucial in fostering positivity in class by promoting positive teacher-student contact and by creating a safe environment in which students respect and work collaboratively in order to overcome English speaking inhibition.

Keywords: English language learning; learner's emotions; learner's beliefs; positive psychology; teacher-student relationships; foreign language speaking; classroom atmosphere

Resum

En l'última dècada, el camp d'Adquisició de Segones Llengües ha estat testimoni d'un 'gir emocional' (Pavlenko, 2013), gràcies al qual s'ha dedicat més atenció al paper que exerceixen les emocions i processos relacionats com les (auto-)creences en l'aprenentatge de segones llengües i de llengües estrangeres. Amb l'arribada de la Psicologia Positiva a aquest camp, s'ha analitzat cada vegada més com els estudiants d'idiomes floreixen i prosperen en moments d'adversitat (vegeu Seligman i Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), un principi que s'ha convertit en el punt de partida d'aquesta tesi doctoral.

L'objectiu d'aquest projecte d'investigació és (a) explorar les experiències d'aprenentatge d'anglès d'estudiants universitaris de primer any en un context català a través del les seves (auto)creences i experiències emocionals, així com (b) analitzar com aquests dos constructes estan interconnectats i són constantment construïts (Barrett, 2017a) a través de la interacció contínua entre l'aprenent i el món social. En vista dels resultats inicials, les creences i emocions dels estudiants s'han explorat en relació amb (i) la metodologia d'ensenyament i el tipus de tasques (especialment les tasques orals); i (ii) el paper de les relacions entre professor i alumne. S'ha adoptat un enfocament qualitatiu en quatre estudis independents però entrellaçats, en què s'han analitzat tant dades observacionals (enregistraments d'àudio/vídeo a l'aula) com no observacionals (entrevistes, grups de discussió i ítems de resposta oberta).

Els resultats indiquen que molts estudiants han construït autoconceptes insegurs amb (auto)creences disfuncionals i experiències emocionals negatives interrelacionades, especialment pel que fa a les tasques de parla, en gran part a causa d'una tradició d'enfocaments gramaticals i d'escassa producció oral. L'anàlisi mostra que és possible canviar cap a una mentalitat més positiva, però el procés d'adaptació implica períodes difícils de transició per aquells estudiants que semblen sentir-se més insegurs amb les seves habilitats lingüístiques. Durant aquest procés, s'ha demostrat que el paper del professor és crucial per a crear positivitat a classe promovent un contacte positiu entre professor i alumne i creant un entorn segur on els estudiants respectin i treballin col·laborativament per tal de vèncer la inhibició a l'hora de parlar en anglès.

Paraules clau: aprenentatge d'anglès; emocions de l'aprenent; creences de l'aprenent; psicologia positiva; relacions professor-alumne; producció oral en llengua estrangera; ambient de l'aula

Resumen

En la última década, el campo de Adquisición de Segundas Lenguas ha sido testigo de un 'giro emocional' (Pavlenko, 2013), gracias al cual se ha dedicado más atención al papel que desempeñan las emociones y procesos relacionados como las (auto)creencias en el aprendizaje de segundas lenguas y de lenguas extranjeras. Con la llegada de la Psicología Positiva a este campo, se ha analizado cada vez más la forma en que los estudiantes de idiomas florecen y prosperan en momentos de adversidad (véase Seligman y Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), un principio que se ha convertido en el punto de partida de esta tesis doctoral.

El objetivo de este proyecto de investigación es (a) explorar las experiencias de aprendizaje de inglés de estudiantes universitarios de primer año en un contexto catalán a través de sus (auto)creencias y experiencias emocionales, así como (b) analizar cómo estos dos constructos están interconectados y son constantemente construidos (Barrett, 2017a) a través de la interacción continua entre el aprendiz y el mundo social. En vista de los resultados iniciales, las creencias y emociones de los estudiantes han sido exploradas en relación con (i) la metodología de enseñanza y el tipo de tareas (especialmente las tareas orales); y (ii) el papel de las relaciones entre profesor y alumno. Se ha adoptado un enfoque cualitativo en cuatro estudios independientes pero entrelazados en los cuales se han analizado tanto datos observacionales (grabaciones de audio/vídeo en el aula) como no observacionales (entrevistas, grupos de discusión e ítems de respuesta abierta).

Los resultados indican que muchos estudiantes han construido autoconceptos inseguros con (auto)creencias disfuncionales y experiencias emocionales negativas interrelacionadas, especialmente con respecto a las tareas de habla, en gran parte debido a una tradición de enfoques gramaticales y escasa producción oral. El análisis muestra que es posible cambiar hacia una mentalidad más positiva, pero el proceso de adaptación implica períodos difíciles de transición para aquellos estudiantes que parecen sentirse más inseguros con sus habilidades lingüísticas. Durante este proceso, se ha demostrado que el papel del profesor es crucial para crear positividad en clase promoviendo un contacto positivo entre profesor y alumno y creando un entorno seguro donde los estudiantes respeten y trabajen colaborativamente para vencer la inhibición a la hora de hablar en inglés.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje de inglés; emociones del aprendiz; creencias del aprendiz; psicología positiva; relaciones profesor-alumno; producción oral en lengua extranjera; ambiente del aula

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List of relevant abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ACJ	Audiovisual Communication and Journalism
BAM	Business and Administration Management
CDS	Complex Dynamic Systems
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FL	Foreign Language
FLCA	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety
FLE	Foreign Language Enjoyment
PP	Positive Psychology
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
ToCE	Theory of Constructed Emotion
UdL	Universitat de Lleida

Transcription conventions

Symbol	Meaning
(text)	Non-verbal information
?	Rising intonation
.	Falling intonation
(.)	Brief pause (less than half a second)
(1)	Longer pause (the number indicates the seconds)
mhm/hm	Backchannel cues
:	Lengthened sound
m:/eh	Fillers or hesitations cues
=	Other continuation
[ ]	Overlapping speech
-	Truncation or word fragments
haha	Laughter
CAPITALS	Emphasis or prominence in speech
(L1 cat)	Original speech in Catalan
italics	Translation of original speech
…	Unfinished interaction (interaction continues)

Based on and adapted from VOICE (2007) mark-up conventions

Introduction

> I suffered a lot… the flash drive didn't work and I started to get nervous [laughs nervously] the words wouldn't come out, then I started talking and when I looked at the teacher I went blank… I thought 'shit, here we go again…' the paper was two tables away. I don't know where to start or how to start, but this is my problem, the class in general is OK with that… so I'll get by.
>
> Excerpt from Tatiana, study 3

The opening extract of this introductory chapter encapsulates what many students experience in the foreign language classroom, especially when it comes to oral production: anxiety, nervousness, insecurity. Although these emotions might also be experienced in other subjects, learning a second or a foreign language is different from learning any other subject, and that is because "students' self image is more vulnerable when they do not yet have mastery of their vehicle for expression –language" (Arnold, 2009, p. 147). Indeed, one's sense of Self is composed of multiple intertwined cognitions, affects and motivations which play a central role in leading one's behaviors, performances and approaches to several aspects of life, including learning. This holistic view of the learner, in which cognition and emotion are inseparable, has also been acknowledged in several scientific fields such as psychology (Frijda, Manstead and Bem, 2000; Ratner, 2000; Vygotsky, 1999), neuroscience (Barrett, 2017a, 2017b; Damasio, 1994; Gray, Braver and Raichle, 2002, Haidt, 2001) and, in the last few years, applied linguistics (Aragão, 2011; Arnold and Brown, 1999; Barcelos, 2015; Dewaele, 2005; Pavlenko, 2013; Swain, 2013).

Nevertheless, research on affect (with the exception of beliefs) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA henceforth) was scarce until approximately the past ten years, to the point that emotions became "the elephants in the room –poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought" (Swain, 2013, p. 205). A cognitivist tradition resulted in a partial understanding of the myriad elements that interact during

the language learning process, but the social turn (Block, 2003) broadened the research horizon and paved the way for the arrival of subsequent turns, such as the emotional one. Most of the work on emotions has been done through studies inspired by Positive Psychology (e.g. Dewaele, Chen, Padilla and Lake, 2019; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; Leung, Mikami and Yoshikawa, 2019; Li and Xu, 2019; MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer, 2019; MacIntyre and Mercer, 2014; Oxford, 2015). Positive Psychology aims at helping individuals and communities not only to survive or endure situations, but also to flourish and thrive through the empirical study of well-being, satisfaction and contentment (in the past), flow and happiness (in the present) and hope and optimism (for the future) (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), amongst many other related topics. In Tatiana's excerpt at the beginning of this chapter, we can see that her last uttered words are "I'll get by". This is perhaps one of the most interesting parts of her statement, because it shows that despite her self-beliefs of incapability and her evident anxiety reported during this event, she is convinced that she will find a way through hardship.

The aim of the present dissertation is to analyze the English language learning experiences of first-year university students in a Catalan context by focusing on their beliefs, self-beliefs and emotional experiences. The significance of this research does not only lie in its attempt to describe learners' (self-)beliefs and emotions, but also in its endeavor to discover how these processes are connected and are constantly being constructed, co-constructed and re-constructed through the ongoing dialogue between the learner (or the individual) and the dynamics of the social world. Therefore, beliefs and emotions in this dissertation are conceptualized not as fixed mental and abstract phenomena, but as dynamically and contextually constructed processes (Barrett, 2017a) by means of the complex interaction of the individual with the environment. Beliefs and emotions are also conceived as intimately related, so this work attempts to provide an integrative and holistic approach that reflects the interrelation, complexity and dynamics of these two constructs. If both beliefs and emotional experiences are dynamic and

constructed, then this implies that they might also be open to modification; therefore, the ultimate goal of this dissertation is to identify from a positive psychology perspective what aspects might contribute to helping students change their (often negative) visions towards English language learning and towards themselves as learners so that they live the experience of learning a foreign language through much more positive mindsets.

Hence, the global research question that guides this investigation is the following:

> **RQ 1.** How do English language learners construct their current and past English language learning experiences in a Catalan context?

In order to narrow the scope of the research, the exploration of English language learner's experiences revolves around the study of two main aspects which have found to be fundamental along this project, namely: (1) the language teaching methodology and the type of activities; and (2) the teacher and the teacher-student relationships. As a result, two sub-questions were developed:

> **RQ 2.** What beliefs and emotions do students construct and display regarding the teaching methodology and the types of tasks (particularly oral tasks) in the English language learning class?
>
> **RQ 3.** What beliefs and emotions do students construct and display regarding the role of the English language teacher and student-teacher relationships?

This thesis is part of a larger project entitled *Towards a plurilingual approach in teaching English as a lingua franca at university* (FFI2015-67769P), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO). The project focused on the analysis and comparison of two methodological approaches to teach English: a traditional monolingual perspective, with the native speaker as the ideal model, and a translanguaging approach with an English as a lingua franca-oriented pedagogy, in

which the plurilingual repertoires of the learners were regarded as assets and which the native model was questioned. The present dissertation, nevertheless, does not center on the participants' beliefs and emotions in relation to these two teaching methodologies in particular. That is because, as I started my investigation, I realized that, although the different use of languages in class produced diverse reactions in the students, there were other more general aspects that appeared to be closely linked to their language learning beliefs and emotional experiences beyond these two methods. As mentioned above, those aspects were connected to the interpersonal nature of teaching/learning (i.e. teacher-student relationships) and to the methodological approaches and tasks employed to teach the language (traditional grammar-based vs. communicative teaching).

My personal interest in pursuing this thesis stemmed from my own experience as an English language learner and teacher within the Catalan education system. As a student, I remember that my English lessons in high school were all very similar. We took the student's book, the teacher gave us some theoretical explanations, perhaps some vocabulary items, and then we did the grammar exercises in the workbook. Sometimes, we did some listening activities in class, some compositions at home, and we read a booklet each term. The spoken part of the language was restricted to reading some texts and our own answers from the activities aloud. Moreover, the teachers tended to be cold and strict; they performed the role of content-deliverer and attempted to be as productive as possible to cover the lesson for the day, so they did not appear to have time to invest in building a bond with students. Although I loved English anyway, I could understand that most of my classmates found the subject boring, useless and even scary at times. For many of them, English was simply a set of bewildering grammatical structures that needed to be memorized like formulae in order to apply them correctly in the exams or activities.

During my college internship, I went back to my old high school as a teacher assistant and, in all those years, things did not seem to have changed much. This did not come as

a surprise, though, because for some years I had been a teacher for students that needed extra lessons in English, and I could see that the same theory-practice pattern was still being followed, sometimes with the same textbooks that I had used as a student. I also prepared students who wanted to take official exams to obtain a certificate in English and, by far, the most difficult part for most of them was oral production. Many confessed to me that they got nervous, even anxious, when having to speak in English, but they also told me that it was easier for them to speak with me because there was some sort of ‘mutual trust’ and they knew I was not going to judge them. In view of these life-long experiences with the English language, as well as of the results obtained in my Master’s thesis –which was my first scientific inquiry into English language learners’ emotions and beliefs– I grew more convinced of the importance of listening to the learners’ voices, including their emotional experiences and beliefs about the subject and about themselves as language learners. These voices could help us to understand the learning processes from their subjective experiences and to produce useful results and guidelines which could help improve foreign language teaching and learning. When investigating such experiences, the affective side of education was deemed suitable given that it was a fairly underexploited terrain in SLA, yet fertile enough to produce thought-inspiring insights into the process of acquiring an additional language.

This research project is structured into three main parts, which are wrapped up by a general conclusion. Part I offers a review of the literature and the theoretical background of the study, and it is divided in turn into two chapters. Chapter 1 consists of a theoretical and methodological overview of emotions and beliefs from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day, from a psychological and sociological point of view. This review shows that (a) emotion has traditionally been regarded as inferior to cognition and, consequently, research has focused on the unidirectional influence of cognition upon emotion, until the past thirty years; and (b) that also in the last three decades, the interplay between social and individual factors and processes in both emotions and beliefs started to be considered. Next, Barrett’s (2017a, 2017b) Theory of

Constructed Emotion is developed, as it offers a theoretical framework that contributes to reconciling the sociocultural and the individual, the emotional and the cognitive. Chapter 1 finishes with the implications for my research project and how my own study is informed by this theory. Chapter 2 provides a theoretical review of emotions and beliefs in SLA by providing a journey through all the different turns in the field. The literature review reveals that whilst having been studied separately, beliefs and emotions have many commonalities and, therefore, an integrative approach is needed to study the Self holistically. This integrative approach is described, which combines a complex dynamic system perspective (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008) and a conceptualization of both beliefs and emotions under the umbrella of Positive Psychology. This chapter concludes with a thorough description of how my thesis is informed by all these conceptions and how they have been merged in my dissertation.

Part II encompasses the research context and the research methodology of the project, and it is split into two chapters. Chapter 3 provides background information of the context in which this research has been conducted. The chapter starts with a contextualization of the learning and teaching of English in Catalonia by describing the Catalan curriculum of foreign languages and the role that English plays at a tertiary education level in Catalonia, and, particularly, at the Universitat de Lleida (UdL). The chapter continues with a specific description of the context of my research project, i.e. the two English for Specific Purposes (ESP) settings from which data for my dissertation were collected. Special attention is devoted to the second ESP context, in which most of the data used were obtained as part of a larger research project, which will also be explained. Chapter 4 is devoted to the articulation of the methodological framework of my study. It starts with the rationale for my research, its main objectives and the specific research questions that I will attempt to answer. Afterwards, qualitative research is introduced as the paradigm adopted in this dissertation to collect and analyze data, followed by the two types of data that I have used in my dissertation, i.e. observational and non-observational data. Lastly, the analytical tools and procedures

employed in each study will be briefly mentioned, as they are thoroughly developed in the four studies.

Part III comprises the analysis and findings of the dissertation, which are presented in the form of four studies, which correspond to chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. The studies have their own specific goals and research questions, and encompass an introduction, a review of the literature and of specific concepts and notions that are relevant for each study, a methodological framework with a focus on analytical tools and processes, a presentation of the findings, a discussion and a conclusion. Because the findings are presented in the form of four independent yet complementary pieces of research, it might initially seem that the volume of data and of results obtained is inferior to a thesis in which results are displayed in lengthy chapters. Nevertheless, in fact the difference dwells in the presentation format rather than in the amount of analytical work conducted "behind the scenes". Therefore, I would like to encourage the reader to view this format from an open-minded perspective and to take into consideration the multiple complexities and challenges of conducting four studies at this early stage of my academic career.

Part IV is dedicated to the discussion of the findings, which is divided into two chapters. Chapter 9 offers a global discussion of the research findings of the four studies and it is divided into three sections which aim to provide an answer to the three initial research questions. Thus, the chapter begins with a discussion of the results in light of the first overarching question, which aims to explore the participants' experiences learning English in terms of beliefs and emotions. A discussion of the next two sections follows, which are dedicated to the second and third research questions, i.e. the role that the teaching methodology and the teacher play in the (re-)construction of learners' (self-) beliefs and emotional experiences in English language learning. Finally, Chapter 10 consists of a presentation and enumeration of the implications and contributions that can be elicited from this research project in relation to the study of foreign language

learners' beliefs and emotions. The implications are analyzed and structured at three different levels: theoretical, methodological and pedagogical.

This dissertation finishes with a conclusion, in which the most significant findings of the research as well as the overall relevance of the project are highlighted. In this section, the major limitations of the project are acknowledged, and, in view of such shortcomings, future possible research directions are sketched. The conclusion is wrapped up by a personal final note in which I briefly reflect upon the journey of elaborating a doctoral thesis.

PART I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1. Emotions and beliefs through time

Chapter 1 provides a theoretical and methodological overview of emotions and beliefs from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day from a psychological and sociological point of view. This historical summary starts with the work of William James and John Dewey, continues with the period of behaviorism, followed by the cognitivist revolution and, eventually, it discusses the sociocultural side of emotions and beliefs. This general overview shows two key aspects: on the one hand, that emotion has traditionally been regarded as inferior to cognition and, when analyzed together, the cognitive influence on emotion –and not the other way around– has been the rule until the past three decades; on the other hand, emotions have traditionally been conceptualized as mere responses to environment stimuli (which are mediated by cognition in appraisal theories) without taking into consideration the social plane. Indeed, the interplay between social and individual factors and processes in both emotions and beliefs started to be considered only in the last thirty years. By means of reconciling the social and the individual, the emotional and the cognitive, Barrett's (2017a, 2017b) Theory of Constructed Emotion is thoroughly developed and linked to its applicability in the conceptualization and understanding not only of emotions, but also of beliefs. Chapter 1 finishes with the implications that this review of the literature of beliefs and emotions has in my research project and the way my own study is informed by the Theory of Constructed Emotion.

1.1 The 'golden ages': James and Dewey

William James is regarded by many as the father of American psychology (Barrett, 2017a), although he wrote on diverse topics such as epistemology, education, metaphysics or religion. He devoted most of his time to perform a systematic description of the phenomena of the 'mental life', including beliefs and emotions, although taking into account their physiological basis, and defended the body-mind interaction. In his late years, James unified the mental and the physical in the stream of

experience (Gobar, 1970). John Dewey was strongly influenced by James' work, especially the notion of experience, and began to reformulate psychology and education in a way that underlined the role of social context in the activity of mind and behaviour.

James rejected the mechanistic and automatic interpretations of the mind, and in his 1879 paper ('Are we Automata?'), James differentiated between the reflexive and the cognitive functions of the nervous system, and stated that the latter are purposeful and mediated by consciousness. He therefore claims that what distinguishes machines from humans is that machines are not conscious because they do not have an organic nervous system. Moreover, James (1890) also establishes a distinction between human beings and other animals, which was that, in humans, ideas act as mediators between stimuli and responses. These understandings are the roots for James' phenomenology, i.e. the study of phenomena as consciously experienced, as for him, there was an inseparable connection between the world, the mind, and its experiences. James was also one of the first authors to discuss about the Self and to employ the term "self-esteem" to describe a self-feeling which "in this world depends entirely on what we *back* ourselves to be and do" (James, 1890, p. 310), and understood the Self as "Unity" and "Diversity" at the same time (James, 1890, p. 352).

James' emphasis on consciousness and his refusal of automatic, reflexive responses is evident in his conception of emotions. He criticized Darwin's views on emotions and pleaded for psychology to leave essentialism behind. He wrote: "the trouble with the emotions in psychology is that they are regarded too much as psychic entities, like the old immutable species in natural history (James, 1890, p. 449). Darwin's 1872 publication of *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* is generally conceived as a turning point in emotion research and, as a result, as giving birth to the "golden years" in this field. In that book, Darwin posited that emotions remained unchanged through the ages and were passed through us –human beings– from our animal ancestors and characterized emotions as survival tools that were innate and universal

(Coppin and Sander, 2016). Darwin scrupulously observed the changes in the autonomic nervous system of both animals and humans (e.g. heart rate, perspiration, etc.) and postulated that these changes were "expressions" of our emotional life, expressions which require no learning as they are hardwired in our brains. In other words, Darwin assumed that human beings had inherited 'essences' from fear, happiness, sadness, surprise and any other emotion from our non-human ancestors and these essences had been buried in our subcortex (Barrett, 2017a).

James, rather than conceiving emotions as mental states, or essences, that triggered physical changes in the body, posited that emotion (which for him was an experience) results from the perception of information or changes in the body: "My thesis […] is that bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur IS the emotion" (James, 1884: 189-190, emphasis in original); thus, "we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble" (James, 1884: 190). His suggestion that behaviors and changes in the body were perceived *as* the emotion itself clashed with the widely-accepted Darwinian perspective that mental states of emotion caused those behaviors and changes and, consequently, his ordering of the emotional sequence was sharply criticized. Amid these criticisms, the most highlighted idea which has endured until today is that emotions are reflexive –since James wrote about emotions as instinctual reactions to the environment– while most of his psychological constructionist and non-essentialist ideas were clouded and virtually lost. One of James' most important ideas –which is also one of the axes of Barrett's theory of constructed emotion– is that, there are different instances of each emotion category, so one emotion can be associated with different bodily symptoms; therefore, he rejected the idea that there was one singular fingerprint for each emotion (Barrett, 2017a).

Despite his opposed views with Darwin's essentialist ideas James is frequently cited as being a basic emotion theorist; however "[James'] theory of emotions … never reduces

the psychological phenomena of emotions to their physiological correlates" (Gobar, 1970, p. 298). Gendron and Barrett (2009) identify three possible causes that led to this misconception. Firstly, James proposed that bodily reactions are produced by stimuli in the world; however, he did not presuppose that these reflexes were always the same in the history of humankind or even within the life of the same individual, as there is "nothing sacramental or eternally fixed in reflex action" (James, 1890: 454), so he believed that variability in emotional life was the norm. Another cause lies in the association of Carl Lange's work with his own because of the "James-Lange theory of emotions", written by John Dewey (1984). Both Lange and James postulated that emotions emerge from responses in the body, but Lange's model was based on the assumption that emotions are biologically primitive and that each of them has a physiological expression. Because of their similar views in certain aspects (and despite their differences in others) and Dewey's fusion of both approaches, their theories are usually interpreted as being the same. Ultimately, the third possible reason is related to Dewey's reconciliation of Darwin's and James' perspectives by assembling (or reducing) the two into a new theory of his own (Dewey, 1894, 1895). For Dewey, the distinction between "the state of being afraid" (or any other emotion) and "feeling afraid" was fundamental, and, according to him, Darwin most certainly focused on the former (i.e. the emotion as such), whereas James' theories were based on the latter (i.e. the experience of emotion). Therefore, Dewey redefined emotion as a physical/functional state (e.g. the state of being afraid), and the experience of emotion was diminished to the mere perception of that biological state (e.g. the feeling of fear).

Apart from writing about emotions, James also engaged in debates regarding the nature of beliefs. James (1907) conceived beliefs as intrinsically related to our experiences in the world and to actions. According to the author, the relationship between beliefs and actions is reciprocal, and thus, they modify each other: "in the realm of truth-processes facts come independently and determine our beliefs provisionally. But these beliefs make us act, and as fast as they do so, they bring into sight or into existence new facts

which re-determine the beliefs accordingly (James, 1907, p. 99). James' contemporary Charles Sanders Peirce (1878) also established a connection between beliefs and actions; he claimed that beliefs guide desires and configure actions by preparing individuals to act in a given situation. Moreover, Peirce (1878) understood beliefs paradoxically, as they can both stop and start thought: he explains that when one believes (in) something, thought can relax and rest for a moment; yet, if beliefs are rules for action, the belief itself involves also further thoughts and doubts. Similarly, Dewey (1983) claimed that beliefs help us make sense of the world and interpret reality, and are part of the thinking that helps us in problem-solving, so in a way he also established a connection between beliefs and action. For Dewey (1933), beliefs are matters of which we do not have sure knowledge but we accept as true, although they might be questioned in the future, as he writes:

> [Belief] covers all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future –just as much as knowledge in the past has now passed into the limbo of mere opinion or of error (Dewey, 1933, p. 6)

To Dewey, knowledge is bound to the context. That is the reason why for him, beliefs change and can be transformed across context and time, and he rejected the tendency of treating knowledge separately from the situation in which it occurs. Additionally, he also argued that knowing (including beliefs) cannot be separated from doing, and that both aspects need to be understood in the context of our everyday experience. Interestingly enough, and relevant for this thesis, is that Dewey understood beliefs, knowledge and action in close relation with our subjectivity, our experiences and our attitudes in the "here-and-now", otherwise important aspects would be missing: "we cannot keep connection on one side and throw it away on the other: We cannot preserve significance and decline the personal attitude in which it is inscribed and operative" (Dewey, 1983, p. 84). By our "personal attitude", Dewey makes reference to the

personal experience. Experience might include different aspects, phenomena and processes, such as beliefs and emotions and, therefore, this understanding leaves room for the inclusion of beliefs and emotions as an important part of our own experience as a whole. Although Dewey distinguished between the "state of an emotion" and the "experience of an emotion", on the whole, James and Dewey valued one's own subjective consciousness and experience –including beliefs and emotions–, which was in a constant interplay with the dynamics of the social world.

1.2 The 'dark ages': Behaviorism

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, after these "golden ages" of phenomenological research, the "dark ages" began with the behaviorist paradigm, which intended psychology to break free from philosophy and become an empirical science. For instance, Hebb (1949), in his early work, considered emotion as a disturbance of organized thought and behavior, and, as Fridja, Manstead and Bem (2000) explain, unreason as a consequence of emotions was a recurrent assumption in philosophy and psychology during the first half of the 20th century.

As a consequence, the interest for phenomenology and the analysis of beliefs, emotions, thoughts and other phenomena was relegated to the background. These phenomena were considered unimportant, to the point that their existence was even called into question by some behaviorist radicals, such as John B. Watson, who denied the reality of conscious experiences at all. In his own words: "psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior" (Watson, 1913, p. 158). Therefore, behaviorists' aim was to identify laws and data that, given the stimuli, could predict behavior or, conversely, that a given response could indicate the nature of the stimulus (Watson, 1919). Because of that, some authors like Rowan (1973) claimed that behaviorism, also called 'reductionism' or 'mechanism', was "wrong theoretically, wrong technically, wrong morally and wrong politically" (as cited in Berlyne, 1975, p. 70).

According to behaviorism, mental and abstract phenomena, such as beliefs, emotions, thoughts or desires cannot contribute to the understanding of sources of behavior, as they cannot be objects of empirical study. In other words, as beliefs and other mental 'substances' cannot be identified, they cannot be treated as the cause for certain behaviors. This vision, however, helps to overcome the Cartesian dualism between mind and body, as behaviorism opposes to the idea that there is a mental-inner realm only accessible by the subject (Collins, 1999). For a behaviorist, there is not a knowable difference between, say, beliefs and wishes, unless this difference can be proved in a subsequent and distinct behavior for each of them. This means that there is no difference between believing that I will pass an exam and wishing to pass an exam; since they are not abstract phenomena, their consequences or responses cannot be identified or measured.

Consequently, emotions were simply devised as behaviors necessary for survival and reduced to something observable, to a physical state (e.g. Watson, 1919). Watson proposed an inherited norm, which he called "pattern-reaction" (Watson, 1919, p. 165), by which emotions would elicit the same inward and outward physical reactions, although sometimes these reactions were altered or suppressed depending on the situation. Interestingly, Watson highlighted the importance of studying stimuli in context and argued that variability in emotion expression was determined by the surrounding of the stimulus (both the external surrounding and the internal, i.e. the individual's history). This relevance of context is shared by constructionist models; yet, as Gendron and Barrett (2009) note, Watson's views resembled the subsequent basic emotion theories that understand context not as influencing the very nature of emotion, but rather as altering only its expression by means of display rules. Therefore, although Watson could not observe this "reaction-pattern" because of the huge amount of variability in responses, he assumed that the pattern was innately there. This speculation, nonetheless, contradicts the basic foundation of behaviorism: that only *observable* behavior was of scientific value.

According to Barrett (2017a), the traditional story tells us that, fortunately, in the 1960s, a cognitive revolution began and psychological research experienced a "Renaissance". Authors such as Arnold (1960), Schachter and Singer (1962) and Tomkins (1962) regained interest in emotions and the mind and attempted to distance themselves from the darkness of behaviorism. Nevertheless, Barrett (2017a) notes that history is always written by the winners and that during that "period of darkness" (especially in the second half) there were actually about a hundred studies that rejected behaviorism as well as emotions as Darwinian biological essences and, on the whole, the classical view of emotions. For instance, Harlow and Stagner (1932) claimed that "*emotions, as patterns of response, do not exist*" (p. 572, italics in the original). Furthermore, some authors acknowledged variability in emotional responses within the same emotion category (e.g., Duffy, 1934; Dunlap, 1932; Harlow and Stagner, 1932, 1933) and proposed constructionist models, which probably never succeeded because they were not fully developed.

1.3 The 'Renaissance': the cognitive revolution

In the late 1950s, an intellectual movement flourished, known as the cognitive revolution or the cognitive turn, which recovered interest in the mental processes in various fields such as linguistics, psychology, anthropology, computer science or neuroscience. As Gregg (2006, p. 415) points out: "the vast majority of cognitive scientists … believe in the real, non-metaphorical existence of mental states such as beliefs and desires, and of mental events such as interference, decision, and computation". So-called cognitive psychologists realized the existence of the 'mind' because they could see its effects in behavior and, more importantly, they could study these effects scientifically without losing the objectivity of behaviorism (Pléh, 2019). The human being was conceived as a knower and as "theory-dependent", in the sense that s/he was characterized by strong internal theories (Pléh, 2019). For instance, in linguistics, Chomsky posited that the human mind has a rich internal structure in which

language is central and, as such, regarded linguistics as "a branch of cognitive psychology" (Chomsky, 1968, p. 1).

In emotion research, despite the available scientific counterevidence that emotion essences do not exist, the cognitivists drew on Darwin's theory and on James' distorted theory and compared those emotion essences to organs in the brain, which was conceived as a computer. This perspective paved the way for the modern classical/traditional view of emotions (particularly basic emotion theories[1]). In the classical view, emotions are usually seen as entirely different from other phenomena such as perceptions (which are key in James' theory) and cognitions, beliefs included. This understanding has contributed largely to the conceptualization of emotions as irrational and instinct-like forces and has helped reinforce the Cartesian dualist tendency in psychology, a point which Vygotsky had also criticized years before: "it is necessary to examine the relationship between intellect and affection, and the relationship of these with the social signs, and avoiding reductionism dualisms" (Vygotsky, 1934, p. 121). Not only were emotions considered independent from other phenomena, but each emotion was also understood as being categorically distinct from the others, as they were caused by different mechanisms (Barrett, 2016).

Influenced by the Darwinian-"Jamesian" idea that (at least certain) emotions were expressed equally and detected universally, Tomkins (1962) and his apprentices Ekman (1972) and Izard (1977) started developing a method for facial recognition of emotions (already foreshadowed by Allport's facial feedback hypothesis 40 years ago) that consisted of taking a set of six posed photographs (like the one in Figure 1 below) which represented the six basic emotions (happiness, surprise, fear, anger, disgust and sadness). The subjects had to either match a photo with an emotion word or select the photo that best matched a brief story (such as "her mother just died and she feels very sad"; see Barrett, 2017a). Ekman and colleagues ran experiments (Ekman and Friesen,

[1] The idea that there is a set of "basic emotions" was already proposed by Descartes (19649/1988) with his six "primitive passions" (i.e. wonder, desire, love, joy, hatred and sadness).

1971; Ekman, Sorenson and Friesen, 1969) using this method with individuals from Papua New Guinea who had had little contact (if any) with Western people, and they found that they could recognize and match emotion pictures correctly. The results from the experiments performed by Ekman and his associates were assembled into a comprehensive theory later on (Ekman, 1999), widely known as the classical or basic emotion theory of emotions.

Figure 1. *Photographs used by Tomkins (1962)*

Although this method received several critiques (Russell, 1995; Nelson andRussell, 2013), scientists started to use it in different contexts and participants, and it allegedly provided empirical support for the belief that emotions are universal, genetically coded and with an easily-identifiable fingerprint (Barrett, 2017a). This technique became so popular that it is still broadly used nowadays, although the basic emotion paradigm has evolved significantly as compared to Ekman and colleagues' original work. Even affective neuroscience has followed a similar essentialist view: "basic emotions may need to be defined in terms of [primitive] neural system attributes" (Panksepp, 2005, p. 69). According to Damasio's somatic marker hypothesis (1994), 'somatic markers' are sources of information, in the form of distinct physical fingerprints (e.g. changes in the heart rate, facial expressions, breathing, etc.) that are used by the brain to aid decision-making. Emotions are induced when these 'markers' are transformed into conscious

feelings that inform the organism about an environmental stimulus. With time, the individual associates emotions and their somatic markers, or bodily changes, to specific situations and their aftermath in the past, which is the reason why emotions influence decision-making (Damasio, 1994). In this view, emotion and emotional experience are different phenomena, as one can "have" the emotion without its experience. This perspective resembles Dewey's (1894, 1895) and is characteristic of theories within the classical view of emotion (Gendron and Barrett, 2009).

Concurrently with the studies carried out by Tomkins and colleagues, Arnold (1960) set the foundations for the "appraisal approach" to emotion (which has evolved into different models, e.g. Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 1984), which involved cognitive processes in a larger extent. Arnold (1960) explained that organisms are constantly assessing the environmental changes to see if they are relevant for their own well-being. Arnold (1960) posited: "to arouse an emotion, [an] object must be appraised as affecting me in some way, affecting me personally as an individual with my particular experience and my particular aims" (Arnold, 1960, p. 171). Thus, those appraisals initiate the emotional sequence, and, in the end, an action tendency, usually approach or withdrawal, depending on whether one appraises something as being good or bad. Therefore, appraisal theory emphasizes the significance of interpretation of emotion through awareness and attempts to explain individual variability in emotional reactions to the same situation/object (Smith, Craig and Lazarus, 1990). Inspired by Arnold's work, Lazarus developed his theory of appraisal some years later and became one of the most influential ones. Lazarus introduced the concepts of "primary appraisal" (the establishment of a meaning to the event), "secondary appraisal" (the assessment of the organism's ability to cope with the consequences of said event) and "reappraisal" (employed to subsequently learn from and re-evaluate situations in a more positive way) (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Lazarus (2006) conceives his theory of emotions as cognitive (the individual's awareness and judgement is what gives meaning and shapes emotions), motivational (motives and desires are important aspects that

configure emotions) and relational (emotions are closely connected to the environment and other individuals).

Two of Lazarus' notions are shared by virtually all appraisal theorists. Firstly, he characterized emotions by immense variability, arguing that individuals can make subtle distinctions in the interpretation of the environment. That is the reason why he initially opposed to the existence of a limited number of distinct basic emotions; nevertheless, in later works (Lazarus, 1991; 2006) he wrote: "each discrete emotion has a distinctive relational meaning—that is, a particular harm, threat, challenge, or benefit—and is the product of the process of appraising" (Lazarus, 2006, p. 15). Lazarus describes several discrete or basic emotions and their "distinctive relational meaning", which is in a way reminiscent of basic emotion theories such as Tomkin's or Ekman's. For instance, "facing an uncertain, existential threat" (Lazarus, 2006, p. 16) is the relational meaning attached to "anxiety". Secondly, he put forward that emotion is better conceived as an ongoing process, an idea that is shared by most current appraisal theorists. Lazarus (1991) claimed that emotions are in a constant state of flux and that human beings are continuously appraising and reappraising the "same" event, by which the initial emotional reaction might be different over time. Since Arnold and Lazarus, several models with different sets of appraisals have been proposed to differentiate one emotion from another (e.g. Fridja, 1986; Roseman, 1984; Scherer, 1982; Solomon, 1976).

The main difference with the Darwinian view of emotions is that appraisal models do not understand emotions as mere reflexive acts, but propose that emotions emerge from the interpretation, or 'evaluative judgement' (Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins, 2006) of the person, that is, his/her cognition(s). Therefore, beliefs are viewed as antecedents of emotions; emotions result from the individual's beliefs about the world, about events and about implications of such events (Frijda et al., 2000). As Encinas-Sánchez (2014) points out, this view depicts the individual with a much more active role, rather than with a reactive one. Nevertheless, it has to be emphasized that in this approach, the conscious experience as well as physiological and behavioral changes are not regarded

as the emotion itself, but rather as symptoms of the emotion. Furthermore, although in principle appraisal models acknowledge emotional variability and do not take for granted the biological 'basicness' of some emotions, these models (e.g. Arnold, 1960; Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991, 2006) also tend to share assumptions found in basic emotion theories, as emotional responses are organized into sets of discrete categories and appraisals "trigger stereotyped, coordinated packets of emotional response" (Gendron and Barrett, 2009, p. 325), which means that each emotion is believed to be activated by specific cognitive mechanisms.

On the whole, the classical or essentialist view of emotions regards emotions as natural entities or kinds, as it has been illustrated throughout this section. One version of the classical view, which is basic emotion theory, presupposes that events and objects in the environment automatically trigger emotion essences, like sadness, surprise, fear, anger, happiness and disgust. Another variant, namely appraisal theory (and its various models), follows the same assumption, although introducing an additional phase between the stimulus and the individual, the appraisal or belief, which is what provokes the emotion. Figure 2[2] (see below) summarizes this way of understanding emotion: some object or event (usually an external stimulus) triggers a certain kind of emotion, which produces a specific set of behavioral and physiologic responses (such as facial and vocal expressions, changes in the peripheral nervous system (PNS) and some action).

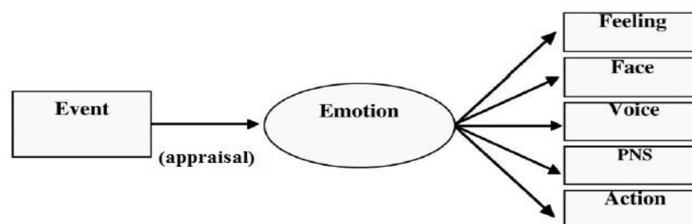

Figure 2. *The natural-kind approach to emotions* (adapted from Barrett, 2006, p. 21)

[2] Figure 2 is not exhaustive, as it does not portray the complexity in both the basic emotion and appraisal theories. Additionally, it has to be taken into account that some models direct their attention to certain outputs, such as facial movements (e.g. Tomkins, 1962; Ekman, Sorenson and Friesen, 1969) or voice expression (e.g. Laukka et al., 2016), but do not focus on others such as the experience of emotion, and that the individual's context and learning history are generally acknowledged as being influential in emotional responses (e.g. Ekman, 1992; Panksepp, 1998).

Although beliefs were regarded as one of the major determinants of emotion in appraisal theories, beliefs on their own were not directed much attention: "in all the huge and widespread literature on the psychology of cognition and emotion, there is almost no reference to research on beliefs" (Fiedler and Bless, 2000, p. 144). In the scant research produced on beliefs, cognitive psychology understood them as mental states expressed by cognitive semantic structures. For instance, Jerry Fodor (1981), one of the most influential figures in philosophy and cognitive science at that time, claimed that mental representations such as beliefs or desires can also be explained correctly in terms of language of thought in the mind −which was already existing and codified in the brain. Drawing on Chomsky's theories, Fodor (1983) postulated that linguistic and perceptual processes, including beliefs, are structured in terms of modules in the mind, "organs" that have functional or causal roles and thus establish causal relationships with external objects and events. Egan (1986) pointed out that while the semantic structure of belief had been extensively researched, aspects such as the acceptance of belief as truth and the nature of such acceptance had not received so much attention, and that "cognitive psychology must deal for the most part with beliefs that are justified and true" (Egan, 1986, p. 316).

One of the major controversies in research about beliefs was −and probably still is− the differences, or similarities, between beliefs and knowledge. The traditional analysis of knowledge views propositional knowledge (i.e. knowledge expressed through declarative sentences) as a type of belief, particularly, a justified true belief (Gettier, 1963). As Egan (1986) explains, in the cognitive paradigm, belief was generally regarded as (a) a propositional attitude (i.e. a mental state held by an individual towards a proposition denoted by a verb like "believe": I believe that it will rain); as (b) a subjective probability (i.e. probability, instead of frequency or propensity of some phenomenon, is interpreted as a personal belief); and as (c) inference (i.e. an opinion or an educated guess that you form based on information that you have). Some authors, like Izard and Smith (1982) have emphasized the "paradoxical nature" of beliefs,

starting from the meaning itself of the verb *to believe.* Izard and Smith (1982) point out that the verb transmits at the same time a sense of doubt and assurance; when one "believes something", one is quite sure about "that something"; nevertheless, the verb also expresses doubt because if "that something" were a universal truth, a proved fact that everyone agrees upon, then, it would not be necessary to say that one *believes* in something, as it would be a fact or a truth.

Nevertheless, due to the fact that "there is often no meaningful way to introduce belief terms into models of cognition" (Egan, 1986, p. 318), authors like Abelson (1979) interpreted beliefs as something different from knowledge (or cognition), as they lack consensus, deal with controversial issues, are evaluative and affective (although with a cognitive component), rely on episodes from personal experience, folklore or propaganda, and are open, with wide boundaries that generally involve self-concepts. Frijda et al. (2000) also make a distinction between beliefs and knowledge, mostly in terms of action triggering, and connect them to emotions. The authors explain that the link with action is stronger in beliefs than in knowledge, because beliefs are more emotion-sensitive than knowledge; their thesis is therefore that an emotional impulse is necessary in order to turn thinking into action, and that no matter how rational thoughts are about, say, helping the needy, because "you need an emotional impulse before you actually volunteer to help" (Fridja et al., 2000, p. 3).

It was also during the cognitive paradigm that, in the study of beliefs, Rokeach (1968) developed the belief systems theory. He defined a belief system "as having represented within it, in some organized psychological but not necessarily logical form, each and every one of a person's countless beliefs about physical and social reality" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 2). Rokeach (1968) pointed out that beliefs differ in power and intensity, that they are distributed along a central-peripheral dimension and that, the more central a belief, the more resistant it will be to change. He compared a belief system structure to that of an atom, in which the various particles are held together by its nucleus (formed

by the most central and difficult to change beliefs). This view of belief systems was also shared by Green (1971), who, additionally, remarked the characteristic that beliefs are situated, as they relate to specific situations and to context. Pajares (1992) admitted that this feature of beliefs can make them "appear more inconsistent than they perhaps are" (p. 319), because context-specificity and interrelatedness to other beliefs might make them more difficult to measure and infer. Pajares (1992), later on, proposed that belief systems are composed of beliefs that not only are connected to one another, but also to other cognitive and affective structures (Pajares, 1992). This conception of beliefs as interconnected by means of systems and as interacting with other planted the seeds for the conception of beliefs as complex dynamic systems. We will go back to this theory in Chapter 2.

1.4 The interplay between social and psychological processes

In the late 60s, psychological research would experience a transformation in the way the Self was conceptualized. Walter Mischel, regarded as the founder of modern personality theory, questioned the stability, permanence and invariability of personality traits, as his findings showed that people's behaviors are highly dependent on the situation and context (Mischel, 1968). By showing that previous methods of behavior prediction were not accurate to explain individual variability, Mischel started a revolution in psychology by causing experts to reconsider assumptions about traits. As a result, in the 1970s, a social cognitive approach to personality developed, which aimed at attempting to grasp: (1) the stable ways in which an individual processes social information cognitively; and (2) individual variations in behavior depending on the situation (Mischel and Mendoza-Denton, 2001). Despite the inclusion of a social acknowledgement, Clark and Brisette (2000) point out that psychology has traditionally adopted an intrapersonal rather than an interpersonal perspective, with the exception of certain psychological currents which will be explained next, and, of course, of sociological studies.

Sociocognitive studies in personality foresaw the transition to the acknowledgement of the role that society plays in the individual, or the Self, an aspect which was reinforced also in other branches of psychology, such as cultural psychology, cross-cultural psychology and discursive psychology. Cultural psychology is defined by Shweder (1990, p. 1) as "the study of the way cultural traditions and social practices regulate, express, transform and permute the human psyche, resulting less in psychic unit for humankind than in ethnic divergences in mind, self, and emotion". Within cultural psychology, it is interesting to mention Cole's cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) (1996), which drawing on the cultural-historical school of Russian psychologists such as Vygotsky and Leontiev, attempted to reconcile the understanding and analysis of the relationship between the human mind (i.e. what people feel and think) and activity (i.e. what people do in society). Cultural psychology is often confused with cross-cultural psychology, but they differ in their understanding of the role that culture plays on the individual: whereas cultural psychology studies how cultures and local practices both shape and reflect psychological processes, cross-cultural psychology tests the universality of these psychological processes across a variety of cultures, but does not focus on how social practices of a particular culture shape the development of cognitive processes (Heine and Ruby, 2010).

As Mesquita and Walker (2003) explain, the vast majority of cross-cultural research on emotions has centred on the biological and universal characteristics of emotions (e.g. Markus and Kitayama, 1994; Mesquita and Frijda, 1992) and on the potential to recognize facial expression in a way similar to Ekman and colleagues. Sociocultural aspects of emotions have thus been mostly overlooked in psychology, but work from other disciplines reveals cultural differences in emotion (e.g. Briggs, 1970; Lutz, 1988). Cultural psychologist Carl Ratner (2000), following Vygotsky's legacy, reinforces the interplay between emotion and cognition, and claims that dichotomizing thinking and emotions is the most fundamental problem in research and understanding of the Self:

> Emotions are feelings that accompany thinking. They are the feeling side of thoughts; thought-filled feelings; thoughtful feelings. Emotions never exist alone, apart from thoughts. The thoughts that are felt may be implicit and difficult to fathom; however, they are ultimately knowable ... We may be fascinated by intense feelings; however, we should not be deluded into thinking that they have an independent existence apart from cognition. They are as dependent on cognition as weak feelings are. (Ratner, 2000, p.6)

Apart from advocating for an integral conceptualization of emotion and cognition, Ratner (2000) draws on Vygotsky's activity theory[3] and empirical studies to claim that biological processes mediate these qualities and expressions, but remarking that it is culture what determines them. For instance, he explains that for the Ifaluk people, disappointment and fright are experienced as similar feelings (Lutz, 1986), whereas Americans experience these two emotions as quite distinct. Boiger and Mesquita (2012) follow the same line of thought but expand it to include not only the bigger cultural context, but they also incorporate two other contexts to the understanding of emotions. They claim that at different times and contexts, the resulting emotions will differ, as emotion is a dynamic ongoing process that is constructed in three embedded contexts: (1) the moment-to-moment interactions, that is, emotions and behaviours are dependent on the situated context of the interaction, which is embedded in the (2) ongoing relationship, i.e. emotions are shaped by, and shape, the relationship in which they occur, which is part of a specific (3) sociocultural context, which have different norms and standards in relation to emotional displaying and understanding.

Apart from cultural and cross-cultural psychology, discursive psychology originated in the 1990s as an attempt to provide a more holistic vision of the person by means of a social-individual tandem by reinforcing social interaction (oral or written) as the primary site in which psychological issues live and are constructed (e.g. Edwards and Potter, 1992; Edwards, 1997, Potter, 2000). Hence, discursive psychology opposes to

[3] Activity theory posits that the cultural characteristics, development and functions of psychological phenomena are shaped by cultural concepts and social activities (Vygotsky, 1978).

more traditional cognitivist approaches to the Self: "one of the features of cognitivism is that by making cognitive processes and entities primary ... it leads researchers away from the sorts of practices which people are taking part in with each other and to another realm entirely" (Potter, 2000, p. 33). Potter (2000) criticizes sharply not only the oblivion of social practices in cognitivism but also the devaluation of such practices, something which can be perceived in linguistics with Chomsky's notions of competence and performance: underlying competence is regarded as the proper topic for study, whereas surface performance is conceived as messy, difficult to measure and secondary. Therefore, the social approach to beliefs and emotions attempts to break with the three decades of cognitivist paradigm by analyzing the influence that the social and cultural exert on the individual and, in turn, how the individual transmits, co-constructs and negotiates meanings, ideologies, identities and, of course, beliefs and emotions by interacting and engaging in social practices.

For discursive psychologists, beliefs, emotions and other constructs exist only in and because of action, and therefore practices need to be analyzed in situ with more qualitative and ethnographic approaches, rather than modeled theoretically and then accessed through questionnaires or surveys (Potter, 2000). As Potter (2000, p. 34) highlights, "they [psychologists] have overwhelmingly failed to attend to the way practices are oriented to *action*, are situated and co-constructed in stretches of *interaction*, and are given sense through the *categories* and *formulations* of participants" (emphasis in the original). Therefore, Potter (2000) and other discursive psychologists defend the study of a world that is flexible and messy and that is not given or pre-defined in a single particular way with fixed categories (unlike cognitivists force themselves to believe), but it is constantly transformed and remodeled through actions and interactions. Discursive psychology offers a holistic vision of emotion and cognition and analyses how they both play out in everyday interaction. Edwards (1999) explores the ways in which emotion categories are threaded in everyday interactions and how these emotion categories are invoked to perform actions in talk. Edwards' (1999)

findings moreover show that emotion discourse employs a wide and flexible range of contrasts and oppositions rather than emerging from fixed cognitive scenarios that define what each emotion signifies.

By operating on the premise that ‘psychological phenomena’ actually exist in discourses, subjectivities, positionings and meanings (Harré and Gillett, 1994, p. 22), discursive psychologists found a common ground with many sociologists and sociolinguists. For instance, Blommaert (2005) made an exhaustive review of the existing literature on “ideology”, which can be defined as a “set of beliefs about how the social world operates, including ideas about what outcomes are desirable and how they can best be achieved” (Simons and Ingram, 1997, p. 784). After an exhaustive review of the existing literature on “ideology”, Blommaert (2005) distinguishes between scholars who focus on the cognitive and ideational side of ideology, and those who draw their attention to the material forces and instruments through which ideology operates. He concludes that the most useful perspective is to conceptualize ideology as an interaction between the ideational/mental and the material forces. This view that ideologies, or beliefs, are both cognitive and social is also shared by van Dijk (1995), who defines ideologies as “very specific frameworks of social cognition, with specific internal structures, and specific cognitive and social functions” (p. 21). This understanding thus implies that individuals have a set of mental or cognitive representations and processes that are socially constructed and perpetuated by means of discourses, i.e. group ideologies. Similar to van Blommaert’s and van Dijk’s view, Harré and Gillett (1994, p. 22) claim that “the study of the mind is a way of understanding the phenomena that arise when different sociocultural discourses are integrated within an identifiable human individual situated in relation to those discourses” (Harré and Gillett, 1994, p. 22). To analyse how beliefs, ideologies, emotions and other constructs are expressed and acquired through these “sociocultural discourses” is what discursive psychologists attempt to achieve.

Similarly to beliefs, or ideologies, emotions have also been studied from a sociological point of view in the last three decades. Social constructionist models, instead of conceiving emotions as innate, universal and invariant (as it occurred in Ekman (1991), for instance), emphasize their socially-construed character and the diversity of emotions across cultures. These approaches also study how emotions are context-driven and how they are socially functional to reinforce, or challenge, social norms. In Barrett's (2017a) terms, the type of emotion felt is dependent upon our own conceptual knowledge or understanding. In social constructionism, these understandings are related to the sociocultural context: "emotions are characterized by attitudes such as beliefs, judgments, and desires, the contents of which are not natural, but are determined by the systems of cultural belief, value and moral value of particular communities" (Armon-Jones, 1986, p. 33).

According to Lutz and White (1986) there are three main reasons that account for the emergence of a growing concern with emotions from a socio-constructionist point of view: firstly, the discontentment with the essentialist-reductive view and the understanding of emotions as "in the head"; secondly, the need to deepen the understanding of the sociocultural experience of emotions from an "emic" approach, i.e. from the perspective of the person who lives it, and, thirdly, the reinforcement of interpretative, qualitative and ethnographic approaches, which permit the researcher to make sense of phenomena that are not fully accessible through more quantitative and purely objective measures. Turner and Stets (2005) justify the turn to the 'social side' of emotions by conceiving them as a sine qua non of sociocultural life:

> Emotions are the 'glue' binding people together and generating commitments to large-scale social and cultural structures; in fact, emotions are what makes social structures and systems of cultural symbols viable. Conversely, emotions are also what can drive people apart and push them to tear down social structures and to challenge cultural traditions. (Turner and Stets, 2005, p. 1)

In sociology, the need for the contextualization of emotions in the social and cultural environment of the individual started with work on emotions in the workplace (e.g. Ashforth and Humphrey, 1993; Parkinson, 1999). Hochschild (1983) coined the term 'emotional labour' to refer to the process of managing or regulating emotions and emotional expressions to fulfil the emotional requirements at work. There are three basic elements in Hochschild's theory of emotional labour: the importance of context, the fact that individuals become actively implicated in showing certain emotions, and the fact that the goal of emotional labour is to elicit a response or a reaction in others. This way, Hochschild argued that emotions were managed in the work context so that employees could display the appropriate emotions by increasing, suppressing and even faking emotions. Research on teachers from this approach shows that they refrain from showing certain emotions so as to exert specific effects on their students and that they often regard emotional labour as a challenging and stressful task, due to the fact that students can dexterously detect false feelings (Hargreaves, 2000). On the whole, research underscores the social character of emotions and how emotions can be controlled (by subjects or by institutions) to achieve certain goals.

Also in the field of sociology, Nowotny (1981) developed the idea of "emotional capital" drawing on the concepts of "social capital", "cultural capital" and "symbolic capital" (Bordieu, 1986). Emotional capital is used to describe the capital that the private sphere can provide and conceptualizes emotions as skills and assets that translate into social advantages, and it refers especially to females: "as long as women were confined to the private sphere, this was the only capital that they could acquire" (Nowotny, 1981, p. 149). This perspective has been criticized due to the fact that it treats emotion as 'capital', i.e. as a resource to acquire rewards and powers, and probably this economic metaphor falls short to grasp the complexities of emotion in interpersonal-familial relationships. Moving out from the family sphere, a few years later, Hargreaves (2001) coined the concept of 'emotional geographies', which he defines as "spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human

interactions and relationships that help create, configure and colour the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other" (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 7). Emotional geographies are conceptualized subjectively and intersubjectively, as emotions are regarded as emerging from patterns of closeness or distance in interactions. Nonetheless, Hargreaves' study relied solely on responses from interviews, and therefore, interactions in context were not analyzed.

Cultural psychology and discursive psychology (and to a lesser extent cross-cultural psychology) as well as sociological studies of the individual-in-society remark the social and situated character of constructs such as beliefs and emotions. The theories and findings from different branches and areas of scientific inquiry show that there is a need to study beliefs and emotions as social-psychological processes. This interdisciplinary approach permits us to explore how these processes are constructed, managed and regulated in interpersonal social relations, and how these cultural products (Lyon, 1998) are negotiated in the social interactions and that are also acquired through socialization in specific sociocultural contexts. In what follows, I explain the most updated theory of emotion that is informed by social, psychological and neuroscientific construction. Although this theory focuses on the construction of emotion, it can also be applied to other constructs such as beliefs, as I will discuss in the final section of this chapter.

1.4.1 The Theory of Constructed Emotion

The Theory of Constructed Emotion (ToCE henceforth) is the most recent exhaustively designed theory of emotions that is in harmony with the holistic view of the individual. The ToCE was formulated around 2006 and developed over time by psychologist and neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett (see Barrett, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2017a, 2017b; Barrett, Mesquita, Ochsner and Gross, 2007). Barrett summarized her findings on emotions in her book *How Emotions are Made* (2017a), in which she exposes the following: "[Emotions] are not triggered; you create them. They emerge as a

combination of the physical properties of your body, a flexible brain that wires itself to whatever environment it develops in, and your culture and upbringing, which provide that environment" (Barrett, 2017a, p. xii). This quotation serves well as a summary of the antecedents of the ToCE, which are psychological construction, social construction and neuroconstruction.

- *Background*

The theory that is presented in this section attempts to provide feasible and scientifically-grounded explanations that can unravel the contradictory results in emotion research. As it has already been argued, the classical view of emotion incorporates –to a larger or lesser extent– an essentialist position, whereas constructionist approaches assume that variability in one category of emotion is the norm. This claim is supported by the outpouring amount of evidence reviewed in the previous section that challenges the universality of emotions and the existence of emotional fingerprints.

Recent results from people from Papua New Guinea (Crivelli, Russell, Jarillo and Fernández-Dols, 2016) challenge the universality and pancultural uniformity of emotions. Interestingly enough, several meta-analyses reviewing and summarizing hundreds of experiments (Cacioppo, Berntson, Larsen, Poehlmann and Ito, 2000; Duran, Reisenzein and Fernández-Dols, 2017; Lindquist, Wager, Kober, Bliss-Moreau and Barrett, 2012; Quigley and Barrett, 2014; Siegel et al., 2018) show that there are no distinct fingerprints for each emotion in the autonomic nervous system. Rather, these meta-analyses suggest that emotional variation is the norm, and not uniformity, as in different studies and contexts, within the same individual and across different ones, different bodily responses are related to the same emotion category. Similar results can be found with facial electromyography measurements (EMG), which is a much more objective technique that consists of measuring the tiny electrical impulses generated by muscle activity. According to Barrett (2016), at best this technique can detect positive

versus negative affect or intensity, but it cannot distinguish discrete or basic emotion categories because muscle movements do not indicate emotions in a direct manner. The same occurs with experiments using facial action coding, in which trained people classify an individual's facial movements. Neuroscience does not show either evidence of emotion fingerprints, or a brain region specifically dedicated to a single specific emotion (Lindquist et al., 2012) or to any emotion as a matter of fact (Touroutoglou, Lindquist, Dickerson and Barrett, 2015).

In view of these results, Barrett (2016) argues that studies that attempt to "recognize" emotions as essential fingerprints, end up "perceiving" emotions, and their accuracy is simply an agreement they (that is, perceivers/researchers) have reached –either consciously or unconsciously. Barrett (2016) also stresses that, ironically, the most trustworthy and replicable finding can be traced back to the classic emotion recognition studies, when perceivers are given a specific set of fake expressions and are forced to choose an emotion, because once the perceiver has the opportunity to choose a label freely and without the context that words and stories conform, agreement rates plummet. This does not imply that people never laugh when they are happy or cry when they are sad, or that facial (or bodily) expressions are nonsensical. There is a substantial number of studies that show that people do make facial movements during emotional episodes, but the reality is that those movements are hardly ever the same. On the whole, it seems thus that the correlation between facial expressions and emotions has rather been "stipulated" (Barrett, 2016) or "induced" (Illouz, Gilon and Shachak, 2014) rather than proved, initially by Darwin (1872) and afterwards by Tomkins and colleagues and other scientists replicating their studies.

Therefore, if there is countless evidence that suggests that emotional heterogeneity is the reality, why do we generally conceive emotions as essences that cause automatic reactions? Barrett (2016) provides four explanations to the question. The first one, and probably the simplest one, is because essentialism is intuitive and common-sense, and

offers easy and cause-effect explanations; given that we experience our own emotions as mechanical and reflexive responses, it is simple (or even logical) to believe that they originate from inherited, dedicated parts of our subcortex. The second reason is that, since essences are unobservable phenomena, their existence is difficult to refute. Scientists perseveringly attempt to find essences but, as they are abstract substances, scientists claim that they still need to perfect their instruments, that they need more powerful tools or that they cannot see them in certain biological structures because these are too complex. The third argument is that, because we compartmentalize our reality through language, words themselves make us divide (our perception of) reality and establish boundaries in it, to the point that these categorizations, or little essences, are so deeply ingrained in us that we end up believing that they are "real". Ultimately, the last explanation that the author puts forward is our neural configuration, given that the cortex separates similarities and differences in order to learn concepts. Therefore, each summary of similarities and differences represents an imaginary essence created by our brain to make sense of and represent reality.

Despite the fact that conceiving emotions as essences or natural kinds seems reasonable, it is actually more plausible to believe that we, human beings, construct our own emotional experiences, as well as our perceptions of emotions in the others, through the interaction of complex systems (Barrett, 2017a, 2017b). As Barrett says, "we are the architects of our own experiences" (2017a, p. 39), we do not passively react to the physical world, but we actively partake in constructing experiences and emotions, although we are not aware of this process. How we construct our own emotional experiences will be thoroughly explained in the following subsection.

- *The construction of emotions*

The ToCE has two core ideas or hypotheses, in harmony with the constructionist view that it adopts. The first key hypothesis is that emotions do not have fingerprints and are not genetically predetermined, as variation is the norm across individuals and within the

individual. These categories are ingrained in us depending on the sociocultural context in which we live, so emotion concepts become meaningful assets that are useful to function in that context. As Barrett (2017a) explains, physiological changes, such as the change in the heart rate, are inevitable, but their emotional feeling is not, because it is constructed based on prior experiences and taking into account the contextual situatedness of the "emotional" event. As a result, one might experience an instance of happiness in many different ways (e.g. laughing, smiling, jumping, shouting, crying, etc.) depending on prior, similar experiences and the context in which that instance of happiness is experienced. In this line, Encinas-Sánchez (2014) found that students' emotional experiences were bound to the social norms of the classroom context (which in a way resembles Hochschild's idea of emotional labor). The second key hypothesis, which is connected to the first one, is that if there are no emotional fingerprints, there is not a single mechanism for each emotion. Hence, instances of the same emotion category, or different categories, or event instances of non-emotional categories (beliefs, thoughts, perceptions, etc.) are not specifically localized in distinct brain regions or networks (Barrett and Satpute, 2013; Lindquist and Barrett, 2012); rather, these emerge from the dynamic interplay of more general and common processes of the nervous system, not from specific parts of the brain. Barrett explains that different sets of neurons in the network produce the same function (a characteristic called "degeneracy"), so that the same outcome (in this case emotions) can be produced in multiple ways. These two hypotheses are the backbone of the ToCE, which will be fully developed in the following lines.

Every waking moment our brain is making meaning of sensory inputs not only from the world, but also from the body, as, for the brain, the body is another source of incoming sensory information from the autonomic nervous system, the endocrine system and the nervous system. According to the ToCE, the brain makes all these sensations meaningful by means of categorization processes, i.e. the brain uses past experience

(organized as concepts) to understand what caused the physiological sensations in the organism and what to do about them, or how to act:

> In every waking moment, your brain uses past experience that function as concepts to guide action and give sensations meaning. In this manner, your brain models your body in the world. When the concepts involved are emotion concepts, your brain constructs instances of emotion. (Barrett, 2016, p. 44)

To illustrate how the categorization process works by using concepts or knowledge from past experience, Barrett (2016, 2017a) resorts to a picture similar to the one in Figure 3 (see below), in which the reader is likely to be "experientially blind", as the brain is not capable of categorizing the visual input and, as a result, all the reader sees is a black and white shapeless mass. The brain tries to find a past experience with these blobs to construct the experience in the present, simulating a familiar concept. Simulation occurs much of our waking hours, for example in daydreams or mind wandering, or when participants in a study are asked to remember experiences in the past and report on them. These simulations are similar to predictions, and they constantly anticipate –rather than reflexively respond to– sensory input from the environment and from your body (remember that for your brain, your body is "part" of the external world). The brain throws predictions, and these predictions are then corrected by and adjusted to external and internal sensations, which act as feedback to assess how good our predictions are. Some predictions fit better than others in a specific situation, so they become our perception and lead our action. We thus construct meaning by correctly predicting and adjusting to sensations. Sometimes, past experiences of emotion and prior knowledge in the form of concepts or categories are constructed, and then, an experience of a certain emotion is experienced (or perceived in others). In summary, emotions can be defined as simulations constructed by your brain on the fly, as it makes meaning of sensations from the outside world and inside your

body, and these sensations are assembled within the concept, or category of, say "anger" (for a more extensive explanation, see Barrett, 2016, 2017a).

Figure 3. *An example of categorizing to construct an experience*
(based on Barrett, 2017a, p.25)

If the reader turns to the appendix, now the item in the picture is familiar, easily recognizable and impossible to be unseen. What has occurred in the brain of the viewer can be explained through neuroscience, more specifically through brain plasticity, or neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the ability of the brain to re-wire itself based on influences from and interactions with the environment. As already suggested by Vygotsky (1978) when he wrote about the social construction of the mind, this means that the brain is not a fixed structure, but rather that it has the capacity to modify its connections as learning occurs, such as the learning the reader experienced after consulting the appendix. In this line, Barrett (2017a) explains that the 'seeds' of emotion categorization are generally planted during infancy. Adults say emotion words, or categories, to children all the time, in the form of "are you happy?" or "don't be angry". Initially, these are just sounds, but, over time, children learn to associate these emotion words with diverse body patterns and movements, as well as with different situations. These body patterns or movements are not always the same for the same emotion word (i.e. crying, shouting or throwing things for the category "angry"), so children collect these experiences of "anger" (or any other emotion) and form a basic mental concept characterized by a common goal, which, in the case of "anger", is to

surmount an obstacle. Furthermore, at the time of creating a mental concept for each emotion, infants also learn what actions were more effective to achieve their goal in each situation (e.g. in a particular “anger” event, perhaps crying was more functional than shouting). In all these situations, if the focus of attention during categorization is oneself, then one constructs an experience of anger; if the focus is someone else, one constructs a perception of anger. Although the natural process occurs during the first years of life, Barrett (2017a) also explains that the learning of new emotion categories and concepts can also take place in other stages of life if one learns a new language or culture.

Categorization processes can be compared to findings from visual perception research. Barrett (2017a) explains that colors do not ‘exist’ in nature; they exist because we categorize with concept colors the wavelengths of light, which are actually a continuum of color. Moreover, color categorization (and in fact all types of categorization) depends on the culture and the language (e.g. Belpaeme and Bleys, 2005). For instance, North-American people would categorize “light blue” and “dark blue” as nuances within the same blue category; on the contrary, Russian-speaking people have completely different names (and concepts/categories) for these colors, and they are as distinct as blue and yellow are for a North-American person. Therefore, the difference in categorization lies in the language and the culture that one has acquired. The same way as with color perception, we tend to assume that the basic emotions which we recognize in our own language must ‘exist’ in nature.

In order to construct an emotion, however, we need something else apart from concepts or categories acquired through social interactions in a specific cultural context to name that emotion. We need core affect. Barrett (2017a) posits that humans have the ability to discern only between the characteristics of core affect, i.e. valence and arousal (as already suggested by Russell, 1980, 2003) by means of a process called “interoception”, that is, the brain’s interpretation of all the internal sensations: pleasant-unpleasant,

calm-agitated, or neutral (see Figure 4 below). For instance, calmness implies low activation and pleasure, anxiety involves high activation and displeasure, and, happiness, high activation and pleasure. Therefore, core affect is a "pre-conceptual primitive process, a neurophysiological state, accessible to consciousness as a simple non-reflective feeling: feeling good or bad, feeling lethargic or energized" (Russell, 2009, p. 1264). In other words, core affect is like a basic type of 'core' knowledge (and that is why it is distinct from the more general notion of 'affect'), which is experienced as feeling good or bad (valence) and more or less activated or deactivated (arousal) (Barrett, 2006).

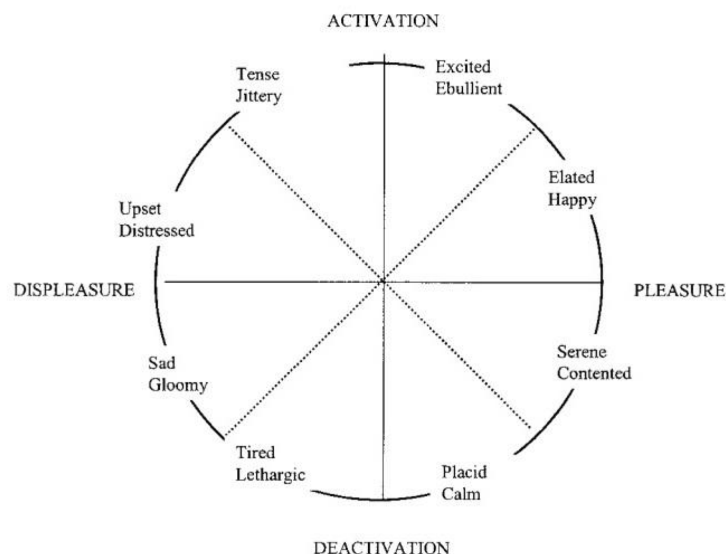

Figure 4. *Core affect* (Russell, 2003, p. 148)

As Barrett (2006) explains, these two qualities (valence and arousal) are universal and primitive, although they can also vary across people, across cultures and even within the same individual over time. However, core affect is not enough to explain the more granular distinction between emotions like sadness, anger, surprise, etc. This distinction is uniquely based on conceptual knowledge and categorization that we have acquired along our lives. In fact, research has shown that infants' development of emotions is achieved by means of attuning, proposing and correcting rather than being stipulated by

prewired emotion programs (e.g. Fogel et al., 1992). Studies also indicate that whilst pleasure and displeasure is felt from birth, emotional granularity increases over time until infants acquire adult-like emotion concepts (see Widen and Russell, 2003, 2008, 2010).

The ToCE can thus be summarized as follows: the brain is constantly regulating the body and predicting what the bodily sensations mean; at a given situation, when those sensations are very intense, instances of an emotion are constructed in the brain by the interplay of multiple networks or systems, such as interoception (which provides information about the internal state of the body in terms of core affect –valence and arousal), conceptual knowledge of emotions based on past experiences and their association with specific emotions, and the interaction with the sociocultural reality, which gives meaning to certain emotions (and other concepts) by means of collective agreement and language. This way, if the brain simulates, or predicts, the presence of a lion near you, together with the unpleasant affect and high agitation that this situation would entail, the brain would probably categorize and construct an experience of "fear". This process can occur before any real sensory input of a lion reaches the brain, only through prediction or simulation. On the contrary, a scientist that studies emotions from an essentialist approach would claim that the first step to feel fear would be to see the snake, a sensory input which would trigger a dedicated "fear mechanism" in the brain. However, since variation is the norm, every time one feels afraid, for instance, their brain could create that experience using different systems or processes which result in the same outcome (i.e. degeneracy; see Edelman and Gally, 2001), such as different facial and bodily movements, vocal sounds, autonomic changes (in blood pressure, heart rate, etc.) and any type of actions.

By having similar mental models, such as categories for emotions, we can communicate and share experiences effectively and, in the end, perceive the same reality. As a matter of fact, emotions serve several functions at two different but interconnected levels, as

expressed by Barrett (2017a). At an individual level, emotions are useful for: (1) making meaning of our actions and sensations ("what am I feeling?"), as any other concepts; (2) prescribing action to achieve a specific goal in a particular situation, always using prior experience as a model ("if I am sweating and breathing rapidly, what should I do?"); and (3) regulating the body budget, i.e. our brain/body/mind capacity to cope. Our body budget can be influenced simply by simulating and, therefore, categorizing sweating or breathing rapidly as certain emotions might involve some body-budgeting for the immediate future (e.g. a categorization of fear might entail a greater release of cortisol). At an interpersonal level, emotions are useful for: (1) communicating the meaning of actions and sensations in synchrony with other people's concepts (as a consequence of belonging to the same sociocultural context); and (2) influencing and regulating other people's body budgets, not just our own, by making the others conceptualize the meaning of quick breaths as fear and thus taking action as a consequence of that emotional interpretation. Therefore, as long as there is an agreement that certain body states and actions, categorized as emotions, have a specific meaning and serve particular functions in a certain context, one can be the architect not only of his or her own experiences, but also of other individuals'.

1.5 Conclusions and implications for my research

The historical overview of how cognition and emotions have been conceived through time (from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day) shows that emotion has been undervalued and conceived as distorting cognition; as a result, a unidirectional effect has been more extensively researched, i.e. that of cognition –or beliefs– on emotion, for instance in appraisal theories (e.g. Arnold, 1960; Lazarus, 1991). Furthermore, whereas in the early times of psychology, James and Dewey understood beliefs and emotions as part of the dynamic and contextualized experience of the individual, as psychology settled as an empirical science, scholars started to look for patterns to identify emotions, which were conceived as mere reactions to stimuli,

sometimes mediated by beliefs, as in appraisal theories. In these extended views, the individual was never conceptualized as a social being. Therefore, throughout history and until relatively recently, the Self has also been divided in terms of an individual being or a social being. This conceptualization of the Self as either individual or social, as cognitive or emotive has not permitted the study and understanding of the person as a whole but rather the understanding of bits and pieces of the fragmented Self. Nevertheless, these bits and pieces do not make sense unless they are explored as part of the bigger picture.

The Theory of Constructed Emotion provides feasible answers to understand both the social and the physical reality, narrowing down the scientific bridge between nurture and nature, given that the individual uses internal processes to categorize, evaluate a situation and act, but with the influence not only of external situations but in the framework of a culture and society which have influenced the way this individual perceives reality. To the best of my knowledge, there is not a theory of such magnitude in beliefs research; nonetheless, the ToCE also provides a complete image of the person in terms of cognition and emotion, as Barrett (2017a) points out that for emotion and non-emotion categories (such as physical symptoms, perception, thoughts or beliefs) the brain follows a similar process: it categorizes to best fit the situation and the internal sensations based on past experiences, and categorization becomes one's perception and eventually guides action. Therefore, both emotion and non-emotion categories emerge from the dynamic interactions of more common or general processes within the nervous system, which implies that the whole brain is working, not only a part of it for emotions, and another part for, say, beliefs:

> There is a growing consensus that a conscious experience emerges when a selection of neuronal groups, coding for specific perceptual properties, fire together to form a temporary coalition or assembly of synchronous neural activity. ... Reverberating, globally coordinated ("reentrant") neural activity of sufficient intensity and duration allows different sensorial features such

> as color, shape, sound, smell, and interoceptive cues, and, as we now suggest, core affect, as well as other cognitive contents like beliefs or memories, to bind together into a single experience. (Barrett et al. 2007, p. 386)

Notwithstanding the fact that scientists and theorists have usually conceived (and some still do) cognitive events (like thoughts, beliefs or memories) as different and separate from emotional events, this division does not seem to be respected by the brain. Fridja and Mesquita (2000) emphasize that the relationship between beliefs and emotions is intimate and reciprocal, and in fact more recent research has shown that emotions influence thinking in general, not only beliefs. For instance, Damasio (1994), Greene et al. (2004) and Haidt (2001) have shown that emotion is a key ingredient of decision-making processes, which have traditionally been conceived in cognitive terms. Similarly, neuroscience research employing functional magnetic resonance imagining of the brain also supports the integration of emotion and cognition in brain functioning, which means that "emotion and cognition can conjointly and equally contribute to the control of thought, affect and behavior" (Gray, Braver andRaichle, 2002, p. 4115). Therefore, as Barrett et al. (2007) suggest, it seems more appropriate to conceptualize cognitive activity and emotional experience as a gradient than as two independent systems.

In my research project, my aim is to explore language learning beliefs and emotions as part of the students' experiences in the Deweyan sense, that is, as connected to the environment, to the context and its dynamics. The concept of 'context' has been studied in sociocultural approaches to learning (e.g. Lave, 2008; van Lier, 2004) and, because beliefs and emotions are both social and individual, it is fundamental to understand the situation in which they occur. The context in this dissertation is not understood as that which surrounds and in which individuals are embedded, but as "that which weaves together" (Cole, 1996). This means that the 'tissue' of a given situation is weaved together by the different and multiple threads that are part of it (e.g. the learner, the

teacher, their peers, their interactions, their beliefs, their emotions, their identities, their experiences, the task at hand, the time, the physical space, the classroom atmosphere, etc.). The boundaries between these elements, or threads, are not clear-cut and static, but ambiguous, complex, interconnected and dynamic. Dewey already criticized the reductionist view of scholars when treating with the analysis of situations by focusing on a singular, alienated object and event; however, "in actual experience, there is never any such isolated singular object or event; *an* object or event is always a special part, phase or aspect, of an environment experienced world – a situation" (Dewey, 1998, p. 67).

On the whole, I argue that reframing our conception of emotions and beliefs as interrelated constructs that are part of the whole experience (see Barcelos, 2015), an experience that is context-bound, situated, and individual and social at the same time will help reconcile the cognitive-emotional and the individual-social dichotomies,. Although my dissertation is enclosed in second/foreign language acquisition research, this understanding of both beliefs and emotions can (and needs) to be applied in any other field not only of educational research but also in any other area of inquiry. Particularly in the field of second/foreign language learning, there is an epistemological need for a change in the way beliefs and emotions have been and still are generally understood and researched, given that studies that focus on these two constructs (or on cognition and emotion as a whole) are, to say the least, scarce, both theoretically (Arnold and Brown, 1999; Barcelos, 2015; Swain, 2013) and empirically (Aragão, 2011; Diert-Boté, 2016, Oxford, 1995), as it will be further explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 2. Emotions and beliefs in SLA

Chapter 2 focuses on the study of emotions and beliefs in the field of applied linguistics, and more specifically, in the area of Second Language Acquisition. For this aim, this chapter provides a journey through all the different turns in SLA to show how the field has evolved epistemologically, partly by absorbing theories and knowledge from other disciplines. This journey also merges beliefs and emotions research in SLA and unveils that, whilst having been studied separately, from different currents and by different authors, these constructs share many similarities. As a matter of fact, history has revealed that perhaps beliefs and emotions in language learning are not so different, and therefore an integrative approach is necessary to study the Self comprehensively. This integrative approach implies (1) conceptualizing the Self, the learner and the learning process as a complex dynamic system in which several subsystems and processes (like beliefs and emotions) are constantly interacting and influencing each other (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008); and (2) conceiving both beliefs and emotions under the umbrella of Positive Psychology, as by modifying negative feelings and thoughts, both teachers and learners can have much more fulfilling language learning and teaching experiences. This chapter concludes with a thorough description of how my thesis is informed by all these conceptions and how they have been merged in my dissertation.

2.1 SLA theories and research: one turn after the other

The shift of paradigms in psychological science explained in Chapter 1 also had an impact on how second and foreign languages were taught and learnt. Whereas Long (1998) claims that modern research in SLA as a respectable field began in the late 1960s[4], other scholars place the starting point in the 'founding texts' from the 1940s

[4] As Block (2003) explains, Long (1998) probably viewed the 60s as the birth of SLA as a settled field because researchers started to work with day-to-day data to develop theories on how people learn languages, instead of relying on psychological and linguistic theories to justify language learning data. It was then when SLA detached from theoretical linguistics and was no longer considered as 'linguistics applied', but as a branch of applied linguistics with the attempt to seek and solve linguistic real-world problems.

(Block, 2003; Selinker, 1992), based on a coherent theory of language (structural linguistics) and a theory of learning (behaviourist psychology). Behaviourism associates learning when an adequate performance occurs in response to a stimulus, i.e. in a cause-effect relationship. Moreover, Skinner's (1938) operant conditioning process proposed that learning can be achieved by means of rewards, as behaviour can be altered by reinforcement or punishment. In this perspective, foreign/second language learners would improve by imitating language role models, by receiving rewards and by repetition.

In his review of Skinner's (1957) publication, Chomsky (1959) responded against behaviourism and exposed his own theory of language, which claimed that human beings have an innate universal grammar due to the fact that all languages have a common structural basis or set of rules. The theory suggested thus that language development is systematic from the beginning and not a reflection of the input the child has been exposed to. This contribution and further developments in the field of linguistics and psychology led to the detachment from behaviorism, and language learners were regarded as cognitive beings more actively involved in the process of language acquisition. As Zungler and Miller (2006) point out, attention was focused on the learner's morphosyntactic system and the SLA process was considered to be an internalized, cognitive process, rather than unconscious and automatic. The cognitive perspective regards acquiring a new language as basically acquiring its structure (grammar), and second (or foreign) language learners' main aim is to add this other grammar to their mind. Their final goal was therefore to mirror the perfect native speaker by producing grammatically-correct sentences, and errors were regarded as the learner's current transitional language system –or interlanguage–, not as a product of undesirable habit formation (e.g. Corder, 1967).

In the 1970s and 1980s, the view of language as communicative competence (which is different from linguistic competence; see Hymes, 1971, 1972, 1974) gave rise to what Block (2003) calls the Input-Interaction-Output model: scholars took Krashen's

Comprehensible Input Hypothesis (1977) and expanded it towards a more complete theory which also included interaction (e.g. Long, 1981) and, afterwards, output (e.g. Swain, 1985). Communicative competence was equated with conversational interaction, and until the 1970s, it was used to apply the grammar rules, structures and features learnt in lessons in oral discourse. However, Wagner-Gough and Hatch's study (1975) provided another perspective:

> This common orthodoxy changed in 1975 when Wagner-Gough and Hatch … illustrated how learners' participation in conversational interaction provided them with opportunities to hear and produce the L2 in ways that went beyond its role as simply a form for practice. Their analysis of conversation between learners and interlocutors suggested that L2 syntax might develop out of conversation, rather than simply feed into it. (Gass, Mackey and Pica, 1998, p. 300)

Interactional conversation gained momentum with time, although researchers were interested in a specific type of interactions, namely exchange of information, or referential communication (Yule, 1997). The focus on referential communication however was insufficient to achieve communicative competence from Hymes' sociolinguistic point of view. Hymes (1971) considered that language should be studied in its environment, that is, in the various social and situated contexts in which verbal communication takes place. Hymes (1972) pointed out that the Chomskian dichotomy of 'competence' and 'performance' was insufficient to explain the rules of use for linguistic interaction in society and criticized it because Chomsky's theory proposed an ideal speaker-listener abstracted from sociocultural characteristics and variabilities. Therefore, despite the advances in theory and research in the field, the lack of attention to the sociolinguistic competence highlighted by Hymes was one of the most important faults in the field.

This cognitivist view had been dominant in the field for about 30 years when Firth and Wagner (1997) exposed the needs for an enlargement in the SLA field in order to

incorporate the social and contextual factors to language learning by claiming that "language is not a cognitive phenomenon, the product of the individual's brain; it is also fundamentally a social phenomenon, acquired and used interactively, in a variety of contexts for myriad practical purposes" (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 296). Although this work caused quite a stir, these authors were not the first to advocate a paradigm change, since other researchers like Frawley and Lantolf (1985) and van Lier (1994), following Vygotsky's work, and other socially-oriented scholars such as Block (1996) and Norton Peirce (1995) and, of course, Hymes (1971, 1972, 1974), had also criticized sharply the asocial view of SLA. Firth and Wagner (1997) questioned the excessive cognitive orientation in researching language learning, for such perspective had led to (1) a reductionist view of complex social beings as 'subjects'; (2) a transactional view of language instead of an interactional one; (3) a predominance of 'etic' (i.e. external/researcher description) over 'emic' (i.e. subject's perspective); (4) an interest in the universal rather than in the particular; and (5) an inclination towards quantitative, generalizable and replicatory methods as opposed to qualitative, exploratory and naturalistic ones (as cited in Block, 2003).

The concern with the social side of learning was also expressed by Kasper (1997), who believed that language socialization theory, for instance, produced more interesting results than most SLA research of that time because it explored the ways culture, language and cognition come together and how psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic views could complement each other. In view of the growing interest for the 'social', some authors such as Lantolf (2000) framed learning under the understanding of Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1934, 1978), which posits that human cognition originates in social interaction and that learning is a social process. Vygotsky believed that learning occurs at two levels:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This

> applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57)

This implies that learners' cognitive development and knowledge construction are not only caused by their personal experiences or physical growth, but they are also strongly affected by the learners' sociocultural surrounding and interactions with others and, particularly at school, by peers and teachers. Another key aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is defined as the distance between the most difficult task that a learner can fulfill alone and the most difficult task that s/he can do with help (Mooney, 2000), as schematized in Figure 5 (see below). Vygotsky thus remarked that teachers should notice when a learner is operating outside their current level of mastery and provide him or her with scaffolding to support the student's knowledge or skills development. Additionally, teachers should also decide whether a conversation among peers should be encouraged, facilitated or disrupted, as Vygotsky highlighted the relevance of the use of language in the construction and transfer of knowledge, both in student-teacher and in student-student interaction.

The retrieval of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provided a new way of understanding and researching in SLA by emphasizing the interconnection between cognitive and social processes in the co-construction of knowledge and meaning. Sociocultural approaches regard language use in real-world situations as essential to learning, not as secondary. Furthermore, language is not viewed merely as input, but as a resource employed when participating in everyday life activities, for participation in these activities is both the product and the process of learning (Zungler and Miller, 2006). Apart from the sociocultural theory derived from Vygotsky, there are other important strands within this social approach to SLA such as Conversation Analysis for Second Language Acquisition (Kasper, 2004; Markee, 2004; 2008), language emergence theory

(Ellis and Larsen-Freeman, 2006), language socialization (Watson-Gegeo, 2004) and language ecology, or ecological linguistics (van Lier, 1997, 2000, 2004).

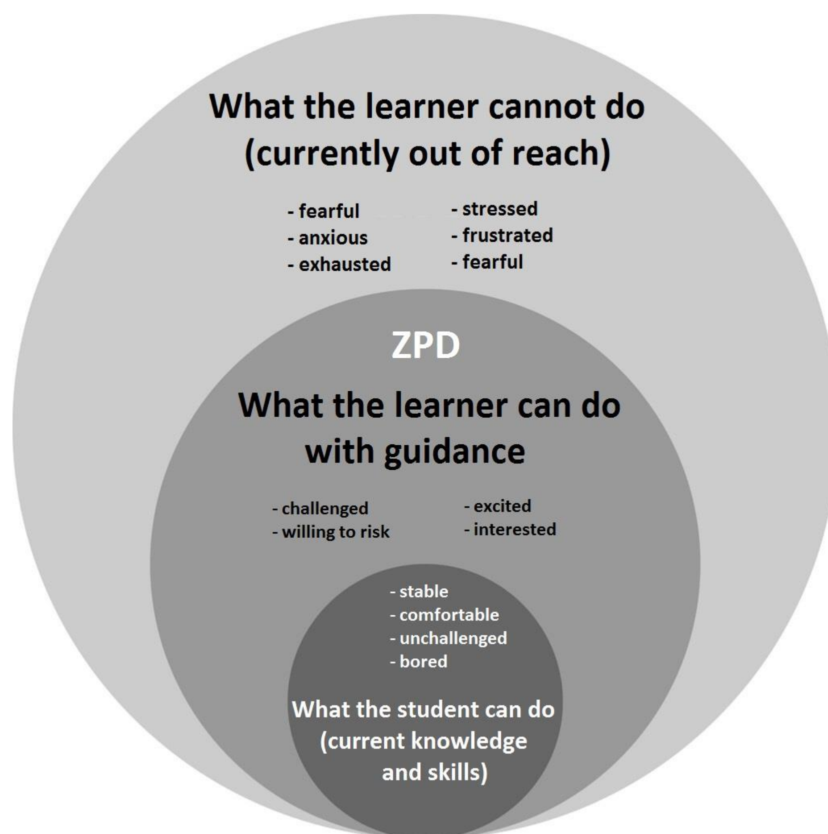

Figure 5. *Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)*

Ecological linguistics is a particularly interesting approach to language education, as it regards the classroom as a complex network of interacting organisms in and with their environment, in which meaningful action and interaction are seen as prompting learning (van Lier, 1997). Therefore, van Lier (2004) advocates for a community of practice where autonomous learners perform a wide range of diverse activities working collaboratively, side by side, or on their own. Learning is not viewed as a causal relation between input and output, but it is the result of the learner's relationship with the environment, which provides all types of affordances (physical, social and symbolic) to the learner. Van Lier defines 'affordances' as "signs that acquire meaning and relevance as a result of purposeful activity and participation by the learner and the perceptual,

cognitive, and emotional engagement that such activity stimulates" (1997, p. 783). In other words, affordances are those aspects, characteristics or conditions of the environment/context that are meaningful for the learner which have potential to foster learning. In order to make the classroom environment rich of affordances, the teacher should ensure a supportive environment in which there is teacher and peer support and respect and use, for instance, of familiar topics, meaning-focused activities, and clear lesson goals (Peng, 2011). For this, it is fundamental to get to know and to consider the students' concerns, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and emotions.

This social turn (Block, 2003) has resulted in more contextualised data of the learning situations by means of more qualitative-oriented and interpretive approaches[5] (e.g. Barcelos, 2003; Kramsch, 2000; Mercer, 2004; Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000; Ushioda, 2009, 2011; Yang and Kim, 2011). As Mercer (2011b) points out, this acknowledgement of the role of context in the learning process has in a way contributed to the 'dynamic turn' in SLA by means of longitudinal and situated studies which have shown how learner's identities, or Selves, change over time and contexts (e.g. Gao, 2010; Mercer, 2011a, 2011b, 2015). As a result, the Self in SLA (and in other disciplines as well) is no longer conceptualized as stable and static. The dynamics of the Self have led to a focus on the interrelation between its multiple variables (such as affective, cognitive, contextual or temporal variables), which have shown that many of them are intertwined by means of complex and reciprocal relationships (e.g. Mercer, 2011a, 2011b). For instance, Cohen (2003, 2012) has shown the contextualized interplay between learning styles, strategies and motivation, and Dörnyei (2009a, 2010) suggests studying the learner as a constellation of complex affective, cognitive, and motivational factors and therefore "the study of such complex constellations of factors requires a dynamic systems approach" (Dörnyei, 2009a, p. 243).

[5] Prior (2019) identifies other turns, namely the 'identity turn', the 'critical turn' and the 'multilingual turn', although all of them find common ground within the 'social turn'. For the sake of clarity and relevance, these turns have not been explained in this overview.

One of the most recent turns is the emotional or 'affective turn' (Pavlenko, 2013), although some studies and theories were already developed in the 1970s and 1980s, often within humanistic approaches to language learning (e.g. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; Krashen, 1982; Lozanov, 1979). Similarly to the fact that SLA had overlooked the role of social aspects in second/foreign language learning, some authors like Arnold and Brown (1999) advocated for the need to recognize the importance of emotions and their link to cognition and learning: "[i]t should be noted that the affective side of learning is not in opposition to the cognitive side. When both are used together, the learning process can be constructed on a firmer foundation" (p. 1). This statement has been supported by research from different fields, as it was explained in the previous chapter (see Barrett, 2017a, 2017b; Damasio, 1994; Gray et al., 2002, Greene et al., 2004; Haidt, 2001).

Research on the emotional side of learning, nevertheless, has been scarce until approximately the past ten years, when, according to Dewaele (2011), the tide had started to change, especially in terms of focus and research methods. Most of the work on emotions has been done fairly recently through studies drawing on positive psychology (e.g. Dewaele, Chen, Padilla and Lake, 2019; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; Leung, Mikami and Yoshikawa, 2019; Li and Xu, 2019; MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer, 2016, 2019; MacIntyre and Mercer, 2014; Oxford, 2015). Although questionnaires are employed in emotion research in SLA, many studies are also qualitative in nature, following insights from contextual, sociocultural and complex dynamics systems research, which will be explained next.

These more recent developments and turns have given rise to the 'complexity turn' (Urry, 2005). The complexity turn, like the others, does not reject the foundations from previous theories and findings, but emerges from the collective incorporation of developments in previous turns (Mercer, 2011b). In the past few years, many other disciplines, including social sciences and education, have been adopting this

understanding of the Self. Complexity theory "deals with the study of complex, dynamic, non-linear, self-organizing, open, emergent, sometimes chaotic, and adaptive systems" (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008, p. 4). In other words, a complex system is composed of several interacting and interconnected elements, also known as agents, which produce an overall state at a specific point in time (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). The components of a complex system might themselves be complex systems which change over time, as well as the ways in which components interact with each other. Complexity theory thus rejects over-simplification and classical Darwinism which focuses on fragmented and dispersed entities that are external and independent from the context. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) point out, complexity theory not only embraces the interaction between individuals and the environment, but it also posits that humans shape their own context. Similar to the Theory of Constructed Emotion, from complexity lenses, "variation becomes the primary given; categorization becomes an artificial construct of institutionalization and scientific inquiry" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 4).

From complexity lenses, the world is not composed of 'things' or 'entities', which are stable and natural; instead, it is better to conceive these 'objects of concern' as processes that change and adapt continuously in and to the world, although with a certain stability that arises from the dynamics of the system (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). This complex view is very similar to van Lier's (1997, 2000, 2004) ecological linguistics, as he himself claimed that "an ecology as a complex network of interacting organisms means an approach to theory building that learns from complexity science and chaos theory" (van Lier, 1997, pp. 785-786) so as to abandon the linear cause-effect or input-output mechanisms. Mercer (2011b) explains that there seems to be a natural evolution in the SLA field towards a complexity perspective based on the insights emerging from advances in theoretical grasp of the learner. In Figure 6 (see below), Mercer (2011b) represents the combination of all the turns and perspectives into a single complexity perspective.

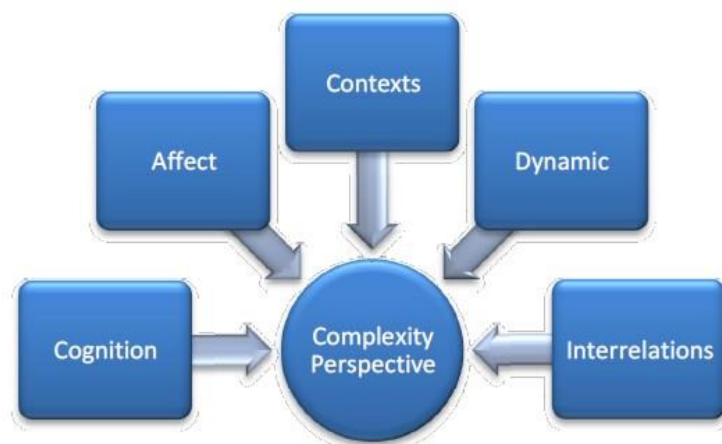

Figure 6. *The cumulative insights leading to a complexity approach*
(Mercer, 2011b, p. 62)

The different 'turns' that the field of SLA has undergone are evidence of the field's progression and dynamism (Mercer, 2011b), as each turn has drawn and relied on original and interesting insights from the previous one. Over time, new theoretical approaches of the language learner and the language learning process have been discovered –often interdisciplinarily– to culminate in the complexity perspective, which merges ideas and understandings from the SLA research trajectory. Language beliefs and emotions, being an integral part of the language learner and the learning process, have also experienced different methodological and theoretical understandings as the field has evolved, and they have recently also been conceptualized as complex dynamic processes. The development of beliefs and emotion research in SLA will be the topic of the following section.

2.2 Approaches to beliefs and emotions research

Foreign or second language learning beliefs and emotions have been receiving more and more attention throughout the years. Although research on both constructs started concurrently in the 1980s, for instance with the studies carried out by Horwitz (e.g. Horwitz, 1987; Horwitz et al., 1986), researchers have centred most of their attention to the study of beliefs, whereas extensive emotion research had been relegated to the

background until fairly recently. I consider that this predominance of belief research over emotion can be attributed to two main reasons: on the one hand, beliefs have traditionally been conceived as knowledge (although sometimes as 'wrong knowledge'), and therefore they are much closer to cognition. This fact reinforces, once again, the prevalence and separation of cognition over emotion that has predominated scientific inquiry in all fields, including SLA, and which "has restrained the understanding of the interplay between emotions and cognition, in which beliefs are at stake" (Aragão, 2011, p. 303). On the other hand, beliefs seem to be easier to measure and to analyse than emotions, and research has attempted to search for factors that are relatively stable and measurable through questionnaires and self-reports (McLeod, 1992).

2.2.1 Beliefs approaches in SLA

Language beliefs have been studied in SLA and applied linguistics for more than 35 years at the time of writing. During these years, belief research has evolved and different approaches were identified by Barcelos (2000) from the beginning of beliefs research in SLA until her research. These approaches are the normative, the metacognitive and the contextual approach. Although in recent times some approaches like the normative one are less common due to its limitations, it has to be noted that scholars use different methods, sometimes combined, to make sense of beliefs depending on their goals and their understanding of what beliefs are and how they should be explored.

- *The normative approach*

The normative approach is called after Holliday's (1994) term "normative" to comprise studies that conceive students' culture as a way to explain their actions and behaviours in the classroom. Therefore, normative studies establish a cause-effect relationship to beliefs and behaviours, as beliefs are regarded as indicators of future behaviours. Barcelos (2003) highlights that in the normative approach, beliefs are generally

understood as equivalents for "preconceived notions, myths or misconceptions" (p. 11) and are usually classified as erroneous or counterproductive. Therefore, students' beliefs are depicted as different from as and less valid than those of scholars, who are regarded as holders of the truth.

The method to investigate beliefs is quantitative in nature, usually in the form of Likert-scales questionnaires, which are analysed through descriptive statistics. Horwitz (1985) developed the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), which was commonly used a few years ago, either as it was proposed by Horwitz (e.g. Horwitz, 1987, 1988; Su, 1995; Yang, 1992) or adapted (e.g. Mantle-Bromley, 1995). The BALLI instrument was initially developed to explore language teacher's or pre-service teachers beliefs, although it was also used to examine beliefs of English as a second language learners (Horwitz, 1987), American foreign language learners (Horwitz, 1988) and Asian foreign language learners (Su, 1995; Yang, 1992). There were other studies which did not employ the BALLI questionnaire to measure students' beliefs, so they created their own Likert-scale type questionnaire to investigate the beliefs of second and foreign language students (e.g. Cotterall, 1995, 1999).

Questionnaires have clear advantages in terms of data collection and analysis: for example, they are inexpensive, a large number of participants can respond, which can feel a sense of anonymity, and the data analysis and interpretation of results is relatively easy (Judd, Smith and Kidder, 1991). Nonetheless, like all research methods, questionnaires also have limitations, one of the most important ones being that there is very little flexibility for respondents to represent their own perspectives (or use their own terms) unless there are open questions (Barcelos, 2000). Block (1998) pointed out that sometimes participants misinterpret or interpret differently the items from questionnaires, and that they might answer the questions randomly without considering their meaning. Furthermore, questionnaires cannot usually include the complexity of the language learning setting, and only investigate one particular point in time; for instance, Sakui and Gaies (1999) found that the findings from the interviews indicated that

language learning beliefs are dynamic and difficult to interpret without bearing in mind the language learning context. Hymes (1996) pointed out that in order to ensure validity, questionnaires should be designed after sufficient observation of the specific context in which they will be responded, as assuming uniformity across context is an error.

In view of these criticism and limitations, it seems clear that the normative approach has several limitations to study language beliefs, and most likely other phenomena or processes that occur in the classroom, such as emotions. This perspective, similar to basic emotion methods of matching faces with emotion words or stories, is decontextualized, restricts the participants' views and forces them to choose amongst the given options. Hence, one might wonder: 'whose beliefs are being investigated: the students' or the researchers'? As Barcelos (2000) remarks, the beliefs presented by the researcher might differ from those of the learner and, consequently, the validity and reliability of the findings can be called into question. This etic perspective does not allow researchers to explore what occurs if students hold certain beliefs, if they behave in accordance with them or what is the origin of those beliefs.

- *The metacognitive approach*

Simultaneously to the use of BALLI (or other) questionnaires to research into language teachers' and learners' beliefs, another approach emerged. The metacognitive approach puts more emphasis on the language learners' experiences by allowing them to reflect and discuss them in their own terms. Metacognition can be defined as "thinking about thinking" (Anderson, 2002), and it is the knowledge that learners (and teachers) have about cognitive processes and their functioning and that helps them reflect about their actions (Wenden, 1987). The assumption in this approach is that "when learners reflect upon their learning strategies, they become better prepared to make conscious decisions about what they can do to improve their learning. Strong metacognitive skills empower second language learners" (Anderson, 2002, p. 4). This metacognitive knowledge is

explored by means of self-reported data obtained through semi-structured interviews and subsequently analysed using content analysis.

Research on metacognitive beliefs in the context of foreign language learning was initially carried out by Wenden (1986a, 1986b, 1987, 1991, 1999). Wenden (1986a) suggested that learners hold beliefs about second or foreign language learning, and that these beliefs influence the way they approach the learning of a language. Wenden (1986b) identified a set of prescriptive beliefs. i.e. beliefs about how things should be, and concluded that learners are aware and can discuss aspects such as language, their proficiency, results of their learning efforts, the best method for learning a language and their role in the language learning process. Wenden described metacognitive knowledge as "the stable, statable although sometimes incorrect knowledge that learners have acquired about language, learning and the language learning process" (1987, p. 163). Despite defining metacognitive knowledge as "stable", years later Wenden (1999) wrote that although this knowledge is relatively stable, it can change with time. The author also classified metacognitive beliefs into three categories: person knowledge (about how humans learn and one's own learning processes), task knowledge (about the task nature, purpose and processing demands) and strategy knowledge (about cognitive and metacognitive strategies and when and where to use them). This last one has been widely researched afterwards (e.g. Hsiao and Oxford, 2002; Rasekh and Ranjbary, 2003; Tsend, Dörnyei and Schmitt, 2006).

The main difference with the normative approach is that the metacognitive approach conceives beliefs as knowledge and, as such, as part of the learner's reasoning. Studies from the metacognitive approach also highlight to a greater extent the relationship between beliefs and learner autonomy, as beliefs appear to "work as a sort of logic determining consciously or unconsciously what they did to help themselves to learn English" (Wenden, 1986, p. 4). As stated above, this approach also underlines the connection between beliefs and actions such as metacognitive strategies, which are interpreted as "complementary components" (Wenden, 1999, p. 436). The relationship

between beliefs and actions or behaviours, however, continues to be one of causality: "if learners determine that they have the skills and the competence to do the task [...] they will choose learning oriented goals [...] if the appraisal is negative, learners may choose coping oriented goals" (Wenden, 1998, p. 522). Moreover, although interviews are useful to let students talk about their language processes and experiences with their own words, these continue to be decontextualized accounts, and beliefs are viewed as "cognitive entities to be found inside the minds of language learners" (Kalaja, 1995, p. 192) with the goal of making them good or successful language learners.

- *The contextual approach*

Barcelos (2000) identified a new stance towards language learning beliefs research which was emerging but still did not seem to have many adepts. She called this the contextual approach, and it includes all those studies in which beliefs are trying to be comprehended in particular contexts, instead of making generalizations about them. The contextual approach has gained momentum in these last twenty years, and several studies have been carried out from this perspective and combining it with other theories, such as sociocultural theory (e.g. Alanen, 2003). The methods for analysing beliefs use ethnography through classroom observations (Allen, 1996; Barcelos, 2000), discourse analysis (Kalaja, 1995), metaphor analysis (Ellis, 2001), phenomenography (White, 1999), diaries and narratives (Miller and Ginsberg, 1995) and case studies (Li and Walsh, 2011; Sakui and Gaies, 2003).

All the studies from the contextual approach share the assumption that context is crucial to the analysis and that, rather than being static, it is dynamic, emergent, socially-constituted and interactively nourished. In the contextual approach, language learning beliefs are seen as part of the learning culture and as representations of language learning in a particular society and are investigated within the context of their actions (Barcelos, 2000). As Peng (2011) points out, language learning "does not happen in a culture-vacuum context and learner beliefs are born out of particular sociocultural

contexts" (Peng, 2011, p. 315). As beliefs are explored in a specific context and taking into consideration the participants' own words, the results seem more contradictory, or paradoxical, in Izard and Smith's (1982) terms. This inconsistency can be found, for instance, in Miller and Ginsberg (1995), in which students claimed that they would like to be in contact with native speakers of the language outside the classroom, i.e. in more naturalistic environments. Nevertheless, when the students had the opportunity to have contact with native speakers in that sort of environment, their expectations were not met either, as they expected the native speakers to behave like a teacher. These "inconsistencies", however, have been recognized as an integral part of the multifaceted and complex nature of beliefs, as several studies have shown that beliefs change as learners interact with their contextual environment, especially with peers and teachers (Amuzie and Winke, 2009; Kern, 1995; Peng, 2011; Riley, 2009)

Dynamism and contextual specificity are two of the core ideas of the contextual approach, and therefore, they differ from the normative and metacognitive views in which beliefs are not stable and purely cognitive entities, but rather they are socially, culturally, interactionally and contextually co-constructed and negotiated. However, one of the disadvantages of the contextual approach is that it usually investigates a small sample of participants, due to its focus on depth over quantity, and that it tends to be rather time-consuming, especially in ethnographic studies (Barcelos, 2003). Studies adopting a contextual approach not only presuppose that beliefs are dynamic, but findings also support this claim. By way of illustration, White (1999) shows the evolution of Japanese and Spanish language learners' beliefs over a period of 12 weeks. Changes in beliefs can also be perceived in Benson and Lor (1999), in which one group of learners modified their beliefs towards those held by learners from the other group. The contextual approach attempts to discover why learners have particular beliefs and how these beliefs are related to their actions. These empirical results have led to re-conceptualize beliefs as complex dynamic processes, which is the most recent approach

not only to beliefs, but also to emotions and other phenomena, as it will be explained in section 2.2.3.

2.2.2 Emotions approaches in SLA

Due to the predominance of the cognitive paradigm in the field of SLA and education in general, the interconnection between emotion and cognition and the role that the former plays in language learning processes were overlooked until fairly recently. That is the reason why Swain (2013) equated emotions with "the elephants in the room – poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought" (p. 205). As mentioned above, emotions in SLA started to receive attention after (or accompanied by) the social turn in education and social sciences in general. With the 'affective turn', not only were emotions –or, rather, anxiety– given more weight, but topics such as motivation or beliefs also started to be reworked through affective lenses (White, 2018). MacIntyre (2017) identifies three main phases or approaches in the most widely-researched emotion in SLA, that is, anxiety.

- *Confounded phase*

In the 1970s, early research into emotion in foreign/second language learning started to recognize the relevance of affect (e.g. Chastain, 1976; Scovel, 1978; Lozanov, 1979). 'Affect' was described by Scovel (1978, p. 129) as a "cover term under which is swept a wide range of disparate constructs and behaviours", as it can noted, for instance, in Arnold and Brown's (1999, p. 1) definition of affect: "aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which can condition behaviour and influence language learning". Even in a much more recent account, Arnold (2009) includes beliefs as part of affect: "the term affect refers essentially to the area of emotions, feelings, beliefs, moods and attitudes, which greatly influences our behavior" (p. 145). This absence of conceptual clarity in defining emotion and the difficulty in drawing boundaries between emotions and related terms appears to be one of the main challenges in emotion research in SLA, even nowadays, although to a lesser extent.

The first studies of affect started to be performed in the 1970s. Ideas, theories and methods for anxiety research were absorbed from several sources, especially psychology, in which anxiety was measured physiologically by means of indicators of arousal, behaviourally through people's actions, and self-reportedly employing structured questionnaires (Scovel, 1978). Scovel (1978), which is considered as the turning point in anxiety research in SLA, described the state of language anxiety literature as providing "mixed and confusing results" (p. 132) and therefore concluded that anxiety is far from being a simple or well-understood construct. The main problem that Scovel (1978) highlighted in anxiety research dwelled in that not all types of anxiety that had been used and analysed were likely to be related to language learning, since 'anxiety' is a rather broad term. In this sense, Horwitz (2017) claims that "it seems unlikely that insect anxiety has anything to do with one's response to or ultimate success in language learning even though entomophobia is subsumed under the general label of anxiety" (pp. 32-33).

The puzzling results in anxiety research were mainly generated by Chastain (1975) and Kleinmann (1977). By using the general education facilitating-debilitating anxiety framework developed by Alpert and Haber (1960), Chastain (1975) attempted to provide a feasible explanation for inconsistent correlations obtained in his anxiety results, as he found positive, negative and non-significant correlations between anxiety and L2 learning; however, as MacIntyre (2017) points out, the problem stems from the inadequate measurement of anxiety, which was not consistently linked to language. Kleinmann (1977) also adopted the facilitating-debilitating model but more successfully, as, unlike Chastain (1975), Kleinmann used separate scales for facilitating and debilitating anxiety measures, following Alpert and Haber's (1960) advice. His results showed that language learners with more facilitating anxiety presented a lower tendency towards avoiding unusual linguistic structures in the target language, and concluded that affective factors play an important role in language learning. Nevertheless, this study faced two problems: firstly, as stated by MacIntyre (2017),

Kleinmann's study has been repeatedly related to Chastain's (1975) in the literature, attributing to Kleinmann also confusing results; secondly, according to Horwitz (2010), Kleinmann's findings have usually been interpreted as meaning that language students need to be a little anxious to obtain higher achievements in the language.

During the 'confounded phase', perhaps the most widely-known model of affect was developed by Krashen (1982) in his affective filter hypothesis. As Krashen (1981) himself explained, Dulay and Burt's (1977) "socio-affective filter" was the source of inspiration for the idea that affective factors played an important role in the absorption of language input. According to Krashen, a high degree of negative emotions brings the filter up, reducing the amount of comprehensible language input, whereas, on the contrary, positive emotions bring the affective filter down, and therefore the learner is open to more comprehensible language input. Krashen (1982) also highlights the role of teachers in lowering the affective filter, as they are encouraged to create a low-anxiety classroom environment, to boost learner's self-esteem and to spark student's interest in the lessons. Therefore, as Kushkiev (2019) explains, Krashen situated positive and negative emotions as two ends of the same continuum; yet, as it will be explained in section 2.3, recent empirical findings contradict this conception (e.g. Dewaele and Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014).

The last contribution within the 'confounded phase' is Gardner's (1985) socio-educational model of language learning motivation, in which anxiety was thought of possibly interfering with motivation when learning a language. This study, unlike the others from this phase, was specifically focused on language learning rather than attempting to draw a general theory of motivation or a theory of motivation across other pedagogical contexts: "the conclusion seems warranted that a construct of anxiety which is not general but instead is specific to the language acquisition context is related to second language achievement" (Gardner, 1985, p. 34). Due to the fact that anxiety was conceptualized as specific of language learning, rather than mixing various types of

anxiety with unclear applicability to language, MacIntyre (2017) points out that Gardner's (1985) paper planted the seeds for the next phase: the specialized approach.

- *Specialized approach*

As Dewaele (2002) noted, discerning between situation-specific language anxiety from the previous more general approaches adopted previously was the turning point in anxiety (and emotions) research in SLA. The first study that argued that the understanding and measurement of anxiety in SLA needed to be re-focused was Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). They were inspired by Gardner's socio-educational model to design a concept of foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) that was based on foreign language students' accounts of anxiety-provoking situations. Horwitz et al. (1986) describe FLCA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). As the authors explain, performance in a language which we do not fully master can be psychologically upsetting given that it might challenge one's self-concept as a "competent communicator", which would lead to a certain degree of FLCA. Horwitz et al. (1986) developed the 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, which since then has been frequently used to measure FLCA (e.g. Aida, 1994). Horwitz (1986) provided preliminary evidence for the high reliability and validity of the scale, and, subsequently, of the language anxiety construct.

The design of situation-specific anxiety scales permitted researchers to identify (or, at least, to attempt to identify) correlations amongst several anxiety measures. For instance, MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) found out that general anxiety and communicative anxiety, which encompassed measures of language anxiety, were not related to language behaviour "in a reliable manner" (p. 268). This difference between types of anxiety was also shown in MacIntyre and Gardner (1991). The establishment of situation-specificity of language anxiety, attention was directed to its effects on language learning and the causes of such effects. In an experimental study performed by

Steinberg and Horwitz (1986), results indicated that learners who were treated in a "cold and official" manner suffered from more anxiety, tended to avoid using the foreign language to offer new, personal interpretations of pictures, and produced lower levels of interpretive content when speaking. Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) claimed that subtle effects of anxiety can exert a significant impact on the way students communicate both inside and outside the classroom.

Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994a) carried out another experiment with FL learners to explore the effects of anxiety arousal in language learning. Results showed that the presence of a video camera increased state anxiety, and that anxiety-arousal was consistently associated with deficits in vocabulary acquisition. The authors identified anxiety at the three stages of the learning task (i.e. input, processing and output stage), although it vanished quite rapidly once learners got used to the video camera. This findings resonate with those obtained in another concurrent study by the same authors (1994b), in which they argued that "performance measures that examine only behavior at the output stage may be neglecting the influence of anxiety at earlier stages as well as ignoring the links among stages" (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994b, p. 301).

Spoken production has been the focus of many language anxiety studies, such as Steinberg and Horwitz (1986), and many of them have reported significant correlations between communication competence and language anxiety (e.g. MacIntyre and Charos, 1995). McIntyre, Noels and Clément (1997) suggested that high anxiety might affect negatively the self-perception of competence, as learners with higher anxiety tended to underestimate their ability to use the foreign language. This tendency was included in MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels's (1998) model of willingness to communicate (WTC), by which a combination of lower anxiety, higher perceptions of competence and a desire to speak at a specific context are the basis of a learner's willingness to communicate in a foreign language. Other researchers have investigated the relationship between anxiety and other skills. For instance, Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) created a new scale to measure foreign language reading anxiety, and Sellers (2000) explained

that anxious readers tend to have interfering thoughts and be more distracted than less anxious learners. As for writing skills, Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999) used an adapted version of an L1 writing anxiety scale and the FLCA scale and differentiated speaking and writing elements of language anxiety. In the listening domain, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) showed that anxiety can increase when learners hold the belief that they must understand every word and are too worried about comprehending everything. Elkhafaifi (2005) demonstrated that listening comprehension falls when anxiety rises. Understanding language skills as a set, Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) argued that being aware of a significant disparity in skills (e.g. reading comfortably but speaking anxiously) can further intensify anxiety.

Apart from effects of language anxiety across the different skills, studies were also performed in order to understand relationships between broader learner factors, such as personality traits. Dewaele (2002) analyzed the correlations between language anxiety in French (L2) and English (L3) and three basic personality traits, namely: psychoticism, neuroticism and extraversion. Results indicated that language anxiety is not a stable personality trait and significant differences were found in correlations between personality traits and language anxiety in the different languages. The author concludes that both individual and social contexts were important when determining the learners' levels of communicative anxiety. Later on, Dewaele (2013) carried out a similar study and found that lower levels of FLCA were linked to lower neuroticism, higher extraversion and higher psychoticism; other studies also suggest that stronger tendencies towards perfectionism increase language anxiety (Dewaele, Finney, Kubota and Almutlaq, 2014; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002). Dewaele, Petrides and Furnham (2008) broadened earlier work on personality traits by analysing the effects of emotional intelligence on communicative anxiety in the L1 and on foreign language anxiety in the L2, L3 and L4. Their study suggests that high levels of emotional intelligence corresponded to anxiety in all languages; results also indicate that participants who suffered from lower levels of language anxiety where those who (1) started learning

foreign languages earlier, (2) used the language beyond the classroom, (3) knew more languages and used them more frequently, (4) had larger network of interlocutors and (5) had a higher level of self-perceived proficiency.

Alongside the etic and quantitative perspective adopted by the majority of the aforementioned studies, a lower number of qualitative studies with the focus the learner's own descriptions and accounts of language anxiety were also published (e.g. Bailey, 1983; Cohen and Norst, 1989; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Hashemi, 2011; Oxford, 1999; Price, 1991). For instance, Bailey (1983) found that negative comparison and competitiveness amongst learners, as well as negative learning experiences and student-teacher relationships contribute to language anxiety. Through a diary study, Cohen and Norst (1989) identified painful experiences by adult students when learning a foreign language such as the fear of having their mistakes exposed; the authors claimed that "language and self are so closely bound, if not identical, that an attack on one is an attack on the other" (p. 61). Hashemi (2011) identified several sources of language anxiety, such as learner's own sense of Self and self-related cognitions, language learning difficulties, cultural differences between learner's mother tongue and the target language, and fear of losing one's identity. Consequences of language anxiety were also explored by Price (1991), in which participants described in interviews the everyday and more enduring effects of anxiety and embarrassment. Price (1991) highlights that "instructors played a significant role in the amount of anxiety each student had experienced in particular classes" (p. 106). Oxford (1999) reported students dropping out one's career goals due to a high-stakes requirement to use their poorly-developed language.

The majority of the studies mentioned so far have attempted to establishing correlates of language anxiety and identifying its causes and effects, especially quantitatively; however, as MacIntyre (2017) himself points out, "correlations can be difficult to interpret" (p. 21). This traditional way of researching emotions as affective factors has

faced several critiques. Pavlenko (2013) points out that emotion research is fraught with challenges because it lacks a solid theory of "affect", which is usually considered an individual phenomenon in response to external stimuli, and because anxiety is the only emotion that has received scholarly attention (although in recent times other emotions and emotion-related concepts have been explored, as it will be explained in section 2.3). Pavlenko (2013) also criticizes the constant search for a linear cause-effect relationship as "the search for objective 'predictors' and linear models is ultimately doomed to failure because anxiety, attitudes and motivation are dynamic and social phenomena and the relationship between these phenomena and levels of achievement is reciprocal rather than unidirectional" (p. 8). Furthermore, Pavlenko (2013) and other authors such as Imai (2010) remark that social contexts have been largely ignored in affective research in SLA –and in SLA in general– (e.g. Gass and Selinker, 2008) and, when their importance has been acknowledged, social contexts have been treated as measurable variables external to affective factors (e.g. Ellis, 2008; Ortega, 2009); the problem with this understanding is that emotions (like beliefs) cannot be understood outside their social context in which they occur (Pavlenko, 2013). In view of these challenges, another theoretical and methodological approach has been proposed and is producing interesting results: the complex dynamic approach.

2.2.3 Towards an integrative approach

As it has been shown along this chapter, beliefs and emotions in SLA have been studied separately following different theoretical and methodological approaches. Consequently, authors who have been researching emotions have not tended to study beliefs, and conversely (with some exceptions such as Horwitz), despite the fact that beliefs appear to be an important component of affect (see definitions above from Arnold, 2009, and Horwitz et al., 1986). Although they have been conceptualized as different phenomena, or processes, research has shown that beliefs and emotions in language learning appear to be highly interconnected. Aragão (2011) remarks that "in

languaging, or linguistic activity, students construct realities and articulate how they *feel* and *think* about learning a new language" (p. 302, emphasis added), something which was also shown in Diert-Boté (2016). The interconnection between feeling and thinking in foreign language learning can be perceived in that emotions such as anxiety or embarrassment are often related to beliefs students have about themselves (self-beliefs) and the environment; for instance, the feeling of being embarrassed at speaking in front of the class might be originated by the belief that a classmate will laugh at one's performance (Aragao, 2011) or the conception that the classroom is a judgmental environment and the fear of criticism refrains the learner from speaking in class (Miccoli, 2001).

It seems thus that emotions and beliefs are connected processes that are part of one's sense of Self. The Self is composed of numerous interconnected and interacting cognitions, affects and motivations, a constellation (Dörnyei, 2010) which contributes significantly to leading learners' behaviours, performances and approaches to learning, especially in language learning, due to its social and interactional nature (Mercer, 2011a). In second/language learning contexts, self-related constructs have been found to play a key role in language learning, language use, achievement and motivation (Arnold and Brown, 1999; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009; Lau, Yeung and Jin, 1998; Liu, 2008; Mercer, 2011b; Waddington, 2019; Walker, 2015). The self-construct which appears to be more closely linked to learner's beliefs and emotions is self-concept, which has been widely defined as "a self-description judgement that includes an evaluation of competence and the feelings of self-worth associated with the judgement in question" (Pajares and Schunk, 2005, p. 105). Williams, Mercer and Ryan (2015) state that learners' self-concepts are composed of a combination of cognitive beliefs and emotional experiences. Emotionality seems to be an important aspect of self-concept, at least in the foreign language learning context, as self-concept can be damaged due to a lack of full command in the language as it sometimes makes learners feel vulnerable and judged (Arnold, 2007). This is especially the case in the oral domain, probably due

to the “saliency and high ‘public visibility’ of oral performance” (Mercer, 2011a, p. 162). Therefore, having a low FL speaking self-concept might imply a ‘flight’ response, in which the learner avoids speaking in the FL in class (see Yoshida, 2013).

Yoshida’s (2013) study shows that learners’ self-concepts are influenced by their past experiences in learning a foreign language and that affective factors such as anxiety and embarrassment contribute to construing their self-concepts of “shy” and “perfectionist”. Other factors which influence learners’ self-concepts are the importance they place on language accuracy, for the fear of making mistakes might hinder their oral production, and their perceived experiences of success or failure. Mercer’s studies on FL self-concept (Mercer, 2011a, 2011b) also show that both internal and external factors constantly interact in the construction of the Self, as “there is not a fixed or static self but only a current self-concept constructed from one’s social experiences” (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p. 306). Taking into account that the Self is not formed in a vacuum, but it develops in the social and cultural contexts in which individuals are embedded, findings from Mercer (2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012, 2015) suggest that self-concept is best conceptualized through complexity lenses, as change occurs even in apparently stable systems and it is the result of an ongoing interaction between cognitive, affective, social and environmental factors.

Therefore, authors who advocate for an integrative approach to the study of the Self (e.g. Dörnyei, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Mercer, 2015; Ushioda, 2009), including its beliefs, emotions, behaviours, identities, and motivations, propose its understanding as a complex dynamic system (CDS henceforth). A CDS can be defined as “a set of variables that mutually affect each other’s changes over time” (van Geert, 1994, p. 50). This understanding can be regarded as an extension of contextual and social approaches in SLA, in which the learner is understood as a whole. In view of the failure of the individual differences paradigm to capture dynamic complexity in language learning, Dörnyei (2009b) and Ushioda (2009) have proposed alternative models in an attempt to

merge affect, cognition and social context. Dörnyei's (2009b) L2 Motivational Self System identifies three sources of motivation: (1) an ideal L2 self, i.e. the learner's perception of him/herself as an effective L2 user; (2) an ought-to-L2 self, i.e. social pressure from the learner's environment; and (3) positive L3 learning experience (teachers, peers, experiences of success, curriculum, etc.). Likewise, Ushioda (2009) proposed a "person-in-context relational view of emergent motivation, self and identity", which is summarized as follows:

> …a focus on real persons, rather than on learners as theoretical abstractions; a focus on the agency of the individual person as a thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background, a person with goals, motives and intentions; a focus on the interaction between this self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of. My argument is that we need to take a relational (rather than linear) view of these multiple contextual elements, and view motivation as an organic process that emerges through the complex system of interrelations. (Ushioda, 2009, p. 220)

This "relational" understanding –rather than causal or lineal– of the different elements that shape the individual implies that these elements are affected and in turn affect other processes which are in a constant interplay and operating on multiple timescales (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). Therefore, from CDS lenses, the world – including the Self, or the language learning process, or the language learner– is not composed of stable and natural 'entities', but of changeable 'processes', although the dynamics of the system also imply a certain degree of stability (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008; Mercer, 2015). In this vein, Mercer's studies of FL self-concept (2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2015) have shown that, while being constantly in movement, some elements of the system, like core beliefs, seem more resistant to change. This idea

was also mentioned by Rokeach (1968) and Barcelos (2000), who compare the structure of beliefs to that of an atom with peripheral and core beliefs.

Likewise, MacIntyre (2017) explains that learner's emotions such as anxiety are continuously fluctuating over time and interacting with other factors such as the learner's actual linguistic abilities, his/her self-perceived abilities, physiological reactions, pragmatics, interpersonal relationship, the task or topic at hand, the type of setting in which communication takes place, and so forth. For instance, Gregersen, MacIntyre and Meza (2014) used the idiodynamic method in which participants self-rated their moment-by-moment anxiety and later explained these episodes in an interview. By means of data triangulation, they could capture one low-anxious student's (classified by the FLCA scale) unexpected anxiety during her talk, which was caused by multiple interacting factors at a time (e.g. camera, heart rate monitor, speaking in front of people, speaking in a foreign language and being graded by the teacher); therefore, these data showed that the learner's physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural systems converged in her uncommon anxiety experience. In MacIntyre and Serroul (2015), an anxiety state during real-time difficulties in vocabulary retrieval also reflects the coalescence of various dynamically changing processes such as cognitive, emotional and linguistic difficulties, as well as physiological changes. Piniel and Csizér (2015) show that, even though their participants have majored in English and are generally motivated to learn that language, there are variations and fluctuations along a fairly demanding course in their anxiety, motivation and self-efficacy beliefs[6]. Their data further indicate that although anxiety and the other processes follow complex pathways, these tend to follow predictable patterns. Using a qualitative approach on learner's states dynamics, Waninge (2015) concluded that:

> … an important finding arising from the analysis of learners' narratives is the almost inseparable nature of cognition, motivation, affect and context…

[6] Self-efficacy, or self-efficacy beliefs, are beliefs about one's perceived ability to perform a given task in a particular context (see Bandura, 1986).

> [A] combination of factors often surfaces together in the learners' accounts, supporting or undermining a student's interest by the way they interact and reinforce one another, thereby making it difficult to separate their influence and pinpoint any straightforward causality. (p. 211)

Thus, this view of the learner allows for a shift from a simple and direct cause-effect relationship to one that allows and embraces changes over time by means of a myriad of interacting systems, as Pavlenko (2013) and Ushioda (2009) had already suggested. The results reported throughout this section have shown the importance of both the outer and the inner context of the learner, which are constantly intertwining at a particular timespan. On the one hand, the outer context means the interactions with the surrounding environment (as in van Lier's language ecology), which consists of the physical space, the material, the task at hand and the people in the surrounding, which in a classroom they are typically the teacher and peers. On the other hand, the inner context refer to the physiological, behavioural, emotional, motivational, cognitive and linguistic processes, and probably many more, that interact in a certain moment in a given situation. These two contexts constantly dialoging But amid all this "chaos" (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), there is structure and order; and there are learners, active learners whose actions, cognitions, emotions and motives make the system move, sometimes in unexpected ways. As part of its holistic and integrative pursuit, the development of the CDS perspective has gone hand in hand with the introduction of positive psychology in SLA (MacIntyre and Mercer, 2014), which I will explain next.

2.3 Positive Psychology in SLA

As it has already been pointed out throughout this chapter, the relevance of emotions in applied linguistics has been long under-researched due to the dominance of cognitive approaches (Sharwood Smith, 2017) until the past decades; yet, when studied, emotions have usually been reduced to negative emotions, namely anxiety, as the overview from the previous section shows. Pekrun, Goetz, Titz and Perry (2002) carried out a literature

search of emotions and learning and achievement (years 1974-2000), and found that anxiety was the most researched emotion (n = +1200), as well as other negative emotions (n = 195), whereas positive emotions had been considered but where scarce in comparison (n = 119). The disregard of the role or positive emotions can be explained by the natural tendency towards the study of what torments humanity, as positive psychologist Barbara Fredrickson (2003) argues. Positive Psychology (PP henceforth), contrary to what some scholars believe (e.g. Lazarus, 2003), does not deny the existence of problems and negative emotions; rather, it scientifically studies the positive human functioning and flourishing by focusing on topics such as: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment (PERMA model, Seligman, 2011), emotion and empathy, meaning and motivation, perseverance, agency and autonomy, time[7], hardiness and habits of mind, intelligences, character strengths, and self factors (self-efficacy, self-concept, self-esteem and self-verification) (EMPATHICS model, Oxford, 2016). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) point out that PP research is founded on three pillars, i.e. positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions (p. 5), and that:

> "positive psychology does not rely on wishful thinking, faith, self-deception, fads, or hand waving; it tries to adapt what is best in the scientific method to the unique problems that human behavior presents to those who wish to understand it in all its complexity" (p. 7).

Fredrickson (2001, 2003, 2006), in her broaden-and-build theory, posits that negative emotions are important at the time they are experienced so as to cause a reaction, e.g. a fight or flight reaction in survival; nevertheless, positive emotions build survival resources that are more long-lasting and that have been shaped over time through natural selection. Some authors (see Lazarus, 2003) have criticized the allegedly

[7] Time is relevant in PP because as it is multidirectional and non-linear, past, present and future images of the Self loop to affect each other. One hypothesis is that language learners with a high level of well-being "appraise themselves temporally in a positive way and have a time perspective that fits their needs for learning" (Oxford, 2019, p. 44).

oversimplified dichotomy of positive-negative emotions; nevertheless, as it was explained in Chapter 1, every person has the basic capacity of distinguishing between pleasant and unpleasant feelings and of representing objects as positive or negative, pleasing or displeasing (Barrett, 2006).

Fredrickson thus explains that some discrete positive emotions, such as interest, pride, love or joy result in action tendencies[8] that "…broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources" (Fredrickson, 2003, p. 219). Fredrickson's conception of 'discrete' (i.e. basic) might seem to contradict Barrett's theory of constructed emotion; nevertheless, as Barrett (2017) explains, what is important is our conceptualisation of our own emotional experiences and how we live them depending on how we construct them. In this sense, PP also revolves around constructing, or re-constructing, our mindset over time to empower ourselves and therefore become –in Barrett's words– "the architects of our own experiences" (2017, p. 39). To the best of my knowledge, the study carried out by Dewaele and Pavelescu (2019) is the only one in SLA which is framed within the Barrett's ToCE. Their findings support this understanding of emotions being constructed in the course of foreign language socialization both inside and outside the foreign language class. The participants' construction and experience of FL enjoyment and anxiety were certainly varied and different due to their different personality, social background and experiences with the foreign language, so it was clear that they were the architects of their emotional experiences.

Although the importance of positive emotions had been emphasized in general education (Pekrun et al., 2002) and in applied linguistics (Arnold, 1999; Arnold and Fonseca, 2007, 2011), and PP-related concepts had been studied in relation to language learning (Egbert, 2003, 2004; Mercer, 2011a, 2011b; Rubio, 2007, 2011; Tardy and

[8] Barrett (2017a) points out that talking about emotional action tendencies is more scientifically accurate than talking about universal patterns and/or fingerprints.

Snyder, 2004), none of these studies established a direct connection with PP. It was not until 2012 that MacIntyre and Gregersen explicitly introduced the principles of positive psychology and Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory to SLA. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012, p. 197-198) summarize the five functions of positive emotions, which are: (1) broadening people's attention and thinking, leading to exploration and learning; (2) helping to overturn the enduring effects of negative emotions; (3) promoting resilience by reacting productively to stressful situations; (4) building personal, social and intellectual resources; and (5) spiralling upwards towards greater wellbeing (i.e. the reversed vicious cycle). Therefore, when applied to foreign/second language learning, positive psychology attempts to provide a more comprehensive view of learners by focusing on a wider range of emotions that they experience in the classroom (e.g. Barcelos and Coelho, 2016; Dewaele and Alfawzan, 2018; Dewaele and Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2019; MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012; Oxford, 2015; Pavelescu and Petrić, 2018; Piniel and Albert, 2018).

Essentially, positive psychology in SLA studies how students can function optimally and achieve desirable outcomes even during unfavourable circumstances by promoting long-lasting resources, such as resilience, to flourish even in averse conditions. Furthermore, inspired by Fredrickson's broad-and-build theory of positive emotion, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) argue that, due to the broadening function of positive emotions, learners who experience positive emotions are more likely to be aware of everything that occurs in the ecology of the classroom, including language input. On the contrary, negative emotions have the opposite tendency, that is, to narrow the learner's perspective, and therefore the range of potential language input is more restricted. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) also pointed out the teacher's potential to influence students' emotions and to create a safe environment in which negative emotions are lessened, an aspect which has been remarked by other authors as well (e.g. Aragão, 2011; Yoshida, 2013). They also proposed a technique so that students employ their imagination to modify their negative mindset so as to replace the negative-narrowing

emotional responses with a relaxation response when confronted with a negative situation. On the whole, the aim is not to eradicate completely negative emotions in the class, but rather to exploit the power of positive emotions to maintain a balance.

Dewaele et al. (2019) make a distinction between an early period in PP research (2012-2015) and a later/current period in which PP is blooming in SLA (2016-nowadays). The authors highlight that in the early years, PP studies were mostly concerned with identifying the effects of positive (and negative) emotions in a language learning context, usually by means of cross-sectional designs, a methodological aspect that had been criticized by Lazarus (2003). For instance, Chaffee, Noels and McEown (2014) showed that resilience and positive appraisals are the key to sustain motivation and love for the FL in a negative learning atmosphere. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014), using a mixed-methods approach, found that foreign language enjoyment (FLE) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) are two separate emotion dimensions rather than a continuum. They also showed that autonomic classroom activities and supportive, respectful, positive, well-organized teachers were sources of FLE. Gregersen, MacIntyre, Finegan, Talbot and Claman (2014) analysed qualitatively how a student and a teacher used emotional intelligence to deal with stressful situations and to integrate inside/outside classroom experiences as part of the language learning/teaching process. Oxford and Cuéllar (2014) examined five Chinese learners' narratives through Seligman's (2011) PERMA model and concluded that language learning can be a journey full of positive emotions in terms of engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. Regarding teachers, Aguilar-Río (2013) explored one teacher's planning and emotional responses underlying her action, and Gabrys-Barker (2014) analysed EFL teacher's narratives and perceptions on enthusiasm and its impact on teaching/learning success; the author also included several strategies to become more enthusiastic teachers, especially useful for pre-service/trainee teachers.

All these studies produced highly interesting findings and foretold the illuminating insights that PP could offer to research in language learning. As Dewaele et al. (2019)

explicate, in 2016 a series of events paved the way for a solid introduction of PP to applied linguistics: plans to establish the *International Association for the Psychology of Language Learning*, a new book series from Multilingual Matters named *Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching*, and two edited books published that same year (*Positive Psychology and SLA* and *Positive Psychology Perspectives on Foreign Language*). Since 2016, many studies focusing on positive emotions experience and positive character traits (the first two pillars of PP) have flourished[9]. Studies have focused on PP-related concepts such as empathy (Mercer, 2016), flow (Czimmermann and Piniel, 2016; Dewaele and MacIntyre, forthcoming), hope (Hiver, 2016), perseverance (Belnap, Bown, Dewey, Belnap and Steffen, 2016), love (Barcelos and Coelho, 2016; Pavelescu and Petrić, 2018) and the L2 self (Lake, 2016). Yet, the most exhaustively studied area has been learners' FLE and FLCA, with some of the studies using data from different timescales, which has been largely possible thanks to the influence of CDS theory. This has led to results that show the existence of ambivalent and conflicted emotions, i.e. experiencing both negative and positive emotions simultaneously, and has provided evidence of how emotions fluctuate dynamically in a complex interplay between internal and external processes (e.g. Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele, 2018; Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2019).

Although the majority of studies drawing of positive psychology has focused on the role of positive emotions, there are several studies on self-related constructs which bring to the fore the function of positive beliefs and self-beliefs as an important part of how humans flourish and function positively. By way of illustration, in mathematics education, Pajares (2001) found that achievement goals and self-efficacy beliefs were predictive of positive psychological variables such as optimism. Specifically in SLA research, Leung et al. (2019) investigated from a PP perspective how self-efficacy beliefs influenced word reading strategies; their study showed that, while reading

[9] Budzińska (2018) focuses on the third pillar, the role of positive institutions, with an ethnographic research of a Polish language school. The study analyses the school from three different angles (physical, psychological and pedagogical) and shows that it is a "positive institution" because it enables students' success and provides positive language learning environments, as well as promoting student well-being.

strategies depended also on other factors such as word properties and L2 reading proficiency and word properties, self-efficacy beliefs indeed influenced reading strategy in a foreign language. As Oxford (2015) explains, learner's negative emotions such as anxiety are highly related to beliefs and can be managed through positive psychology strategies. As FLCA research has shown, many language learners hold irrational and dysfunctional beliefs about their learning, their capabilities and their proficiency, which more often than not can cause negative emotions such as anxiety. One strategy to combat this negative state of mind is 'disputation' (Seligman, 2006, as cited in Oxford, 2015), that is, recognizing irrational beliefs about adversity such as imposing dogmatic demands ("I must/should"), underestimating one's frustration tolerance ("I can't stand it"), awfulizing ("it's terrible") or self-rating ("I'm worthless and incompetent"), and identifying counterevidence to create a new positive mindset.

The integration of PP principles into SLA research is very recent but it is producing fascinating results not only on how language learners deal and experience their language learning processes, but also on how teachers (and hopefully in future studies institutions) manage and spread positivity in their classrooms. Findings are also broadening and deepening our knowledge of the nature of positive and negative emotions, and of how they interact with other processes or factors such as motivation, (self-)beliefs, behaviours and actions, always taking into account the spatiotemporal context and the understanding of the language classroom, the language learning process and the language learner as being multifaceted, complex and dynamic.

2.4 Conclusions and implications for my research

Throughout this chapter, I have shown the evolution of the SLA field by describing its many turns, each one constructing on the foundations of the previous one and incorporating new insights for the next one to blossom. With each turn, not only theoretical and epistemological novelties have been discovered, but also new and diverse methodological approaches have been introduced in order to study various

processes and factors related to language learning. It is undeniable that SLA is undergoing the 'complexity era', one that fortunately embraces the existence and importance of abstract processes such as beliefs and emotions and that explores them holistically and interactively. My own research is inspired by complexity and ecological theories, as I take the view that one's processes (cognitive, emotional, social, etc.) are interconnected and inseparably interwoven with their experiences in the physical and sociocultural reality by means of a dynamic negotiation on a moment-to-moment basis (Leather and van Dam, 2003). In fact, across my four intrinsically related studies, valuable insights into learners' beliefs and emotions have been obtained by exploring different contexts (micro-macro), i.e. the here-and-now of the interaction, the classroom ecology as a whole, and the broader sociocultural context.

Unfortunately, due to the fact that this thesis belongs to a bigger project with different objectives, it was not possible to methodologically design a longitudinal study, or a study at different timescales, to observe specifically the variability and fluctuations of learners' beliefs and emotions. Despite this limitation, my research will show some dynamics in EFL learner's beliefs and emotions (especially in study 3), and will report on the process of co-adaptation between the learner and the environment, the learner and the teacher, etc. (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008), and on how teaching and teacher-learner interactions construct learning affordances (van Lier, 2004), or optimal conditions for learning. Moreover, the relationship between the learners and the classroom context and amongst the individuals in the classroom, especially between the teacher and the students, are not conceived in terms of linearity and causality. It is understood that, although some patterns or tendencies can be identified in behaviours, the classroom context is understood comprehensively, as a complex dynamic system itself, in order to understand the interplay between behaviours, beliefs and emotions. All these understandings are founded on positive psychology principles, and I attempt to show how a positive mindset and favourable learning conditions (e.g. through

supportive teacher-student relationships and classroom climate) can contribute to a more positive language learning experience.

PART II. THE RESEARCH

Chapter 3. Research context

The goal of this chapter is to provide background information of the context in which this research has been conducted. The chapter starts with a contextualization of the learning and teaching of English –and foreign languages in general– in Catalonia. This first section is subdivided into two parts: on the one hand, a description of the Catalan curriculum of foreign languages is provided, given that the participants of my research were first-year university students who had just left high school, where they carried out secondary education and *Batxillerat*[10]. On the other hand, the second subpart constitutes an explanation of the role that English plays in teaching at a higher education level in Catalonia, and, more specifically, at the Universitat de Lleida (UdL). The second section of this chapter presents the context of my research project, and, therefore, it involves a detailed description of the two English for Specific Purposes (ESP) settings from which data for my dissertation were obtained. Special attention is devoted to the second ESP context, as most of the data used in my thesis come from this course as part of a larger research project, which will also be explained.

3.1 Learning English in a Catalan context

Catalonia is a bilingual autonomous community of Spain in which both Catalan and Spanish are official languages. Catalan is commonly used as a vehicular language and is the language of instruction in the educational institutions. The role of English in international communication has progressively gained strength and its impact upon many societies (including the Spanish and the Catalan) is much more powerful in the present than a few years ago, involving different and growing areas of language use and a wider social spectrum of speakers. Now that the "contexts of learning and using English in the globalized world are becoming fluid, flexible, mobile, transitory, borderless and less easily definable" (Ushioda, 2013, p. 5), the need for English learning

[10] Two-year studies, after compulsory secondary education, which enable access to university.

is therefore evident and comprehensible, and English is in fact one of the central subjects in the Catalan curriculum of both primary and secondary education.

It was in the 1990s when English became stronger in the education system in line with the sociopolitical leading role of the Anglophone world in the last third of the 20th century. Through various reforms, this period witnessed a consolidation of the learning of at least one foreign language, mostly English[11], but also the progressive introduction of a second one. Hence, English language teaching was reconsidered through several laws which provided innovative measures and emphasized three dimensions: the social (English as a global demand), the educative (English as a vehicle of multicultural knowledge) and the linguistic (English as a functional and structural reality) (Barbero Andrés, 2012). Since the late 1990s, this has implied a spread of English "down and across the curriculum" (Ushioda, 2013, p. 7), which has been introduced as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary education (with some centres starting even at pre-school level). Furthermore, schools are increasingly offering subjects totally or partially through English, commonly known as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In the academic year 2018-2019, the percentage of schools (primary and secondary) in Catalonia which use CLIL methodologies was 62.6%, almost 30% more than in year 2012-2013 (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2019a).

The Catalan curriculum of the Compulsory Secondary Education (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015a) emphasizes the need to reach mastery of both Catalan and Spanish, as well as of a foreign language, which in most cases is English. The curriculum also constantly refers to the importance of being communicative in several languages so that interculturality is at the same time promoted. Language education, hence, occupies an important position in the curriculum, and the total of hours per week devoted to the foreign language is three both during the four years of compulsory secondary education

[11] Considering data from compulsory education (primary and secondary), 98% of schools teach English as the first foreign language in Catalonia, whereas 1.6% choose French, and only almost 0.5% opt for other languages (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2020).

and the two optional years of *Batxillerat*. Despite these efforts to furnish learners with sufficient skills and knowledge in the English language, results in university entrance exams (*Selectivitat*) are not excellent. In the last four years (2016-2019), the average grade for the English subject exam in Catalonia has oscillated between 7.36/10 (the highest, 2018), and 6.01/10 (the lowest, 2017) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2019b). In fact, statistics from a survey with more than 11,000 students by the Spanish Ministry of Education show that Spanish students are not very eager to be in contact with the English language outside the classroom; out of 11 countries in Europe, Spain ranked second lowest (ahead of France) in being in contact with English through communication media (Vez, Martínez and Lorenzo, 2013). These results are in stark contrast with those from other contexts like Sweden (Henry, 2014), where English language learners use and are in contact with English so extensively outside class that they usually consider the formal instruction of English unnecessary. It seems thus that English teaching in Catalonia is still a challenge and despite the continuous research and attempts of improving the situation, the results obtained by Catalan students in international EFL tests are, on average, low (Arnau and Vila, 2013).

3.1.1 Compulsory education: the FL curriculum

The Catalan curriculum of foreign languages is competency-based and encourages teachers to adopt a communication approach towards language teaching. A competency is the ability and capacity to carry out tasks and activities effectively and is based on the integration and activation of techniques, knowledge, abilities, attitudes and values (Villa Sánchez and Poblete Ruiz, 2011). Being competent, thus, means knowing and regulating one's own learning processes, both from a cognitive and emotional viewpoint, and being able to use knowledge strategically to perform a given task. A competency-based approach does not simply involve transmitting knowledge, but also teaching the student how, when and why to apply such knowledge and abilities, as well as emphasizing the importance and practicality of using ICT and digital media key tools

(Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015a). According to Coll (2013), a competency-based curriculum gives priority to the acquisition of competencies which make an individual a competent and autonomous learner throughout his/her life. Furthermore, this type of curriculum focuses on the language as a medium of communication and on an effective performance of a real-world activity so that students are prepared for the demands outside class. In addition, the assessment is continuous and is based on the student's performance, and the instruction is individualized and student-centered. It is significant to highlight the relevant role of emotions, values and attitudes in the competency-based approach, because all of them come into play dynamically when performing a school task, as they do in the real world. As a matter of fact, Jaeger (2003) found that competency-based education fosters emotional intelligence among students.

The area of foreign language in the Catalan curriculum is constituted by a total of eleven competencies classified into five dimensions: oral communication, reading comprehension, written expression, literary, and attitudinal and plurilingual (Decree 187/2015). The competencies associated to each of the dimensions are shown in Figure 7 (see below). The contents proposed in the curriculum, which are only illustrative, are structured according to the aforementioned dimensions, except for the attitudinal and plurilingual one due to its transversal nature. The oral communication, reading comprehension and written expression dimensions embrace the communicative process and establish the concepts, procedures and strategies needed to comprehend several texts, originals or adapted, and in different formats. The contents from the literary dimension encompass traditional and current texts, written and oral, original or adapted to the students' level. There is also a transversal block which contains the contents of the knowledge of the language. It is divided into four levels of study: pragmatics; phonetics and phonology; lexicon and semantics; and morphology and syntax. In the curriculum, it is explained that it is necessary to know and reflect on the grammar to understand, write and speak in specific contexts of social, academic and professional media, as well as to understand, appreciate and write literary texts. These linguistic

contents are thus at the end of the dimensions as the language basis which has to be kept in mind when communicating at all levels and contexts.

The assessment of the four courses of the compulsory secondary education is also classified into these dimensions. The educational institutions are strongly encouraged to evaluate the competencies from a global perspective and to consider the relation between all of them. They are also urged to abandon the penalizing vision of evaluation and to mainly conceive it as a communicative activity which regulates the learning process and the language use. Educational effectiveness is ensured by employing several types of evaluation such as individual and collective assessment, self-assessment, co-assessment and hetero-assessment, and diverse instruments like questionnaires, portfolios, dossiers and evaluation guidelines (Decree 187/2015). The objectives of the curriculum include achieving the competencies previously exposed, as well as developing critical thinking and autonomy and understanding the multicultural and multilingual reality which surrounds us. On the whole, the Catalan curriculum of foreign languages offers some guidelines of the contents, some sample activities and some ways in which they can be assessed. However, it also provides the teacher with the freedom of choosing the methodology, the materials and the activities to be implemented in class.

In the end, the main goal is that students know how to communicate in various languages and in several contexts and real-life situations with different speakers. This objective, however, does not seem accomplished by many students, as they tend to feel frustrated with the education received in the English language and have low self-concepts regarding their level, particularly in terms of oral production (Diert-Boté, 2016). Furthermore, notwithstanding the curriculum’s communicative approach and its commitment to work on the learners’ various competencies, the reality of many schools continues to be the textbook as the central axis, a strong focus on the grammar and little practice of the oral competence (Diert-Boté, 2016; Tragant et al., 2014).

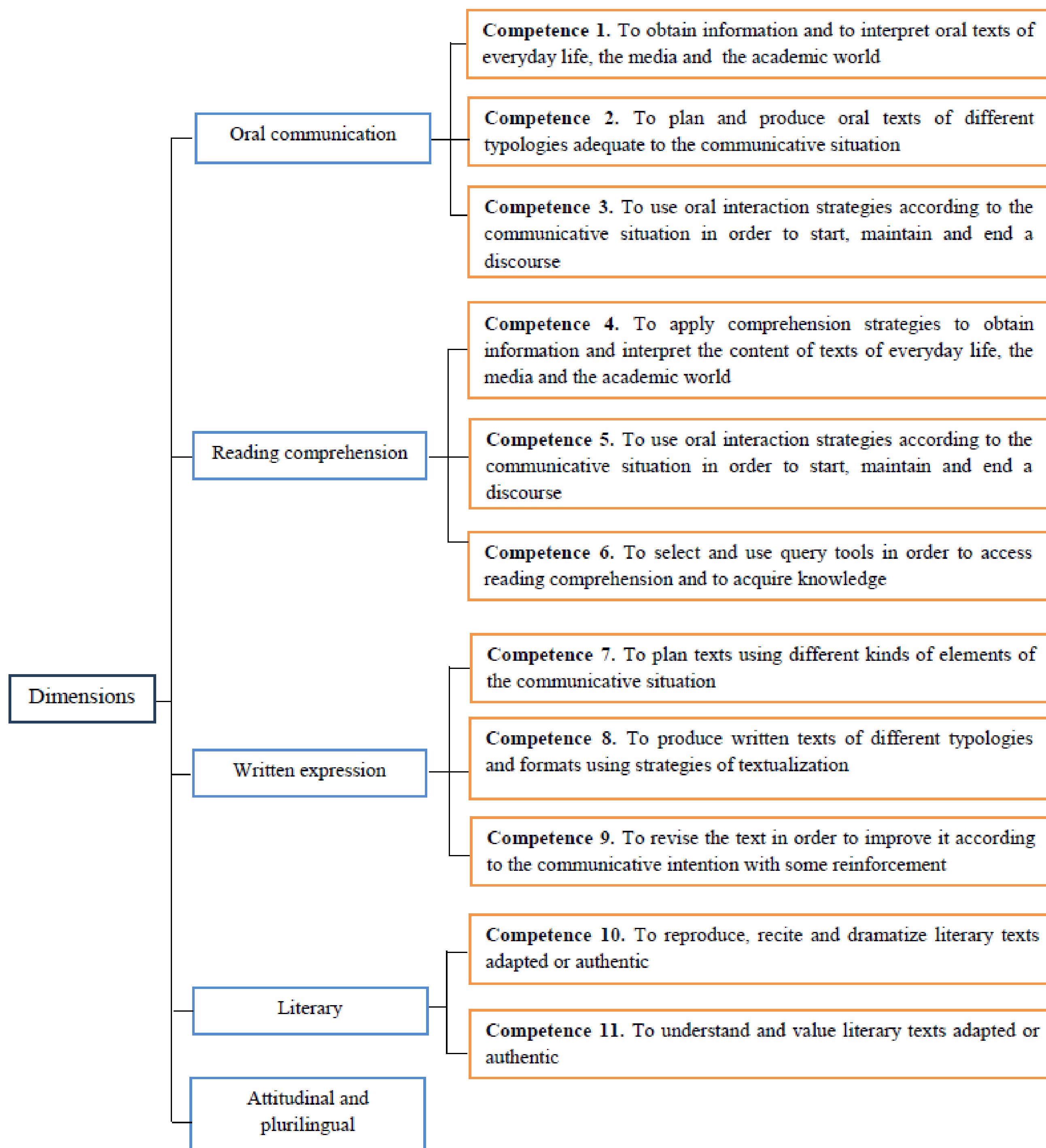

Figure 7. *Basic competencies of the language area*

(Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015a, p. 8) [my translation]

3.1.2 Higher education: 'Englishization' at home

Those students who want to pursue their non-compulsory studies at university will most probably encounter English again –and to a much lesser extent other foreign languages–

along their higher education studies. The internationalization (or 'Englishization'; see Martin-Rubió and Cots, 2016; Sabaté-Dalmau, 2016) of higher education has been underway for more than a decade, starting in 1999 when Catalonia joined the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), signed by 29 European Member States (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015b). This internationalization mission intends to (a) strengthen the intellectual, social, cultural, scientific and technological dimensions of Europe; (b) acknowledge the central role that higher education/universities play in terms of citizen mobility and the demand for qualified employees in the European labor market; and (c) increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European higher education system internationally (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015b). This Englishization has been carried out by means of the adoption of language policies and practices that reinforce the enactment of English as the lingua franca of traditionally non-English speaking universities, which has transformed higher education institutions into "market-driven transnational ventures" (Sabaté-Dalmau, 2016, p. 16). One of these policies was the following:

> The students who start their Bachelor's degree studies at a Catalan university in the 2014-2015 academic year and following have to accredit, at the end of their studies, the knowledge of a foreign language among the established ones in the *Proves d'Accés a la Universitat (PAU)* [university entrance exams], with a level equivalent to B2 of the The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). [*Els estudiants que iniciïn els estudis universitaris de grau en una universitat catalana el curs 2014-2015 i posteriors han d'acreditar, en acabar els estudis, el coneixement d'una llengua estrangera d'entre les establertes en les proves per a l'accés a la universitat (PAU), amb un nivell equivalent al B2 del Marc europeu comú de referència per a les llengües (MECR) del Consell d'Europa*.] (Law 2/2014)

Nevertheless, in June 2017, the Interuniversitarian Council of Catalonia (CIC) decided to establish a moratorium of four years for this requirement. The moratorium was

finally approved by the Catalan Parliament in May 2018 (Law 1/2018) in view of the insufficient knowledge of foreign languages that third-year undergraduate students (the first students who should accredit the B2 level according to the regulation) showed in tests run by the Language Policy Commission of the Interuniversity Council of Catalonia. Therefore, students who started in 2014-2015 and had to finish their degree studies in the academic year 2017-2018 were exempt from the B2 requirement; yet, this requisite is compulsory for all the students beginning their studies in a Catalan university in the academic year 2018-2019 and subsequent years, according to Law 1/2018.

The internationalization of higher education is also visible in the data from the Secretariat of Universities and Research (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2020). The statistics show that Catalan universities (except for UPF) have more or less the same percentage of instruction in third languages, for the most part English. The percentages vary from 8.1% (the lowest, UB) to 31.2% (the highest, UPF), and the weighted average is 10.7%. Although the presence of English as a language of instruction is not very strong, it has increased gradually from the year 2010-2011 (5.8%) to 2017-2018 (10.7%) and the percentage is even higher in master's degree studies, with a weighted average of 22.6%. The most recent data on language use from Generalitat de Catalunya (2020) show that, at the UdL, 10% of the teaching is carried out it English in bachelor's degrees and 13% in master's degrees. Further data on language use provided by the Language Institute of the UdL (Universitat de Lleida, 2018) show that the use of English for teaching purposes at bachelor's degrees level has increased, although not steadily, along the years 2004-2018 (see Figure 8 below).

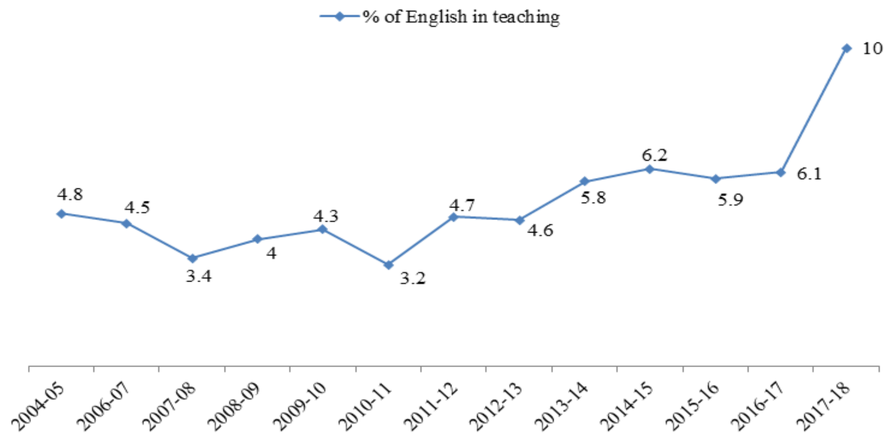

Figure 8. *Percentage of teaching through English in bachelor's degrees* (Universitat de Lleida, 2018)

The graph in Figure 8 shows an increase in the percentage of teaching through English from the academic year 2011-2012 onwards, which rocketed in 2017-2018. These data mirror the objectives of the Operational Plan of Internalization [*Pla Operatiu d'Internacionalització*] of the UdL (Universitat de Lleida, 2012-16), which aims to promote internationalization at two levels: in teaching, and in research and transference. In terms of teaching, the aims are (1) to internationalize the teaching offer; (2) to increase mobility (outgoing and incoming); and (3) to attract a growing number of foreign students. One of the cross-cutting objectives of the internationalization at the teaching level is "to increase the presence of English in teaching in order to promote the integration of foreign students and the mastery of professional English by UdL students. [*Incrementar la presència de l'anglès en la docència per tal d'afavorir la integració dels estudiants estrangers i el domini de l'anglès professional dels estudiants UdL.*]" (Universitat de Lleida, 2012-16, p. 9). Likewise, the Operational Plan of Multilingualism [*Pla Operatiu de Multilingüisme*] (Universitat de Lleida, 2013-18) states that English has to be introduced gradually in bachelor's degrees and establishes that one of the urgent lines of action is "the management of Catalan, Spanish and English as working languages in the official levels of studies (bachelor's and master's), as well as in studies of continuous training and in-house qualifications [*la gestió del*

català, del castellà i de l'anglès com a llengües de treball en els nivells oficials dels estudis (graus i màsters), així com en els estudis de formació contínua i títols propis] (Universitat de Lleida, 2013-18, p. 12).

These two plans determine that the university has to fulfill the objective of helping students (and staff) to become trilingual in Catalan, Spanish and English and to facilitate the learning of other languages apart from these three (Universitat de Lleida, 2012-16); yet, the emphasis is constantly placed on acquiring the English language by setting "the criteria to improve the students' knowledge of English in all the degrees of the UdL" (Universitat de Lleida, 2012-16, p. 11), while the learning of other foreign languages is seldom mentioned and, when it is, it is done in very general terms. It seems clear then that there is an urge to Englishize the university, largely through instruction or teaching. The courses that are carried out in English (apart from those in the English Studies degree) are English for academic/professional/specific purposes (EAP/EPP/ESP) and English Medium Instruction (EMI) subjects. The difference between these types of courses is that the former set (EAP/EPP/ESP) can be included under the umbrella of English Language Teaching (ELT), as its objective is to equip students with language knowledge and skills to accomplish certain purposes (Yang, 2016). On the contrary, language learning is not one of the goals of EMI subjects, as in these courses English is only used as a tool through which content is transmitted and acquired. Nevertheless, sometimes these definitions do not match the classroom reality, especially in contexts where students do not have, on average, a high level of English (like in Lleida/Catalonia/Spain) and therefore EMI subjects may end up being *CLILised* (Moncada-Comas and Block, 2019) when teachers engage in language teaching practices. The current research project took place in two ESP settings which will be explained next.

3.2 Context of the present research

The data from this dissertation have been obtained in two ESP courses designed to improve first-year students' English language knowledge and competencies. Data analyzed in Study 1 were collected from an ESP subject of the Audiovisual Communication and Journalism (ACJ henceforth) degree (7.5 ECTS, autumn semester 2013-2014 –from September to January–), whereas data used in the rest of the studies (2, 3 and 4) were collected from an ESP subject from the Business Administration and Management (BAM henceforth) degree (6 ETCS, spring semester 2016-2017 –from February to June–). In order to pass both subjects, students were expected to attain a B1 level of the CEFR in English at the end of the course.

3.2.1 Context of Study 1

The ESP course from the ACJ degree aimed to provide students with tools to be able to handle information in English during the degree. The course was divided into two key axes: the written-oral axis and the production-reception axis. On the one hand, the students worked on reading comprehension, mainly through online newspaper articles, and on written production by composing abstracts, opinion articles, emails and reviews. On the other hand, students were also exposed to short talks and short news videos and were asked to understand the main ideas, to take notes, to identify key words, and to subtitle short online videos; in terms of oral production, learners had to express opinions and share viewpoints with their classmates in seminars. Additionally, the ICT aspect was also an important part of the subject given the weight that it has on audiovisual communication and journalism. Therefore, this course was also planned so that students became familiar with searching articles in e-journals, with identifying sections of articles and with learning different ways of quoting sources. The English language was practiced and improved through 6 units: (1) summarizing texts and answering to specific questions (oral and written); (2) written and oral (sub)genres; (3) language of

the media: translating science for the lay person; (4) expressing opinions: blogs, reviews, essays, forums; (5) dubbing and subtitling; and (6) referencing and plagiarism.

The subject combined master classes with seminars, or practical sessions, at the computers lab, in which students had to perform several tasks related to the theory they had previously been explained. There were a total of eight seminar tasks assessed and, although attendance was not assessed (mostly because there were around one hundred students enrolled in the course), missing more than three seminars without due justification would entail failing the course. These eight seminar tasks were worth 40% of the final grade, and the remaining 60% was distributed among three exams: a mid-term exam (15%), an oral exam (15%) and a final exam (30%). The data used for Study 1 was extracted from the oral exam in which their English language oral skills were evaluated. In the exam, five to seven students were assembled in ten focus groups in which they had to talk about several topics, one of which was their experiences learning English during their lives. For the study, though, only five out of the ten focus groups were examined, given that qualitative micro-analysis techniques were adopted. It is worth noting that despite being a tested task, students seemed to be eager to discuss their experiences and, in fact, it was the topic which they were more engaged in and to which they devoted more time.

3.2.2 Context of Studies 2, 3 and 4

Most of the data from this dissertation were obtained in an ESP course of the degree in BAM. This course was part of a larger research project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (grant FFI2015-67769P) which aimed to empirically investigate the benefits of implementing an English teaching methodology based on a plurilingual perspective and centered on English as a lingua franca (ELF) (acronym: Plurelf). This project was inspired by the most recent bibliography that argues that (1) plurilingualism is an asset to make foreign/second language acquisition more efficient and coherent with the multilingual and multicultural environment of most of the

learners (see Cenoz and Gorter, 2017; Garcia and Li Wei, 2014); and that (2) there is a need to implement new teaching/learning methodologies that move away from the traditional conception which has the monolingual native speaker as a model, and thus to adopt a more realistic ELF-oriented pedagogies based on communicative efficiency over accuracy (see Rubdy, 2009; Sifakis, 2014). The hypothesis of the project was the following: a plurilingual approach in English language teaching produces more positive results with regard to language development, intercultural orientation and attitudes of learners than those obtained through a traditional approach, based on the idealized monolingual native speaker model. The participants from the project had been previously divided into two groups of around 60 students by the university, although, in practice, around 20 of them did not come to class; the control group followed a traditional monolingual approach, whereas the experimental group followed a translanguaging, ELF-oriented method to English language learning. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the teachers of the groups were two female members of the research project.

In order to explore the students' language gains and attitudes, the project adopted a mixed-methods approach. For the quantitative part, the main instruments were English language tests (written and oral) and a questionnaire (Likert scales combined with multiple-choice and open-ended questions) on intercultural orientation and attitudes in relation to the English language and the course itself. Both the language test and the questionnaire were passed twice: first at the beginning of the course and then just before it finished in order to measure the students' language competence development and to capture potential changes in their attitudes and intercultural beliefs after the course. As for the qualitative part, attitudinal orientations and construction of discourses on language learning were obtained by means of several instruments. Linguistic ethnography was adopted as a methodological approach and, therefore, six lessons of each group were audio and video-recorded and field notes were taken by two members of the team who were carrying out non-participant observation, i.e. without interfering

or taking an active part in the situation under examination. Furthermore, eight individual interviews (with 4 students of each group) in the middle of the course were conducted, as well as six focus groups: two pre-, two post- and two with Chinese Erasmus students. More details on classroom video-recordings and self-reported data from focus groups and interviews will be provided in Chapter 4.

The teaching material for the course was created by the members of the team and was distributed into two dossiers, one devoted to practice oral skills, and the other designed to work on writing skills. Although some exercises were different in both groups depending on the language teaching approach, both groups used a communicative language teaching approach, which aims at engaging learners in communication to help them develop their communicative competence, as opposed to simply controlling syntactical and phonological patterns (Savignon, 2002). For this reason, authentic materials that promoted both oral and written communicative competence were employed in this course, and many activities were designed to work in small groups or in pairs. This course, similar to the one in the ACJ degree, was divided into two axes: the oral-written axis and the productive-receptive. The course was designed so that students could understand, critically analyze and produce oral and written texts from the field of economics and business in English, as well as to recognize and use basic vocabulary in the area of business management. More specifically, learners were asked to write a formal business letter for a specific purpose (20%), to make an oral presentation with visual support (20%) and to give an improvised sales pitch (20%). Moreover, learners had to submit a portfolio with the activities which they had been carrying out during the lessons (10%) and had to sit for a booklet reading exam (10%) and for a final exam that evaluated the four skills as well as grammar and vocabulary (20%).

In terms of ethical considerations, it has be taken into account that the aim of this research project was to explore, analyze and compare situations and data, for which

there were not significant problems regarding research ethics. Nevertheless, given that social science research involves working with human subjects, their integrity and rights need to be protected. To this aim, the first day of the course, participants were briefly explained the nature of the research project orally by one member of the team. Afterwards, an informed consent form was passed which included more details on what the research entailed and how data would be collected, processed and used. All the students voluntarily signed the consent form and therefore formally agreed to participate in the project and they were also informed about their right to withdraw from the research at any time. In terms of data processing and treatment, all archives containing data were stored in a secure drive and were only accessible by members of the team (i.e. researching team, working team and technical team). Furthermore, data were treated and published confidentially and anonymously, so pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' anonymity. Ultimately, all members of the team attempted to create a welcoming environment during tests, interviews, focus groups and classroom observations in order to minimize the potential discomfort that these situations might cause.

3.3 Concluding remarks

In this chapter I have attempted to provide a general contextualization of my research that helps to understand better the way the English language is formally instructed in a Catalan setting, both at a secondary and at a tertiary level. Throughout these sections, it has been shown that the Catalan curriculum for foreign languages follows a communicative approach and is divided into several competencies; yet, empirical evidence suggests that a reality in secondary English classrooms is far from being communicative (Diert-Boté, 2016; Tragant et al., 2014). In terms of the role that English plays in tertiary education, this chapter has also provided interesting insights into the way English is used as a way of internationalization (or Englishization) of the Catalan universities, including the UdL. This latter point has been further exemplified by

describing in detail the two ESP contexts in which my research projects has delved into, particularly the one in the BAM degree, which was part of a bigger funded research project to which my own study belongs. The way my research project connects with the funded project, as well as the type of data that I use, their collection methods and analytical tools and processes will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Methodological framework

In this chapter I will present, in the first place, the rationale for my research, its main objectives and the specific research questions that have guided my project and that I will attempt to answer through this study. Secondly, I will introduce qualitative research as the paradigm which I have adopted to collect and analyze my data. Thirdly, I describe the two types of data that I will use in my dissertation, i.e. observational and non-observational (or self-reported) data. On the one hand, observational data were obtained by means of twelve classroom sessions (six from the monolingual group and six from the translanguaging group) which were audio- and video-recorded. On the other hand, non-observational data were collected by means of individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and one open-ended question from a questionnaire. Ultimately, the analytical tools employed in each study will be briefly mentioned, as each of them is duly developed in each of them.

4.1 Rationale, objectives and research questions

The rationale behind this dissertation can be summarized in four key points which have been derived from the exhaustive review of the literature in chapters 1 and 2: (1) although the connection between beliefs and emotions is strong, very few studies have focused on both beliefs and emotions in SLA and therefore more research is needed to see how these processes interact and with each other and with other phenomena during the foreign language learning process; (2) although research on foreign/second language learning beliefs has been more popular in SLA, research on emotions (especially emotions other than anxiety) has been scarce until fairly recently; (3) more studies that adopt positive psychology lenses are needed in order to comprehend the aspects that contribute to the learners' well-being and to making the language learning process more satisfying and enriching; and (4) to the best of my knowledge, research focusing on language learners' beliefs and emotions in a Catalan context is virtually non-existent (e.g. Diert-Boté, 2016).

Taking all these points into consideration, the general objective of this research is to explore the beliefs that university students hold and the emotions they experience (and have experienced) in relation to English language learning in a Catalan context. This goal is accomplished by means of four independent although interconnected studies that attempt to capture the experiences of the participants during their English language learning trajectories. As it was explained in Chapter 1, Dewey (1983), inspired by James' phenomenology, conceived one's personal experiences as inseparable from one's subjective attitudes. These attitudes involve several phenomena, or processes, such as beliefs and emotions, and are thus an integral part of one's own subjective consciousness and experience, which is in a constant dialogue with the dynamics of the sociocultural world. Drawing on Dewey's notion of 'experience', the starting point of this study can be encapsulated in the following research question:

RQ 1. How do English language learners construct their current and past English language learning experiences in a Catalan context?

A first exploration of students' English language learning experiences in Study 1 led to two other sub-questions that helped to narrow down the focus of the research. Consequently, the participants' beliefs and emotions were analyzed in relation to two specific aspects: the role of methodology/tasks (particularly oral tasks) and the role of the teacher in the English language learning classroom:

RQ 2. What beliefs and emotions do students construct and display regarding the teaching methodology and the types of tasks (particularly oral tasks) in the English language learning class?

RQ 3. What beliefs and emotions do students construct and display regarding the role of the English language teacher and student-teacher relationships?

At this point it is worth highlighting two challenges that have influenced the way my research has been designed and conducted and the type of data that I have obtained and analyzed. Firstly, these research questions were not predetermined from the very beginning, but they developed as my research unfolded and results were obtained. When I started my research project, I planned from the very beginning to examine the experiences of several students of English by focusing on their emotions and beliefs. Nevertheless, it was not until the first study –which offers a general overview of various students' experiences learning English in a Catalan context– was finished that the two other subsequent and more specific questions were created based on its results. This design has allowed me to go step by step in my thesis development as results from each study have, to a certain extent, paved the way for the following study, although always bearing in mind the general research question and objective of my research. Therefore, whilst all my studies explore learners' experiences with regard to English learning, the attention devoted to the teacher and to the methodology is not uniform across the four studies. Thus, the first study focuses on both the role of the teacher and the role of the learning methodology/types of tasks; the second one is centered on the role of the teacher and on teacher-student relationships; and, ultimately, the third and the fourth thoroughly investigate the role of methodology and tasks, especially oral tasks, although with reference to the role of the teacher and other relevant aspects as well.

Secondly, and as it was explained in the previous chapter, most of the data that I used for my dissertation were part of a larger granted project. This aspect has conditioned the type of data that was collected and the processes by which they were gathered. As the reader may have noticed, this project did not focus on exploring the emotional experiences of the students, although it did pay attention to students' attitudes, beliefs and discourses about language learning, an aspect which was useful for my own study. Furthermore, the Plurelf project was not designed to study the relationship between the teacher and/or methodology and learners' language beliefs and emotions. In the Plurelf research, due to the fact that its focus was on the teaching methodologies, the role of the

teacher was considered a secondary factor. Regarding the methodology, the funded project focused on the methodological comparison between a translanguaging approach with a focus on ELF and traditional monolingual approach centered on the native speaker, but it did not focus on methodology at a more general level including communicative approaches and type of tasks, particularly speaking ones. Hence, in view of the results from Study 1 and of preliminary findings and insights from the funded project, I started to direct my interest towards the relevant role that the teacher and the type of tasks play in language learning.

4.2 Adopting a qualitative approach

Croker (2009) points out that the way one conducts research is shaped by his/her own view of the world and is informed by how other scholars conceive research. This view of the world, or paradigm, responds to two main questions: 'what is reality?' (ontological) and 'what is knowledge?' (epistemological). According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), paradigms are systematic sets of beliefs and methods which "represent a distillation of what we think about the world (but cannot prove)" (p. 15). By way of illustration, Croker (2009) compares two of the most well-known paradigms which are often provided as an example of opposite perspectives: positivism and constructivism.

On the one hand, positivists strive to find a singular, universal 'truth', as they believe that there is only one fixed reality that exists independently of themselves and that needs to be described, usually by means of quantification. Academics from the positivist school of thought assume that any truths they discover can be applied to other settings, groups or situations, regardless of the context, as their main goal is to make predictions to know what will happen in the future. In terms of the role of the researcher, positivists tend to be disconnected from the processes of data collection and data analysis in order to remain as 'objective' as possible (i.e. an 'etic' perspective). On the other hand, constructivists sustain that there is not a universal 'truth' to be discovered and that each individual creates his or her own reality, for which there are

multiple constructions and interpretations of the world. Not only are there myriad constructions, but they change depending on the context, time and circumstances, so "reality is not only universal but person-, context-, and time- bound" (Croker, 2009, p. 6). Moreover, constructivist researchers do not attempt to adopt an objective role in research, but position themselves closely to the participants in order to try to perceive the world as their participants do (i.e. 'emic' perspective). As Ratner (2008) points out, this 'emic' perspective positions reality –including the psychological world of participants– as something unknowable and therefore the role of the researcher is to construct a sense of reality as the participants see it. In such constructivist view, "the investigator and the object of investigation are … interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p. 207).

As it has already been highlighted, in this research the language classroom is conceived as an ecology (van Lier, 2000, 2004), or as a complex dynamic system (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008), in which learning is understood as a process that develops by means of the interplay of all its elements, or agents, and the interaction between the individuals at all levels: cognitive, emotional, behavioral, social and discursive. It is precisely this interaction with their surrounding that allows individuals to socially construct meaning. Consequently, questions such as "what's going on here? What does the world look like for participants? What meanings do they make here? How does this setting influence participants' perceptions and behavior?" (Croker, 2009, p. 8) are relevant in order to understand the participants' subjective meanings and the ways they understand and construct their own personal and social worlds. This complex conceptualization, as well as the nature of the research questions, presumes the need for a constructionist, qualitative interpretive approach to explore in depth the students' experiences, beliefs and emotions simultaneously on the individual and on the social plane.

Stake (1995, p. 37) sustains that there are three major differences between quantitative and qualitative research: (1) a distinction between explanation (quantitative) and understanding (qualitative) of the purpose of inquiry; (2) a distinction between an impersonal (quantitative) and personal (qualitative) role for the researcher; and (3) a distinction between knowledge discovered (quantitative) and knowledge constructed (qualitative). Therefore, according to Jackson, Drummond and Camara (2007, pp. 22-23), in a qualitative approach

> the focus turns to understanding human beings' richly textured experiences- and reflections about those experiences. Rather than relying on a set of finite questions to elicit categorized, forced-choice responses with little room for open-ended replies to questions as quantitative research does, the qualitative researcher relies on the participants to offer in-depth responses to questions about how they have constructed or understood their experience.

In qualitative studies, various data collection methods are often used such as interviews, focus groups, observations, open-response questionnaires and diaries in order to create a richer and more complete picture of the participant's experiences from his/her perspective. Therefore, researchers doing observations will write field notes, researchers conducting interviews will create transcripts, and researchers using open-ended questions from a questionnaire or diaries will analyze the text that the participants themselves have written. Nevertheless, Croker (2009) notes that numerical data can be used in qualitative studies, although their purpose would be complementary and not the main focus. Data in a qualitative investigation needs to be 'interpreted' by the researcher in order to assemble similar ideas or to discover patterns of thinking or acting, for which analysis in qualitative research is usually called interpretive analysis (Croker, 2009). Due to its design, a qualitative study generates a huge amount of information about a phenomenon and managing it is usually a challenging task. As Jackson et al. (2007) point out, the major disadvantage of qualitative research would be that findings are not generalizable to another sample, or representative of a whole

population, because very few participants partake in this type of studies; yet, studies that adopt qualitative lenses offer much more depth of detail in the phenomenon they are investigating, which is what I have attempted to achieve throughout the four studies that compose this thesis.

4.3 Data, instruments and procedure

Data collection could be described as the process, or processes, of preparing and gathering data by means of particular techniques or methods to answer research questions or test to hypotheses.

In qualitative research, there are two types of data collection methods, both of them with an 'emic' perspective and grounded in sociology and ethnography: observational and non-observational methods (Burns, 2009). Observational methods in classroom research involve field notes, audio- or video-recordings of the class, observation of the classroom action, transcripts of classroom interactions (teacher-student, student-student), maps, layouts of the classroom, and photographs of the physical context. On the other hand, non-observational methods encompass questionnaires and surveys, interviews, class discussions or focus groups, diaries, journals and logs, and classroom documents (materials used, samples activities or tests) (Burns, 2009).

In my dissertation, I have used both observational and non-observational (or self-reported) data. Except for the first study, which relies solely on data gathered from focus groups, the rest of the studies use more than one data sort. Thus, the second study employs data from classroom observation and self-reported data from interviews and focus groups; the third study uses data from an individual interview, from an open-ended question from a questionnaire and from classroom observation; and the data for the fourth study were obtained via interviews, focus groups and an open-ended question from a questionnaire. This data triangulation permits gaining information at multiple levels and going beyond the knowledge acquired by one single approach or data sort, hence ensuring more trustworthy research (Flick, 2018). Furthermore, using various and

complementary methods is especially useful to achieve a more complete understanding of the Self (Mercer and Williams, 2014) and therefore is encouraged in constructionist approaches (see Barrett, 2016).

4.3.1 Non-observational data

Non-observational (or self-reported) data intend to inquire into various topics or phenomena such as demographic variables, personality traits, beliefs, attitudes, values, affect or behaviors by means of the participants' own words and experiences of reality (Chan, 2009). As Frith, Perry and Lurner (1999) explain, conscious mental states[12] are mental representations that, in theory, can be reported; therefore, perhaps the most direct way to measure one's mental representation (of emotion or of belief) is by examining how people use words to represent experiences (Barrett et al., 2007). Self-reports are a type of communicative which is extremely valuable "for revealing the ontological structure of consciousness" (Barrett et al., 2007, p. 377). Mesquita and Walker (2003) discard solely observing situations as a viable way of researching emotions, because they argue that self-reported data are necessary to understand observed emotional episodes. Despite their utility, self-reports have traditionally been regarded as fallible tools to study emotions, because they tell scientists more information about 'emotion language' than about 'emotions themselves'. Nevertheless, emotion is always a subjective, constructed experience, and thus, as Barrett (2006) points out, it will never be possible to measure emotion in an 'objective way' by simply measuring the face, heart rate, or any single set of physical measures alone. That is because what we measure is consensus, or our agreement that 'you and I agree in the emotion that you are feeling'. This consensus further reflects the nature of emotions as social, and not biological, processes that can be subjectively perceived, but not objectively detected.

[12] The reference to beliefs and emotions as "mental states" has been maintained in order to introduce Frith et al.'s (1999) original idea. However, as I explained in Part I, I do not conceive emotions or beliefs as mere mental states, but as processes which are socially and dialogically (co-)constructed.

The non-observational data that I have analyzed in my dissertation were obtained by three different methods of data collection: interviews, focus group discussions and open-ended question from a questionnaire, all of them conducted in Catalan, most of the students' L1[13]. For my study, twelve individual semi-structured interviews were used, four with local students and four with Chinese Erasmus students of each group (monolingual and translanguaging). The interviews with local students were collected as part of the funded project in the middle of the BAM ESP course, and the participants selected were students of different English levels who attended the course regularly, since the main goal of the interviews was to explore their experiences in that course. The interviews with Chinese students were carried out by me in order to gather more data, but were not part of the funded project.

Interviews have been described as "the gold standard of qualitative research" (Silverman, 2000, p. 51) and indeed they are very valuable to gain insights into individual's experiences, perceptions, beliefs, motivations and emotions in a way that is not possible with questionnaires (Richards, 2009). Questionnaires, although they offer a breadth of information by being answered by a large sample, do not provide the possibility of understanding thoroughly the experiences that might explain their responses. In semi-structured interviews, unlike in structured or open interviews, the researcher usually follows a guide with the key topics or questions that need to be answered in order to achieve a degree of comparison across interviews (Richards, 2009). Nevertheless, this format also allows for more flexibility to cover more subjects and to explain certain points more in depth. Hence, at the end of a semi-structured interview the interviewer will have, at least, covered the questions/topics from the interview guide and the respondent will not have the feeling of just having replied to questions, but to have participated in a "conversation with a purpose" (Richards, 2009).

[13] In the ESP course from the ACJ degree, the focus groups were carried out in English given that it was an assessment test. In the ESP course from the BAM degree, the students could choose to answer the questionnaire either in Catalan, Spanish or English. However, all the interviews (except for one which was in Spanish) and focus groups were conducted in Catalan, as all the students understood it and could speak it perfectly, even if it was not the L1 of all of them.

A data collection method quite similar to interviews is focus group discussions. Focus groups can be described as a group of people that is convened to talk about a set of questions on a particular topic (or topics) and its main goal is to generate discussions that uncover opinions about a particular issue or to reveal group consensus, if it exists (Cyr, 2016). The potential of focus groups arises from the "range of experiences and perspectives" (Morgan, 1996, p. 134) that is uncovered due to their the conversational nature, and thus multiple voices and reactions can be collected simultaneously, unlike in individual interviews. In my dissertation, I analyze data that were obtained by means of different focus groups. In the ESP course from the ACJ degree, the five focus groups of Study 1 –which do not belong to the funded project– were conducted by the teacher of the subject and his teaching assistant in January 2014. In the ESP course of BAM, six focus groups were carried out: two focus groups (pre-) were carried out in March 2017 –week 7– with eight students in the 'trans' group and seven in the 'mono' group and two in May (week 15) (post-), with the same students, although due to some technical difficulties three learners from the 'mono' group could not attend the meeting and a new one was incorporated. The remaining two focus groups were performed with Chinese Erasmus students (four in each group) during April 2017; the two focus groups with Chinese students were not part of the project and were carried out independently by my supervisor and me. I was also an interviewer, together with other colleagues of the team, in the two pre-focus groups for the 'trans' and 'mono' groups and in the post-focus group of the 'mono'.

The last non-observational data collection method that I have employed in study 3 and especially in study 4 is the response of one particular question from a questionnaire. The questionnaire was passed at the beginning (pre-) and at the end (post-) of the ESP course in the BAM degree in order to reveal beliefs and attitudes regarding English language learning. The item under analysis was an open-ended question with the following statement in the pre-: "Indicate some aspect(s) you remember positively of any English class you had throughout your life. Think about a lesson you liked and

explain why it was good". The question from the post-questionnaire was the same but focused on the ESP course they were enrolled in. Open-ended response items require respondents to answer them in their own words, by writing in the provided space, so they are particularly suited for qualitative exploratory research (Brown, 2009). On the contrary, closed-ended questions intend to collect numerical data to analyze statistically by requiring the participant to select from a limited list (i.e. forced-choice). Hence, open-ended items do not restrict the respondents to a set of predetermined answers, but allow them to express freely and more flexibly, sometimes to elaborate their answers to closed-response items. As Brown (2009) highlights, sometimes the answers are surprising and can offer striking examples and illustrative quotations, so they provide more richness, depth and color to data, especially if most of the items are closed-response, as it was the case with the questionnaire developed in the Plurelf project.

4.3.2 Observational data

Barrett (2006) maintains that in order to measure emotion, human experience and perception need to be explored as well as more 'objective' measures. Some of these objective measures include facial muscle movements, cardiovascular reactivity or any other physiological measures at the visceral level or at the central nervous system, which have been found to be insufficient on their own, without a context (Barrett, 2017a; Canon, 1927). If we take the stance that both emotions and beliefs exist through subjective experience and are constructed in social events, then, in addition to self-reported data, these should also be observed in action in the classroom context or setting. Studies that analyze emotions in the classroom as the object of inquiry from a qualitative, micro-level viewpoint are practically non-existent (see Encinas Sánchez, 2014; Imai, 2010). Emotions occur when participating and interacting in the context of the classroom culture, a participation which entails, amongst other aspects, language and behavior in the social space of the classroom. Therefore, this conceptualization

made it clear for me that audio- and video-recorded material was a highly valuable resource.

One third of the classes of the two groups of the ESP course in the BAM degree were audio- and video-taped. Thus, twelve sessions in total (weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14) of 1.5 hours or 2 hours, depending on the class duration, were recorded, plus a pilot recording that took place in the first day of class. The sessions were video-recorded with two cameras (one at the front and one at the back of the classroom) and ten audio-recorders distributed among the students' desks, every two or three students, depending on the number. Additionally, the teachers of the two groups had a lapel microphone during all the class. During the recording of the sessions, there were two members of the team (me included) observing what occurred in the class who wrote down field notes on aspects such as the use of different languages and for what purposes, student and teacher participation, accuracy and fluency based on the students' participation, types of learning tasks and degree of engagement in them, and presence (or absence) of learning episodes and language-related problems. The technicians of the project joined all the audio- and video- files from each session into one single file; this way it was possible to easily switch from all the audio and video tracks when an interesting episode seemed to take place between particular students. In order to make this task even simpler for the researchers, a classroom layout of all the sessions was created: a picture of the classroom distribution was taken and a key was created with the students' surnames and the number of audio-recorder each of them had, as it can be seen in Figure 9 below.

The analysis of videos in social research has flourished in the last decade (Cowan, 2014; Imai, 2010; Jewitt, 2012). The use of video camera in qualitative social research has become the "data collection tool of choice" for many researchers interested in studying situated interactions in natural settings such as classrooms (Jewitt, 2012, p. 2). Video recordings are a rich information source, different from other visual material such as field notes and photographs, given that they provide temporal and sequential record.

This offers the researcher moment-by-moment data about an event or episode while preserving simultaneity and synchrony of interaction (Cowan, 2014). For me, video- (and also audio-) recordings were a direct window to the classroom ecology that I could gaze through as many times as needed in order to capture its immense richness and to identify interesting episodes that were afterwards transcribed. Regarding transcription, Coates and Thornborrow (1999) challenge the assumption that there is a 'perfect' transcript or a 'true' version of audio or video recording, as it is always partial based on the analyst's decisions about what is relevant for his/her own purposes. They point out though that "this is not a tragedy but a necessity" (Coates and Thornborrow, 1999, p. 596) that depends on the goal of your research.

Figure 9. *Translanguaging group classroom layout (week 8)*

In order to explore the learners' situated emotional experiences in the classroom (e.g. in relation to the teacher or to the tasks), a multimodal interaction analysis was taken based on Norris' work (2004). The author describes multimodal analysis as a holistic methodological and analytical framework that allows the integration of verbal and nonverbal data as they are being used by individuals (inter)acting in the social world.

Thus, the selected classroom episodes were transcribed multimodally following Norris' (2004, p. 59) conventions, including not only the words uttered and the pauses, but also kinesics (gestures, head movement and gaze) and sometimes even proxemics (i.e. the use of the physical space of the classroom).

4.3.3 Data analysis

The dataset collected by means of interviews, focus groups, open-ended questions and classroom observation was afterwards analyzed using different methods and approaches. Since my dissertation is composed of four different studies, each piece of research uses different types of data and different sorts of analytical tools and analytical processes. Thus, in the first study, a combination of narrative positioning and Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) was performed in order to explore the experiences of English language learners (non-observational data); in the second one, an analysis of student-teacher moments of contact –or positivity resonance– was performed in order to delve into the role of positive emotions and how positive emotions are socially and interactionally-constructed in the classroom (non-observational and observational data); in the third study, a case study with a grounded theory approach was used to examine one learner's self-concept (non-observational and observational data); and, ultimately, in the fourth piece of research, a domain and taxonomic analysis and a content analysis was conducted to analyze the students' beliefs and emotions in relation to several aspects of the classroom, especially oral tasks (non-observational data). Therefore, the decision of employing different tools and procedures for data analysis was based not only on the type of data that was being analyzed, but also on the goal of each study and the research questions posed. The description of each analytical tool and of the data analysis process is thoroughly explained in each of the four chapters within the findings section.

Although the data that I examined came from classroom observations, interviews, focus groups, and open-ended questions from questionnaires, it is worth noting that I was also

acquainted with other type of data in order to make the picture of the learner more complete. Although these data were not directly analyzed, they served as a "messo-level" (Day, 2008) to further interpret findings. This messo-level is understood as all those elements of a distal context (e.g. one's profession, one's own experiences in a local setting, etc.) that can be brought to be in the actual analysis, also called the 'proximate context'. For instance, the fact that I am a Catalan woman, who was schooled in the Catalan education system and who was taught English in similar ways to the ones students report made it easier for me to fully comprehend their experiences. Moreover, in studies 2, 3 and 4, which derived from the granted project, I could have a more holistic picture of the learners because I was acquainted with their marks in language tests and their responses to the questionnaires, I knew how they behaved and what they said in class, and I sometimes even talked to some of them outside the classroom. Hence, although I have not used (all of) this information explicitly in my analyses, this knowledge complemented them and was always present, perhaps even unconsciously, during the analytical process.

4.4 Concluding remarks

Throughout this chapter I have provided an overview of the methodological framework employed in my dissertation. The chapter has started with the presentation of the rationale of my research, as well as its objectives and the research questions that will be addressed with the data analysis. Afterwards, I have conceptualized my research as qualitative by describing its main characteristics and I have justified the need to adopt this research paradigm in order to address my research questions. Next, I have explained the two types of data (observational and non-observational) that I use in my research, as well as the way(s) they have been collected, processed and analyzed. The chapters in the following part represent the four independent yet interconnected empirical studies that display the analyses and results of my research. Each chapter contains its own literature review, its research questions, its methodological framework and its own results and

discussion; therefore, all the specifications in terms of data collection, types of data used, analytical tools and processes that have been explained in general terms in this chapter will be elaborated further in each of the four studies.

PART III. FINDINGS

Chapter 5. Study 1

This chapter encapsulates the first study of the four that constitute this dissertation, and its scope is the most general of the four, as it intends to provide an overview of learners' beliefs and emotions with regard to the English language learning education received during their years of instruction in that language in Catalan schools. For that purpose, data from 5 focus groups with 31 university students have been analysed through a combination of Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA) and Narrative Positioning analysis of small stories. The findings reveal that the participants are dissatisfied with the English language education provided, and they believe that the teachers and/or the system are to blame for their (low) level of English. In the main story analysed, boredom, demotivation, irritation and frustration are emotions attached to English learning in high school, which are also present in most of our subjects' small stories; it is the repetition (iterativity) of small stories, beliefs and emotions across participants that leads us to the detection of a discourse of victimhood, by which students identify themselves as the victims of their English teachers and/or the education system.

5.1 Introduction

English is one of the central subjects in the Catalan curriculum of both primary and secondary education. Precisely due to its relevance, the education system has had –and still has– to face controversies about required standards for the students and teachers, the weight of grammar, the assessment of English and the best ways of preparing and training teachers, among other aspects. It seems thus that English teaching in Catalonia is still a challenge and despite the continuous research and the attempts of improving the situation, the results obtained by Catalan students in international EFL tests are, on average, low (Arnau and Vila, 2013). In order to understand (at least in some measure) why the learners' results are insufficient, it is fundamental to study the beliefs held and the emotions experienced by students, as these two factors exert a significant impact on their learning process and progress (e.g. Aragão, 2011; Peng, 2011; Pekrun et al., 2002;

Yoshida, 2013). Listening to students' voices is a valuable resource to assess English teaching/learning in Catalonia (or elsewhere) and to gain insight into the way the educational system works, at least, from the learners' perspective. In this line, this study aims to explore the participants' emotions attached to the English language lessons received so far and to reveal their beliefs regarding such English lessons. To this end, the following three research questions have been posed:

RQ 1: Who (or how) do students portray themselves as English language learners and how do they construct their English language learning experiences?

RQ 2: Who (or how) do students portray their past English language teachers?

RQ 3: What role does the education system play in the learners' constructions of their English language learning experiences?

In order to provide an answer to these questions, an excerpt in which two small stories appear, one as a consequence of the other, has been selected and has been analysed through a combination of Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA henceforth) (Sacks, 1972) and 3-level Positioning Analysis (or Narrative Positioning) in small stories (Bamberg, 1997); small stories, in contrast to "big stories", can be defined as "underrepresented narrative activities" (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 129), given that in research of narratives "there has been a long-standing tradition of investigating how socioculturally available –capital D– discourses ... are drawn upon by tellers in order to make sense of themselves over time and of the defining events that have happened to them" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2011, p. 162).

The main stories analysed in this study are only examples of the dominant discourse; however, these stories should not be understood as isolated narratives by a few individuals: there are multiple small stories across focus groups and across participants which make evident the power and the ubiquity of the circulating discourse. This repetition of (a type) of small story is what Georgakopoulou (2013) calls "iterativity";

My interest dwells thus in exploring how participants use small stories interactively and iteratively to construct a sense of who they are as English learners by displaying beliefs and emotions related to English learning experiences.

5.2 Theoretical framework and key notions

5.2.1 Learning English from a sociocultural approach: beliefs and emotions

Learning is much more than a cognitive process. Despite the apparent triviality of this statement, the "social" was perceived as secondary to the "cognitive" within the field of Second Language Acquisition for a long time. Scholars like Block (2003) called for a social turn in the field, and studies like Norton's (2000) or Miller's (2003) showed how the social context in which learning occurs is fundamental to account for the progress (or lack thereof) in the learning process. By way of illustration, Norton's (2000) research shows that immigrant women with low-status jobs living in Canadian neighbourhoods where languages other than English dominate have limited opportunities to practise English. This social context also contributes to undermining their self-confidence and to producing high levels of anxiety in them. In situations like these, the "social" is, without a doubt, as relevant as the "cognitive".

This study explores some learners' language beliefs and emotions, and thus tackles an important element of this social and affective aspect of learning. Emotions and beliefs sit somehow in between the social and the cognitive, in the sense that biological processes mediate beliefs and emotions but do not determine them (Barrett, 2017a; Ratner, 2000); rather, language beliefs and emotions are shaped by sociocultural processes and factors (Ratner, 2000) that are related to the learning of a certain foreign language –in this case English– given that language learning "does not happen in a culture-vacuum context and learner beliefs are born out of particular sociocultural contexts" (Peng, 2011, p. 315). In the case of beliefs, they are not only socially constructed, but they can be also socially shared by a group of individuals, becoming Discourses (see Harré and Gillett, 1994; van Dijk, 1995). I therefore consider that

beliefs and emotions influence each other (Frijda et al., 2000) and that they are intimately linked with learning contexts and the ever-changing nature of learners as human beings (Barrett, 2017a; Mercer, 2011a.). Therefore, in this study, beliefs and emotions are conceptualised as processes which are constructed, reconstructed and updated continuously as human beings inside and outside the classroom.

Barcelos (2000) defines "beliefs" as a way of viewing the world which provides the confidence to act in a certain way towards matters accepted as true, but which might be questioned in the future. Learner beliefs are a multifaceted and complex concept (Peng, 2011) and were originally explored as relatively stable mental representations, thus focusing on their cognitive dimension. Nonetheless, from a sociocultural and complex perspective, beliefs are regarded as emergent, dynamic, socially constructed and dependent on the context. Emotions have been given much less importance and attention than cognition in western tradition. However, Ratner (2000, p. 6) maintains that "dichotomizing emotions and thinking and attributing them to different processes" is a fundamental error, and argues that "emotions are feelings that accompany thinking. They are the feeling side of thoughts; thought-filled feelings; thoughtful feelings. Emotions never exist alone, apart from thoughts". Integrated into cognition, emotions are as cultural as thinking is, and these thoughtful feelings can be –although not necessarily– connected to expressive reactions (like smiling or frowning) and bodily reactions (sweating or secretion of hormones) (see Barrett, 2017a).

On the whole, to have knowledge of the students' beliefs and emotions is crucial because, as Barcelos (2000) argues, these elements have considerable importance in language learning since they tend to shape students' (and also teachers') perceptions and to influence their actions and behaviour in the classroom. Consequently, Aragão (2011) encourages the teachers to build rapport with their students and to provide conditions which facilitate learning in order to foster positive academic emotions and beliefs and to create an agreeable learning environment.

5.2.2 Learning English in Catalonia: theory vs. practice

In order to understand and correctly interpret our participants' stories, beliefs and emotions, we need to take into consideration English language education in the Catalan context. A fairly exhaustive explanation of the Catalan curriculum of foreign languages as well as of the overall level of Catalan students in the English language was provided in chapter 3.1. Thus, in this section a summary of the most relevant points which are necessary for an accurate data interpretation will be provided. The Catalan curriculum of foreign languages (Decree 187/2015) is competence-based and adopts a communicative approach. It offers some guidelines of the contents, some sample activities and some ways in which they can be assessed, but it also provides teachers with the freedom to choose the methodology, the materials and the activities to be used in class. It sets as the main goal that students know how to communicate in various languages and in several contexts with different speakers, and that they know how to face real-life situations in an autonomous and critical way.

Despite these guidelines, a communicative approach does not seem to be the rule across Catalan high schools. Aguilar (2003)'s paper, written from the perspective of an English Inspector from the Catalan Education Department, stressed that although the teaching of English had improved in comparison to a few decades before, the reality was that structural syllabuses were still used in the vast majority of classrooms and, subsequently, the limelight was on teaching grammar. The author also highlighted that learners were exposed to a limited sample of language, and that the pedagogical materials and classroom procedures were designed to focus on the form of the language. She strongly criticised, thus, that even though some grammar clarifications might be useful at some point, such traditional approaches relied heavily on (i) linguistically simplified teaching materials; (ii) explicit grammar explanations; and (iii) error correction. The approach still relies on the notion that students automatically learn what is taught in class, so students are asked for immediate production of the units previously

taught: "having practised the present perfect tense followed by for and since, the teacher administers a test to check acquisition of the structure" (Aguilar, 2003, p. 2).

A more recent study, Tragant et al. (2014)'s, points in the same direction. The study focused on the six Catalan high schools with the best results in the university entrance exam, and the researchers found that the reason for their success lied on classroom management issues (high level of exigency, time management and lack of discipline problems). However, in terms of teaching methodology, these schools did not seem to differ from less successful schools: individual work; teacher-centered lessons; the textbook-based educations; and many more written than speaking activities. The authors remark that some methodological aspects employed in these high schools do not coincide with the recommendations found in the literature on good practice and, on the whole, there is no evidence that the methodological aspects constitute a determining success factor in the high schools analysed. If we view the results in the English test among 4th ESO students (secondary school) in Catalonia in 2020, we see that there has been an improvement over previous years; however, results also show that 31.6% of students still have a low/medium-low level of the language (CSASE, 2020). In the case of 6th grade students (primary school), 34.6% have a low/medium-low competence of English (CSASE, 2019).

5.3 The study

5.3.1 Data collection and context

The data used in this study were gathered during December 2013 by means of five focus groups –coded FG1 to FG5– with a total of 31 participants, distributed in groups of five to seven people. The participants were year-one students of the ACJ degree in from Universitat de Lleida and the group discussions were an evaluative item of one subject. Thus, although the participants and the moderator share the L1, which is Catalan, the discussions were conducted in English in order to assess their competence in the language. The group discussions were video-recorded and the duration of the whole

exam was approximately one hour. For the present study, only 20-35 minutes of each conversation have been considered, which correspond approximately to the time students spent sharing their experiences in English language education. Data from the group discussions were transcribed using the software Atlas.ti, which was particularly helpful in the codification, organization and the search of specific themes across data. Despite the fact that the amount of data was large[14], I decided to perform a micro-analysis of a particular moment in one focus group that permitted me to analyse in depth how emotions and beliefs are socially and discursively (co-)constructed, expressed and shared. Participants provided their consent to use these videos for research and academic purposes, pseudonyms have been used in order to ensure the informants' anonymity, and the names of two high schools which appear in the transcript have been replaced by HS1 and HS2.

5.3.2 Data analysis

Narrative is an imprecise concept which has been understood more generally as a way of making sense of the world, and, more moderately, as a particular type of discourse (Georgakopoulou, 2007). In order to analyse this "type of discourse", I have decided to employ a method which fusions MCA and Positioning Analysis (or Narrative Positioning). Deppermann (2013) compared positioning analysis and MCA and, despite considering that positioning goes beyond MCA, he concluded that "membership categorisation analysis is a core element of positioning" (Deppermann, 2013, p. 129). This study hence analyses categories constructed sequentially and interactionally, for which Positioning Analysis is fundamental, and shares Wilkinson and Kitzinger's (2003) view that positioning analysis has to make use of MCA (and conversely). MCA was developed by Harvey Sacks (1972) in order to analyse the way members of society use categories (i.e. classifications) to organise and understand the social world. In Sacks' (197, p. 330) famous example "the baby cried, the mommy picked it up", he

[14] For a piece of research analysing all the data obtained in the focus groups see Diert-Boté (2016).

wondered why everyone understands that it is the baby's mommy (and not any other mommy) who picked it up. He suggested that categorization is fundamental to understand the statement and proposed an apparatus which allowed a comprehension of "what was going on". Said apparatus is composed of membership categorization devices (MCD), i.e. collections of categories, such as "family", which includes the categories of "mommy" and "baby", and the notion of category-boundedness, that is, activities bound to certain categories (for instance, "crying" is a category-bound activity –CBA– of the category "baby"). Apart from CBAs, Watson (1978) proposed category-bound predicates (CBPs), for he considered that categories not only have correlated activities, but also rights, obligations, features, knowledge, attributes, etc. (Roca-Cuberes, 2008). We understand that it is the baby's mommy who picked it up because they are members of the same MCD and that one of the activities that mothers (are supposed to) do is picking up their babies when they cry. The MCA apparatus is a member's, not an analyst's, apparatus, as it is a set of interpretive practices used by a member to understand and construct social realities within a specific interactional framework (Roca-Cuberes, 2008).

The second analytical tool, Narrative Positioning, derives from Bamberg's (1997) proposal of the 3-level analysis model in narratives, more concretely, in small stories. The term "small stories" originated in opposition to the prototypical narrative analysis model proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967), which led to the creation of a narrative canon, and, as a consequence, to several assumptions on, for instance, what a story is or what structure and components it has. As De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008) remark, this definition of narrative has led to the understanding of narratives as well-organized texts (structurally, chronologically and spatially) of a highly tellable event, i.e. life-stories or autobiographical accounts, usually in the form of monologues and as replies to (interviewer's) questions. These authors also point out that "narratives need to be studied as texts that get transposed in time and space, that (re)produce and modify current discourses" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008 p. 384). They might be small,

locally-relevant stories, but they tend to echo social discourses that can be reproduced or challenged.

These “big stories/narratives” have been explored contextless, which means that the situated talk and activity have not been taken (much) into account. The study of small stories started thus as an “antidote formulation” (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 129); as Georgakopoulou (2006) explains, in her data there were some small stories which fulfilled the prototypical canon criteria, but some others failed to do so; however, as she claims, not considering them as stories would overlook its social significance and omit the tellers’ understandings of their (social) world. Small stories are defined by the author (2006, p. 129) as “underrepresented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell”.

Going back to Narrative Positioning, Bamberg (1997) proposed a method to apply the notion of “positioning” to storytelling. Positioning is defined by Davies and Harré (1990, p. 48) as “the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent storylines”. Bamberg (1997) proposed three levels of analysis: level 1 analyses the storyworld (how the teller is positioned vis-à-vis the characters of the story); level 2 explores the here-and-now of interaction, that is, the positioning in an interactional event between the teller and the interlocutors; and level 3 inquiries into how the teller (his/her Self) positions him/herself vis-à-vis societal Discourses. Particularly important for the current study is the concept of “iterativity” (Georgakopoulou, 2013), comprised within this last level, that allows us to see “what tends to happen in those two levels of positioning [1 and 2] in a particular type of stories told over and over by the same teller in similar sites” (Georgakopoulou, 2013, p. 103). Thus, it has to be pointed out that the author employs the concept in her studies to refer to the repetition of a certain type of story by a particular teller in a given situation. Nevertheless, I would like to argue that “iterativity” can also be understood as the

repeated presence of a "type of story", like Georgakopoulou claims, across several tellers in a similar context (for a similar approach see De Fina, 2013). In this line, "iterativity" can also be understood and applied when resembling stories are recited by different tellers in similar situations in which shared beliefs or discourses are exposed.

5.4 Findings

In the dataset, several small stories in which the tellers as students and their English teachers are the protagonists can be encountered. In the selected excerpt, two stories appear, the second (Clàudia's) as a consequence of the first (Yolanda's). When the moderator asks "do you think that English education in Catalonia works?", participants do not need to bring up stories to respond, and yet some of them do. The fact that they answer with stories indicates their willingness to approach the topic from a more intimate perspective, one which implicates themselves more personally (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008). As De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2008) point out, when telling stories, tellers perform numerous social actions, for instance putting forward an argument (Yolanda) or challenging the interlocutor's views (Clàudia). Nevertheless, the participants' actual aim of using stories here is to provide a persuasive explanation that can justify their little progress in English during the years of instruction and to present the teachers and/or the education system as the culprits of this situation in order to save their own face.

Excerpt 5.1 (FG1)

1	Daniel	I think I agree tha:t (.) in genera:l (.) a bad education (.) of English. (.) and if you for example do:n't (1) don't study in a (.) academy of English you don't lea:rn (1) English. (.) but in the school there a:re bad level I think. (Mercè and Clàudia nod)
2	Moderator	do you think that the teachers have a bad level or that the level is bad in general?
3	Mercè	[no:]
4	Joanna	[no]
5	Daniel	eh t-the level that the teache:rs e:h

6	Moderator	(2) teach?
7	Daniel	teach (.) yes. (nods)
8	Moderator	it's bad? (Mercè nods)
9	Yolanda	I'm agree because it's not about the teacher (.) is not about what the teacher knows (.) is about how they try to make you: understand (.) make you speak (.) I mean I was last year in [HS1] and the teacher enters to the class and (.) hi boys hi girls. eh present simple (.) (fast) I am you are he is she is. (/fast)
10	All	hahaha (Clàudia nods)
11	Yolanda	and I was like OH MY GOD I don't understand it (.) when I was five years old I was learning it and now still learning it. (.) I don't know. (.) I mean we don't speak (.) if you try to speak the teacher says (fast) (frowns) okay shut up I don't have time I gotta go (/fast) or…
12	Clàudia	and what about the program they have? (.) they have a paper that says you have to teach this (.) this to the:
13	Yolanda	yeah. (nods)
14	Moderator	do you think that the paper says you have to teach present simple?
15	Yolanda	no.
16	Clàudia	we:ll (0.5) I think some papers do. (.) I mean some some lessons are just essential for every course. (.) I mean I went to [HS2] and my teacher wa:s was bri:lliant. (.) eh she: she knew a lot of English (.) but the classes were really low were really poor (2) that's because she knows she's supposed to teach thi:s and that.
17	Moderator	do you think that the government should improve that?
18	Clàudia	yeah.
19	Moderator	OK. because what they have to do is not the thing (.) right?
20	Clàudia	yes. because if they sta:rted from the very beginning (.) when you are a chi:ld
21	Yolanda	yeah.
22	Clàudia	improving the: (.) the leve:l (.) not only repeating and doing past simple activitie:s. (participants laugh)
23	Daniel	yes.
24	Yolanda	(2) but maybe: (.) I think I think eh it's the the life of the teacher (.) I mean they are really bored explaining and if you don't like it what a- why are you working there? I mean you are a teache:r (.) an English teacher (.) it's (looks around and raises the brow) (.) it's SUPPOSED you like to: teach people a:nd speaking in English a:nd making them feel (.) better and fee:l [so excited]

25 Moderator	[good.](.) OK. so do you think this has to do with the insecurity of the teacher?
26 Yolanda	not insecurity. (.) it's like they are tired of always teaching the same and they go to the class and they say OK today this this and this and bye (snaps her finger) go to home (.) if you like to do somethi:ng (.) you like to do it with energy (.) with- (grimaces)

5.4.1 Level 1: Yolanda's story and the "present-simple teacher"

The selected episode occurs in 28m 55s of FG1. In turn 1, Daniel states that "in the school there are [sic] bad level" and that unless students attend language schools, they do not learn. The moderator, however, wants Daniel to specify whether it is the teacher or the students who have a bad level of English. By doing this, she is alluding to a category of the MCD "types of teachers": "the bad-level teacher". Mercè and Joana reject the relevance of this category (although it is significant in other episodes), and Daniel clarifies that the problem is not the level they have, but the level they teach.

At this point, Yolanda aligns with Daniel since, according to her, the problem is not what the teachers know (their level), but their way of teaching. To make the explanation even clearer, she resorts to a small story. In her tale, she shares a memory of an episode which was probably quite recurrent in her English lessons (she says "the teacher *enters*", which may imply a routine). The setting is the tellers' high school, HS1, the previous year, and the characters are 17-year-old Yolanda, 5-year-old Yolanda, her classmates and her English teacher. In the story, the teacher enters the room greeting the students with "hi boys, hi girls" and then directly moves on to teaching the present simple tense. The teller's emphasis on this short time lag between the greeting and the grammatical explanation reflects the teacher's excessive interest in grammar. I have labelled this type of teacher "present-simple teacher" (within the "types of teachers" MCD), based on the way most informants describe their English teachers' lessons. This type of teacher is constructed in Yolanda's story as performing the following CBAs:

“teaches a lot of grammar”, “provides the same grammatical explanations repeatedly course after course”, and “hushes the students”, for s/he allegedly does not allow them to speak in class. One of the main characters of this story, 17-year-old Yolanda, recollects an episode from a younger self: when she was 5 years old, she was already taught the present simple tense, and the character is portrayed remembering that episode with shock and disbelief (in turn 11 she exclaims “Oh my God I don’t understand it”). It sounds like an epiphany: she realizes that something is wrong with English language teaching. A CBPs for this type of teacher would be “is in a hurry” and therefore does not have time (or interest) to listen to the students when the class is over.

Although the small story ends in turn 11, Yolanda continues constructing the present-simple teacher. In turn 22, she attempts to provide an explanation for why this type of teachers is ineffective. She claims that it has to do with their life: they do not enjoy being teachers and therefore their demotivation can be perceived in the way they develop the lessons. In the description of the character above, we have already provided a list of CBAs and CBPs; two new predicates for the members of this category are: “they do not like their job”; and they “are really bored explaining”. In the same turn, Yolanda adds another predicate closely related to the previous one, which is “is tired of always teaching the same”. Just after that, Yolanda expresses that “if you like to do somethi:ng (.) you like to do it with energy with…”, which reinforces the idea that the present simple teacher is bored and tired. In turn 22, Clàudia adds another category-bound activity to the “present-simple teacher”, which is “always repeats the same grammar activities”. By enumerating the characteristics of the “present-simple teacher”, Yolanda and Clàudia are concurrently presenting the opposite category: the “effective teacher”. What provides the clue for intuiting a new category is Clàudia’s statement in the subjunctive mood: “because if they sta:rted from the very beginning (.) when you are a child” (turn 20). This reveals a belief about what, according to this participant, an ideal or effective teacher would do in the classroom in order to ensure a fruitful learning process to the students. Thus, according to Clàudia, category-bound activities of the

"effective teacher" would be: "helps students improve their level since childhood" and "does not repeat the same grammar activities".

5.4.2 Level 2: expressing emotions and negotiating discourses

One of the main focal points in this study is the emotions displayed by the participants with respect to their experiences in the English classroom. Since Yolanda is the main speaker, our attention has been directed to what emotions related to the classroom context she expresses and how. Although we cannot analyse the *real* emotions felt in class, we can somehow have access to them in the here-and-now of telling: when she is telling her story, she is in a way reliving the emotions she experienced in class and expressing them in talk, probably consciously in order to make her story more genuine. According to Niemeier and Dirven (1997, p. 250), direct speech has the capacity to "represent emotive-affective features of the 'original' utterance". In fact, it is especially during these passages of direct speech when Yolanda reveals more evidently her emotions towards the situation: when she is reciting the present simple, she moves her head mechanically like a robot, and her facial expressions clearly show boredom and demotivation. These negative "academic emotions" (Pekrun et al., 2002) are probably the emotions that she felt (or feels) when studying grammar, and probably also the expression that 17-year-old-Yolanda remembers on the teacher's face while explaining repeatedly the same grammatical structure. In fact, as we mentioned before, she explicitly mentions that "the teacher is really bored explaining".

In the second direct quotation, she places her hands with the palms to the front, in a way that indicates "stop" or "keep a distance", which helps to convey her idea that this type of teacher's concern is giving the lesson and leaving the class without minding the students' needs. Additionally, she drastically changes her neutral facial expression into a rather irritated one by frowning. During these direct quotations, her speech rate increases and her voice tone changes: in the first impersonation, it is monotone and flat, whereas in the second one, it is more aggressive, which in our sociocultural context

would convey anger. These emotions are evoked again afterwards, in turn 24, by the same speaker but outside her small story. She claims that the teachers "are really bored explaining", which it could be interpreted as matching the bodily expression of the emotion identified in the first direct quotation; at the end of the turn, she states that an English teacher is supposed to "make [the students] feel better", which is connected to the second direct quotation in which the teacher is portrayed as unwilling to build rapport with the students. The fact that Yolanda draws the attention to the lack of rapport is key to understand her complaint and the frustration or irritation that she felt (and apparently still feels) in the English class because she perceived that her teacher did not care about her.

Yolanda's imitation of her "present-simple teacher" makes the other participants laugh (turn 10), which seems to indicate that they share her position, as they have had similar experiences recounted in the rest of the dataset. However, Clàudia aligns only partially with Yolanda's statement: she positions in favour of the idea that there is an excess of grammar teaching in the classroom, but disagrees in that it is not completely the teacher's fault: the "program", or "paper" (turn 12), i.e. the curriculum, which is designed by the educational authorities and must be followed by teachers, is also to blame. By doing so, Clàudia adds another predicate to the "present-simple teacher" category: "follows a program that tells him/her to teach grammar". There is, however, a negotiation of this predicate, and this negotiation is vital: in turn 13, Yolanda initially accepts this predicate and therefore admits that the overabundance of grammar is not completely the teacher's fault; however, when the moderator asks "do you think that the paper says you have to teach present simple?" (turn 14), Yolanda misaligns with Clàudia again and returns to her initial position. Yolanda's shifting between positions may result contradictory; yet, the explanation could be that, at first, she agrees with Clàudia about the existence of a curriculum which the teachers have to follow. Nevertheless, after the moderator's question, Yolanda realizes –probably due to the moderator's tone of incredulity– that the curriculum is not as specific, and therefore that

it is the teacher's choice to devote so much time to grammar. For her part, Clàudia does not change her mind, but somehow softens her position by saying "well" and "*some* papers do" in order to save her face. Her conclusion is that some lessons are simply essential, implying that grammar must be studied anyway.

In turn 16, Clàudia uses a story to argue her point. Having listened to Yolanda's story, in which English teachers are depicted from an overwhelmingly negative perspective, Clàudia comes to their rescue by sharing her own experience. In Clàudia's story, set in her high school –HS2–, her former English teacher, described as "brilliant", appears; for the teller, being a "brilliant" English teacher means being proficient in English. The teacher's lessons, however, are described as "low" and "poor". What is remarkable here is that this informant believes that "brilliant teachers" are transformed into "present-simple teachers" because they have this program which they must follow, and, as a consequence, their lessons are "low". The teacher in this case is not constructed as the antagonist or as the culprit causing problems for the students, as happened in story 1. In this story, the teacher is portrayed in a position of victimhood and trouble, and, as a consequence, so are her students. Thus, English teachers are represented as being subjugated to the power of the curriculum, which is designed by education authorities, and therefore they have little say in what and how to teach. As Clàudia states in turn 12, before she tells her story, the curriculum "says you have to teach this (.) this to the students", and, subsequently, her English teacher, despite being "brilliant", "knows she's supposed to teach this and that".

There is certainly a clash of discourses, which was already made evident in the negotiation of the predicate "follows a program that tells him/her to teach grammar". Whereas Clàudia seems to believe that the presence of a curriculum which stipulates grammar teaching is essential to understand and justify the existence of the "present-simple teacher" category, Yolanda –despite her momentary alignment with Clàudia– refuses to evade the teachers from any responsibility. This disagreement in the inclusion

of this predicate points to a different understanding of the category. This level 2 positioning is crucial because it helps not only to identify the participants' discourses, but also to comprehend them in the specific context in which the discourse construction takes place. Through her contribution, Clàudia brings to the fore the question of "who is to blame?", and both Yolanda and Clàudia –probably under a certain influence of the moderator– negotiate and attempt to provide an answer to this question. The emergence of these two stories makes sense in and only because of the here-and-now of telling, that is, the very moment of interaction.

5.4.3 Level 3: the Discourse of victimhood

We have analysed how both Yolanda and Clàudia position themselves and their English teachers as characters in the storyworld (level 1), and how they position themselves in the interactive episode with their classmates and the moderator (level 2). In this final stage, we need to answer one big question: "who am I?", or, more precisely, "who are *we*?". Who are the tellers as (English) students and how do they position themselves and their English teachers within their sociocultural context? In this excerpt, the participants provide information about themselves (and about "their Selves"), but in the quest to discover who they are, our main focus is on the beliefs they display regarding: (1) who (or how) they are as English students, (2) who (or how) their English teachers are as teachers, and (3) the role that the education system plays in all this.

In the excerpt analysed, we have identified through the use of small stories two beliefs which two of the participants reveal. The first, displayed by Yolanda, is that students are the victims of teachers who are only concerned about providing grammatical explanations while ignoring the students' needs. The second, as Clàudia argues, is that both students and teachers are the victims of the educational authorities, which are in charge of designing the curriculum. Although these beliefs are slightly different, they both point to a discourse of victimhood, by which English students are the victims of grammar-obsessed teachers and/or a flawed education system. The excerpt included

here was only an instance to illustrate the students' general discontentment with English learning. However, what is interesting to note is that all 31 participants of the focus groups expressed dissatisfaction with the methodology employed in the English lessons. Their main complaint is directed towards the excess of grammar teaching to the detriment of other more dynamic and communicative activities such as watching videos or films, listening to music and, above all, practising speaking skills. We found 28 episodes in which they complain about this issue, and they often do so by means of small stories with present present-simple teachers as protagonists, like Yolanda and Clàudia did:

Excerpt 5.2 (FG1)

Joana when I stay in school (.) my English teachers m: (.) don't let me to ta:lk and listen music and see: watch films (.) and this is so important to learn (.) and not only grammar and vocabulary and (.) yes (.) it's importa:nt (.) but the other too.

Excerpt 5.3 (FG2)

Míriam I think that since I was five: (.) or three: the: the teachers just say this is a: this is a pencil (.) vocabulary and grammar (.) but they didn't teach how to use that vocabulary or how to use that grammar speaking (.) they only teach the: writing and saying it's a lamp it's a window (.) or present simple: I am (.) my name i:s

Excerpt 5.4 (FG3)

Gemma when we speak English in class we feel unsafe and eh we are embarrassi:ng (.) and nobody speak and teache:rs (.) grammar grammar grammar grammar.

Excerpt 5.5 (FG4)

Glòria in secondary school I don't think it's a good process how they do it beca:use they always do grammar (.) my teachers only did

grammar grammar gramma:r and always the same (.) and they didn't let students to speak or things like that.

The characters of both the students and the teachers in most of the small stories are depicted in a way that is similar to Yolanda and Clàudia's: the teacher is presented as mainly carrying out grammar explanations and activities and very little speaking tasks, while the students portray themselves as being unable to learn or improve their English because of the excess of grammar in the class, repetitive and uncommunicative activities, and little practice of the language. Moreover (and probably as a consequence), they relate exclusively negative emotions to the English learning setting; apart from demotivation, boredom, irritation and frustration, identified by Yolanda, participants also mention feelings of insecurity, fear and embarrassment. Other times, the participants show their disappointment through statements, hypothetical events and suppositions. A strategy which they employ on countless occasions is to express their loathing towards grammar by repeating the word three times ("grammar, grammar, grammar"), like Glòria and Gemma do.

Apart from the grammar, another key issue is teacher-student rapport, introduced by Yolanda, which is connected to the emotional climate of the classroom. Although this topic is not as recurrent as grammar, in the instances they refer to the relationship with their English teachers they do it in negatively, for instance:

Excerpt 5.6 (FG4)

Mireia And the teachers were too different (0.5) he: only cares about the people who know some English and the othe:rs (.) when the teacher speaks and explains the lesson but the class don't understa:nd (.) he doesn't care (.) and the girl was very careful about everyone

With these set of isolated stories we can weave a web that enables us to construct a bigger picture, that is, the dominant discourse among some English students in a Catalan context. This discourse of victimhood is grasped and made relevant thanks to an

"iterativity" (Georgakopoulou, 2013) detected in the small stories analysed. Georgakopoulou (2013, p. 103) argues that scrutiny on iterativity permits us to gain insight into positioning levels 1 and 2 "in a particular type of stories told over and over by the same teller in similar sites". Nonetheless, in this research we have looked at a particular type of stories told not only by one teller, but by different tellers in similar contexts. This iterativity has allowed us to recognize (1) the emotions which the participants report to have experienced in the English class; (2) the shared beliefs about their English teachers, about themselves, and about the education system; and (3) the circulating discourse of victimhood that the participants (re)produce.

5.5 Discussion

The aim of this study was to identify the beliefs and emotions of some English students with respect to their English language experience through MCA and narrative positioning in small stories. More specifically, the objective was to explore: (1) who (or how) the participants are as English students, (2) who (or how) their English teachers are as teachers –from the viewpoint of the students–, and (3) the role that the education system plays in these self- and other- representations. The students are presented as victims and claim that their little progress in English is mostly due to having "present-simple teachers". Yolanda, the main participant, attaches blame directly to this type of teachers, whereas Clàudia believes that the blame falls on the curriculum, and, subsequently, on the education system, which instructs the teachers to do grammar in class.

The learners display this discourse of victimhood by categorizing their teachers and by engaging in narratives in which they depict themselves as bored, demotivated and frustrated. These negative emotions appear to be related to two main points, as the analysis of Yolanda's narrative suggests. On the one hand, it has been observed that due to the overabundance of repetitive grammar activities in the classroom, the emotions that she mentions and displays in her discourse are demotivation and boredom. On the

other, the teacher's reluctance to build rapport with the students arouses emotions of frustration and irritation in her due to the unpleasant experience she underwent learning English. These negative emotions (and others like insecurity, embarrassment or fear), the "present-simple teacher" and the complaints about grammar issues are present across numerous episodes in the five focus groups. This iterativity has contributed to the construction of a bigger picture of the English learners' beliefs and emotions in a Catalan scenario and to the understanding of what the problem with English education is from their viewpoint in such learning context.

The analysis of the narratives therefore suggests that, for these learners, the classroom is both (1) a threatening place where they feel insecure, embarrassed, afraid and pressured, and an (2) uninteresting environment in which they feel bored and demotivated. The participants associate the classroom with a menacing and judgmental environment particularly when they have to speak in front of their teacher and peers in English, as it has been reported in other studies as well (see Miccoli, 2001; Aragão, 2011; Yoshida, 2013). This occurs because students tend to have low-self concepts and feel that their competence in English is not as good as it should be due to the lack of oral practice and their preoccupation with correctness and accuracy (Yoshida, 2013), probably induced by the excess of grammar teaching. On the other hand, the classroom becomes an uninteresting setting because as the participants themselves claim, they feel that they do not advance in their learning process because the tasks they are asked to perform are monotonous and devoid of purpose and meaning.

5.6 Conclusion

In the present research, the analysis was based on students' self-reported accounts by which students were remembering (and somehow reliving) their English lessons and expressing emotions while talking about them. The micro-analysis of their interactions and discourses has provided greater understanding of how both beliefs and emotions are not static mental states, but rather meaningful complex processes which are expressed

and negotiated in discourse and which can be collectively shared. The analysis also shows the beliefs and emotional experiences that the students relate to their past English language lessons. The participants seem to be fairly dissatisfied with the English language education received and they point out two main reasons for that: firstly, the fact that during their lessons grammar instruction was the focus and, secondly, the teacher's indifferent attitude towards them. On the whole, it is noticeable that the participants give central importance to the features that teachers have (both from a professional and from a human point of view) and their abilities to build rapport with them, as well as to the type of activities that they performs (or not) in class (e.g. grammar or speaking exercises).

A further line of research would be to observe both students and teachers in action, experiencing the emotions *in situ*. This interaction between the teacher and the learners in the naturalistic setting of the classroom will be the focus of the next chapter, in which observational data will be complemented by interviews and focus group discussions, in which emotions and beliefs related to the role of the teacher emerge.

Chapter 6. Study 2

This chapter presents the second study conducted in order to delve more in depth into the role that the teacher plays in the emotional experiences of the English language learners in the classroom. This research draws on theories from Positive Psychology (Fredrickson, 2001; 2013) in order to explore moments of positive contact between teacher and students (see Korthagen, Attema-Noordewier and Zwart, 2014). These moments of teacher-student positive contact have been examined via (1) students' self-reported accounts of their experiences in English learning contexts through four interviews and three focus groups; and (2) observable classroom practices through audio/video recordings of six class sessions. Findings reveal that positive emotion, which is co-constructed by both teacher and student(s) in in-situ interaction, seems to (a) benefit the learner at multiple levels (emotionally, behaviorally, motivationally and cognitively), to (b) contribute to creating rapport between both parties, and to (c) help fulfill various language learning-related goals.

6.1 Introduction

Teaching involves much more than having content knowledge and transmitting it to your students. As Day (2004) points out, good teaching requires commitment not only at an intellectual level, but also at an emotional one. Despite this, the tradition in SLA has given more weight to cognitive variables –which are easier to manipulate and quantify– than to the emotional ones. Most research on the emotional dimension of language learning has focused until fairly recently on negative emotions and their detrimental impact rather than to the beneficial outcomes of positive emotions (Gregersen, MacIntyre and Mercer, 2016). Nevertheless, with the introduction of Positive Psychology in the field of SLA (see MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012), there has been an increased interest in exploring ways to develop tools that can contribute to fostering positivity in class and, in turn, to sustaining learner's engagement.

As it is within the language teacher's power to address the emotional concerns of their students (Horwitz, 1995) and to provide more caring classrooms with more positive emotions and connections (Barcelos and Coelho, 2016), the aim of the present study is to analyze teacher-student interaction taking into account the experience of positivity in the classroom. To this end, the co-construction of positive emotions in the classroom is analyzed in teacher-student moments of contact (Korthagen, Attema-Noordewier and Zwart, 2014) or moments of positivity resonance (Fredrickson, 2013) in order to identify the function(s) and the influence that positive emotion and teaching practices might have on the language learner.

6.2 Theoretical framework and key notions

6.2.1 Emotions and Positive Psychology in SLA

The social turn (Block, 2003) was marked by studies that emphasized the social and contextual dimension of second/foreign language learning and paved the way for the development of subsequent turns, such as the emotional one. This development in the field of SLA also led to new and more complex and dynamic understandings of the learner, of the learning process and of relevant constructs such as learner's identities, beliefs or emotions (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). With the emotional turn, emotional experiences in the language learning classroom have been increasingly studied in order to comprehend the role that they play in language learning processes. Although emotions have been inquired as well in other educational settings and areas, such as mathematics (e.g.,, McLeod, 1992), they appear to be particularly relevant in the acquisition of a new language, due to the fact that a lack of full mastery of the vehicle of expression can create more vulnerable self-concepts (Arnold, 2009).

Whereas past research on emotions, or 'affect', had almost exclusively focused on anxiety (e.g.,, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986), with the advent of Positive Psychology in SLA in the last years, positive emotions (mostly enjoyment) and related concepts (such as hope, well-being, flow, love, emotional intelligence or self-

constructs) are becoming the center of many empirical studies. Positive Psychology explores the ways in which individuals can function optimally, flourish and thrive even in averse situations (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and one of its key propositions is Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. This theory posits that positive emotion has a different function from negative emotion: whilst negative emotion narrows one's perspective in order to overcome a particular threat and generates specific action tendencies such as fight or flight, positive emotion broadens a person's thought-action repertoire (through play, exploration, interest, etc.) and promotes discovery of novel and creative actions or ideas which, subsequently, build enduring personal resources which can be drawn on to cope with unfavorable circumstances. Applied to language learning, this means that positive emotion facilitates the building of learning and personal resources to endure difficult situations in the learning process and that, due to its broadening effect, opens the individual to absorb the target language (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012).

6.2.2 Teacher-student contact and positivity resonance

Teaching is innately interactive since it entails "making connections with an active, growing mind" (Tiberius, 1993-94) and, especially in language learning, it is through interacting, negotiating, collaborating and dialoguing with others that we learn (Barcelos and Coelho, 2016). This interpersonal side of language teaching began to be studied through research drawing on sociocultural approaches which understand teaching and learning as socially situated and which explore language learners in context, with a focus on relationships with people with whom they learn and use the language (Mercer, 2016). In the classroom, these relationships involve mainly student-student and teacher-student relationships. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) point out, interactions between the teacher and the learner affect the dynamics of the complex system of the classroom and construct (or constrain) learning affordances (van Lier, 2000), depending on the nature of such interactions. As shown in Chapter 5, the

role of the teacher and how they relate to the students plays a fundamental role in the emotions that students experience in the language learning classroom. In this line, evidence from educational research also shows that teacher-student relationships play a fundamental role in learning because, as Hamre and Pianta (2006, p. 71) emphasize, positive teacher-student relationships are "fundamental to [students'] success in school, and as such, these relationships should be explicitly targeted".

However, teacher-student relationships research, which comes from various educational and psychological theories (mainly self-determination theory and attachment theory[15]), does not directly deal with contextualized and in-situ *contact*. Whereas relationships refer to a more enduring phenomenon, *contact* is defined as a "momentary phenomenon" which has to do with "encounters between teachers and students in the here-and-now" (Korthagen et al., 2014, p. 24). Contact moments are situated in a continuum from superficial (e.g., saying hello to a student) to more intense contact (e.g., sharing a serious personal problem) and accumulate over time; therefore, they are the basis for relationships. Good contact between teacher and student requires a connection in the here-and-now and a willingness and openness to experience this connection (Korthagen et al., 2014). Korthagen et al. (2014) conclude that teacher-student contact is a two-way process in which both parties influence each other's responses. An indicator of good contact is the positive effect on the students' active learning behavior and on their emotional and motivational states; the teachers participating in Korthagen et al. (2014) perceived an effect on their students which they considered positive, like a cognitive insight, a positive feeling, increased motivation and/or a behavioral impulse. In the field of SLA, only Henry and Thorsen (2018) have analyzed to date teacher-student interaction through moments of contact. This research provides conceptually grounded explanations of how here-and-now connections have an impact on language

[15] Broadly speaking, self-determination theory (see Ryan and Deci, 2000) posits that individuals are motivated to grow and change when their needs for competence, connection and autonomy are satisfied. On the other hand, attachment theory (see Ainsworth, 1978) focuses on bonds and etween people, particularly long-term ones, suh as parent-child or romantic relationships.

students' engagements and motivation, and reveals how moments of personal contact and their influences seem to differ in emerging and mature teacher-student relationships.

Moments of contact share many similarities with Fredrickson's (2013) notion of micro-moments of positivity resonance, i.e., moments in which two or more individuals experience shared positive affect, mutual care and even synchrony in behavior. Fredrickson discovered that our brains and bodies respond positively to connection with other human beings, regardless of the extent to which we know the other person, although spending more moments with the other person increases the possibilities of experiencing micro-moments of positivity resonance. The basis for positivity resonance, or positive contact, is love, which Fredrickson (2013) identifies as the most experienced positive emotion. Following this line of thought, Barcelos and Coelho (2016) argue that love is crucial in language teaching; the authors explain that students and teachers tend to co-construct a supportive classroom environment by changing and adapting to each other's emotional states, for instance, by means of jokes and casual conversations. In fact, Henry and Thorsen (2018) found that the positive emotion aroused during positive resonance produces "unconscious incentives that shape subsequent behaviors" (p. 220), similar to the positive effects of good contact identified in Korthagen et al. (2014). Similarly, Li and Rawal (2018) found that love between teachers and learners was displayed in the form of mutual understanding and support during classroom interactions, and that love was communicated through teacher's care for students and the joint creation of a supportive learning environment.

These micro-moments of positivity enhance mutual care over time and help build bonds and community (Fredrickson, 2013). In this sense, positivity resonance is conceptualized as socially and interactionally constructed, which implies adopting a conceptualization of emotions as emergent, dynamic and contextually co-constructed processes which are constantly shaped through interactions with individuals from the social world (e.g., Barrett, 2017; Boiger and Mesquita, 2012; Ratner, 2000), rather than

being understood as abstract mental phenomena that develop as innate maturating programs. In this sense, this study offers a contextualized view of interactions in the classroom milieu, an aspect which, as pointed out by Oxford (2016), has not been much taken into consideration in positive psychology studies, as very little information about the classroom contexts and the teacher-student interactions tends to be provided. Following this socio-psychological constructionist framework of emotional experiences, and drawing on Positive Psychology principles, the following study attempts to address the following two research questions inspired by Barcelos and Coelho (2016):

RQ1: What teacher-student moments of positive contact, or micro-moments of positivity, are there in the English language classroom?

RQ2: In what ways does the positivity constructed during these moments of contact appear to affect, or benefit, the learner?

6.3 The study

6.3.1 Data collection and context

The data used in this study were collected from an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) subject offered in the spring semester 2016-2017 of the first year of a Social Science degree at a Catalan university. This piece of research is part of the Plurelf project, although for this study in particular only data from students from the 'monolingual group' were used because, despite employing a more traditional approach in terms of language policy, students reported high enjoyment and comfort in the classes, something which they attributed, to a large degree, to the way the teacher behaved with them. It has to be highlighted, though, that the teacher was highly conditioned by the teaching methodology and the materials imposed on her, and that students' attendance and participation were crucial for the research project. Thus, it is difficult to know to what extent the teacher's performance might have been conditioned by the methodology and the research needs.

The participants of the study were informed about the project and voluntarily provided their written consent so that the members of the project could use their data for research purposes. Their names have been replaced by a pseudonym to preserve anonymity. This study combines non-observational and classroom observational data. Non-observational data include (1) four individual semi-structured interviews carried out in April (week 10) with students from that group; and (2) three group discussions: two of them were conducted in March (week 7) –one with sevel local students, and the other one with four international Chinese students–, and the last one was carried in May (week 15) with five local students (four were the same from the previous group discussion and one was new). Regarding observational data, six class sessions from February to May 2017 (weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14) with a duration of 1.5 or 2 hours, depending on the day. The classes were video-recorded with two cameras (one at the front and one at the back of the classroom) and several audio-recorders were distributed among the students; moreover, field notes were taken by two researchers of the team during each session.

6.3.2 Data analysis

Most research on teacher-student relationships or interactions is quantitative in nature, both for classroom observations of teacher behaviors and relationships with the students (e.g., Pianta andStuhlman, 2004), and for the analysis of either students' or teachers perceptions on the issue (e.g., Farmer, 2018; Spilt, Koomen and Mantzicopoulos, 2010). Furthermore, most of the few qualitative studies which have analyzed students or teachers' perceptions on teacher-student relationships have most frequently relied on self-reported data rather than on classroom observations. In order to offer a new perspective on teacher-student interactions in class, this study adopts a qualitative approach and explores not only students' self-reported accounts on contact with their teacher but also actual episodes of interaction so as to provide a micro-level analysis of *in situ* teacher-student contact.

The analysis of the teacher-student contact moments and their effects on the students is twofold. Firstly, the individual and group interviews were transcribed in whole and the parts in which students talked about their teacher were assembled in a single text document. Secondly, the individual and group interviews were translated into English, given that they had been carried out in Catalan (the two focus groups with local students) and Spanish (the focus group with international Chinese students). Afterwards, the transcripts from the text were codified using Atlas.ti, specialized software to analyze qualitative data, by means of structure and process coding (Saldaña, 2015). Structure coding allows gathering topic lists by codifying data that represent a topic of enquiry directly related to a research question (e.g., 'what types of teacher-student contact moments do students mention?'), whereas process coding uses gerunds ('-ing') to capture ongoing action in the data while simultaneously searching for consequences of this action. Two external researchers were asked to codify independently the transcripts to increase the reliability of the analysis. After the codification process, the coded segments were collected together and a list of more detailed themes was created (e.g., from the code 'engaging in casual conversations' the theme 'engaging in casual conversations to encourage speaking' appeared) and their consequences/effects were assembled within each theme. Ultimately, the contact moments were classified into 'good' or 'bad' contact depending on the effect on the learner (Korthagen et al., 2014).

On the basis of the learners' reported positive contact moments during the individual and group interviews, an analysis of teacher-student contact moments *in situ* was deemed necessary, particularly because "classroom-based research is surprisingly rare" (Henry and Thorsen, 2018, p. 219). It has to be noted that all the contact identified in the class sessions observed was positive, as bad contact examples reported by students came from past English language teachers. First of all, the field notes were read carefully in order to have a general idea of what occurred in each session. Then, the six class videos were watched from beginning to end and notes were taken on moments of

contact, indicating the minute of the video when they occurred. Afterwards, these moments of contact were transcribed multimodally using Norris' (2004, p. 59) conventions, and thus including not only the words uttered and the pauses, but also the teacher's and students' kinesics (gestures, facial expressions, head movement and gaze). Once the interactions were transcribed, contact moments were codified and classified with the method employed in the individual and group interviews, and the possible effects of the positive contact moment on the learner were described. It has to be noted that despite the fact that this study only comprises a few teacher-student moments of contact in class, these interactional episodes are not simply anecdotal or sporadic. Therefore, the selection of episodes is but illustrative of the amount of moments of positive contact that took place in class between the teacher and the students.

6.4 Findings

6.4.1 Teacher-student contact in self-reported accounts

This section is devoted to the results of the analysis of self-reported data in the group and individual interviews regarding teacher-student contact. The three group discussions and the four individual interviews were conducted in order to discover the students' opinions and views about the lessons, the materials and the activities of the ESP subject. When the participants were asked about the activities or the materials of the ESP course, they often related them to the positive actions and practices carried out by their teacher which made them like and enjoy the subject in question. Consequently, their statements directed my attention towards some remarkable moments of contact that the participants recalled having with their ESP teacher and with other past English language teachers. I also noticed that many of the actions described by the participants were followed by an effect either on the learner on in the classroom atmosphere in general. Along and across the individual and group interviews, there were several references to both their teacher from the ESP subject at that time as well as to past teachers. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 6.1 (see below). It has to

be noted that the effects, which are in double quotation marks, were originally in Catalan and were translated as faithfully as possible to English so that they could fit in the table.

	Contact moments	Effects on students/class	Type of effect
POSITIVE	Correcting in a helpful way Correcting students so that they learn and improve Correcting what is necessary Correcting in a friend-like and kind manner	"it makes me happy" "it gives you confidence" "it doesn't make you feel bad or lose face" "I feel comfortable during corrections"	Emotional Emotional Emotional Emotional
	Being close	"you participate more" "you greet and talk to the teacher outside class"	Behavioral Behavioral
	Showing interest in students' progress	"it motivates you"	Motivational
	Showing interest in that students understand Explaining well	"you learn more things"	Cognitive
	Explaining in different ways until students understand Being at students' disposal	"the class is more productive"	X
	Making students speak and participate Looking after all the students	"you are constantly attentive" "the class is more dynamic"	Motivational X
	Asking students	"people are more active" "people try to participate more"	Motivational Behavioral
	Paying attention to students	"I always go to class"	Behavioral
NEGATIVE	Correcting in a serious manner	"it makes us afraid"	Emotional
	Ignoring students	"I stopped going to class"	Behavioral
	Not answering, not saying and not doing anything	"we went there to pass the time"	Behavioral
	Not making students participate	"you participated if you wanted"	Behavioral
	Not speaking students' L1	"if you don't understand you stop paying attention"	Behavioral Motivational
	Acting in a strict way	"people would change their attitude and will lose interest in the subject" "I find it tiresome" "you are afraid"	Motivational Emotional Emotional
	Not congratulating students on their good performance	"it doesn't motivate you"	Motivational
	Speaking in Catalan and Spanish mostly	"I feel English is boring"	Emotional Motivational
	Explaining in a way that students do not understand	"I didn't get the content"	Cognitive

Table 6.1. *Teacher-student contact moments and effects*

As it can be observed in the table, one type of contact moment could have more than one effect either on the same student or on different students. The contact moments were divided into positive depending on whether a specific contact moment was evaluated as exerting a positive or a negative effect. Following Korthagen et al. (2014), the criteria for the classification of the effects have been the following: an effect was considered cognitive when it was related to acquiring knowledge or understanding something; on the contrary, it was considered emotional when there was a reference to feelings –subjective emotional experiences (Coppin and Sander, 2016)– or to certain degrees of (dis)pleasure; when the effect referred to the students' specific actions or performances it was classified as behavioral; and, ultimately, when the students referred to their motivation, drive or enthusiasm to do something, the effect was categorized as motivational. It has to be mentioned that two effects in the table alluded to the classroom atmosphere in general, so they have not been ascribed to the four aforementioned categories because the impact on the student has not been clearly expressed (they are marked with an 'X'). When comparing my classifications to those carried out by the two external researchers, the three of us had coincided in almost all the classifications; only two ("if you don't understand you stop paying attention" and "I feel English is boring") were a subject of discussion, as the statements were rather ambiguous and could fit in more than one category. Eventually, we agreed upon assigning more than one type of effect to these two statements, as it was frequently done in Korthagen et al. (2014).

Thus, the results from this analysis show that, as reported by students, there is evidence that the actions performed by teachers tend to have an impact on the learner, either a positive or a negative one. The practices which show genuine interest in students elicit positive responses, whereas the actions that display a lack of care for students and their learning process have a rather negative effect on them. The analysis also reveals that only two responses of all the contact moments were classified as purely cognitively, whilst most of them are emotional. This finding suggests that students place more

importance, either consciously or unconsciously, to the way the teachers' actions make them feel (emotional effect) than to whether their actions help them learn or understand better (cognitive effect). Findings also reveal that positive teacher-student relationships elicit positive emotions on students (happiness, confidence, security, comfort and enjoyment), while negative relationships evoke negative emotions (fear, weariness and boredom).

Despite this classification of contact moments, it is worth highlighting that these findings do not imply that there is a direct causation between one moment of contact and one type of effect, or that the Self is easily fragmented into clear-cut dimensions. In fact, these results point to the difficulty of dividing the learner into differentiated parts, as in some cases more than one type of response has been identified and, consequently, it is more realistic to adopt a holistic vision of the learner and of the learning process (see Dörnyei, 2010; Mercer, 2015; Ushioda, 2009). Therefore, these findings should rather be interpreted as an indication that (a) both positive and negative contact seem to play a role at multiple dimensions of the self (cognitive, emotional, motivational and behavioral); and that (b) positive contact generates more positivity on the learner, whereas negative contact elicits negative responses of various types from the student.

The participants' self-reported accounts on moments of contact with their teachers suggests that teachers have an indisputable influence on the students' experiences at various levels with regards to the course – and even perhaps to English language learning as a whole. In view of these results, the next section intends to take one step further by providing an in-depth analysis and description of some positive teacher-student moments of contact on the ground.

6.4.2 Positive teacher-student contact in classroom-observed interaction

This section encompasses several moments of positive contact identified in the video- and audio-recordings of the classroom sessions. Some moments coincide with those reported by the students in the individual and group interviews ('correcting and

providing feedback with kindness', 'explaining and helping' 'paying attention to students and caring about them'), whilst some others were not mentioned ('praising and motivating students' and 'engaging in casual conversations and using humor to encourage speaking'), but were observed in several occasions in class.

– *Correcting and providing feedback with kindness*

There exist several examples in the dataset which show examples of corrections and assessments of learners' productions and these corrections are never made in an intimidating or authoritative manner, as it can be seen in the following contact moment:

Excerpt 6.1 (week 10/01:30:20)

Teacher	have you finished Raquel?
Raquel	yeah (nods)
Teacher	can I have a look at your letter?
Raquel	(shows her the letter)
Teacher	(reading) it's better to use a comma than a colon
Raquel	oh (.) yeah (smiles)
Teacher	dear Mr. Robins, OK (.) eh try to avoid contractions.
Raquel	yeah (nods)
Teacher	(reading) (5) same here.
Raquel	mhm
Teacher	(reading) em I'm thinking about that it is possible (.) that's not correct (.) instead of that you can say (0.5) because I wonder if it's possible
Raquel	mhm OK (nods)
Teacher	(10) (reads and nods) instead of thanks it's better it's mo:re formal to say thank you.
Raquel	hm hm OK (smiles) thank you
Teacher	and the::n (.) instead of best regards which is kind of informal (.) you can sa:y yours sincerely.
Raquel	(points to the notebook where she had written 'yours sincerely')
Teacher	a::h OK sorry I hadn't seen that (smiles) (touches Raquel's shoulder)
Raquel	hahaha
Teacher	OK (smiles) so that's OK. (smiles)
Raquel	(smiles) thank you.
Teacher	thank you. (smiles)

This moment of positive contact is an example of some of the teacher practices mentioned in the self-reported data: correcting what is necessary in a helpful, friend-like and kind way so that students learn and improve. First of all, it has to be noted that the correction is not done straight away, for the teacher asks for permission to the student. Five corrections are made in total (or six if we also consider "same here"); out of these five, only one is a direct correction ("that's not correct"), whereas the rest are formulated in a more indirect way, as many of them are expressed in the form of suggestions: "it's better", "try to avoid", "instead of… it's better", "instead of… you can say". Making use of these constructions lowers the dogmatic tone in the corrections, which can rather be taken as recommendations to improve the final product. Furthermore, when the teacher does not see that the student had written "yours sincerely", she apologizes for her mistake both verbally ("a::h OK sorry") and non-verbally (by touching the student's shoulder), which triggers Rachel's laughter; the humbleness expressed by apologizing and thanking the student, and the closeness evoked from the physical contact are actions which might make the teacher more approachable to students and more "friend-like".

In the self-reported data, students mentioned that they felt happy, confident and comfortable during corrections and that they did not feel bad or lose face. This positive affective experience can be observed in this episode, as Raquel does not seem to be uncomfortable or humiliated by being corrected: she seems to acknowledge her mistakes, she smiles throughout the conversation and even laughs at the end, and she thanks her teacher twice. At the end of this episode is when the positive resonance between the teacher and the student is more evident because they synchronize behavior by smiling and thanking each other. This positive contact moment shows that correcting and providing feedback is a necessary teaching practice and that, even though some instructors might feel reticent to corrections for fear of discouraging or demotivating students, learners can in fact be glad to accept corrections if these are managed skillfully, as it is the case in this episode.

– *Explaining and helping students while promoting self-sufficiency*

Explaining carefully and in different ways together with providing help to students is a type of contact which the participants already mentioned in the interviews and focus groups and which has been observed in the videos on countless occasions. When students are carrying out an activity, the teacher usually goes around to every student/group to check their work and help them in case they have any questions. Some of the sentences which the teacher utters are: "if you have any questions, raise your hand and I'll help you", or "(student's name), do you understand?". When helping students, the teacher also tends to provide them with different ideas and views, to give them various examples or options and to offer several explanations until students understand. In the following episode, a student asks for the teacher's help and this is how she assists him:

Excerpt 6.2 (week 14/01:09:00)

Pol	(L1 cat) com es diu les primeres cent- *how could you say the first hundred*
Teacher	(approaches the student) -in English (smiles)
Pol	how could you say the first- (L1 cat) però si t'ho dic in English i no sé allò: (smiles) *but if I say it in English and I don't know that part*
Teacher	well (smiles) then tell me in Catalan what you cannot say in English haha
Pol	(L1 cat) les primeres cent persones *the first one hundred people*
Teacher	(L1 cat) les primeres cent persones? (leans towards the student) *the first one hundred people?*
Pol	mhm
Teacher	OK it's like: remember that we did this exercise: e (L1 cat) els tres primers dies *the first three days*
Pol	yeah
Teacher	how would you say that? how would you say (L1 cat) els tres primers dies? *the first three days?*
Pol	the first three days
Teacher	OK so (L1 cat) les primers cent persones? *the first one hundred people*

Pol	(1) the first a hundred persons
Teacher	the first one hundred people
Pol	(nods) yes: (smiles) yes yes
Teacher	(1) or clients (2) see the connection with the exercise? (smiles) it's the same
Pol	thanks (repeats the answer to a classmate)

The moment of contact between the teacher and Pol is not simply an exchange of knowledge: first of all, a positive and friendly environment is created when the teacher asks him to speak in English and he responds that he does not know how to say it in English (otherwise he would not be asking); this situation makes him smile and provokes the teacher's laughter. Moreover, when Pol formulates the question, the teacher shows approachability by leaning towards him. Leaning towards a student or even crouching in a way that both are physically at the same level is an action which the teacher tends to do when solving doubts, like in this episode. This conveys a sense of equality of power and positions the teacher as a peer, similar to what occurred in the previous excerpt when the teacher showed humility for her mistake and apologized to the student. Finally, by scaffolding but not providing an immediate answer to the student, the teacher fosters the learner's self-sufficiency, one of the main objectives of instruction (Bruner, 1966), which helps him find the answer by himself. When Pol says "the first a hundred persons" and the teacher corrects him, he does not seem to feel bad or to be offended: he says "yes", smiles, and says "yes" twice more, so in this sense this positive response to the teacher's corrections resembles that of Raquel during the previous episode.

This contact with the teacher is interesting because it illustrates that any moment provides a good opportunity for the teacher not only to help the student (for instance by simply providing the answer to his question), but also to strengthen ties through the co-construction of a friendly atmosphere through the skillful use of joking and teasing as ice-breakers. As it occurred in Excerpt 6.1, both the teacher and the student appear to mimic each other's behavior by exchanging smiles at the beginning, and this ambience

becomes breeding ground for the promotion of scaffolding strategies and, ultimately, for attempting to achieve learner's self-sufficiency and autonomy. This positivity during the exchange also appears to inspire confidence in the student because the classroom becomes a safe space where he will not be judged for his mistakes. The teacher could have opted for a shorter interaction to help Pol, for instance by means of a question-answer sequence; nevertheless, by spending some time making him think of the answer, she demonstrates genuine interest in that the student learn that type of grammatical structure while furnishing him with the necessary resources to establish linguistic connections in the future so as to become a more autonomous learner. As a matter of fact, at the end of the interaction, Pol is able to repeat the answer to a classmate, which suggests that this contact with the teacher seems to have effective in making the student understand (and hopefully learn) this type of construction.

– *Praising and motivating students*

Two of the most frequent practices which can be observed in this ESP class are motivating and praising students. When students get the right answer or when they speak in English rather than in Catalan, a practice which seems to be successful in rapport building is acknowledging their effort by saying sentences like: "I'm proud of you", "well done!" or "(very) good!". This positive feedback tends to generate positive emotional responses, such as smiling proudly and thanking the teacher. By way of illustration, in week 3, a male student is listening attentively to the teacher's explanations, so the teacher tells him: "I'm proud of you [Name], well done! (smiles)" and the student smiles back and thanks her (00:58:29). Similarly, in week 14, a female student is speaking with a peer in English, and the teacher says smiling to her "very good, [Name], I'm proud of you" (00:11:20).

In addition to praising the students' performance, motivating strategies when they do not seem to feel confident enough with themselves or with their English level are also

frequent. The following two excerpts take place during the performance of the same exercise, in which students had to define in English some business-related words:

Excerpt 6.3 (week 12/00:12:11)

Ramon	(raises his hand)
Teacher	yes
Ramon	(L1 cat) jo no no no ho veig (frowning) *I don't I don't I don't see it*
Teacher	(reading Ramon's answer) it's the person who's working (1) m: yes (.) that's correct (.) sales pitch (reading) that's correct yes
Ramon	(L1 cat) sí? (opens his eyes wide) *yes?*
Teacher	yes (.) that's correct (smiles) (.) yeah (.) you're doing well (smiles) (leaves)
Ramon	okay (3) (L1 cat) però és que (1) jo sé el que és però no ho sé definir *but (1) I know what it is but I don't know how to define it*
Teacher	(comes back) m: well in this case maybe: (1) try try to define it (1) what you've written so far Ramon is right so keep doing that (1) and if you need more help afterwards let me know (leaves to help other students)
Ramon	(keeps writing in his dossier)

In Excerpt 6.3 –as well as in Excerpt 6.4 below– strategies to give support and motivation to students are used. These strategies are closely connected in turn with the teacher's recurrent interest in helping students become independent and self-sufficient learners, as it was already mentioned in Excerpt 6.2. In the first case, Excerpt 6.3, Ramon appears to be stuck in the activity, so the teacher lets him know that he is doing well, something which comes as a bit of a surprise to him. He tries to continue with the exercise but claims not to be able to define a word, so he calls the teacher again. At this point, however, the teacher chooses not to provide further assistance to Ramon, although she hesitates in her decision ("m: well in this case maybe: (1) try try to define it"). This vacillation and the physical approaching of the teacher towards Ramon appear to reveal that the teacher might have been initially inclined to helping him further, but she reconsiders it. Her ultimate decision might have been based on her trust in the student's capabilities to finish the exercise on his own and, on the other, on the pressure

of having to help other students who seemed to have problems with the exercise as well. In order to compensate the student for not helping him further, the teacher attempts to reassure the learner and to encourage him to "keep doing" that way because he has shown that he can do the activity correctly by himself; furthermore, the teacher lets Ramon know that if he eventually needs more help, she will be at his disposal, although Ramon keeps working without asking for her help again.

Excerpt 6.4 (week 12/00:14:33)

Jaume	(to the teacher) refund? what's the meaning?
Teacher	well (.) I can=
Eloi	(L1 cat) =devolució *refund*
Teacher	VERY GOOD Eloi! (.) but how do you say that in English? how do you explain that in English?
Eloi	(L1 cat) ui (.) millor que no (1) my English is too bad *o:h (.) I'd rather not*
Teacher	Eloi you need to change your mentality (1) you cannot say my English is too bad (.) your English is good enough to do this exercise so you should be trying hard to do the exercise and then you will be more motivated (smiles) (leaves)
Eloi	okay (looks at Jaume and chuckles)
Jaume	(smiles to Eloi)
Eloi	(to Jaume) the price you pay (.) the price you pay for something and then (.) they return it

The second extract illustrates a similar situation as Excerpt 6.3. In it, another student, Jaume, needs to know the meaning of 'refund' in order to provide a definition in English. His classmate Eloi translates the word into Catalan. The teacher seems rather proud to hear that Eloi knows the meaning, so she asks him to explain the meaning of the word in English; yet, Eloi refuses to do it because he seems to believe that his level of English is "too bad" to provide a definition. Similarly to Excerpt 6.3, the teacher tries to encourage him by telling him that he needs to change this negative-oriented mindset in which he perceives himself as lacking the necessary abilities in the language to perform a given exercise are. On the contrary, the teacher's statement attempts to direct

him towards the other end of the continuum, that is, towards a more positive and motivational mindset so that he feels and believes “[his] English is good enough to do the exercise”. Interestingly, the teacher was right about Eloi’s abilities in the language because when the conversation between them is over, Eloi is able to give the definition of ‘refund’ to Jaume in quite accurate and intelligible English.

These two episodes exemplify how the teacher is concerned with making students more autonomous and less dependent on her help. As a matter of fact, throughout the classroom sessions observed, some students tend to rely on the teacher’s help too much and they expect her to provide them with the answer immediately so as to avoid making an effort to find it by themselves. Nonetheless, the teacher attempts to stimulate and motivate learners with this type of positive moments of contact, during which she attempts to reassure their English language self-concept by challenging their negative self-beliefs and insecurities with regards to their own perception of knowledge or abilities in the language.

– *Engaging in casual conversations and using humor to encourage speaking*

Participants indicated in the self-reported data that a practice carried out by the teacher was asking students and making them participate. They also stated that teacher was close to them, and that this increased their participation in class. Through the analysis of the classroom video recordings, it was observed that, apart from asking students directly –which is a typical activity in a classroom– the teacher fostered students’ participation and oral production through casual conversations and humor. An example of this type of conversation is presented in Excerpt 6.5 below. In this episode, the teacher approaches Pol and Miquel, who are doing an activity about tips for giving oral presentations, and asks them if there is something about the text that has caught their attention:

Excerpt 6.5 (week 3/00:38:00)

Pol	no
Teacher	why?
Pol	I think that (.) since we are childs always [tea-]
Teacher	[(smiles) chi:lds:?]
Pol	er we:ll: (.) young (1) (L1cat) no sé: *I don't know*
Teacher	(.) children.
Pol	children (.) all the teachers a:re (1) focusing on: (1) presentations and presentations and presentations
Teacher	really?
Pol	and we all know how (0.5) to presentate (1) [another thing]
Teacher	[really?]
Pol	is that we don't want [to: do it properly.]
Teacher	[Pol (.) I don't agree] because I have the: I have the feeling that many people are not used to presenting (.) to giving presentations (.) have you ever done it? (1) have you ever done a bad presentation knowing ho- knowing how to do a good one?
Pol	(2) no 'cause I: do i:t (0.5) good (smiles)
Teacher	(smiles) oh you always do it good (0.5) right (smiles)
Pol	not always but (.) I try my best (smiles)
Teacher	is there anything that caught your attention from the text?
Pol	no (.) nothing in special
Teacher	OK mhm (leaves to another group)
Miquel	(to Pol) but it's difficult express emotions (.) and have and have a natural talent to speak …

The teacher approaches Pol and Miquel so that they explain to her something from the text that has caught their attention, and Pol develops his point that students already know how to make a good oral presentation. The teacher takes advantage of Pol's statements and starts a discussion with him, instead of just ceasing the conversation there because of the student's negative answer. What is remarkable is that, by encouraging the discussion with the student, she achieves two objectives: on the one hand, she is fulfilling a language-oriented goal, as she provides him with the opportunity of developing his speaking skills and she even emphasizes a language error ("childs?"); on the other hand, she builds rapport with him by showing interest in his opinions and they end up joking when Pol says that he always makes good oral

presentations. At this point, this conversation resembles an informal chatting between friends that tease each other, and something to note here is that both the teacher and the student feel free to share their opinions without losing face or feeling threatened. This fact denotes certain confidence between them, developed after a series of good contact moments which have been observe in the classroom recordings; that is the reason why even if the teacher interrupts him to correct a language issue ("childs") and she disagrees openly with his opinion, Pol does not show signs of annoyance or offence, but instead they joke around. After the joking together, the teacher redirects the conversation to the initial question, which results in Miquel telling Pol the aspects from the text that were striking for him.

This type of positive contact is rather recurrent in the classroom dataset. The following episode is another example of a casual conversation in which a joke is the starting point of an interaction with two students, Tània and Aitor:

Excerpt 6.6 (week 8/00:22:49)

Tània	(picks the audio-recorder and plays with it)
Teacher	(stops next to her) is it working Tania?
Tània	(0.5) yes haha
Teacher	don't touch it eh? (points at her) (.) I don't trust you (points at her) (smiles)
Tània	ha[hahahaha]
Teacher	[haha] (1.5) come on (1.0) you should be discussing about the video that you just saw did you understand the most relevant information?
Aitor	yes
Teacher	yeah? so now (0.5) what do you think was missing how could it be improved?
Aitor	sports
Teacher	sports for example (.) they don't say anything I think (.) OK so (.) (looks at Tània) you should be speaking Tània okay? haha
Tània	yes haha
Teacher	in English yes haha but [not looking at me (.) speaking with Aitor in English]
Tània	[hahahahahaha]

Teacher	OK? haha she's looking at me and laughing (2.0) OK he says sports he's right they didn't say anything (0.5) Aitor for example eh what information did you miss about sports?
Aitor	yeah university teams and like that I think that are mentioned quickly or not mentioned in the video
Teacher	OK (0.5) what else? (1.0) what other information for example Tània you think it's important to mention in your final presentation
Tània	(6) (L1 cat) no sé *I don't know*
Teacher	you don't know? (smiles) (3) OK I'll leave=
Tània	=they wou- they
Teacher	yes?
Tània	(L1 cat) és que… *but…*
Teacher	yeah? no no say that
Tània	the video
Teacher	yeah
Tània	is during (1) (L1 cat) és que ara no sé com dir-ho (0.5) dura massa *I don't know how to say it* *it lasts too much*
Teacher	the video is too long it should be shorter?
Tània	yes and the information (1) very visual
Teacher	OK there should be more visual information. what else?

…

This contact moment is an example of how humor is dexterously introduced to break the ice and build rapport, but also it is used as a wake-up call when students are distracted from the task. Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016, p. 227) stress that "a classroom atmosphere that can accommodate teasing and other forms of humor must be handled adeptly", and this episode shows that the teacher manages to make students focus on the task and speak in English by initiating the conversation with a joke. In order to encourage students speak, though, the teacher has to insist by asking questions and addressing them directly, and it takes a few minutes to get them talking, especially Tània. Teacher's interest and care for the students is not only evident in the way she decides to tackle the situation (by joking instead of scolding), but also in the fact that she encourages Tània to speak throughout the conversation, and she stays with them until Tània provides an answer. Tània does not seem very comfortable speaking in

English, perhaps because her level is not very high, and the teacher seems to be aware of it, so she refuses to give up on her by using different strategies (joking, rephrasing the question, translating, etc.) to make her speak.

These two contact moments show that the positivity arising from casual conversations and from jokes can be employed to engage students in conversations in order to practice the target language, as well as to take a short break and create a bond with students; nevertheless, it is also important to keep the task as the central point of the conversation and to prevent the discussion from going off-topic –and to refocus it if needed– so that students do not deviate in excess from the task at hand. In the self-reported accounts, participants mentioned that asking and making students participate motivated them as they claimed to be more attentive, active and to participate more; likewise, these episodes indicate that, if used deftly, casual conversations and humor might have the same effect, as an order to get back to work might be more welcome by students in a supportive and friendly climate.

- *Paying attention to students and caring about them and their opinions*

Showing concern and interest in the students' learning process is especially important to make students feel that their instructor cares for them. Sometimes, the teacher asks to the whole class questions like: "was it difficult for you to understand the main idea? Not the whole text but the main idea" or "have you understood this?". However, these general, unfocused questions do not appear to be effective, as students tend to remain silent and uninterested, as shown also in Korthagen et al. (2014). Nevertheless, when the teacher addresses students directly (as opposed to the class in general) and when she shows interest and care for their learning and opinions, students appear to be engaged in the conversation. In the following episode, the teacher overhears some students (Ramon amongst others) speaking in Catalan instead of in English:

Excerpt 6.7 (week 10/00:53:20)

Teacher	now can I ask you (.) why is it so difficult for you to speak in English? (1) why?
Ramon	[it's not difficult]
Carles	[I speak Spa:nish]
Teacher	it's not difficult but no:body turns into English I have to keep insisting on the use of English in the cla:ss (1) why is it so difficult for you?
Ramon	we use English (.) to speak with yo:u
Teacher	yes
Ramon	but with us no
Teacher	why not? if I ask you to use English=
Ramon	=it's not necessary
Teacher	who says that? do you want to improve your English Ramon?
Ramon	m: well (smiles)
Teacher	your English is good enough right? (smiles) (1) you don't even need to come to class (chuckles)
Ramon	I don't need more (laughs)
Teacher	you what? (chuckles)
Ramon	I don't need more
Teacher	you don't need more? (smiles) now seriously (.) if you try to use English as much as possible in the classroom (1) probably your English level with improve more (2) because do you use English outside the classroom? (1) any? anyone here? do you speak [English]
Ramon	[yes]
Teacher	Ramon who do you speak English with (.) outside the class?
Ramon	with my friends
Teacher	where are your friends from? (.) (Ramon's town name)? (laughs)
Ramon	no (laughs) Ireland
Teacher	and how often do you speak with them?
Pol	(L1 cat) un cop a l'any (laughs) *once a year*
Ramon	yes (laughs)
Teacher	(laughs) OK so as you can imagine if you speak with them once a yea:r (.) this doesn't make much difference (.) OK? (.) if you speak twice a week here in class (.) assuming you come to cla:ss twice a wee:k (smiles)
Ramon	I COME!
Teacher	(smiles) then (.) then (1) maybe your English level will improve
Ramon	(1) OK (smiles)

What can be observed in the episode above is that the teacher is scolding the students for not speaking in English; yet, she is not simply rebuking them; she is attempting to understand why it is so hard for them to speak in English, and this is why she initiates

the discussion with Ramon. Perhaps the teacher thought that this was a good opportunity not only to understand students' views and interests better, but also to hold a conversation in English for a while, given that students do not speak it willingly. The teacher seems entirely focused on the conversation, and students appear to be as engaged in it as the teacher, as many of the students are paying attention to the conversation. Instead of simply reprimanding students and leaving, the teacher creates an agreeable tenor in the interaction by teasing Ramon, probably because he is constantly teasing her as well, an act that displays a certain degree of mutual trust and playfulness. Both the teacher and the students appear to be enjoying the conversation, as it can be perceived through the multiple smiles from the teacher and the students (those involved in the conversation and those listening to it), as well as from the common joking. After this contact moment, the teacher leaves the group to help two other students. Two of Ramon's classmates tease him by telling him that the teacher was right, and he admits that we did not know what else to reply because what she was saying was true.

What is remarkable from this positive contact moment between the teacher and the students is that the teacher achieves her objective of making students speak in English by starting a conversation which is not related to any activity or task that the students are performing at the moment. The teacher is intrigued by the fact that many of the students do not use English in class, and she is genuinely interested in understanding the reason why. During the conversation, she creates a positive, informal environment in which students feel confident to share their views and in which some touches of humor and teasing are welcomed. Given that students report that they value positively when the teacher shows interest and pays attention to them, this type of positive contact points to the fact that the experience of positivity in the classroom can also be effective to achieve certain learning goals without creating a negative, uncomfortable environment that might have detrimental effects on the learners (and perhaps also on the teacher) and which might jeopardize the trust and rapport developed between them.

6.5 Discussion

The language classroom is a complex system in which many elements and processes coexist, interact and mutually affect each other (see Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008). Amongst all the elements of the classroom, this study has focused on moments of teacher-student interaction to gain insight into how momentary connections with their teacher might affect students at multiple –and perhaps even simultaneous– levels. The findings from this research have shown that there are many moments of positive contact, or micro-moments of positivity resonance, between teacher and student in the classroom setting analyzed. These contact moments are similar to the self-reported practices mentioned in other studies of rapport and teacher-student relationships (see Frisby and Martin, 2010; Gallardo and Reyes, 2010; Krzemien and Lombardo, 2006), although this research has gone one step further by including not only self-reported account of students (like the aforementioned studies), but also an accurate description and examination of actual teacher-student classroom interaction through observational data. Furthermore, although most of the attention has been directed to positive contact moments, this study also sheds light upon instances of bad contact reported by students, which also appear to have an impact on students' responses towards the teacher and towards the subject altogether. In this vein, findings go in line with Gallardo and Reyes (2010, p. 105), as they show that "the presence of any form of bad treatment or lack of care for students will lead to the generation of a bad teacher-student relationship" (own translation).

The analysis suggests that teacher-student interaction appears to be essential in order to experience positivity. As also shown in Swain (2013) and Imai (2010), findings reveal that emotions (in this case positive ones) are not private and inner reactions to external stimuli from the world, but rather interpersonal processes, whose meanings are socially and culturally derived (see Barrett, 2017; Ratner, 2000), and which are dialogically and interactionally co-constructed through verbal and non-verbal means of communication

(words, tones, gestures, gaze, smiles, laughter, etc.). In these interactional events, it can also be observed that co-adaptation processes between the teacher and the learner come into play, as they both adjust their behaviors to each other (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008) –and even sometimes synchronize them in moments of high positivity (Fredrickson, 2013)– for the sake of learning or rapport-building, for instance. This momentarily positive connection can be achieved, as shown by the data, by means of contact that reflects respect, humility, motivating and praising feedback, and touches of humor through casual conversations with students. Therefore, as insights from the analysis unveil, moments of positive contact might take various forms, but they appear to be primarily useful to (a) build rapport or a positive bond with students, but also to (b) fulfill language learning-related objectives. With respect to the objectives related to language learning (or even learning in general), positivity during moments of contact seems to be advantageous inasmuch as it can help de teacher to: (i) make students practice oral production; (ii) give feedback or corrections on their output; (iii) promote autonomy and self-sufficiency; (iv) explore their (self-)beliefs, insecurities or views regarding the learning of the language; and, consequently (v) provide necessary advice, motivation, or alternative perspectives that might help students overcome uncertainties and construct more positive mindsets.

This study shows on the whole that positive interpersonal connections with the teacher appear to be beneficial for the learner, at least in the moment in which this positivity is experienced at multiple levels (e.g., emotionally, motivationally, cognitively and behaviorally). However, Fredrickson (2001, 2013) points out that, despite being brief, the accumulation of micro-moments of positive emotional experience help build enduring resources for life survival, broadening awareness and setting individuals on trajectories of growth. More specifically in foreign language learning, insights from the data point to the fact that the experience of positivity is likely to facilitate the absorption of the target language, as during these moments students appear to be experiencing low stress levels (see MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012). As a matter of fact, having a positive

classroom atmosphere, in which the teacher –and thus teacher-student relationships– play an essential role, has been identified as an important factor in foreign language classrooms (e.g., Arnold and Fonseca, 2007; Cuéllar and Oxford, 2018; Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer, 2018; Dewaele and Li, 2018; Saito, Dewaele, Abe and In'nami, 2018).

It is important to note that moments of positive contact might take various forms and expressions, and so do their effects. Therefore, findings should not be interpreted causally, but rather from a complex perspective which acknowledges that every interaction can be constructed and interpreted differently both by the teacher and the students, and therefore it might affect each of them them in various ways depending on the continuous interplay of the myriad elements of the context. Similarly, the analysis shows that the use of clear-cut categories employed in Korthagen et al. (2014) (i.e., emotional, motivational, behavioral and cognitive responses) can be problematic because although these categories can be more easily used in self-reported statements, dividing the ways the Self relates and communicates with the social world into defined labels appears to be inefficient in actual here-and-now interaction. Despite its intricacies and difficulties, it is precisely the analysis of these classroom interactions that makes moments of teacher-student contact a valuable theoretical and methodological framework to grasp how "real world of the classroom operates" (Larsen-Freeman, 2016, p. 389) and to explore the significance and the function of positivity in the foreign language classroom.

6.5.1 Limitations and further research

This research has merged self-reported accounts with observable classroom practices; yet, despite its complexity, there are some limitations to be mentioned. The first one, and probably the most important, is that the data collection was designed to gather information regarding students' beliefs and attitudes regarding many different aspects of

language learning, but no specific questions were thought to address issues of teacher-student contact; rather, these issues appeared as the interviews and group discussions unfolded. Another limitation is that the design of the study does not permit to have access to the students' (nor the teacher's) perceptions from a moment of close interaction with the instructor, as no follow-up interview was performed. This means that the development of the interaction and the emergent positivity have been interpreted by the researcher as an external observer, but it is impossible to have a certainty of the participants' own experience of that moment of contact.

In future studies it would be especially interesting to (1) use stimulated-recall interviews with both students and teachers in order to compare and contrast their views and emotions of contact moments as well as to ensure that the researcher's interpretation of such contact is close to the participants' actual experience; to (2) gather data involving bad teacher-student contact, not only in self-reported accounts, but also in classroom interaction; although it might be a sensitive topic, it would be extremely interesting to investigate how these moments are constructed and effects (immediate or long-term) might negative teacher-student contact produce on both parties; and, finally, to (3) analyze micro-examples of classroom interaction in other classroom contexts to see if moments of positive (or negative) contact are similar to those identified in this study and to explore the ways in which positivity derived from positive contact appear to benefit both parties.

6.6 Conclusion

This study has focused on teacher-student moments of contact through the analysis of data obtained from both students' self-reported accounts and from classroom observed interactions. Adopting positive psychology lenses, this research has explored the role that positive emotion plays in teacher-student interactions in the English language learning classroom. Although the study acknowledges the complexity of the classroom system, findings reveal that positive momentary connections between the teacher and

the student contribute to creating a supportive and relaxed environment that fosters rapport development and that might contribute to achieve learning goals. Broadly speaking, the teacher needs to guide students along their language learning process in the most effective way possible. In order to make it effective, thus, the learners' emotional well-being needs to be taken into account. As the analysis shows, any action performed by teachers is likely to have an influence on the learner, either a positive or a negative one. Perhaps there is not an exact formula for developing positive teacher-student relationships, but this micro-analysis of moments of contact has pointed out the relevance of establishing a positive emotional learning context and has produced insights into the role that positivity plays in the foreign language learning classroom.

Chapter 7. Study 3

In the third study of this dissertation, the focus of attention deviates a little from the role of the teacher to center emotions and beliefs elicited in oral tasks –as opposed to grammar-oriented tasks– since the topic of grammar versus speaking was one of the fundamental topics in the first study. Thus, this research explores the dynamics of the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speaking self-concept from a female student of the 'translanguaing' group of the ESP course. Taking a Grounded Theory approach, this case study analyzes the participant's experience in relation to speaking in English in a communicative language teaching context through self-reported data (two focus groups and two open-ended questions from a questionnaire) and classroom observational data (six video-recorded sessions). The study focuses on the participant's internal and external frames of reference (Mercer, 2011a) to analyze how her EFL speaking self-concept has been constructed throughout her years of English language instruction, and how it is re-constructed and developed in the current ESP course.

Findings show that her EFL speaking self-concept originates from beliefs systems, emotions, learner characteristics, previous English language learning context/method, critical experiences and experiences of success/failure using the oral language. Results suggest a dynamic stability (Mercer, 2015) in EFL speaking self-concept, as some dimensions seem easier to modify than others, and indicate that critical positive experiences and perceived experiences of success appear to influence positively the learner's self-efficacy beliefs and affective experiences with regards to an oral task

7.1 Introduction

In SLA research, it has been widely acknowledged that the beliefs and emotional experiences that learners construct in relation to language learning play a central role in their learning process (Aragão, 2011; Arnold and Brown, 1999; Barcelos, 2000; De Costa, 2016; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; 2016; Kalaja and Barcelos, 2003;

Miyahara, 2019). In this line, everything that students believe and feel about themselves in a specific academic domain, i.e. their academic self-concept(s) (Mercer, 2011a), has been associated with achievement (Marsh and Martin, 2011), academic performance (Liu, 2008), motivation (Dörnyei, 2009) and attitudes to learning (Burnett, Pillay and Dart, 2003). In the domain of Foreign Language Learning (FLL), several studies have been carried out in the past few years examining the nature and development of learners' self-concept (Csizér and Magid, 2014; Mercer, 2011a; 2011b; 2015; Waddington, 2019; Walker, 2015). Particularly in FL speaking, self-concept can be damaged due to a lack of full proficiency in the language because it might make learners feel vulnerable and judged (Arnold, 2007) and even anxious (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986). However, FL speaking self-concept has received little attention (for an exception see Yoshida, 2013) and thus more research is needed in order to create a more holistic picture of the learner self-concept in the FLL domain.

This article attempts to fill this gap by exploring the EFL speaking self-concept of a first-year university student in an ESP course. By means of self-reported and observational data, the study aims to analyze internal and external frames of reference in the context of foreign language learning (Mercer, 2011a) to gain insight into how EFL speaking self-concept might be formed, developed and even changed. To conclude, the study reflects upon possible pedagogical implications and future directions for research on speaking self-concept in SLA.

7.2 Theoretical framework and key notions

7.2.1 Self-concept

One's sense of self is composed of numerous interconnected and interacting cognitions, affects and motivations, a constellation (see Dörnyei, 2010) which contributes significantly to leading learners' behaviors, performances and approaches to learning, especially in language learning due to its social and interactional nature (Mercer, 2011b). The self has been studied through various self-related terms which are often

difficult to distinguish from each other, mainly self-esteem, self-concept and self-efficacy, the former being the most affective and broad and the latter being the most cognitive and task-specific (Mercer, 2011a). Self-concept has been widely defined as “a self-description judgement that includes an evaluation of competence and the feelings of self-worth associated with the judgement in question” (Pajares and Schunk, 2005, p. 105). Although the importance of self-concept has been highlighted in literature (both in SLA and in other fields), its picture still remains incomplete due to scarce empirical research (Rubio, 2014). Existent studies show that self-concept plays a primary role in all learning situations, and it is associated with many educational gains, such as achievement (Chen, Hwang, Yeh and Lin, 2012; Marsh and Martin, 2011) academic performance (Liu, 2008), motivation (Dörnyei, 2009; Eccles and Wigfield, 2002) and attitudes and approaches to learning (Burnett et al., 2003).

Individuals with a high self-concept in a specific domain tend to have an orientation towards self-improvement, whereas those with a low self-concept usually have a self-protective orientation and try to avoid failure (Baumeister, 1999). A domain generally refers to a subject domain, as self-concept research has moved from a unidimensional to a more complex multidimensional model (Shavelson, Hubner and Stanton, 1976) which views individuals as holding separate self-concepts in different domains (academic or non-academic). Academic self-concept refers to a learner’s self-perception and assessment of competence about their academic abilities (Marsh and Craven, 2002). The study of academic self-concept is relevant because, as Arnold (2007) points out, low self-concept makes the learner split the energy between the task and an excessive worry about one’s self-perceived lack of ability, which results in a less motivating and effective experience.

Apart from being multifaceted, self-concept is frequently regarded as hierarchical in nature (Marsh and Shavelson, 1985), i.e. as comprising several domains, although findings from Mercer (2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2015) suggest that self-concept is best

conceptualized through complex dynamic systems perspectives, as change occurs even in apparently stable systems and it is the result of an ongoing interaction between cognitive, affective, social and environmental factors. Therefore, "there is not a fixed or static self but only a current self-concept constructed from one's social experiences" (Markus and Wurf, 1987, p. 306). Research has demonstrated that self-concept is both stable and dynamic, and this dynamic stability (Mercer, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c) is explained because while the individual uses internal and external frames of reference (I/E model from Marsh, 1986) to form and develop their self-concepts, the notion of personality, i.e. "the *intra*individual organization of experience and behavior" (Asendorpf, 2002, p. 1), also implies some degree of stability or equilibrium (Nowak, Vallacher and Zochowski, 2005).

7.2.2 Self-concept and speaking self-concept in FLL

In the recent years, self-concept, and the notion of self in general, has gained momentum in second and foreign language learning, and research has demonstrated the existence of a separate self-concept for each language (Yeung and Wong, 2004; Mercer, 2011a). In line with work from general education, in FLL self-related constructs have been found to play a key role in language learning, language use, achievement and motivation (Arnold and Brown, 1999; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009; Lau, Yeung and Jin, 1998; Liu, 2008; Mercer, 2011a; Waddington, 2019; Walker, 2015). Nevertheless, more studies are needed to grasp how learners construct their sense of self throughout their foreign language learning process (Csizér and Magid, 2014).

In FLL, the study of self-concept is closely related to learner's beliefs and emotions, areas which have received increasing interest in the past few years (see Barcelos, 2015; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; Kalaja and Barcelos, 2003; MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer, 2016). In this sense, Williams, Mercer and Ryan (2015) state that learners' self-concepts in the FLL domain are composed of a combination of cognitive beliefs and affective experiences. Mercer (2011a) points out that affective experiences appeared

regularly throughout her dataset and had connections with factors that emerged in the study, both internal (comparisons across domains, beliefs systems and affective reactions) and external (social comparisons, feedback from significant others, perceived experiences of success/failure, previous language learning/use experiences and critical experiences).

Affect seems to be particularly important in the foreign language learning context, as self-concept can be damaged due to a lack of full command in the language as it sometimes makes learners feel vulnerable and judged (Arnold, 2007). This is especially the case in the oral domain, probably due to the "saliency and high 'public visibility' of oral performance" (Mercer, 2011a, p. 162). Work on FL anxiety (e.g. Horwitz et al., 1986) demonstrates how learners tend to be anxious when speaking in a language which they do not fully master, usually due to fear and embarrassment about making mistakes (Hewitt and Stephenson, 2012; Liu and Jackson, 2008). Therefore, having a low FL speaking self-concept might imply a 'flight' response in which the learner avoids speaking in the FL in class (see Yoshida, 2013). This FL anxiety appears to be even more accentuated during assessed oral exams or tasks, given that "oral tests have the potential of provoking both test and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students" (Horwitz et al., 1991, p. 30). Similarly, Rubio (2000) concluded that the realization of an oral evaluative test is bigger than that produced in other situations in language learning.

Research has shown that learners also hold different self-concepts for specific verbal skills, i.e. reading, writing, speaking and listening (Arens and Jansen, 2016; Lau, Yeung, Jin, and Low 1999). Although some studies have been conducted in relation to self-concept and the different skills, research on speaking self-concept is –to the best of my knowledge– virtually non-existent, with the exception of Yoshida (2013) and some parts of Mercer's (2011a; 2015) research. These studies show that learners' speaking self-concepts, like self-concept in general, also seem to be influenced by internal and

external frames of reference (Mercer, 2011a), including affective factors (Yoshida, 2013), and that, despite the unique nature of each learner's self-system, they can gradually change depending on their speaking experiences. Therefore, this paper aims to fill the research gap on EFL speaking self-concept in order to (a) gain insight into self-concept formation and development, and to (b) consider potential pedagogical implications for the ELL classroom. The study intends to provide an answer to the following two questions:

RQ 1: What is the learner's EFL speaking self-concept and how does it appear to change (or not) along the ESP course?

RQ 2: What are the factors that play a role in EFL speaking self-concept construction and development?

7.3 The study

Self-concept has traditionally been studied within the quantitative paradigm, but there is a need for research approaches which understand the learner in a more complex and holistic sense (Ushioda, 2009). As Elliott (2005, p. 173) notes, "qualitative approaches allow for a conception of the self as being socially constructed [as well as] constantly revised and negotiated" and, within qualitative research, the case study was considered the most suitable method to analyze and comprehend the dynamics of EFL speaking self-concept, as it enables in-depth, context-dependent knowledge and meaningful understanding of particular real life events (Luck, Jackson and Usher, 2006). Although case studies tend to be criticized due to lack of representativeness and difficulty in generalization (Flyvbjerg, 2006), it is important to bear in mind that a substantial number of thoroughly well-conducted case studies is necessary in order to make a discipline effective (Kuhn, 1987, as cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006).

7.3.1 Context and participant

This study is part of a larger research project which analyzed and compared two English language learning methodologies (translanguaging approach and traditional monolingual approach) in two groups of a first-year ESP course. Despite their differences, both methodologies used a communicative language teaching approach, which aims at engaging learners in communication to help them develop their communicative competence, as opposed to simply controlling syntactical and phonological patterns (Savignon, 2002). For this reason, authentic materials that promoted both oral and written communicative competence were employed in this course, and students usually worked in small groups or pairs. The tasks assessed for the course were: an oral presentation (20%), a sales pitch (20%), a formal business letter (20%), a final exam (20%), a booklet reading exam (10%) and a portfolio (10%).

The participant in this study is Tatiana (a pseudonym), a 19 year-old first-year female student enrolled in the aforementioned ESP course, more specifically in the 'translanguaging' group. After being explained the research project, she agreed to participate in it and provided her written consent to use her data for research purposes. Tatiana was born in a south-eastern town of Rumania and came to Catalonia at the age of nine. She had never studied English in Romania, and when she arrived in the new country she had to invest her time and effort in learning the official languages (Catalan and Spanish). Such 'investment' (Norton Peirce, 1995) allowed the learner to have access to a wider range of resources (both symbolic and material) in her adoptive land, and, as pointed out by Norton Peirce (1995), it might have influenced her own social identity over time due to the engagement in new linguistic and social practices. It was not until a year later that Tatiana started with English, approximately four years after her classmates.

This participant was purposefully selected for two main reasons. Firstly, this participant offered an information-rich case that facilitated an in-depth understanding of the

phenomenon under analysis (see Wan, 2019), the EFL speaking self-concept, as this learner's contributions were particularly rich, detailed and elaborated. Secondly, my attention was directed towards Tatiana because of the difficulties and uneasiness that she reported regarding the teaching method employed, as she showed a much deeper concern than her peers about having to speak in English publicly. Therefore, Tatiana's thorough and multiple contributions about her struggle speaking in English provided insightful data to analyze and explore EFL speaking self-concept.

7.3.2 Data collection and analysis

The study employs a triangulation of data sorts, which permits gaining information at multiple levels and going beyond the knowledge acquired by one single approach or data sort, hence ensuring more quality research (Flick, 2018). In research of the self, Mercer and Williams (2014) explain that various and complementary approaches have to be effectively mixed in order to achieve a more complete understanding of the self. Data were obtained from (1) Tatiana's contributions in two group discussions (pre- and post-), (2) classroom observational data, and (3) an open-response item from a questionnaire (post-).

Firstly, in the group discussions, students were asked by members of the research team about their experiences in the course by focusing on the class materials, evaluation, activities, language use and so forth. The first group discussion (coded 'pre-GD' in the excerpts) was conducted in March 2017 (week 7), and the second one (coded 'post-FG') in May 2017 (week 15); in both groups there were eight students (Tatiana being one of them) and both were performed in Catalan and have been translated into English due to space constraints. Secondly, Tatiana's behavior in class was analyzed through the recordings of six class sessions (weeks 3, 5, 8, 10, 12 and 14) of 1.5 hours or 2 hours (depending on the class duration). The sessions were video-recorded with two cameras (one at the front and one at the back of the classroom) and several audio-recorders distributed among the students' desks. Thirdly, a questionnaire was passed in week 18

of the course, which included and open-ended question with the statement "Indicate some aspect(s) you remember positively from [Name of the subject]. Think about a lesson you liked and explain why it was good". Therefore, Tatiana's response to this item was analyzed, coded 'post-Q'.

In order to understand the complexities and dynamics of an EFL learner's speaking self-concept, a grounded theory approach was adopted, as this methodology contributes to the elaboration and development of a theory or a phenomenon from the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Corbin and Strauss, 2015). Firstly, the pre- and the post-group interviews were fully transcribed and all Tatiana's contributions related to speaking aspects were assembled in a single word document chronologically and thematically. The data generated from the interviews and the response from the questionnaire were analyzed using Initial Coding, an approach to coding which allows to remain open to all possible theoretical directions (Saldaña, 2015). As dynamics cannot be profoundly explored taking two fixed points in time (Saldaña, 2003), the six videos from the class sessions were viewed and the participant's audio-recorder was listened to carefully in order to have a more complete and longitudinal understanding of EFL speaking self-concept. Her contributions in class were transcribed multimodally following Norris' (2004, p. 59) conventions, including not only the words uttered and the pauses, but also kinesics (gestures, head movement and gaze) (Norris, 2004). Notes were taken also on the number of times she spoke aloud in each class session. Ultimately, the three data sorts were contrasted chronologically in order to trace the participant's EFL speaking self-concept dynamics during the course.

7.4. Findings

The findings present self-reported and classroom-based data simultaneously and are displayed chronologically in weeks in order to explore the learner's EFL speaking self-concept dynamics.

7.4.1 Weeks 3 and 5

The first part of the class in week 3 consists of watching online oral presentations (e.g. a presentation by Steve Jobs) and identifying positive and negative aspects, and of reading texts about public speaking to get ideas for the oral presentation that students will have to give in weeks 16-17. Tatiana is attentive, listens to the teacher and works on the different class activities. She displays a relaxed attitude that transmits comfort: she smiles, laughs with her classmates/friends, speaks with them about class-related aspects and about their lives, usually in Catalan, but sometimes in English. Half an hour after the class started, Tatiana is working with her friend and classmate, Iria, who is reading aloud a text; when it is Tatiana's turn, she says: "do you want to read? I'm very bad at reading aloud in English [translation]" while grimacing. Tatiana's belief that she is "very bad" at reading in English aloud points to the fact that she does not feel very confident with her spoken English, as reading aloud could be interpreted as a part of the speaking domain. Despite this statement, Tatiana volunteers to answer the teacher's questions two times. One of the episodes unfolds as follows:

Excerpt 7.1 (week 3/1:20:48)

Teacher	can any of you please summarize the main points of this webpage?
Tatiana	(scratches head) (looks at computer) em::: (1) yes.
Teacher	if it's similar-
Tatiana	-e yes (.) there are mm they present e
	(plays with hair)
	(looks at computer)
	some phases to present the information the body to summarize to to do questions
	(rubbing hands)
	(reading from the computer)
	and and that.

The excerpt above illustrates how Tatiana, even from the very beginning of the course, is willing to participate in class, even if that implies speaking in English in front of her classmates. It has to be pointed out, though, that the multimodal analysis reveals an "instance of the emotion category" (Barrett, 2017a) of nervousness: scratching, playing with the hair and rubbing hands can be interpreted as signs of nervousness and uncertainty (Pease and Pease, 2004), something which can be further perceived by her gaze, as she avoids looking at the teacher.

Two minutes after the interaction in Excerpt 7.1 takes place, the teacher tells students that they have to self-record an improvised two-minute oral presentation and that they can reuse the version that they did the other day. When Tatiana hears that, she exclaims, staring at the teacher: "*¡ahí va!* [oh my gosh!] and several students turn around to look at her, disconcerted; she asks to her classmates if that activity is worth 10% of the final mark, but nobody answers, and she starts typing very fast, extremely concentrated. Therefore, whereas Tatiana seems to be relaxed and talkative during the first part of the session, her emotional state appears to change radically into one of tension and anxiety when the oral presentation is brought up.

In the class from week 5, Tatiana's behavior resembles that of week 3. Contrary to the lesson observed in week 3, in this class the activities do not deal with oral presentations, but, rather, with writing formal business letters. In that class session, there is an alternation between hard work and more relaxed periods in which she chatters and laughs with her friends, perhaps due to the non-threatening topic of the class (it involves writing, not speaking). She volunteers a couple of times by correcting activities without the teacher explicitly asking her to do so, and her responses are similar to the one from Excerpt 7.1 above: they are rather short and to the point, and her non-verbal behavior while speaking reveals a certain degree of nervousness (she tends to scratch and to avoid staring at the teacher), as in the previous week.

7.4.2 Week 7

In week 7, the first group discussion takes place with eight students (Tatiana included) takes place to discuss course-related aspects, and the excerpts presented in this section belong to the pre-group discussion (pre-FG). Tatiana's contributions tend to revolve around the oral presentation task, although sometimes she also refers to speaking in broader terms. Hence, this learner expresses negative self-views and repeated verbalizations of uncertainty and anxiety related, specifically, to the oral presentation task, which is part of Tatiana's EFL speaking self-concept:

Excerpt 7.2 (pre-FG)

> All the people that go to academies and so on I guess that they are more used to speaking in English, but I find it very hard, especially in an oral presentation because I'm very shy, I mean, I learn it by heart and when I'm there in front of the class I go blank

Tatiana reports that speaking in English in public makes her feel insecure and anxious ("I go blank") and she holds the belief that the task is "very hard", so she adopts a memorization strategy in order to face the situation. This is especially the case in oral presentations, as she explains in Excerpt 7.2, and as it could also be deduced from the oral presentation episode in week 3. She attributes her uncertain EFL speaking self-concept to two main aspects: firstly, to the fact that she is not used to speaking in English because, unlike her classmates, she has never attended language academies. This social comparison also shows that she does not evaluate her speaking skills positively in relation to her classmates, which might partly explain her anxiety (Lyons, 2014). Secondly, Tatiana attributes her uncertain EFL self-concept to her shyness. The self-belief of being shy is a non-academic self-concept that arises from the domain of personality and which seems to penetrate into other domains, like the domain of EFL speaking self-concept. In connection with her shy self-belief, she also mentions:

Excerpt 7.3 (pre-FG)

> It is very important to know how to present something in front of the people for the future and so, but the thing is that I don't like at all recording myself, and taking pictures of myself and speaking aloud in front of people [pants] is very hard for me, I'm very shy

This self-belief of shyness appears to be deeply ingrained in her perceived personality and might be a central, core belief (Harter, 2006), as it affects other aspects of her life apart from speaking in public, such as self-recording or taking pictures of herself. In turn, this belief plays a relevant role in Tatiana's emotional response towards speaking in English in public, as she conceives it as something strongly negative (she "doesn't like it at all"). This excerpt also demonstrates the Tatiana's internal struggle during the ESP course: on the one hand, she believes that learning how to present properly is important for her future but, on the other hand, she does not want to present precisely because she views this type of task as "very hard" and as anxiety-provoking. Despite this, she shows a determination not to quit, and she is aware that she will end up presenting: "practicing little by little is good for me, and I know I will do the oral presentation anyway, so…" (pre-FG).

As the two excerpts above suggest, Tatiana's self-belief of shyness is one important factor which accounts for her uncertainty in her EFL speaking self-concept. Another influential factor appears to be her previous English language learning (ELL) context and method and her ELL beliefs. In the excerpt below, Tatiana explains the method through which she has learnt English throughout her life, which could be classified as more traditional and grammar-focused:

Excerpt 7.4 (pre-FG)

Tatiana	I'm missing something. we've always done (.) I know it sounds very outdated but I've always learnt like this: theory practice theory practice (.) and now I don't have the theory and I have to go to class and listen and understand what I can.

Researcher	when you say that you've learnt you mean that you've always done that or that you have really learnt by doing that?
Tatiana	yes. I've learnt by doing that (.) well until now I had always done well and in Batxillerat I had quite good marks and now I've plummeted (.) well (.) I've only done one exam so we'll see in the last exam if I've learnt or if I haven't (.) but...

Despite the fact that Tatiana had to learn several languages when she arrived in Catalonia and that she did not attend any English language academies, her story seemed to be one of success: she received good marks and she had done well along the years of English instruction with a grammar-based method. Nevertheless, she is experiencing a period of transition or adaptation, as this subject is not grammar-focused; Tatiana feels that she is "missing something" because her ELL foundations (theory/grammar) have been replaced by others which prioritize communication. She now compares herself with her past self and feels that she has experienced a setback, which she attributes to her subjective interpretation of the marks (according to her she has plummeted), although at that point she had only taken one exam. In the same line, she expresses that "you learn more with a book and doing exercises" and "recording the video, uploading something, I don't improve much, I don't learn anything" (pre-FG). Based on her previous language learning experiences and the methods she believed worked for her, Tatiana has developed this belief in the need for theory (grammar) and practice. Her belief in this method and her self-belief of shyness are fundamental to understand her preference for a traditional ELL and it can subsequently be interpreted as a justification for her distaste for oral tasks.

Furthermore, Tatiana's characteristics as an English language learner seem to be important to understand her feeling of uncertainty about her EFL speaking self-concept:

Excerpt 7.5 (pre-FG)

> I don't move from my comfort zone, we don't move forward and I want to learn more to be able to, I don't know, when we are out there in real life… I guess that we will wise up but… we have to start now

As a learner, she has a strong sense of agency/autonomy, as she wants to be in control of her language learning process and wants to keep advancing in her learning, as seen in the excerpt above; similarly, she says: "I've never had private lessons or gone to an academy yet, but I learn on my own" (pre-FG) and "I watch films and so on and you always learn something" (pre-FG). Interestingly, she claims that with this subject she is not moving from her comfort zone, although it is precisely because she is doing so that she is experiencing this period of uncertainty. Tatiana also has clear language learning goals (to be able to use the language in "real life"). Ultimately, Tatiana is very demanding of herself, hard-working (as it can be seen from the classroom data) and quite perfectionist, as she wants to redo all the videos because she was reading instead of improvising given that "it is difficult to do everything perfectly and to speak naturally in the video" (pre-FG). Having these characteristics in her past ELL context had worked well for her, but in the new learning context she feels that even though she strives earnestly, the results are not the expected ones, which help explain her frustration and uncertainty.

Lastly, previous critical experiences presenting also seem to be fairly influential in the construction of her EFL speaking self-concept:

Excerpt 7.6 (pre-FG)

> I promise you, ask [name of the previous ESP subject teacher], poor thing, because I suffered a lot… the flash drive didn't work and I started to get nervous [laughs nervously] the words wouldn't come out, then I started talking and when I looked at the teacher I went blank… I thought shit, here we go again… the paper was two tables away. I don't know where to start or how to start, but this is my problem, the class in general is OK with that… so I'll get by.

Tatiana's vivid description gives the impression that she is reliving this moment. This experience has a negative emotional significance for her and she probably perceives it as a failure, although she does not explicitly voice it. However, it has to be noted that, first of all, the fact that she remembers this episode in so much detail indicates that it is likely to have exerted a considerable impact on her; moreover, the way she narrates this passage and the negative connotations in the words that she uses indicate that this impact was far from positive: she considers that she has a "problem", and that she "suffered a lot" during that oral presentation because she was feeling so anxious that she forgot everything. However, this does not seem to be an isolated case ("here we go again"), which implies that she has gone through a situation like this more than once, a repetition which might also contribute to the perception of failure. Nevertheless, at the end, she states that she will "get by", which indicates that she is determined to do the oral presentation anyways, something which she had mentioned already before. This type of critical experiences are fundamental because they act as predictors for future emotional experiences constructed in similar situations, in this case in oral presentations (see Barrett, 2017): Tatiana might believe that if she has never succeeded in oral presentations and she has always suffered from anxiety and experienced negative emotions while doing them, this pattern is likely to continue in future similar situations.

7.4.3 Week 8

Despite the negative experiences related to speaking that Tatiana shared the previous week in the pre-focus group discussion, her degree of class participation is far from low. In the class session from week 8, learners did not have to prepare any part of the oral presentation, contrary to the session observed in week 3; rather, students had to watch a video about foreign students presenting their universities in order to obtain ideas for their own oral presentation. During that class, she contributes several times aloud, four of them voluntarily. Moreover, in comparison to the behavior shown in weeks 3 and 5,

she seems much more confident when speaking in front of the class. This is one of the excerpts that demonstrate that:

Excerpt 7.7 (week 8/01:35:46)

Teacher	which aspects did they emphasize?
Tatiana	that it’s a small university (looks at teacher)
Teacher	a small university:
Tatiana	yes, and young and e (looks at teacher)
Teacher	young yes
Tatiana	fif- e fiv- fifty-five percent of the students e they are from abroad so (closes eyes) (smiles) (looks at teacher)
Teacher	okay so half of the [students are-
Tatiana	[and I think that more classes are in English (0.5) I think (looks at teacher)

Tatiana’s non-verbal behavior is completely different here than in previous class episodes: she does not scratch, rub her hands or twirls her hair, and she keeps eye contact with the teacher. In her third turn, there is a moment of confusion when saying the number “fifty-five” and she closes her eyes to concentrate, but right after she finds the correct word she smiles and looks again at the teacher. Moreover, Tatiana answers the teacher’s question straight away, without hesitation, and contributes a total of three times to provide a more elaborated answer; she also appears to have clearer ideas, to the point that she even interrupts the teacher to put them forward.

7.4.4 Weeks 10, 12 and 14

In this final class excerpt from week 10, one month before the end of the course, Tatiana displays, yet again, a more secure attitude when speaking in English aloud in class than in week 3. In this case, it is the teacher who asks Tatiana to correct an activity:

Excerpt 7.8 (week 10/00:51:52)

Teacher	Tatiana (0) number two
Tatiana	geography: it's one of the most attractive characteristic for the: international (scratches neck) (looks at computer)
Teacher	okay
Tatiana	I found that m: eh countries in north (points upwards) of Europe are more attractive (looks at teacher)
Teacher	mhm
Tatiana	and the investment is in the same point e if you have more more investment to: the university (2) a- and the same with the competition, the local competition if there are more than one university in the city (looks at teacher)
Teacher	okay
Tatiana	eh if they are more competitive (1) then more demand

Even if this interaction is not initiated by Tatiana herself, she is still able to provide a quick, lengthy and detailed response. Despite some minor aspects that reveal hesitation and nervousness (scratching neck, use of fillers and two pauses), Tatiana replies immediately, with long turns (especially the third one) and rather fluently. Furthermore, her gaze is directed towards the teacher (as in Excerpt 7.7), except at the beginning, when she checks her notes. It has to be noted that, especially in her third contribution, Tatiana is able to formulate a precise and long answer while keeping eye contact with the teacher and without even looking at her notes. This type of contributions (both voluntary and teacher-initiated) can be found as well in weeks 12 and 14, and her non-verbal communication is very similar to the example from week 10.

7.4.5 Week 15

In week 15, the second, post-group discussion (post-FG) is conducted, with the same students as in the pre-, and therefore extracts from the post-group discussion will be presented in this section. Data reveals that despite Tatiana's apparent relaxed and more comfortable behavior speaking in class, her EFL speaking self-concept still seems to be undergoing a phase of uncertainty and she keeps struggling to readjust to the new context. The oral tasks, and particularly the oral presentation and its preparatory activities, seem to be an uphill climb to Tatiana: as she herself expresses in the post-FG, she is "starting to get really overwhelmed" and "stressed out" with the subject. She also complains about having to record a lot of videos of herself speaking because "it is very hard and tiresome for me, and I don't like doing them" (post-FG).

One of the researchers asks students if they have perceived some improvement in their oral skills, to which she responds: "no, I haven't improved yet. I try to, but I find it harder every time" (post-FG). On the contrary, one of her classmates mentions that practicing for the oral presentation has aided him to overcome the embarrassment of speaking in English in public, to which she replies: "I'll never do that". Tatiana not only sees her present self as incapable of overcoming embarrassment, but she does not imagine her possible future self capable of doing it either. Possible selves are portrayed in the mind in the same way as their here-and-now self, which means that they are a reality for the individual (Markus and Nurius, 1986). In her statement, Tatiana's possible future self appears to depict what she is afraid of becoming in the future (Dörnyei, 2009), which shows once more the negative views she holds of her English speaking abilities with regards to the oral presentation (both in the present and in the future). She even claims that she knows exactly how much the oral tasks count for the final mark to see "how many points [she] would lose" (post-FG). These beliefs of incapability affect the beliefs she holds about herself as a learner and her speaking skills, and she does not appear to conceive change as possible. Here, Tatiana refers to

the grades in the course (as in Excerpt 7.4), which demonstrates that she still feels uncertain of her speaking self-concept and that she has the need to reinforce it, and struggling to obtain high grades in the oral tasks, particularly in the oral presentation, is a challenge which would contribute to that.

7.4.6 Week 18

In weeks 16-17, the students performed the oral presentations in front of the teacher and the classmates. Due to ethical issues, we do not have access to Tatiana's oral presentation mark, as it was part of the course assessment but not part of the dataset of the research project. However, the marks obtained for the research project indicate an improvement in all of them, including her oral performance (sales pitch), although her marks here already quite good from the beginning. Despite not having Tatiana's oral presentation mark, her response to the post-question from the questionnaire is even more valuable than the mark itself, as the actual grade is perhaps less influential than the self-perception of that the grade means to her. In that post-question, students had to indicate the most positive aspect(s) of the ESP course and provide an explanation. Tatiana's answer about the most positive aspect was as follows:

Excerpt 7.9 (post-Q)

> The oral presentation, because I have put a lot of effort to improve the mark with respect to the presentation in the first semester, and I have finally achieved it and I see that I can do it now. However, it is still hard and embarrassing for me to speak in public, even more in a language which I don't get to fully master.

This question was broad enough so that students could mention any aspect of the ESP course. Considering Tatiana's answers in the pre- and post- group discussions, it was inconceivable that she could choose the oral presentation as the most positive aspect of the whole subject, especially considering that the ESP subject made her very uncertain of her EFL speaking self-concept. In the end, her subjective experience of success is

what helps her transform her emotional state towards the task (from extremely negative to positive) and to change her previous negative self-efficacy beliefs into beliefs of capability: “I have finally achieved it and I see that I can do it now”. Although she had not overcome her fear of speaking in public, the fact that she attributes success to her own effort rather than to external factors might contribute to an increased sense of control about future outcomes and to generating positive affect and confidence (Baumgardner, 1990).

7.4.7 Drawing the complete picture

Tatiana displays more positive levels of confidence speaking in class than in the oral presentation scenario, which might be attributed to some of the factors found by Mercer (2015): she always sat in the same area of the classroom, she always worked with the same people (who are her friends), and, due to her fear of speaking assessment, she might conceive the class as a much more welcoming space. In addition, another essential factor seems to be that Tatiana’s uncertainties when speaking in English are rooted specifically in the oral presentation task, rather than in the EFL speaking domain as a whole.

After having analyzed multimodally the seven sessions and having compared the self-reported and the classroom-based data, Tatiana does not seem very concerned about all oral tasks (e.g. she rarely mentions the sales pitch) or about speaking in English in general. About this last point, she does not seem to display an attitude of an anxious speaker when having to speak aloud in English in class. The classroom dataset suggests that Tatiana was not an anxious EFL speaker even at the beginning of the course (although she experienced a certain degree of nervousness), because she volunteered several times in all the classes with rather long contributions (although those from the first classes tended to be shorter). In fact, compared to her classmates, she is one of the most active students and the majority of her contributions are voluntary (two or three per class approximately); what is more, the multimodal analysis indicates an evolution

towards a much certain EFL speaking self-concept as the course advanced, given that she displayed a more relaxed and secure behavior when speaking aloud and a decrease in hesitation and restless movements.

Therefore, her problem seems to be very task-specific and her beliefs of incapability are better conceived as self-efficacy beliefs. If Tatiana had negative self-efficacy beliefs in every oral task and situation, the evolution would have probably been a more difficult process, as it would have implied, for instance, perceiving success in other tasks (sales pitch) and communicative situations (like speaking in class). Nonetheless, her negative self-efficacy beliefs appear to affect the whole system, resulting in an overall low EFL speaking self-concept. This was explicitly seen in statements like "I'm very bad at reading aloud in English" (week 3, to her classmate Iria), "speaking in English is very hard for me" (Excerpt 7.2) and "speaking aloud in front of people is very hard for me" (Excerpt 7.3), as well as when she mentioned that she did not like recording videos of herself speaking because "it was very hard and tiresome" for her, as well as when she denies having improved in oral skills in general. It has to be noted that although Tatiana refers to the English speaking domain in general, she might be in fact referring to, or thinking exclusively about, the oral presentation, which is the task that worries her the most, as shown by the analysis.

The explanation for this low and uncertain EFL speaking self-concept is likely to dwell in Tatiana's excessive preoccupation with the oral presentation, which makes her feel so insecure that she believes that she is not good at speaking in English in general. After the success in the oral presentation, Tatiana reports a positive change in her affective conceptualization of the task and in her self-efficacy beliefs, which might eventually affect her overall EFL speaking self-concept.

7.5 Discussion

This research has contributed both theoretically and methodologically to the exploration of self-concept in the EFL speaking domain. The combination of data from group

interviews and the class observations have permitted to gain insight into the learner's beliefs, emotions and actions and to construct a holistic portrayal of her speaking self-concept. In connection to this, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) highlight that observing classroom practices rises ecological validity, as in complex dynamic systems context is regarded as inseparable from the system analyzed.

Interestingly, these two data sources illustrate the existence of ambivalence in second or foreign language learning situations (MactIntyre and Serroul, 2014), as the learner might feel both willing to speak (as shown in classroom data) but also restrained by anxiety (as expressed in group discussions). In turn, these results echo Mercer (2015), given that levels of anxiety seem to be lower in class than in a speaking task where the student is being observed. Furthermore, the analysis of classroom observational data suggests that participant's incapability beliefs were specific of the oral presentation rather than shared across other communicative situations; yet, the participant's grave problems with this specific task appear to have destabilized the whole EFL speaking self-concept, resulting in a low overall EFL-speaking self-concept. This study further demonstrates that the line that separates the "different layers of the self" (Mercer, 2015), such as a self-efficacy (task-specific construct) and self-concept (a more global construct), is blurry and that they are so strongly related that at some points they become indistinguishable (Marsh et al., 2019).

Several internal and external factors found in Mercer (2011a) have been identified as playing a role in the creation and development of the EFL speaking self-concept: beliefs systems (about oneself and about ELL), emotional experiences, English language learner characteristics (perfectionist, hard-working), previous ELL context and method, social comparison with peers, critical negative/positive experiences presenting, and perceived experiences of success/failure. A positive critical experience presenting, self-perceived as an experience of success, has triggered a change in beliefs systems (at a self-efficacy level) and in the emotions constructed towards the task. The change,

however, is only partial, highlighting the dynamic stability (Mercer, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012, 2015) of EFL speaking self-concept, as there seems to be both dynamic and stable dimensions depending on their centrality (Harter, 2006). Some dimensions appear to be less malleable, such as task-specific negative emotions like embarrassment and anxiety and the belief that speaking in English in public is extremely hard, which seem to be closely linked to her "shy" core belief.

Contrarily, dynamics were observed in the classroom-based data, as along the six sessions observed, the learner seemed to have experienced a decrease in her level of nervousness when speaking in the target language in class. A possible reason for that could be the fact that the learner did not conceive the classroom as a threatening situation or context in comparison to the oral presentation. Similarly, more peripheral aspects connected to the actual ability, i.e. self-efficacy beliefs, seem to be more susceptible to change (Harter, 2006; Mercer, 2012), even in such a short time lapse (15 weeks). The results show that changing the global self-concept is perhaps too complex of an exercise; yet, this change can occur more easily at a task-specific level, as it can be perceived in Tatiana's post-question, by succeeding in a task that is particularly relevant for the learner. The learner's attributed relevance, or value, to a specific task (such as the oral presentation in Tatiana's case) has been employed in theories like expectancy-value (Eccles, 1983) or control-value (Pekrun, 2006) as being directly correlated to the learner's motivation, academic achievement and type of emotions felt (positive or negative). Therefore, if modifications in self-efficacy beliefs occur in tasks to which the learner attaches high value, and taking into consideration that the different layers of the self are nested and reciprocally influence each other, such change might eventually affect the whole system of the self (Mercer, 2015).

Ultimately, although many studies have already highlighted the affective dimension of self-concept in general (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003; Pajares and Schunk, 2005), and also in the EFL self-concept (see Mercer's work), the findings from the current study

confirm the importance of emotions in FL learning, as it has already been mentioned by several authors (e.g. Arnold and Brown, 1999; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele, Witney, Saito and Dewaele, 2018), and, more specifically, this research shows this is especially true in the domain of speaking. These emotions seem to play a central role in the learner's assessment of her own ability, results which resonate with those obtained by Waddington (2019) and Yoshida (2013). It is well documented that willingness to communicate (WTC) is associated with self-esteem and self-perceived communication competence (Habib zade and Hashemi, 2014; McCroskey and McCroskey, 1986) and that learners tend to experience negative emotions like anxiety when speaking, especially in front of their peers (Kang, 2005; Lyons, 2014). The present study also confirms results by Horwitz et al., (1991) and Rubio (2000), as it shows that FL anxiety appears to increase during assessed speaking tasks. Therefore, these negative emotions, together with other fixed self-beliefs (like the belief of being shy) might impede a change in FL speaking self-concept, for which learners' self-confidence in the FL communicative competence is essential (Yashima, 2002).

7.5.1 Pedagogical implications

Educators need to be aware of the fact that learners carry their own learning experiences that explain their current EFL speaking self-concept and that, whilst it is open to change, this development is not likely to occur globally, but rather at a task-specific level. Teachers should help learners to develop positive and realistic self-concepts (Mercer, 2012) and to bear in mind the importance of boosting learners' speaking self-concepts by working on particular oral tasks while helping them progress. Furthermore, as Arnold (2007) points out, English language teachers should be aware that learners would benefit from more feasible goals in their language learning process in order to avoid frustration and negative self-beliefs and, on the whole, general low self-concepts. This is particularly noteworthy for speaking tasks, as learners often feel judged by their peers and tend to evaluate themselves negatively in relation to their classmates (Lyons,

2014). Educators should thus create a positive atmosphere in which respect is the top priority and in which students feel safer and less exposed to judgments. Ultimately, it has to be noted that although the foreign languages curriculum in Catalonia is communicative in nature, communicative approaches do not seem to be the rule in the classrooms, as shown in study 1 (see also Diert-Boté, 2016). By implication, teachers should focus on improving students' academic skills, in this sense oral skills by introducing more oral practice in class so that students get used to speaking in English in public and, in this way, learners can develop stronger EFL and EFL speaking self-concepts.

7.5.2 Limitations and future research

Despite its complexity, the study has some limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the timespan between the first and second group interviews is rather short (15 weeks) as compared with other longitudinal studies (e.g. Mercer, 2011a; Shapka and Keating, 2005). Despite its shortness, some changes have been spotted in the system of the self, which reinforces the finding that dynamism might occur in different timescales (from minutes to years) depending on the construct analyzed (Mercer, 2015). Another limitation that most longitudinal studies face is that there has not been a follow-up to explore the durability of any changes, although they might endure if the learning environment provides the right "affordances" (van Lier, 2004) in order that students keep growing and evolving, such as a communicative teaching language method, teacher support or a good classroom atmosphere, as shown in studies 2 and 4. Although various data collection methods have been employed, the overall research project did not focus exclusively on this student and so more detailed data could have been collected from further interviews. Similarly, it was not possible to have access to Tatiana's oral presentation mark or to her actual performance of the task, and no data on her subsequent reaction to her performance were gathered except from her response to the questionnaire.

In future studies, it would be especially interesting (1) to use repeated individual interviews with learners across a more extended period, stimulated-recall interviews in order to support their reflection on their actual performance, as well as follow-up interviews after a longer period of time to see if changes in their (speaking) self-concepts persist or if further changes or regression takes place; to (2) explore why some speaking tasks and/or communicative situations might be conceived by the learners as more threatening than others by analyzing speaking self-concepts across more learners, contexts, and types of oral tasks; and to (3) combine self-reported data with other types of data such as classroom observation, as the findings from the present study indicate that data triangulation is a promising approach in exploring learners' self-concept and revealing any potential paradox across data types.

7.6 Conclusion

The aim of the article was to analyze one EFL learner's speaking self-concept and to explore its origins, its dynamism, and underlying reasons for the changes during an ESP course at university. This study is methodologically innovative as it has mixed observable data from the classroom and self-reported data, which has provided the analysis of the learner's self-concept with more soundness. Findings show that EFL speaking self-concept was affected by the learner's beliefs systems, that is, negative self-efficacy beliefs at a task level (oral presentation), negative emotions towards the task, her characteristics as a learner, critical negative experiences presenting and perceived experiences of failure. Results also indicate that critical positive experiences presenting and a subjective interpretation of the experience as a success has played an important role in changing self-efficacy beliefs and the affective reactions towards the task (from extremely negative to very positive).

The study also highlights the overlap between self-concept and self-efficacy (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003; Marsh et al., 2019) and shows that self-efficacy beliefs might be peripheral and thus easier and faster to change than other core beliefs and related

emotions which seem more resistant to change (Harter, 2006), resulting in a dynamic stability (Mercer, 2011a; 2011b; 2011c). Ultimately, this research also underlines the importance of the affective dimension in EFL speaking self-concept and self-efficacy; on that note, beliefs of incapability appear to be strongly related to the emotional experiences of the participant, particularly to negative emotions such as foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986). This anxiety can further be perceived in the learner's incapability of portraying her present or her possible future self (see Dörnyei, 2009) as successful in the oral presentation task. Thus, this finding provides a deeper understanding of anxiety in the speaking domain from a qualitative approach and from the subjective viewpoint of the learner, which is particularly relevant for the current flourishing 'emotional turn' in SLA.

In terms of pedagogical implications, it is argued that educators should bear in mind the existence and dynamics of learner's speaking self-concepts and the significance of strengthening them by working on specific oral tasks. Therefore, teachers should help students develop a feeling of success in the task and, by extension, a feeling of progress in their language learning. Furthermore, educators should promote a healthy and positive classroom climate in which students are respectful and do not feel judged by their peers (Lyons, 2014). Ultimately, at least in the Catalan context, more time should be invested in oral practice so that students habituate to speaking in English and they subsequently develop stronger EFL speaking self-concepts. Whereas this chapter was focused on the case of one single student, the following chapter adopts a broader scope in the examination of beliefs and emotional experiences, mostly related to speaking, of the students from the 'mono' and 'trans' groups of this ESP course.

Chapter 8. Study 4

The aim of this study is to continue the exploration of the learners' foreign language-related beliefs and emotions by researching the elements which they regard as most important to have positive and enjoyable experiences in the classroom. The participants are the students enrolled in the two groups ('mono' and 'trans') of the ESP course. The data were obtained through one pre- and post- open-ended question from a questionnaire; eight semi-structured interviews; and four focus groups. The answers from the open-response items were analyzed at a macro-level through Domain and Taxonomic Coding (Saldaña, 2015) and afterwards the interviews and focus groups were content-analyzed to deepen the understanding of students' responses at a more micro-level. The analysis reveals that oral activities are the aspect which students value most positively; yet, some report of them negative emotions due to lack of practice and to negative beliefs about speaking tasks and about their own capabilities. Findings suggest that extensive speaking practice along the course, as well as a supportive teacher, a positive classroom atmosphere and an effective classroom management can increase students' self-confidence and positivity.

Keywords: language learners' beliefs; language learners' emotions; foreign language speaking; communicative language teaching; positive psychology

8.1 Introduction

In recent years, scholars have advocated for more holistic understandings of the language learner, the language classroom and the language learning process (e.g. Dörnyei, 2010; Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008; Ushioda, 2009; van Lier, 2000). This integrative view has allowed the exploration of the language learner from both the psychological and the social plane. In this line, research has shown that internal aspects, such as learner's emotions and beliefs, and external contexts, such as the physical space, the type of tasks or the interactions with peers and teachers, are constantly interacting in

complex ways (e.g. Aragão, 2011; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016; Mercer, 2011; Miccoli, 2001); yet, research on language learner's beliefs has been more extensive, whereas emotions were considered until fairly recently as "the elephants in the room – poorly studied, poorly understood, seen as inferior to rational thought" (Swain, 2013, p. 11). Nevertheless, the blossoming of Positive Psychology in SLA has not only resulted in an increased attention towards FL emotions, but it has also allowed to focus on emotions other than anxiety, particularly positive emotions such as enjoyment and other PP-related concepts such as resilience, flow, well-being, hope, optimism, creativity and foreign language self-constructs (see Oxford, 2016).

Given that positive psychology studies empirically the ways people can flourish and thrive (MacIntyre, Gregersen and Mercer, 2016), the goal of this study is to analyze what elements are fundamental, from the learners' viewpoint, in order to ensure positive and enjoyable experiences in the classroom. This is done by adopting macro-micro perspective by using multiple data sorts in order to delve into first-year university students' beliefs, self-beliefs and emotional experiences, particularly in relation to oral tasks.

8.2 Theoretical framework and key notions

8.2.1 Emotions and Positive Psychology in SLA

Due to the predominance of the cognitive paradigm in the field of SLA and education in general, the interconnection between emotion and cognition and the role that the former plays in language learning processes were overlooked until fairly recently. However, some authors like Arnold and Brown (1999) advocated for the need to recognize the importance of emotions and their link to cognition and learning, a point that is supported by research from different fields such as neuroscience (see Barrett, 2017; Damasio, 1994). The separation of cognition and emotion "has restrained the understanding of the interplay between emotions and cognition, in which beliefs are at stake" (Aragão, 2011, p. 303). However, with the 'affective turn', not only were

emotions given more weight, but topics such as motivation or beliefs also started to be reworked through affective lenses (White, 2018), because, despite being researched as different phenomena, research has shown that beliefs and emotions appear to be highly interconnected (Aragão, 2011; Barcelos, 2015; Dörnyei, 2010; Mercer, 2011a; Miccoli, 2001; Yoshida, 2013).

Emotion research tradition in SLA had focused had been reduced to the study of negative emotions, namely anxiety (e.g. Dewaele, 2002; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986; see MacIntyre, 2017). As a more integrative view of the learner gained as momentum, emotions research also started to widen horizons by focusing on other emotions apart from anxiety. Positive Psychology (PP) studies how people can function optimally and achieve desirable outcomes even during unfavorable circumstances by promoting long-lasting resources, such as resilience, in order to flourish and thrive even in averse conditions (MacIntyre, Gregersen, and Mercer, 2016). Fredrickson (2003), in her broaden-and-build theory, posits that positive emotions such as interest, pride, love or joy, contrary to negative ones, result in action tendencies that "…broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources" (Fredrickson, 2003, p. 219). Apart from positive emotions, the role of self-constructs, beliefs and self-beliefs have also been found to be important in flourishing and in re-constructing positive mindsets (e.g. Leung, Mikami and Yoshikawa, 2019; Pajares, 2001).

PP principles were introduced in SLA by MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012), who, inspired by Fredrickson's (2003) theory, argued that due to the broadening function of positive emotions, learners who experience positive emotions in class are more likely to be aware of everything that occurs in the classroom. Consequently, as learners are more aware of language input, they will be able to absorb it more easily. Negative emotions have the opposite effect, as they tend to narrow the learner's perspective, and therefore

the range of potential language input is inferior. MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) also point out the teacher's potential to influence students' emotions and to create a safe environment in which negative emotions are less prevalent, an aspect which has been remarked by other authors as well (e.g. Aragão, 2011; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016; Yoshida, 2013). Inspired by PP theories, some authors started to study the effects that positivity has in second and foreign language learning contexts. Studies have focused on PP-related concepts such as flow (Czimmermann and Piniel, 2016), hope (Hiver, 2016), perseverance (Belnap, Bown, Dewey, Belnap and Steffen, 2016) or love (Barcelos, 2020; Barcelos and Coelho, 2016; Pavelescu and Petrić, 2018; Martin-Rubió and Diert-Boté, under review).

8.2.2 Foreign language enjoyment and anxiety

FLE and FLCA go hand in hand in foreign language learning, as found by Dewaele and MacIntyre (2016). The authors suggest that anxiety and enjoyment are complementary emotions, not opposites of a continuum. This means that the understanding of enjoyment and anxiety as a see-saw appears to be inaccurate, as an increase in one does not necessarily imply a decrease in the other. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) were the first to conceptualize FLCA as situation-specific and multifaceted: "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). Since then, research on FLCA has been gaining interest as for some students it is one of the main hurdles they have to face in foreign language classes. Anxiety tends to appear when students believe that their oral performance is incomprehensible, wrong or stupid (Brown, 2001) and, therefore, it is closely related to their (self-)beliefs. Moreover, Tianjian (2010) found that foreign language speaking anxiety appears to differ over proficiency groups and personality factors, as also shown in Dewaele (2013).

Whereas FLCA has been researched and theorized on for more than 30 years, interest in FLE is just starting to take off. Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele (2018) defined

enjoyment as less simple and fleeting than pleasure: "If pleasure can occur simply by performing an activity or completing an action, enjoyment takes on additional dimensions such as an intellectual focus, heightened attention, and optimal challenge" (p. 153). Pavelescu and Petrić (2018) discovered that both FLE and love, which is conceptualized as a more intense emotion than enjoyment, were powerful driving forces in the learning of new language. Similar results were also obtained by Tashma Baum (2015) and Martin-Rubió and Diert-Boté (in review), which focused specifically on passion and love and concluded that both are powerful motivators in the learning of a foreign language.

As shown in Dewaele, Witney, Saito and Dewaele (2018), aspects such as positive attitudes towards the foreign language and the teacher, a regular use of the foreign language by the teacher, an advanced level in the language, and a high amount of time speaking were found to be significantly connected to higher levels of FLE. These authors also found that, in fact, FLE was more related to teacher and teacher practices than FLCA, which means that "an effective teacher needs to fuel learners' enthusiasm and enjoyment and not worry overly about their FLCA – while creating a friendly low-anxiety environment" (Dewaele, Witney, Saito and Dewaele, 2018, p. 27). In this line, research carried out by Dewaele and Dewaele (2017) and Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) suggests that the role of the teacher is essential in the experience of enjoyment in the classroom, as teacher friendliness, a positive attitude towards the teacher and positive teacher-student interactions (as also shown in the second study of this dissertation) are all linked to high levels of FLE. In a similar vein, the study carried out by Ahmadi-Azad, Asadollahfam and Zoghi (2020) reveals that teachers' extraversion, openness and agreeableness seem to have a positive effect on the students' FLE, whereas their neuroticism and conscientiousness did not significantly predict the same.

Recently, scholars have studied anxiety from a dynamic perspective over different timescales (Boudreau, MacIntyre and Dewaele, 2018; Gregersen, 2020) and in relation

to FLE. Results suggest that FLE and FLCA are two separate dimensions and therefore it is possible to experience them simultaneously, and has provided evidence of how emotions fluctuate dynamically in a complex interplay between internal and external variables (e.g. Boudreau et al., 2018; Dewaele and Dewaele, 2017; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; 2019). In this line, Boudreau et al. (2018) found that the relationship between FLE and FLCE varied considerably, with second-by-second fluctuations in FLE and FLCE during speech productions in French second language learners. The qualitative analysis of interviews showed that this variation was connected to low-level linguistic hurdles (related to gaps in vocabulary) or to higher-level obstacles lack disinterest in a specific topic. The complex and dynamic structure of FLE and FLCA – as well as of WTC– was also shown in Dewaele and Pavelescu (2019), in which said emotions emerged, fluctuated and co-existed in various ways, affecting in interactive and dynamic ways the participants' WTC in the FL.

What emerges from this literature review is that there is an increasing interest in how learners can flourish and thrive by experiencing high levels of positivity and enjoyment in the classroom, in which both (self-)beliefs and emotions like enjoyment and anxiety have an important role and interact dynamically. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore what aspects of the English language class they consider to be the most positive and enjoyable by answering these questions:

RQ 1. What aspects do learners value most positively, or find most enjoyable, of any English class they have had throughout their lives?

RQ 2. What aspects do learners value most positively, or find most enjoyable, of an ESP course which follows a communicative language teaching methodology?

Since preliminary results from these two questions indicated that students were recurrently mentioned by the participants, and, in general, very positively rated, two other research questions arose:

RQ 3. What beliefs do learners articulate and what emotions do they report to experience in relation to oral tasks at the beginning and at the end of the ESP course?

RQ 4. What are the dynamics of such processes and what reasons might explain the changes (if any)?

8.3 The study

8.3.1 Data collection and context

Data were gathered from students enrolled in both the 'translanguaging' and the 'monolingual' groups of the ESP course in the BAM degree. Despite their distinct approaches towards English language learning/teaching, both used a communicative approach, which, rather than focusing on the acquisition of syntactical and phonological patterns, aims at engaging learners in communication to help them develop their communicative competence (Savignon, 2002). Communicative language teaching is influential at all the phases of teaching (in the syllabus design, materials, teaching techniques, etc.), and emerged as a humanistic reaction to those teaching methods (such as the audiolingual) that overlooked fundamental communicative and affective aspects of language learning, and which had been proved to be ineffective in helping students communicate successfully (Arnold and Brown, 1999).

The course was designed so that students could understand and produce oral and written texts from the field of economics and business in English. For this reason, authentic materials that promoted both oral and written communicative competence were created. The assessment was based on three final tasks (oral presentation, sales pitch and formal business letter), two exams (mid-term and final) and a portfolio. Careful attention was devoted to each of the tasks, so students had to perform many practical activities in order to learn how to create final quality products. These activities included reading information about how to make good oral presentations/sales pitches, watching several performances, and self-recording several times. Students were also encouraged to

participate in class, so they also practiced their English speaking skills by discussing among themselves and the teacher.

The data employed in this study have been obtained by means of an open-response items, focus groups and individual interviews. This data triangulation has allowed understanding the phenomenon under analysis from various angles and perspectives, and going beyond the knowledge acquired by one single data sort, thus ensuring more quality research (Flick, 2018). The open-response and post question was collected from a questionnaire passed the first day of class (coded 'pre-Q') and just before the course finished (coded 'post-Q'). This question stated: "Indicate some aspect(s) you remember positively of any English class you had throughout your life. Think about a lesson you liked and explain why it was good". The post-question was the same but focused on specific aspects from that ESP course. 87 responses were obtained in the pre-question (41 in 'mono', 46 in 'trans') and 79 in the post-question (33 in 'mono', 46 in 'trans'). The second data collection method was two focus groups conducted in week 7 of the course with seven students from the 'monolingual group' (coded 'FG1') and with eight students from the 'translanguaging group' (coded 'FG2'). The last method by which data were gathered was eight individual interviews (coded 'int.') with four students from both groups that were conducted in the middle of the course. In the focus groups and interviews, participants were asked about previous experiences learning English and their current experience in the course. Both were conducted in Catalan, and the questionnaire could be answered either in Catalan, Spanish or English; therefore, all the answers have been translated into English.

8.3.2 Data analysis

The analysis of the data involved a twofold process that combined macro and micro perspectives of analysis. Firstly, the data from the open-ended question were transcribed and subsequently codified with Atlas.ti. The analytical process followed Boyatzis' (1998, p. 11) four stages: (1) sensing themes – recognizing the codable moment; (2)

doing it reliably – recognizing the codable moment and encoding it consistently; (3) developing codes; and (4) interpreting the information. The researcher-generated codes were renamed and organized using Domain and Taxonomic Coding. Domains are categories which categorize other categories, and a taxonomy is a list of elements classified under a domain (Saldaña, 2015). Once the codes were obtained, these were passed to an external researcher so that he could codify individually the open-ended items of the questionnaire drawing on such categories (although with the freedom to modify them or to add new ones). Afterwards, we compared both codifications and calculated the items we had codified equally, which resulted in 83% of inter-rater reliability.

This more macro analysis provided information on the bigger picture of students' beliefs about important aspects of language learning. Therefore, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the learners' experiences that might explain their responses, a more micro analysis was performed. Data from the interviews and focus groups were fully transcribed and content-analyzed in order to delve into the learners' emotional experiences, beliefs and self-beliefs in relation to EFL speaking. It has to be noted that despite the fact that the excerpts presented here are in English, the analysis was carried out in the original transcriptions in Catalan in order to be as faithful as possible to the participants' original words and meanings.

8.4 Findings

Results are divided into two subsections: the first one revolves around the task, especially speaking tasks, which is the domain with a higher frequency in both the pre- and the post- answers; the second subsection is devoted to the other themes brought up by the participants which are likely to be potentially influential factors upon the task development, namely: the teacher, the classroom management, and the classroom atmosphere.

8.4.1 Tasks

Table 8.1 (see below) displays the Domain and Taxonomic Coding for 'task', which is the code with the highest frequency in the pre- and post-answers. In the pre-answers, students especially highlight speaking and discussing in class via debates or activities which imply interacting orally with their peers. Videos and films are also an activity which students report to enjoy, as well as games. Some students also mention working with songs, learning vocabulary, giving oral presentations and learning grammar. At the bottom of the list, listening, reading, phonetics and writing letters to a pen friend are also mentioned.

	R. FREQUENCY (%)	TAXONOMY	R. FREQUENCY (%)
PRE-	43.2	Speaking/discussing	30.2
		Videos and films	18.7
		Games	15.1
		Songs	7.5
		Oral presentation	5.7
		Grammar	5.7
		Vocabulary	3.8
		Listening	3.8
		Reading	3.8
		Phonetics	1.9
		Creative tasks	1.9
		Pen friends	1.9

Table. 8.1. *Task: pre-Q Domain and Taxonomic Coding*

Some of the pre-answers related to oral tasks are: "I like speaking quite a lot in class because then you gain fluency in the language" (Guillem, pre-Q), "the most interesting and productive lessons that I've attended are those in which we spoke with a native and we learnt phonetics and to pronounce correctly" (Naia, pre-Q) or "I remember when I gave an oral presentation and I did well, and I like it when we do activities to overcome embarrassment when speaking" (Clara, pre-Q). Clara brings up a key point that appears

“iteratively” (Georgakopoulou, 2013) in the interviews and focus groups, which is the connection between speaking activities and negative emotions such as embarrassment or anxiety. Indeed, whilst the Domain and Taxonomic Coding has allowed to create a big picture that shows that students tend to enjoy speaking activities, interviews and focus groups allows us to give voice to students that do not feel that way when speaking in English, particularly when they have to do it in public. These are a few examples:

Excerpt 8.1 (Anna, int.)

> “I don’t participate because I feel awkward. I think that what scares you with English is making a fool of yourself […] we don’t participate in class out of pleasure”

Excerpt 8.2 (Pol, int.)

> “Many of us don’t master English and then maybe it causes embarrassment or something like that... the fact that what if I screw up? I’d better not say anything”

Excerpt 8.3 (Laura, FG1)

> “I’m very embarrassed about making mistakes or saying something which the others won’t understand, or about mispronouncing something… when I read aloud, for example, I repeat words without realizing, or I ask how to pronounce them”

Excerpt 8.4 (Gisela, FG1)

> “I’m very shy and I have a hard time when I have to speak in English. In high school I was much much much shyer, but now more or less I’ve already… haha I prepare it quite a lot at home and memorize it and then when it’s time to do it then it’s better”

Excerpt 8.5 (Tatiana, FG2)

> "I find speaking in English very hard, especially in an oral presentation because I'm very shy, I mean, I learn it by heart and when I'm there in front of the class I go blank"

These five testimonies show the adverse effects that negative emotions such as embarrassment and anxiety can have on foreign language learning. As Fredrickson (2003) posits, negative emotions narrow individual's repertoire of action in order to to cause a particular reaction such as fight or flight: while Anna and Pol exemplify a 'flight' response, by which they avoid speaking so as not to "make a fool of themselves or "screw it up", Gisela and Tatiana show a 'fight' strategy by memorizing the text from the oral task at hand, probably an oral presentation. Moreover, Laura says that she repeats words without being aware of it and Tatiana reports being so nervous that she goes blank when having to speak in English. These two last statements appear to further reinforce the idea that negative emotions make learners less aware of everything that occurs in the classroom, including language input (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012) and, in this case, language output.

Nevertheless, these 'emotional reactions' are not automatic, but constructed in view of previous experiences and anticipations of what will occur (Barrett, 2017) and intimately related to various beliefs and self-beliefs that they construct around themselves as FL learners and around FL learning. For Anna, the belief that she will make a fool of herself keeps her from participating, as for her speaking in English is not something "pleasant". Pol holds the self-belief that one avoids speaking when s/he does not have a sufficient level of English; this appears to be connected to the belief that making mistakes provokes negative emotions like embarrassment, a belief which is also shared by Laura. Gisela and Tatiana attribute their anxiety to their self-belief of shyness. These instances show that some students feel very insecure with their English level and appear to have low EFL self-concepts in the speaking domain.

These negative emotions associated to EFL speaking might be also related to lack of or little oral practice. In interviews and focus groups, students report that during their lives

they have been exposed to a large amount of grammar and little speaking. In connection to this, a student plains the following: “I think that the oral part helps a lot because in high school all the time you do grammar exercises and so on and then people are not so used to speaking” (Gabriel, int.). Similarly, another learner mentions: “all our lives we’ve had the student’s book and the workbook, you know? and here it’s more practical [...] I think it’s better because you can watch a video and see the mistakes in the pronunciation or the way they speak” (Ivan, int.). In one of the focus groups, students also highlight the contrast between high school and the ESP course in terms of grammar and speaking:

Excerpt 8.6 (FG1)

Researcher 1	do you find any differences between this subject and for example what you did in high school?
Laura	yes
Aitor	here it’s focused on writing and speaking
Laura	[yes]
Marta	[yes] here we don’t do grammar
Researcher 1	and in high school?
Marta	[yes more grammar]
Gisela	[more gram- more grammar]
Maite	[grammar yes]
Laura	[grammar the important] thing was grammar
[...]	
Laura	and we didn’t speak at all we didn’t do speaking activities
Researcher 2	oral presentations maybe
Laura	oral presentations but everyone was reading the paper haha

Participants’ statements indicate that they have a tradition of learning grammar in school with little practice of oral skills, as it was also reported by participants in the first study. In some cases, as Laura highlights, in the few oral tasks that they had to perform (mostly oral presentations), students tended to read from the script, and therefore the oral presentation task resembled more a read aloud activity than an actual presentation. Despite the fact that some students feel insecure and anxious in a more communicative

context, as excerpts 1-5 have have shown, most students seem to have enjoyed the change in the teaching methodology. This can be perceived in the fact that in the post-answers (see Table 8.2 below), 'task' remains the item with the highest frequency. Whereas in the pre-question, 'speaking/discussing' and 'oral presentation' represent 35.9% of the total of tasks, in the post-question, the activities related to oral tasks (oral presentation, speaking/discussing, sales pitch and self-recordings) increase to 63.7%. Apart from this type of tasks, watching videos, writing business letters, and, to a lesser extent, studying grammar, vocabulary and topics related to are activities which students have highlighted, as well as the extensive use of ICT in the course.

	R. Frequency (%)	**Taxonomy**	**R. Frequency (%)**
Post-	53.2	Oral presentation	30.2
		Speaking/discussing	17.6
		Sales pitch	15.9
		Videos	12.7
		Writing	6.2
		Self-recording	4.7
		Grammar	4.7
		Vocabulary	3.2
		Business aspects	3.2
		ITC use	1.6

Table 8.2. *Task: post-Q Domain and Taxonomic coding*

The oral presentation and the sales pitch were key tasks in the subject and results show that in the post-answers students valued them highly: "[I liked it] when we had to give an improvised presentation in front of all the class" (Ariadna, post-Q), "I enjoyed working on the sales pitch because I think that until the degree, English subjects are too focused on grammar" (Èric, post-Q) and "[I like] public practice of oral expression. I remember a very productive lesson in which we did a debate and everyone participated

in English" (Irina, post-Q). The communicative approach adopted in this course seems to have been positively assessed by most of the students, even by Anna, Pol, Gisela, Laura and Tatiana. Their post-questions are in stark contrast with the unwillingness to speak in English that they had expressed at the beginning of the course, as they highlight speaking-related aspects in the post-question:

Excerpt 8.7 (Anna, post-Q)

"When we had to do an improvised presentation in front of the class"

Excerpt 8.8 (Pol, post-Q)

"The fact that the teacher insisted that we spoke in English because the only way to learn is by making mistakes, so you don't have to be embarrassed about making mistakes"

Excerpt 8.9 (Laura, post-Q)

"The class where the teacher played the videos of the presentation because she played mine and I got over the embarrassment that I felt before"

Excerpt 8.10 (Gisela, post-Q)

"Self-recording videos talking about a topic is a good activity because, apart from practicing English, in the end you get more fluent and gain confidence when speaking. It's good to play them in class because you feel a little bit embarrassed, but you get over it and pay attention to mistakes"

Excerpt 8.11 (Tatiana, post-Q)

"The oral presentation, because I have put a lot of effort to improve the mark with respect to the presentation in the first semester, and I have finally achieved it and I see that I can do it now. However, it is still hard and embarrassing for me to speak in public, even more in a language which I don't get to fully master"

These answers suggest that by means of extensive oral practice, students can change their perceptions regarding oral tasks as well as the emotional experiences attached to them. Whereas in the interviews and focus groups (Excerpts 8.1-8.5) these participants expressed negative emotions and low self-concepts with regard to EFL speaking, post-Q answers reflect a positive change in some of the students' self-concepts by the end of the course. At the beginning, Pol was reluctant to speak because of the belief that making mistakes was something that one should be embarrassed of; here this belief appears to have changed because he seems to have understood that making mistakes is a natural process of language learning. Similarly, Laura, who was very insecure and afraid of making mistakes, seems to have developed certain resilience and to have "overcome the embarrassment" of speaking in English after her experience. Gisela points out that although some activities like self-recording videos might be intimidating, in the end they are useful in terms of cognitive development, i.e. to advance in learning ("you gain fluency" and "[you] pay attention to mistakes"), and of emotional development, i.e. to overcome embarrassment and to gain confidence. Ultimately, Tatiana articulates the belief that speaking in English is still hard and embarrassing for her; yet there has been a change in her self-beliefs, as whereas in the FG she reported high insecurity and anxiety (she went "blank"), she now have more positive self-concept because she has seen that she "can do it now". Apart from these cases, other students also reported positive emotional effects of oral practice:

Excerpt 8.12 (Joan, post-Q)

"I enjoyed the day of the presentation about the university, because you overcome the embarrassment of speaking in English and you practice how to speak in public"

Excerpt 8.13 (Gala, post-Q)

"[I liked it] when we did the presentation due to the fact that you start getting over the fear of speaking in public"

The analysis has shown that students have generally have positive experiences in this communicative language teaching context, and some students even report having been able to overcome negative emotions associated to speaking in English thanks to the course. Yet, a more complete picture of the experiences in the ESP course can be constructed by analyzing the other aspects that students mentioned in both the pre- and post- open-response item, which are the teacher, the classroom atmosphere and the classroom management.

8.4.2 Teacher, classroom atmosphere and classroom management

Table 8.3 below summarizes other aspects which participants mentioned in their pre- and post-answers and which, despite having a lower frequency, provide information about the students' beliefs, emotions and overall experiences in the English language classroom.

	DOMAIN	R. FREQUENCY (%)	TAXONOMY	R. FREQUENCY (%)
PRE	Teacher	24.8	Rapport	37.9
			Nativeness	24.1
			Delivery/language use	20.7
			Management/ organization	10.4
			Knowledge	6.9
	Class management	16	Group work	55
			English language use	30
			Dynamism	15
	Atmosphere	12	Participation/interaction	46.6
			Positive environment	40
			Self-improvement	6.7
			Keeps attention/motivation	6.7
	Nothing good	3.2		
	Other	0.8		
POST	Atmosphere	18.3	Positive environment	39.1
			Participation/interaction	30.4
			Self-improvement	26.1
			Keeps attention/motivation	4.4
	Teacher	16.6	Rapport	47.6
			Management/organization	38.1
			Delivery/language use	9.5
			Knowledge	4.8
	Class management	10.3	Group work	76.9
			English language use	7.7
			Diversity of tasks	7.7
			Dynamism	7.7
	Nothing good	0.8		
	Other	0.8		

Table 8.3. *Other factors: pre- and post- Domain and Taxonomic Coding*

These results show that the role of the teacher is very important for the students, especially their building-rapport capacity, which is the highest code in the pre- and post-responses. Although some students had remarked the importance of classroom atmosphere in their pre-answers, after the course this domain increases substantially and becomes the most valued before 'teacher'. This indicates that many students have enjoyed the positive environment of the class, a good level of participation and interaction, a sense of self-improvement and, eventually, an atmosphere which keeps them attentive and motivated. It is important to highlight that although 'self-improvement' maintains the third position within the taxonomy, there has been a considerable increase in its frequency. Classroom management aspects seem to be fairly important for the participants as well, particularly working in groups, being encouraged to use English in class and making the lessons dynamic.

Therefore, the success of oral tasks in this course might not be completely understood without the presence of these three elements (classroom atmosphere, teacher and classroom management). As shown in Table 8.3, a positive and healthy classroom atmosphere is an aspect which students value greatly of this course, as many have emphasized the good classroom environment in both groups. Some students have also linked the positive atmosphere to speaking tasks. For instance, Aitor remarks the positive environment during oral presentations, and David and Mario emphasize the enjoyment during oral presentations and the sales pitch:

Excerpt 8.14 (Aitor, post-Q)

"I liked the day of the oral presentations because there was a very good atmosphere"

Excerpt 8.15 (David, post-Q)

"[I liked] presentations, because it was never boring and students could participate actively in class"

Excerpt 8.16 (Mario, post-Q)

> "I would have liked to practice the sales pitch more, as not everyone could practice in class and we all had a really good time when listening to the way the others sold the products"

Based on results from the post-Q answers, another factor which has appeared to be considerably important for students in the ESP course is the teacher, whose role appears to be highly significant for the learners, particularly the capacity of building rapport. The way the teachers from the two groups have interacted and related with their students is therefore very likely to have had an effect on the students' positive experiences with speaking. For instance, Pol (int.) points out that "you cannot force anyone [to speak], you know? The teacher encourages people to speak, asks them, and now, with her, people are more active and try to participate more". In the same vein, these participants mention the following in their post-questions:

Excerpt 8.17 (Ramon, post-Q)

> "The most important thing is the kindness and enthusiasm that the teacher had to teach us and to make us participate and speak"

Excerpt 8.18 (Jessica, post-Q)

> "Above all, that the teacher encouraged us to speak to each other in English, and that the teacher herself spoke it all the class"

Excerpt 8.19 (Magda, post-Q)

> "The teacher's effort so that everyone participated and spoke in English during the class"

Ultimately, classroom management is the last factor which students assess very positively, and, within it, group work is, by far, the most cited aspect. As Aina

(int.) highlights: "in a smaller group it's not that awkward, especially when you do it with people that you know well, because we are not close with everyone in the class". In the responses, as well as in interviews and focus groups, students stress that they enjoy working in groups or in pairs especially to practice speaking, as it is less embarrassing to speak in front of two or three people than in front of the whole class:

Excerpt 8.20 (Lluc, post-Q)

> "I think group work is positive because it's easier to work with classmates and those of us who are embarrassed feel more supported"

Excerpt 8.21 (Sara, post-Q)

> "I like lessons in which the teacher divides us in groups and we have to interact with each other, for instance the class when we did the last sales pitch of the products from the dossier"

Excerpt 8.22 (Mateu, post-Q)

> "The classes when we do activities in group and this way we can practice English and have a good time" (Mateu, post-Q)

These findings suggest that the success of certain activities in class, particularly of oral tasks, cannot be understood without the wider context of the classroom. The change in the perception of oral tasks as something threatening to something less embarrassing and even enjoyable might have not been possible if these other elements had not been present as well. If the teachers had not been attentive and had not encouraged students to speak, if the atmosphere created during oral activities had been unsafe and uncomfortable and if the class had not been organized in a way that allowed students to practice speaking in small groups in a more relaxed way, probably the tasks would not have been so fruitful and, as a result, students would not have enjoyed them that much.

8.5 Discussion

This study has shed light on the aspects which are most enjoyable for students in the English language class and to which they attach more importance, based on their life-long experiences learning English and on the ESP course they were enrolled in. The analysis of the pre- open-ended questions has shown that the aspects which participants value the most in an English class are: (1) interactive and entertaining activities which involve speaking, much more than the traditional grammar or vocabulary learning; (2) a supportive teacher who is skillful at building rapport with them; (3) a positive classroom environment that fosters discussion and participation; and (4) an effective management of the class that promotes group work. As shown in the post-answers, learners encountered these factors in the ESP course and rated them very positively, especially the amount of oral practice. Thus, it seems that the elements that they expect to find in an enjoyable English language class were met in this course.

This macro perspective was nuanced by a more micro analysis of the participants' interviews and group discussions. These have shown that "enjoyment for one might not be enjoyment for all" (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016, p. 227), as some students report experiencing negative emotions such as embarrassment and anxiety when speaking. The experience of negative emotions was most probably constructed (see Barrett, 2017) through their years of EFL/FL speaking, as students displayed some strategies that they seem to frequently adopt when having to deal with oral tasks. These strategies narrowed their thought-action repertoire by producing 'fight' (speaking but having previously memorized the text) or 'flight' (remaining silent) responses as they conceived this type of task as threatening (Fredrickson, 2003).

This conceptualization of oral tasks and subsequent negative emotions were also connected to irrational beliefs about learning (a tendency towards 'awfulizing' the speaking situation), dysfunctional self-beliefs about their own proficiency and capabilities (a tendency to self-rate negatively their own abilities in the language) (see

Oxford, 2015), and beliefs of perfectionism (a tendency to regard mistakes very negatively and to think that peers would judge them; see Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016), which tend to increase language anxiety (Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002). The last factor that seems to have been influential in the experience of negative emotions is a tradition of learning English mostly through grammar which has not enabled learners to forge high EFL speaking self-concepts, and, when confronted with a more communicative approach, students feel defenseless and vulnerable. In relation to this, in the interviews and focus groups analyzed, students tended to lean towards discourses of perfectionism in language production (see Dewaele, Finney, Kubota and Almutlaq, 2014; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002). Thus, in their utterances, they attached central importance to accuracy, to the point that the thought of making mistakes increased their anxiety and prevented them from producing oral output in the FL.

One of the most interesting findings is that the students who had reported negative emotions in relation to speaking activities eventually assess them as the most positive aspect the course. The fact that they could mention anything but they choose speaking-related aspects is very relevant as this suggests that negative emotional experiences can be positively changed. Pol, Laura, Gisela and Tatiana show how FLE and FLCA can be experienced simultaneously, as other studies have shown (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016). Participants explain that the most enjoyable experience they have had of the course is related to speaking, but at the same time they acknowledge that they have experienced negative emotions such as anxiety and embarrassment during the performance of that task. For instance, Laura and Gisela were embarrassed when the teacher played the videos of themselves speaking, but they managed to overcome negative emotions and remembers this episode as one the most enjoyable ones. Similarly, Tatiana claims that she still feels anxious when having to speak in English in public, but she conceives the oral presentation as the most enjoyable task because she regards it as a triumph. This further shows that experiencing real

success is the ultimate route to self-esteem (Arnold, 2011) and to enjoyment (Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2014).

Changing emotional experiences of the learners into more positive ones is neither a simple nor an automatic process, especially if they have been constructing and accumulating negative experiences in relation to FL speaking throughout their lives. Nevertheless, insights from this course seem to indicate that with the ideal certain conditions, this goal can be fulfilled. On the one hand, extensive oral practice through adequately-designed activities seems to have helped learners to get accustomed to speaking tasks. At the beginning, students lacked self-confidence and emotional resources to face a communicative language teaching environment; nevertheless, through intense practice, they have developed resilience that has helped them successfully face adversity and resist in times of emotional, cognitive and/or physical stress (Oxford, 2015). On the other hand, if we conceive the classroom as an ecology (van Lier, 2000) or a complex system (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008) in which all its elements or agents interact, then it is interesting to observe the role of other agents present in the classroom. The findings show that a supportive teacher, a positive and safe classroom climate and an effective classroom management, particularly group work, seem to have been particularly influential in terms of oral tasks enjoyment.

As for the teacher, the participants believe that the capacity of building rapport is the most important in the teacher; they report that in that course the teachers encouraged (not forced) them to speak and to participate and highlight their kindness and enthusiasm. The relevance of a supportive teacher has also been found in other studies, including study 2 from this dissertation. Pianta, Hamre and Allen (2012) show the connection between positive student-teacher relationships and student engagement; similarly, Henry and Thorsen (2018) found that moments of positivity between the teacher and the students increased students' motivation. Regarding classroom climate, students remark that during the course was a positive and supportive atmosphere during

oral tasks, which likely affected their positive assessment and enjoyment (see Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016). As Dewaele and Dewaele (2017, p. 14) point out, it is crucial to "create an emotionally safe classroom environment where linguistic experimentation is encouraged", given that learners tend to have vulnerable FL self-concepts that can be damaged due to a lack of full proficiency in the FL (Arnold, 2007). This positive classroom climate is even more intense when working in small groups or pairs, given that being comfortable and familiar in a language group is a form of social capital (Gregersen, MacIntyre and Meza, 2016) which students can resort to in difficult situations. Thus, this macro-micro perspective has revealed that it is probably the accurate mixture of several factors which might have facilitated the learners' increase of enjoyment in oral tasks, even in those students initially reluctant to FL speaking.

8.5.1 Limitations of the research

Despite these encouraging findings, the study has some limitations. Firstly, the sample for the pre- and post- open-response item was not very large, particularly in the post question. This is due to the fact that all the students that were enrolled in each group did not attend the classes in which the questionnaire was distributed. Although it would have been ideal to have the responses of all the students, it is worth remarking that since these data were analyzed qualitatively, the sample size does not need to be as wide as in purely quantitative/statistical studies. Secondly, only a few students participated in interviews and focus groups and therefore data are not very extensive. Moreover, as this study belongs to a bigger project with different aims, it was not possible to conduct a detailed follow-up of each learner's evolution of their beliefs and emotional experiences and, hence, findings in this regard should be taken with caution. Despite its limitations, results are optimistic, as they suggest that with the necessary tools and resources and with the correct combination of ingredients, it is possible for learners to re-construct the negative emotional experiences, as well as the beliefs they hold about foreign language speaking and about their own capabilities as FL users.

8.5.2 Pedagogical implications

Several pedagogical implications can be derived from this study. It would be interesting for teachers to get to know their students' preferences in language learning, as well as to explore their emotions and (self-)beliefs in relation to specific tasks, such as oral ones, given that each learner has different interests (Reschly et al., 2008). In order to do so, many of the observations and activities provided in Gregersen and MacIntyre (2014) on learning styles, motivation, beliefs and so on can be useful to get better acquainted with the students as well as to empower them by occasionally letting them choose the activities they prefer to do. It has to be borne in mind that positive psychology does not deny the existence of problems or negative emotions, but it studies ways in which human can flourish and function positively.

Therefore, educators should not aim at eradicating anxiety, but at finding a balance between anxiety and enjoyment and to help students flourish in times of cognitive and emotional stress (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012). Hence, it would be a mistake to overprotect learners and to avoid exposing them to 'threatening' situations such as public FL speaking, because lack of practice is likely to create insecure learners with low self-concepts. In the end, students themselves also seem to realize that in order for learning to occur, they need to get out of their comfort zone; as Gisela says: "you feel a little bit embarrassed, but you get over it". Therefore, it is on the teacher's hands to help students "get over it" by furnishing them with the tools and resources they need to face these adverse situations successfully and to become more emotionally intelligent. In turn, the teacher should also attempt to create a positive and safe welcoming environment which facilitates positive emotions and in which students are willing to take risks with language, to explore and to play (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012).

8.6 Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to explore foreign language enjoyment in a ESP course composed of two class groups which followed a communicative language teaching

approach. Data were triangulated in order to construct the most holistic and faithful picture as possible of the various aspect of the course, which permitted obtaining a macro-micro perspective of the students' experiences. To this end, data from different sources and different timespans were gathered: an open-ended question from a questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the course, two focus groups and four interviews, all of them conducted in the middle of the course.

Findings indicate that oral tasks are the aspects which students find more enjoyable in the English language class, although some of them also construct instances of negative emotions such as of anxiety or embarrassment when having to speak in the FL. The construction of these negative emotions appears to be linked to a lack of oral practice, to a tradition of grammar focalization –in detriment to speaking–, and also to negative (self-)beliefs about language mistakes, about the difficulty of oral production in a FL and about their own linguistic (cap)abilities. Results from the data obtained at the end of the course show that exhaustive FL oral practice, together with a supportive teacher, a positive and comfortable classroom atmosphere, and extensive group work, amongst others, can be effective in increasing students' self-confidence and positivity in the classroom.

PART IV. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Chapter 9. Discussion of research findings

This chapter provides a global discussion of the research findings of the four studies and it is divided into three sections that correspond to the three research questions of the dissertation. The chapter therefore begins with a section devoted to presenting the results in the first general question, which aims to explore the participants' experiences learning English and the ways beliefs and emotions relate to such experiences. The next two sections are dedicated to the second and third research questions, that is, the role that (a) the teaching methodology, including the type of tasks implemented, and (b) the teacher, particularly his/her capacity of creating rapport and a positive classroom atmosphere, play in the (re-)construction of learners' (self-)beliefs, emotional experiences and overall foreign language self-concepts.

9.1 Experiences learning English

The general aim of my research has been to explore the beliefs and self-beliefs that first-year university students display and the emotions that they experience (and have experienced) in relation to learning English in a Catalan context. Personal experiences have been conceived in this research as inseparable from subjective consciousness (Dewey, 1983), which includes, amongst other processes, one's beliefs and emotional experiences. Based on this premise, the first, and most general, research question that I have addressed throughout my dissertation is the following:

> **RQ 1.** How do English language learners construct their current and past English language learning experiences in a Catalan context?

The findings of the four studies have shown that when analyzing learning experiences, it is crucial to take into account both the inner and outer contexts in which such experiences occur or have occurred. This means that neither emotional experiences nor beliefs about language learning or about their own capabilities and abilities can be understood independently from the ongoing situations in which they take place. As a

matter of fadct, emotions and beliefs are constructed, emerge and develop in a particular way in relation to the objective of being in a classroom, which is to learn English in this case. More specifically, students' experiences, including their emotions and beliefs, cannot be separated from the various aspects that constitute the particular ecology of a given classroom (see van Lier, 1997; 2000). These aspects include interpersonal relationships (with the teacher and peers), the type of teaching methodology, the different types of task that they perform, the way the classroom is managed or the classroom atmosphere. Nevertheless, all these elements should not be considered in isolation, but understood in a classroom context in which they converge and interact, as it is especially emphasized in study 4.

Throughout the four pieces of research that comprise this dissertation, it has also been demonstrated that learners' experiences not only need to be interpreted in the 'current' language ecology context (i.e. their ESP courses), but also in light of previous experiences learning English, perhaps in different settings (different teachers, peers, methodological approach, activities, work environment, etc.), and even in view of hypothetical/future experiences, or scenarios, of the English class. For instance, in studies 1 and 4, students complain about learning experiences in the past in terms of teachers, methodologies and tasks, and these perceptions appear to influence how they feel and think today about English language learning and about themselves as language learners. In study 2, students compare previous negative experiences with other teachers to construct more positive experiences with their current teacher. Similarly, in study 3, the participant uses her past experiences with oral activities to construct her present emotional experiences and her beliefs and self-beliefs about speaking in English. What is more, in studies 3 and 4, learners not only make reference to past experiences, but also to future and hypothetical experiences that they think will happen such as experiencing anxiety when they will speak in English in public or being judged by their classmates if they make language mistakes. These results show the interconnection between past, present and future selves, and the the influence that past experiences have

on one's own construction of the here-and-now self and of possible selves (future and/or hypothetical). These possible selves sometimes reflect what learners are afraid of becoming and how they are afraid to act or feel in the future –as shown in studies 3 and 4–, and since possible selves are constructed in the mind in similar fashion to the here-and-now self, these selves are as real as their current self (Markus and Nurius, 1986).

Similarly, findings also suggest that emotional experiences are constructed based on past experiences and on an anticipation of what might occur in the future. This result is in line with Barrett's (2017a) theory of constructed emotion, by which the brain attempts to find a past experience to construct the present experience and, based on the accumulation of past experiences, predictions are made about what is more likely to occur. The same pattern seems to take place when constructing language learning experiences, for instance in relation to speaking in a foreign language. Thus, students seem to remember past experiences speaking in English, which sometimes are perceived as failures, and associate to their physiological state the emotional category of 'anxiety' or 'embarrassment'. This accumulation of past experiences acts as an anticipation of what will probably occur in similar speaking situations in the present or future, and it is by means of these predictions that the learners construct an episode of 'anxiety' or 'embarrassment' before it even takes place. Nevertheless, if emotions are not unalterable and universal 'essences' that can be found in the natural world, but they are rather constantly constructed, co-constructed and re-constructed as inner and outer elements come into play, then this implies that emotional experiences can be changed and that this negativity emotional tendency is possible to be curbed.

Furthermore, the emotional experiences (both positive and negative), appear to be related in complex and dynamic ways with the beliefs students hold about language learning and about their own skills and proficiency in the language. As it was also the case in other studies (e.g. Aragão, 2011; Miccoli, 2001; Yoshida, 2013), the feeling of embarrassment when having to speak in front of the class in English is connected to a

belief that classmates will judge one's performance or laugh at one's mistakes. This is in turn linked to irrational, negative and dysfunctional beliefs (Oxford, 2015) of incapability (low self-efficacy and self-concepts), associated, once more, to past similar experiences speaking which have not been successful. This complex interrelation indicates that the connection between learners' beliefs and emotions cannot usually be understood in terms of causality, and without taking into consideration past experiences and other elements from the outer and inner context that might also influence and be influenced by this relationship. As a result, these phenomena or constructs are better conceptualized as 'processes' that can change based on internal and external factors (see also Mercer, 2011a), although in study 3 it was shown that some beliefs, i.e. core beliefs, seem more resistant to change, whereas other more peripheral beliefs are easier to be modified.

Apart from their interconnection and their dynamic nature, insights from the data indicate that beliefs and emotions are socially and dialogically constructed, shared and negotiated through language. This was particularly explored in studies 1 and 2: in the first study, students shared their experiences and displayed their beliefs about English language learning with other learners and they jointly constructed discourses about language learning and the appropriate and inappropriate ways of learning English, based on their own experiences. Yolanda and Clàudia, as well as other peers, engaged in a negotiation about attributing blame for the poor English language education they had received, and they were constantly positioning themselves and aligning or misaligning their beliefs to others'. Likewise, emotions are frequently expressed, displayed and constructed in dialogue with peers, with the teacher, and even with the researchers (see Encinas Sánchez, 2014). Emotions spring in conversation and they are an essential part of interpersonal relationships, such as those between teachers and students. As shown in study 2, emotions are situated; they emerge in talk, affect and in turn are affected by the other's linguistic and non-linguistic behaviors. For example, positive emotional responses on behalf of the teacher tended to produce positive emotions on the learners,

and the other way around. This shows that both beliefs and emotions are part of social practices through which individuals socially and jointly share and give meanings as well as influence each other's behaviors (Edwards, 1999; Potter, 2000); this further indicates that, as Harré and Gillett (1994) point out, 'psychological phenomena' do not exist in the inner mind of the individual, but they actually live in discourses, subjectivities, meanings and positionings.

In their discourses, students tend to report negative experiences in relation to their life-long trajectories learning English (about 12 years approximately). It has to be noted that the aim of my dissertation was not to obtain a vast amount of data in order to examine whether students think the education received in the English language is adequate or not. Yet, data from studies 1, 3 and 4 have revealed that there seems to be a generalized discourse regarding teaching/learning English in a Catalan context. This discourse is formed by beliefs and emotions related to the inadequate and often old-fashioned language methodologies employed in teaching English, which is the first axis of the dissertation. In the ESP course, which adopts a more communicative approach, students find themselves adapting to other ways of learning the language and some of them, like Tatiana, undergo a difficult process of adaptation to the new context. However, once the process of adaptation is over, students appear to have much more positive experiences that at the beginning/middle of the course and, perhaps more than in their previous years.

Apart from the role of the teaching/learning methodology, the figure of the teacher was the other axis of this research. It has to be taken into account, however, that it is extremely difficult to separate the teacher from the methodology employed, as well as from the other elements that constitute the classroom system. As Yolanda and Clàudia negotiated in article 1, "are the teachers the ones who are imposed teaching grammar, or are the teachers the ones who decide the method and tasks?". As it might be expected, the role of the teacher in creating a safe environment appears to be fundamental in

learning a language, perhaps even more so than in other subjects, given that "our self image is more vulnerable when we do not have mastery of our vehicle for expression – language" (Arnold, 2011, p. 11). The experiences that students report in relation to their past teachers are more varied than with the teaching methodology, although they clearly display positive experiences in relation to the figure of the teacher in the ESP course. The role of these two axes, i.e. the teaching methodology and the teacher, will be more thoroughly discussed in the following two sections.

9.2 The role of the teaching methodology and the tasks

In order to explore the participants' experiences learning English more in depth, the following research sub-question was posed, and therefore methodology became one of the core aspects of my research:

> **RQ 2.** What beliefs and emotions do students construct and display regarding the teaching methodology and the types of tasks (particularly oral tasks) in the English language learning class?

The analysis of the secondary education curriculum for languages in Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015a) showed that it has a holistic vision of learning that follows a competency-based approach. This perspective aims to make students competent, that is, to allow them to identify and apply the skills, knowledge, abilities, attitudes and behaviors which are necessary to successfully perform a given task. Furthermore, this type of curriculum encourages teachers to develop highly communicative activities, to employ authentic materials, and to evaluate from a global perspective and by using different types and instruments. Furthermore, in the language model of the Catalan education system (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2018), it is specified that "[a]s is common knowledge, in order to consolidate language learning, one must practice the language in contexts of meaningful functional use and, especially in settings that are directly linked to a student's own emotional and recreational experiences" (p. 59).

Despite being “common knowledge”, the participants of this research project do not always seem to have learnt English in a way that is meaningful and functional, or that involves them emotionally or recreationally. They also do not report having developed enough competencies, skills, knowledge or attitudes to face real-life situations, oral or written, outside the classroom. As learners mention in studies 1, 3 and 4, practice differs considerably from theory, because they claim that the methodology employed in secondary school classrooms is strictly grammar-based and far from communicative. It has to be taken into account that these beliefs were expressed by two different sets of participants (from two different degrees and with a time-span of about three years in their data collection), and, despite this, they shared very similar experiences. The most relevant problems they identify according to their English learning experiences are that the teaching method was based on a structural syllabus, with little practice of oral communication, unvaried and meaningless activities and grammar-based exams which evaluated more the students’ capacity of memorizing than their learning processes. As findings from study 1 reveal, these type of approach of teaching English produced generally negative emotions in learners, such as demotivation, boredom, frustration and insecurity.

In self-reported data from both ESP courses (from the Audiovisual Communication and from the Journalism and Business Administration and Management degrees), participants claimed that in order to compensate for the insufficient level of English they had acquired in formal instruction, many of them attended language schools and/or learned on their own by watching films, series or videos, listening to music and reading in English. Although these learning strategies were not specifically reported in the four studies, it was an aspect which many participants from the two ESP data-sets highlighted; moreover, in study 4, activities which involved learning by doing and by having fun –i.e. those which differ the most from what they tended to do in class– were the most positively valued and the most fondly remembered by students. Their self-reported poor level of English despite having formally studied it for more than ten years

can be viewed from two perspectives: their actual abilities in the English language and their self-perceived abilities. Their actual abilities were not assessed in this thesis project because it was not one of its aims. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that ACJ students carried out the discussions in English because these were part of the oral assessment and many of them actually struggled (some a great deal) to communicate spontaneously. Similarly, in the BAM group, I could have access to some of their language tests and to their oral contributions in class and, as it happened with the ACJ group, many students were assessed with a low or medium-low command of the language (A2-B1)[16]. There were exceptions in both groups, of course, with students having around a B2 level and even higher, although those were a minority.

Learners' perceived abilities with the language, which are intimately related to FL self-concept and self-efficacy, were an aspect that emerged quite regularly in the data-sets for both groups of participants (ACJ and BAM). Students generally displayed low and insecure FL self-concepts, particularly in relation to oral production, which were connected as well to negative emotions such as anxiety and embarrassment, as other studies have found (Aragão, 2011; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016; Hewitt and Stephenson, 2011; Horwitz, et al., 1986; Liu and Jackson, 2008; Yoshida, 2013). Oral production appears to be the skill to which students attach the most negative emotions, due to the fact that oral performance in public involves a higher visibility (Mercer, 2011a). This was observed both in self-reported accounts and in observable classroom data. For instance, in study 1, most of the students complained about the lack of oral practice during their English language education, and Gemma explains that "when we speak English in class we feel unsafe and we are embarrassing [sic], and nobody speaks". In study 3, it was analyzed how Tatiana felt extremely insecure and anxious when speaking in English in public; although some instances of anxiety could also be perceived in her verbal and non-verbal behavior (some hesitations, playing with hair,

[16] Participants' command of the English language can also be perceived in the participants' contributions in articles 1, 2 and 3 (in the 3rd one only in class contributions), which were transcribed verbatim.

scratching, rubbing hands), her negative emotions were particularly related to the oral presentation task, in which she reported having to learn the text by heart in order not to "go blank". This 'fight' response produced by the narrowing effect of negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2003) was also perceived in study 4, as both Tatiana and Gisela used a memorizing strategy in order to face oral presentation tasks. There were also examples of students who had 'flight' responses, by simply remaining silent and avoiding participating in class, such as Anna or Pol, mostly produced by a fear of making mistakes and of making a fool of themselves.

These insecurities and negative self-concepts and emotions come to the surface precisely in periods of transition, for instance from elementary to secondary school, or to secondary school to university (see McMillan, 2013), as it is the case. Our participants, however, not only experienced a transition from secondary to tertiary education, but also, and perhaps most importantly, from a traditional grammar-based methodology to a communicative language teaching approach. For many students, this implied being exposed to new ways of learning the language, mostly through extensive oral practice, which is in fact what most students seem to enjoy and expect in an English language course (as shown in studies 1 and 4). During periods of transition, the learners' identities or selves seem to be in constant dynamism because they are trying to adapt to the new context (Jackson, 2003; Mercer, 2013; Silverthorn, Dubois and Crombie, 2005) and subsequently learners might experience declines in academic self-perceptions (Cole et al., 2001; Fredricks and Eccles, 2002) and achievement (Alspaugh, 1998). This could be exhaustively observed in study 3, with Tatiana's struggles to adapt to the new learning setting, as well as in study 4, when students' express their uncertainties in relation to all the amount of speaking that the course entails.

These periods of adaptation do not last forever and by the end of the ESP course students display a change in some of their beliefs and emotional experiences with regard to speaking in English. Pol for instance seems to comprehend that making mistakes is

necessary to advance in the language learning process; Laura, who was also afraid of making mistakes, reports having "overcome the embarrassment" she felt before; Gisela mentions that some oral activities might be daunting at first, but she acknowledges they produce cognitive and emotional gains, as they are helpful to improve in the language and to gain self-confidence. In this line, Gala and Joan pointed out that oral presentations help you "overcome the embarrassment of speaking in English" and "start getting over the fear of speaking in public". Tatiana is not so categorical in her response, as she admits that speaking in English is still hard and embarrassing for her; nevertheless, whereas throughout the course she displayed high anxiety and insecurity, in the end she seems to have a much certain self-concept and much more positive self-efficacy beliefs, as she appears to have realized that she knows she "can do it now".

This change towards more positive mindsets is neither an easy nor a quick process, and several conditions need to be met for an evolution to occur. Findings across the studies suggest that both internal and external factors might account for the students' low self-concepts and their experiences of negative emotions. External factors include a teaching methodology that focuses on grammar acquisition and does not foster speaking practice; and an unsafe classroom environment in which students feel judged or criticized by the peers and/or the teacher. Regarding internal factors, a tendency towards perfectionism (see Dewaele et al., 2014; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002), perceived failure speaking in the past, irrational and dysfunctional beliefs (like low self-efficacy beliefs and 'awfulizing' beliefs of the speaking situation; see Oxford, 2015) and self-beliefs of shyness were identified as sources of anxiety. Findings indicate that there exist ways of helping students have more positive mindsets and increase their self-confidence, such as critical positive episodes in relation to speaking, perceived experiences of success and progress in learning, extensive oral practice and numerous activities to prepare quality final products. In all this, the role of the teacher is fundamental, given that s/he is the one in charge of selecting the teaching methodology and the type of activities, as well as of ensuring a positive classroom environment in which all these ingredients can be

combined and learning can be experienced through positivity. The role of the teacher is more extensively addressed in the following section.

9.3 The role of the teacher

What would a class be without a teacher? Probably the same as without students. The teacher is, in the end, the person who is in charge of the classroom and the students, and who takes important decisions with respect to what occurs in the learning context – although always bearing in mind the directions received from the educational institution and the education system. It seemed clear thus, even before the data analysis, that the role of the teacher would be an essential factor that would help understand the learners' experiences in the classroom. This became more evident with the initial results that were obtained in the first study; therefore, the role of the teacher became the second focus to explore the participants' experiences learning English, with a particular interest in the interpersonal relationships that were built with students. Consequently, the last research question that I have attempted to provide a response to is:

> **RQ 3.** What beliefs and emotions do students construct and display regarding the role of the English language teacher and student-teacher relationships?

Stevick (1980), in his oft-cited quotation, claimed that "[m]y earlier conclusion was that success depends less on materials, techniques, and linguistic analysis, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom" (p. 4). The findings from my research point to the same direction. Based on insights from my data, it seems clear that what occurs "inside the people" from the classroom is also influenced by outside factors, such as materials, techniques or methodologies, but also by the relationships with the other individuals in the class. In my research I have not analyzed explicitly the ways students relate with their peers, as the emphasis has been placed on teacher-student relationships. Nevertheless, data suggest that students tend to compare themselves with their peers in the same class and tend to be afraid of their criticism and

judgment. For instance, Tatiana articulated the belief that for her classmates it was easier to speak in English because they (had) attended language schools, whereas for her it was more difficult, and several students in study 4 made evident their fear of ridicule before their classmates during public oral productions in English.

Going back to Stevick's quotation, it is difficult to unequivocally state that what goes on between people is more significant than teaching techniques, the materials employed or the methodological approaches, as findings reveal that students place a lot of importance on the methodology and type of tasks performed. What my results seem to indicate, however, is that the key is not so much on the materials and methods that are implemented, but on how they are implemented. And the *how* depends entirely on the teacher. As it was shown in study 4, students reported high enjoyment with oral tasks, and even those who experienced anxiety ended up assessing speaking activities as the most enjoyable aspect of the course. In relation to it, they also remarked the positive classroom environment, the high amount of group work and the way the teachers behaved with them. Students highlighted the teachers' "kindness and enthusiasm" and the way they encouraged and made an effort so that students participated and spoke in English to each other in class. Moreover, the ability to build rapport with students was the aspect of the teacher that the students valued the most, both in the pre- and in the post- questions from the questionnaires, a finding which resonates with Faranda and Clarke (2004).

Rapport development was thoroughly examined in study 2 by focusing on teacher-student contact moments in one of the two groups of the ESP course. That teacher was particularly selected because, in contrast to previous English language teachers they had had in the past, that teacher was described as having very positive characteristics and as performing certain practices in the class that were positively assessed by the students. The findings show that there are certain practices that contribute to creating a positive classroom atmosphere and to building rapport between teacher and students; these are,

for instance: making corrections and providing feedback with kindness; explaining and helping students while promoting self-sufficiency; engaging in casual conversations and using humor to make students speak; and paying attention to students and caring about them and their opinions. These practices (or similar ones) have been identified in other rapport studies (e.g. Frisby and Martin, 2010; Gallardo and Reyes, 2010; Krzemien and Lombardo, 2006); yet, through the analysis of teacher-student contact in situ it was possible to see the construction of emotional experiences in and through interaction in a multimodal sense, i.e. not only through verbal communication but also through the use of gestures, facial expressions, smiles, laughter, etc.

The analysis also indicated that, in order to understand rapport, we first need to explore positive contact moments, or micro-moments of positivity resonance (Fredrickson, 2013). These are moments of interpersonal connection, a connection which unfolds in real time and which is gained through eye contact, touch, shared voice and body movements in which the individual becomes invested in the other person's well-being. It is therefore the accumulation of multiple situated moments of positive resonance that eventually builds an embodied sense of rapport (Fredrickson, 2013; Korthagen, Attema-Noordewier and Zwart, 2014). During these moments, positive emotion appears to generate more positive emotion, and "this back-and-forth reverberation of positive emotional energy sustains itself –and can even grow stronger– until the momentary connection inevitably wanes" (Fredrickson, 2013, p. 42). As reported by students, during this positivity resonance they feel happiness, confidence, increased security, comfort and enjoyment; on the contrary, students reported experiencing negative emotions such as weariness, boredom and even fear when the teachers were too strict and demotivated, and when students felt ignored and not cared about by them. This point also emerged in study 1, in which Mireia explained that her teacher did not care whether students understood what he explained, whereas the teacher from the other group "was very careful about everyone". Yolanda also pointed out that English language teachers were supposed to "like to teach people and speaking in English and

making them feel better and feel so excited", because "if you like to do something you like to do it with energy"; yet, from her experience, many teachers were "tired of always teaching the same", and this demotivation was subsequently transmitted to the students.

Yolanda's comment about teacher demotivation is particularly related to teachers' well-being, an area within language learning research which has received scarce attention[17]. This is rather surprising given that the teachers' well-being plays a fundamental role not only in their own life satisfaction (Kieschke and Schaarschmidt, 2008) but also in the quality of instruction and academic success (Day and Qing, 2009; Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Lüdtke and Baumert, 2008). As MacIntyre et al. (2019, p. 27) explain, "[o]nly when we better understand these processes can the profession as a whole take informed action to more proactively support language educators and their wellbeing, not only for their own sake, but also for the benefit of the learners whom they teach". Oxford (2020) found that a dynamic use of emotional intelligence, emotional labor, emotion regulation and empathy allowed teachers and teacher educators to strengthen their emotional well-being. In terms of emotional intelligence, teachers with higher levels of trait emotional intelligence[18] report more positive attitudes towards the students (Dewaele and Mercer, 2018), higher intrinsic motivation and less amotivation[19] (Dewaele, 2020) as well as higher levels of self-reported classroom management, creativity and pedagogical skills (Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer, 2018). Furthermore, as Li and Rawal (2018) found, positive resonance between teacher and students is not only beneficial for the students' well-being, but also for the teacher's, as mutual love, understanding and support during classroom interactions helped teachers avoid being

[17] See Barcelos and Ruohotie-Lyhty (2018) for a review on teacher's emotions and beliefs in SLA.
[18] Trait Emotional Intelligence refers to emotion-related self-perceptions measured through self-report (e.g. questionnaires and rating scales) (Petrides and Furnham, 2001, as cited in Dewaele, Gkonou and Mercer, 2018).
[19] Amotivation refers to "being neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated" (Fernet et al., 2008, p. 258, as cited in Dewaele, 2020).

dragged down, and love towards their profession was what sustained their investment in teaching.

On the whole, the findings suggest that the role of the teacher is particularly influential in how students experience their English language learning process. Students appear to display several expectations and beliefs regarding how a 'good' teacher should be and how s/he should act in the classroom and relate with them. These beliefs seem to have been formed based on past experiences (positive and negative) with different teachers, and, in the end, what students highlight the most about their teachers is the interpersonal side of teaching, that is, their rapport-building skills, more than their subject knowledge or other characteristics they may have. Insights from the data indicate that learners' emotional experiences in the classroom are intimately related to this rapport factor, as almost any action and behavior performed by the teacher is likely to have an effect on the students. This does not imply, however, that learners adopt a passive role and modify their behavioral, motivational, cognitive or emotional state depending solely on the teacher's actions; on the contrary, data show that emotional experiences are jointly constructed in and through interaction and dialogue and, therefore, emotions are situated, emergent and context-dependent. These interactions can become moments of positivity resonance between teacher and student when both of them experience strong positive emotion, which appears to be beneficial not only for the learner, but also for the teacher's well-being, as shown in Li and Rawal (2018).

9.4 Concluding remarks

This chapter has discussed the findings of the four articles that compose this dissertation in light of the three research questions that were initially posed. The findings suggest that there are many internal and external aspects that play a role in the type of experiences that English language learners have. Language learning experiences need to be explored in light of learners' self-beliefs, beliefs and emotions towards different elements of the classroom ecology, such as the task at hand, the teaching methodology,

their peers and the teacher. Results further suggest that learners are constantly re-constructing and socially co-constructing experiences in the language classroom, which can be much more positive if suitable conditions are met, namely: a safe and respectful classroom climate, an effective classroom management that fosters group work, positive relationships with the teacher and peers, and methodology that helps advance in all the skills with particular emphasis on oral production. These adequate affordances (van Lier, 2000) can help learners to modify negative and dysfunctional beliefs and self-beliefs they tend to hold about language learning and about their own capacities as learners, as well as to overcome negative emotions by constructing experiences through much more positive mindsets.

Chapter 10. Implications of the research

After discussing the findings in light of the three research questions, this section will be devoted to emphasizing the relevance of this dissertation by exploring its implications and contributions at three levels: theoretical, methodological and pedagogical. Theoretical implications will be discussed in terms of the complex interconnection between beliefs and emotions and the similar nature of these two constructs. Methodological implications will be expounded in relation to the validity of adopting qualitative lenses, different data collection methods and various analytical tools in order to explore learners' beliefs and emotional experiences. Lastly, classroom implications will be commented with regard to the relevance that these two constructs have in foreign language learning processes and pedagogical recommendations will be provided based on insights from the findings.

10.1 Theoretical implications

With regard to theoretical implications, the results of this thesis indicate that studying learning experiences involves understanding the learners in holistic terms. In this vein, learners' beliefs and emotions appear to be closely connected to the way students assess their experiences, as they display several expectations and beliefs about how a successful experience learning English should be (for instance in relation to the teacher and the teaching methodology) which, in turn, are connected to certain emotions experienced throughout their lives in English language learning contexts. As Frijda, et al. (2000, p. 4) point out, beliefs, emotions and other mental states[20] "form such an intricate web that distinctions can become blurred".

As findings suggest, the relationship between beliefs and emotions appears to be evident for two main reasons. In the first place, data reveal complex interactions between these two constructs, as there seems to be a mutual influence between them. In fact, some

[20] Note that these authors conceptualize beliefs and emotions as purely mental states, but in this research they are conceived as processes whose social dimension is fundamental in their construction.

authors even include beliefs as part of affect (Arnold, 2009; Horwitz et al., 1986; McLeod, 1989). This problematizes the understanding of beliefs and emotions in linear or causal terms: do I feel anxious when speaking in a foreign language because I believe that I am too shy? Or do I believe that I am too shy because I experience anxiety? In this vein, Eysenck (2000, p. 182) explains that "[w]hen individuals are anxious, they exhibit increased use of cognitive biases which can lead to the expansion of existing danger and vulnerability schemas. In addition, the existence of danger and vulnerability schemas makes individuals more likely to experience anxiety". This example illustrates that it is extremely difficult to establish patterns or predictors between these two processes, probably because such causalities do not even exist. Assuming that there is a unidirectional causation between beliefs and emotions would be reductionist, but even establishing a bidirectional influence between them would be too simplistic, as it is impossible to separate a part from the whole, i.e. analyzing beliefs and emotions without considering other factors. Nevertheless, there is cumulative evidence (from the present research as well as from other studies, e.g. Aragão, 2011; Dewaele and MacIntyre, 2016; Mercer, 2011, 2012) that there are many elements within and outside the learner constantly interacting at a given point in time, and therefore we need to take a holistic or 'relational' (Ushioda, 2009) view of the learner and of the learning process.

In the second place, beliefs and emotions not only appear to be interrelated, but they also share some ontological similarities. Both constructs might be conceptualized as processes, given their dynamic and complex nature, rather than as entities or phenomena, as the latter view hides a degree of essentialism that makes us conceive them as purely mental and abstract substances that are fixed (see Barrett, 2017a). Findings from this research reinforce the idea that beliefs and emotions are dynamically constructed through the interplay of several individual and social elements and are displayed through interaction. Moreover, due to their intrinsic dynamism, beliefs and emotional responses are constructed based on previous experiences and on hypothetical future situations, and are continuously reconstructed based on the accumulation of

experiences (Barrett, 2017a), as shown in studies 3 and 4. Both constructs are functional and meaningful at a social and individual level and they can even guide action[21]. By way of illustration, at an individual level an experience of anxiety might lead to a 'fight/flight' response; at a social level, the teacher might interpret an instance of, say, demotivation or boredom in a student, and take action in order to change that emotional state. Similarly, a belief like 'English is a very difficult language' could serve the purpose of justifying oneself when performing poorly in an English test and, in the social plane, shared beliefs could help learners create cohesion by means of discourses of victimization regarding the (inadequate) way they have been taught English.

Both beliefs and emotions appear to have an individual and a social side, but in practice it seems unviable to attempt to draw a line between the inner side and the outer side of these constructs, for the Self is at the same time individual and social; therefore, one might wonder whether the dichotomy individual-social contributes in any way to a better understanding of these two processes and if this dualistic thinking is necessary (Larsen-Freeman, 2002). This vision leads us to Vygotsky's psychological research that frames the individual-social relationship as co-constructed, rather than as two separate entities. This embracing perspective conceives the individual and social character of the person concurrently, so emotions and beliefs cannot be split from their contexts. This view is also shared in complexity theories; as Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) explain, context is not a stable background variable outside the individual that affects him/her, but in complexity theory individual and context are regarded as coupled. Vygotskyan sociocultural theory and ecological approaches (e.g. van Lier, 1997, 2000, 2004) share with complex systems theories the idea that language learning and use are social processes that emerge from interaction with the world and with individuals and, as such, offer the possibility of conceptualizing the complexity of emotions and beliefs in their wholeness.

[21] However, this should not be interpreted in linear terms as though emotions and beliefs always precede or produce action.

10.2 Methodological implications

Apart from its theoretical contributions, this research also has implications in terms of methodology. As pointed out by Croker (2009), the focus of qualitative approaches is on the participants and on the ways they experience, provide meaning(s) and interact with certain phenomena or processes, in this case their beliefs and emotional experiences about English language learning. Therefore, a qualitative framework has been particularly helpful to explore in depth the situated, contextual and functional nature of beliefs and emotions and to analyze the ways these constructs relate to each other and to other contextual factors at a given point in time. In terms of analysis, learning beliefs seem to be easier to capture and to examine than emotions, but they are not easy to comprehend *without* emotions. This means that beliefs tend to be easily reported and displayed through language, but they are hardly ever devoid of emotion, as "emotions are feelings that accompany thinking. They are the feeling side of thoughts" (Ratner, 2000, p. 6). For instance, when students articulated beliefs (and discourses) regarding teachers or the poor English language education received, or when they explained their self-perceived inabilities of speaking in English, emotions were always present and emergent.

As a researcher I could hear, read and interpret frustration, anxiety or demotivation in many of the learner's statements even though these words were not explicitly uttered. When I started analyzing learner's emotions, I aimed at identifying emotion words in their statements (e.g. 'I felt bored'); nevertheless, after being immersed in the data, I began to realize that emotions were everywhere: in words, in tones, in faces, in gestures, in gaze. However, the fact that emotions are experienced multimodally and that other individuals can decode them does not imply that there is a way of analyzing emotions objectively and outside their context. Going back to Barrett's view (2006), the experience of emotion is always subjective, both for the person who constructs the emotion and for the person who 'interprets' an episode as an instance of a certain

emotion. This interpretation is based on cultural agreement or consensus and understood because of contextual information, and therefore my reading of the participant's emotions in their non-verbal behavior was thanks to the fact that I am a member of the same community and, as such, we share the same cultural understandings of what an instance of a certain emotion is (or can be).

Studies that are qualitative in nature like this one (see also Gabryś-Barker, 2014; Imai, 2010; Pavelescu and Petrić, 2018) offer a perspective that contributes to understanding how a person –or a learner– constructs an experience of emotion in context. From this dissertation it can be drawn that data triangulation and a combination of observational (classroom audio/video recordings) and non-observational (interviews, focus groups and open-response items) data have been valuable methods to capture learners' construction of emotional experiences and of beliefs and self-beliefs. If our aim is to analyze the subjective construction of emotions, then we need to go beyond physiological and biological cues and examine them qualitatively through the analysis of experiences communicated through language (Barrett et al., 2007; Buckley, 2016), both verbally and non-verbally (see also Encinas Sánchez, 2014, for a multimodal analysis of emotional experiences in general education). This type of analysis can be done in self-reported data (as in study 1) and in observed interactions in the classroom setting (as in studies 2 and 3) by means of several analytical tools which have been useful to explore both emotions and beliefs from different angles and degrees of detail.

Despite the usefulness of exploring these constructs through observational and non-observational data, it has to be pointed out that analyzing emotions in the classroom is fraught with difficulty even with the support of field notes and several audio and video recordings of the sessions. Although the four studies of the thesis do not include classroom data analysis, those studies which examine classroom data show that affect is involved in interaction, in which both verbal and non-verbal communication are embedded. This makes it reasonable to perform multimodal analyses that enrich

interactions with explicit explanations and interpretations of the social practice that, in essence, allow us to grasp "how the real world of the classroom operates" (Larsen-Freeman, 2016, p. 389). Therefore, notwithstanding the challenge that collecting and analyzing classroom data represents, I would like to encourage researchers carrying out qualitative research to enter natural settings and explore how any construct or process related to language learning –such as emotions or beliefs— is constructed in interaction and how it is experienced, expressed and interpreted by the participants involved through verbal and non-verbal modes.

10.3 Pedagogical implications

The last implications that can be drawn from this dissertation are related to teaching practices and pedagogy. In her study about teacher's views about teaching research, Kennedy (1999) concluded as follows:

> The relationship between teaching and learning is the most central issue in teaching, and it is also the most perplexing and least understood. Teachers often feel that learning outcomes are unpredictable, mysterious and uncontrollable. It is not surprising to learn that teachers find studies most valuable when the studies give them a deeper understanding of this fundamental relationship. (p. 528)

This "deeper understanding" can be achieved through ecological validity in research, i.e. by analyzing real-world phenomena in the experimental contexts in which they occur (Schmuckler, 2001), in this case, the classroom. I believe that this dissertation has reached this ecological validity by contextually exploring the ways language beliefs and emotions relate to the students' language learning/use experiences and to the ever-changing nature of learners as human beings. From a Positive Psychology point of view, the aim is that students learn to accept their past, to experience a sense of contentment and well-being in the present, and to look forward to future learning experiences with optimism and excitement (Shrestha, 2016). Insights from the data suggest that learners'

own perception and construction of past, present and future learning experiences are strongly related to what students *think* and *feel* about their own capabilities, which, according to Bandura (1986, 1997), might have a more influential role on their behavior than their actual capabilities.

Results from the analyses reveal that learners generally have low or insecure self-concepts and self-efficacy in terms of speaking in the foreign language, particularly in public (e.g. during oral presentations) which are constructed from (self-)beliefs and emotions that relate to internal and external factors, namely: perceived experiences of failure, a tendency towards perfectionism and self-underestimation, perceived shyness, fear of ridicule, comparison with peers (in which they displayed beliefs of inferiority; e.g. Tatiana) and lack of (or little) oral practice. Regarding the latter, findings reveal that insufficient oral production and an excessive focus on grammar combined with a traditional theory-practice approach do not seem to be adequate to create powerful learners who are able to communicate and function in diverse communicative situations. In fact, allowing little space for practicing their oral skills seems to produce quite the contrary effect. By not encouraging students to speak, insecure, anxious and vulnerable language learners and users are created, as students do not feel capable of succeeding in oral interaction after many years of studying the language. In general, participants tended to idealize classmates (who know more English, who are more used to speaking, etc.) as well as to subscribe to idealized models of language learning (e.g. mistakes should be avoided, one has to perform perfectly, etc.). All these irrational and dysfunctional beliefs and self-beliefs (see Oxford, 2015) were identified as sources of anxiety that contributed to the creation of insecure self-concepts, to erroneous or underestimated interpretations of their own performance and to feelings of incapability.

Nonetheless, findings suggest that increasing the amount of oral practice in class can contribute to creating more powerful and self-assured learners who eventually experience less negative emotions when speaking. Oral tasks can be fostered through

audio- and/or video-recordings in which students can hear their own voice and their classmates', as data appears to indicate that these activities are helpful so that learners can pay attention to mistakes, overcome speaking inhibition and eventually feel real speakers of the language. Teachers can encourage students to perform oral presentations and other types of public oral activities, which, despite being initially unpleasant, seem to be useful to help to overcome inhibition and to promote gradual change in students' emotional and socio-psychological experiences. Therefore, public speaking activities could be promoted at first in small groups and pairs, in which results show that students report feeling more comfortable to experiment with the language, and gradually be promoted in front of bigger audiences, such as in front of the class. From the data it can be inferred that this is particularly necessary during periods of transition, e.g. when moving to a different institution such as the university, as students appear to be more self-conscious because they not know (all) their classmates; consequently, speaking in front of the whole class can make them feel vulnerable, so they prefer working in small groups. When this 'newness' factor is present, teachers could promote activities that encourage students to learn the names of their peers and to get to know them better through ice-breakers.

Apart from promoting a communicative teaching methodology and oral activities, teachers should not underestimate the power of building positive connections with their students as a way of experiencing mutual enjoyment and comfort in class. Educators might find it useful to bear in mind that the ability of building rapport with students is one of the most important ones for them –if not the most important. Following the results obtained in this dissertation, teachers might be more successful in developing a bond with their students if they adopt the role of learning facilitator (rather than of knowledge transmitter) through which they contribute to the co-construction of knowledge by engaging in conversations and actively interacting with them. Interaction with students appears to be crucial to experience moments of positive contact, or positivity resonance, which are generally characterized by respect, humbleness, humor,

praise, encouraging and supportive feedback, and amicable informal conversations. As self-reported and observational data from study 2 indicate, these moments of positive contact are desirable because they appear to be beneficial for the learner at multiple levels[22], e.g. emotionally, motivationally, behaviorally and cognitively, although also probably for the teacher (see Fredrickson, 2013; Li and Rawal, 2018). Nevertheless, findings from the current research project have only shed light upon the effects that positive teacher-student contact might have on the latter.

Results from the analysis show that such positive effects on the students are achieved by performing actions that help students learn and use the language while experiencing positivity. In this vein, teachers could make the most of positive contact moments by attempting not only to build rapport with students, but also to achieve several language learning-related goals, as the teacher from the analyzed course did. For instance, as findings suggest, teachers should attempt to construct good contact with students in order (a) to engage them in speaking tasks so as to assess and correct their English oral production in a non-threatening manner, but also (b) to explore and detect learners' beliefs, self-beliefs, insecurities and opinions regarding English language learning and to act accordingly by giving advice, offering alternative views and, if necessary, attempting to change their negative self-beliefs in order to help students to overcome uncertainties and to construct more positive mindsets.

On the whole, it is particularly important for educators to bear in mind that a learning environment that provides students with the necessary affordances is not only advisable, but fundamental. Such affordances are not only simply pieces of language input, but relations between the active learner and the different elements of the environment, which are exploited by the learner and which provide grounds for activity (van Lier, 2004). This dissertation shows that such affordances include social relationships and

[22] Evidence for this emerges from data obtained in here-and-now interactions and, therefore, the current research has not been able to measure whether those effects last after the interaction. However, Fredrickson's broad-and-build theory (2003; 2013) proposes that the effects of positivity are enduring.

interactions (with teacher and peers) and types of tasks and teaching methodologies, as well as the quality of the classroom atmosphere and the way the classroom is managed and organized. Therefore, teachers should attempt to construct a learning environment which provides a high number of affordances, such as the ones mentioned, in order to facilitate learning, given that potential meanings will be available gradually as the learner interacts within and with the environment (van Lier, 2000). Moreover, as results reveal, when learners feel comfortable and safe in the learning environment, they tend to enjoy more the lesson, be more (inter)active, more willing to take risks and more open to speak the language (see also Aragão, 2011; Khajavy, MacIntyre and Barabadi, 2018; MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012).

Although this dissertation has not investigated the usefulness of self-reflection tasks in order to have more positive language learning experiences, there is empirical evidence from other studies on language beliefs and emotions that shows that "reflection in languaging [i.e. linguistic activity] plays a fundamental role in empowering learners as leading figures in their own language learning trajectories" (Aragão, 2011, p. 311). Accordingly, it would also be interesting for the teacher to perform self-reflection exercises in the different skills, as research shows that learners also construct different self-concepts for reading, writing, speaking and listening (see Arens and Jansen, 2016; Lau, Yeung, Jin, and Low 1999), as well as in several tasks/situations, since findings of this dissertation show that students might feel more anxious in certain type of tasks (e.g. oral presentations in public) than in others (participating spontaneously in class or speaking in small groups). This reflection exercises can be done jointly with the classmates and the teacher in the form of debates or narratives to be read by peers. Joint reflection has been shown to be an effective activity to help students become more self-assured and to believe that a change towards positivity is possible (Aragão, 2011; Barcelos, 2000); moreover, by discussing and sharing views about how and what they feel and think about their language learning processes, students would also be able to get to know each other better, which in turn might contribute to creating a safer

environment in which classmates are not regarded as strangers (as some participants reported in the present research). In addition, by sharing experiences, emotions and beliefs in relation to language learning, the teacher will gather more information about each student and therefore they will be able to provide more individualized learning tools, resources and strategies when needed.

Ultimately, insights from this dissertation also may lead us to reconsider the meaning of ‘learner’ and ‘learning’. Teachers need to be aware that the learner is much more than a person that comes to class to learn something, but a complex individual that should be contemplated holistically (Ushioda, 2009). Learners have their own background stories, both within and outside school; they have insecurities, fears and needs; they can be more or less motivated for countless reasons, and they come to class with their own complex set of cognitive, affective and motivational systems, which include beliefs, views, preferences, motivations, emotions and feelings about language learning, about school, about the world, about life. If students’ preferences, beliefs and views are considered, and if their emotional experiences are not tabooed, but are acknowledged and naturally talked through instead, it will probably be easier to help learners to empower themselves and to flourish and thrive by experiencing positivity in the classroom.

Teachers also need to take into account that every learner is different and so is their learning process and progress, and that not all students might experience change in equal measure or pace, as data from this dissertation suggest. Advancing in one’s learning does not necessarily or solely imply knowing a lot of vocabulary or grammatical structures, or delivering a perfect oral presentation. Learning might involve being less afraid of doing a task than before. Learning can be experiencing enjoyment and not anxiety or fear anymore. Learning might be realizing that you are no longer embarrassed of making mistakes or that you have moved out from your comfort zone. On the whole, educators should cultivate mutual trust, acknowledge every little step and

evolution, help learners understand that there is nothing wrong with feeling insecure, embarrassed or afraid sometimes, and furnish them with the necessary cognitive, social and emotional assets to become more effective, empowered and motivated learners.

10.4 Concluding remarks

In this chapter of the discussion part I have described the theoretical, methodological and pedagogical implications that arise from the findings of this dissertation. In terms of theory, this research contributes to the conceptualization of beliefs, emotions as dynamic complex systems which need to be understood contextually and taking into account the learner comprehensively; it further highlights the complex interrelation and mutual influence of beliefs and emotions and identifies the similarities between both constructs, particularly their concurrent individual and social (co-)construction. Regarding methodological implications, this dissertation shows the value of a qualitative approach in which two types of data (observational and non-observational) are triangulated to analyze learner's beliefs and emotions, despite the inherent difficulty of exploring social-psychological processes. Ultimately, with respect to teaching or pedagogical implications, this research emphasizes the key role that emotions and beliefs play in language learning, particularly in terms of language oral production, and provides pieces of advice for educators in order to promote high levels of positivity in the classroom which are not only beneficial for the learner but also for the teacher.

Conclusion

It is both gratifying and scary to be writing the concluding lines of this dissertation. At this point, insecurities arise and many questions come to my mind: 'is this research good enough?' or 'have I actually discovered anything new?'. Yet, as a friend of mine – and former Ph.D. candidate– wrote in her thesis, "the whole story was never about finishing [the puzzle], but about doing one's best to put together a part while not losing the hope someone else will come up and keep it going" (Mocanu, 2019, p. 322). As a matter of fact, with my research I have attempted to fill in a 'part', or gap, in SLA research, but also –and perhaps more importantly– to open up directions for future inquiry both for myself and for other researchers. Hence, in this final section, I will synthesize the major contributions of this dissertation while acknowledging its limitations, which hopefully future studies will be able to overcome in order to offer further illuminating insights into FL beliefs and emotions research.

This thesis has presented an exploration of the beliefs that English language learners hold about the language learning process and about themselves as language learners, as well as of the emotions that they have experienced, and experience, in relation to several aspects of the English language classroom. The overarching research question of this research project was how these students construct and describe their current and past experiences learning English in a Catalan context. In light of initial findings, this relatively broad question was afterwards divided into two sub-questions in order to narrow the scope of the research. Consequently, careful attention was devoted to the beliefs and emotions students displayed and constructed in relation to the teaching methodology and the type of tasks (particularly oral tasks) and to the role of the teacher and student-teacher relationships. These three research questions have been addressed throughout four independent yet intertwined studies in which both observational (classroom audio/video-recordings) and non-observational (interviews, open-ended

items and focus groups) data have been analyzed by means of various qualitative analytical tools and processes.

Findings from this thesis emphasize the importance of constructing positive emotional experiences and functional beliefs about oneself as a learner in the English language learning process. Results indicate that many students have constructed insecure EFL self-concepts during their lives, with dysfunctional (self-)beliefs and negative emotional experiences in class particularly in relation to oral production. Although many factors can contribute to the creation of such negative mindset (such as a self-belief of shyness), this research has identified that one major cause is a tradition of learning English through approaches which promote the learning of grammatical theory to the detriment of other more communicative aspects of the language, particularly oral production. The analyses have shown that adaptation to a new –in this case more communicative– learning context involves difficult periods of transition for those students who appear to feel more insecure with their own abilities with the language. These students display negative emotions such as embarrassment or anxiety when having to speak in English, especially in oral presentations, in which students feel under the spotlight.

This negative mindset appears to prevent them from having enjoyable and positive experiences in the classroom that help them flourish, thrive and broaden their scope to absorb the language and to build learning resources (MacIntyre and Gregersen, 2012); instead, the analysis suggests that some students tend to adopt 'fight' or 'flight' strategies (see Fredrickson, 2013) when confronted with oral production (particularly with oral presentations), so they narrow their thought-action repertoires in order to save the situation (e.g. by memorizing the text or by remaining silent). However, these narrowing strategies produced by negative emotions are not helpful for students to build affective or cognitive resources in order to perform better and act differently in future oral presentations. Furthermore, they do not seem to contribute to the learning of the

language, or to improving oral skills, given that memorization techniques will probably be of little use in improvised and real-world oral conversations.

In the adaptation process to a communicative English learning context, the role of the teacher has been proven to be crucial in creating a safe space in which students can experiment and take risks with the language. Data reveals that this 'safe space' can be achieved by means of positive contact with students, which in the long run help build rapport and trust with them, and by creating a respectful and positive environment in which students respect and work with each other (in pairs or groups) in order to overcome speaking inhibition. In the end, insights from the data show that students experience increased positivity in the classroom, and those students who were initially reluctant to speaking activities end up assessing them as the most positive aspect of the course. Positive emotional experiences such as enjoyment appear to contribute to the construction of more positive self-efficacy beliefs and to the development of resilience for future similar situations. Although not all students experience change at the same pace or degree, results are optimistic because they show that, with time and the right conditions, change towards more positive mindsets can take place.

On the whole, this thesis has shown that experiences related to learning a language, in this case English, are constantly co- and re-constructed through a complex interplay between inner and outer processes that constitute the classroom system at a given point in time; therefore, reductionist or simplistic views of the language learning process or of the language learner should be replaced with more comprehensive and holistic ones (e.g. Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008; Mercer, 2015; Ushioda, 2009). The interconnectedness between beliefs and emotions and their complex interplay with other contextual elements (at once individually and socially constructed) contribute to the dynamic construction of learning experiences. Since these experiences are 'constructed' (Barrett, 2006, 2017a), there is room for growth and development not only at an academic level, but also at a personal level. In this vein, we should bear in mind that

> effective teaching and learning equips learners for life in its broadest sense. Learning should help individuals develop intellectual, personal and social resources that will enable them to participate as active citizens, contribute to economic, social or community development, and flourish in a diverse and changing society. (Ashwin et al., 2015, p. 74)

Therefore, teachers should aim at creating an environment rich in affordances (van Lier, 2000, 2004) that not only helps students to learn a language effectively, but also to have much more satisfactory experiences that contribute to producing a gradual change towards more positive mindsets. Positive and broadened mindsets contribute to creating such durable resources like empathy, optimism and resilience, which are not only useful in language learning, but also in every other facet of life (Fredrickson, 2013). As a consequence, learners would acquire tools to become much more active individuals who self-regulate better and who take genuine control of their own actions, beliefs, thoughts and emotions; as Barrett would say, this way they would learn to become the architects of their own experiences.

Notwithstanding the significant findings of this research and its theoretical, methodological and pedagogical contributions to the study of language learner's beliefs and emotions, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. The first limitation of this thesis –and perhaps the most important– has been its format. Although a thesis composed of different studies has certainly benefits in the long run, because the doctoral student can concurrently produce a doctoral thesis and four articles, perhaps this configuration is not so advantageous for the elaboration of the thesis itself. This is because although the four studies are connected, and the sample of participants is the same (except in study 1), there is some disruption in the reading as each article has its own aims, research questions, methodology, analysis and discussion, and therefore the narrativity that characterizes a traditional dissertation can be lost.

The second limitation is that this dissertation has not been able to explore the complexity and the dynamics of learners' beliefs and emotions –and perhaps other influential aspects– in its entirety. In order to achieve that, a longitudinal research would have been needed, with several case studies. Although my thesis has been in a way longitudinal, because I was able to develop certain ethnographic/messo-level (Day, 2008) knowledge of the ESP course in the BAM degree, the studies combine cross-sectional research (studies 1 and 2) and longitudinal research (studies 3 and 4[23]) in order to gain different insights into the data; yet, as Dörnyei (2007) points out, longitudinal studies permit the researcher to explore and describe change over time and to delve into causality. Therefore, I am aware that a collection of longitudinal studies would have been ideal in order to thoroughly explore the learner's co-construction and re-construction of emotional experiences, beliefs and self-beliefs. This drawback in the research design and development derives from the embedding of the present dissertation within a funded research project with its own objectives, as I already mentioned in the methodological section[24].

Being part of this bigger research project has facilitated the development my own research in many ways, given that several researchers collaboratively designed the project and collected data, with the aid of the technical and working team, which I was part of. Despite these advantages, depending on another project to conduct my own thesis has also being challenging, so two main limitations need to be pointed out in this regard. Firstly, the scope of the funded project was on plurilingual education, as it aimed to compare the effectiveness of two different teaching methodologies (a traditional monolingual approach and a translanguaging-English as a Lingua Franca approach), as well as the students' attitudes and experiences. In a way, it paid attention to students' attitudes, beliefs and discourses about language learning, which was useful

[23] Study 3 is a purely longitudinal study because data were collected and analyzed in various points in time. However, study 4 analyzes data obtained at two points in time, which some researchers such as Goldstein (1979) and Menard (2008) consider sufficient to be classified as longitudinal.

[24] This affects studies 2, 3 and 4, but not the first one, since data from that article was obtained outside the funded research project.

for my own study, but these aspects were mostly explored in relation to the two aforementioned methodologies. Yet, whereas beliefs were explored, emotions were only introduced sporadically, as they were not one of the foci of the project. Secondly, the aim of the funded project was not to conduct a longitudinal study to exhaustively measure and explore dynamics at an individual and complex level, but rather to note differences (if any) at a classroom level and between the two groups before and after the course. When data for the project were gathered, I was at the initial phase of my Ph.D., in which I did not have a comprehensive vision of my thesis as a whole yet; as a result, I might have missed the opportunity of putting forward suggestions or taking actions that might have been useful and beneficial for my own research. Despite all these challenges, I contributed actively in the decisions concerning data collection methods and procedures and I participated in the different stages and processes of collecting the data, in which I attempted to include items and questions which were interesting for my own research. In the end, thanks in large part to the abundance of observational and non-observational data obtained through the funded project, I was able to conduct my research successfully despite pursuing different objectives.

Ultimately, the last limitation of this dissertation is related to the challenge of developing a complex and integrative framework that fuses different currents from various scientific fields (psychology, sociology and applied linguistics) in the holistic study of both beliefs and emotions. I must acknowledge that I started this project with tendencies towards essentialism: I attempted to induce emotions in the students' reported data, to find emotion words in their speeches, and to identify emotion fingerprints in their expressions and movements; I also looked for causality, repetition and patterns in the data in order to make generalizable statements, or truths, when clearly this was something beyond the reach of my data. However, throughout the development of the thesis, I have learnt to adopt a much critical and complex view of constructs such as 'beliefs' and 'emotions', as well as of the language learner and the language learning process, and I have realized that their intricacies are not so easily

unraveled. Perhaps there are still traces of reductionism along the dissertation; yet, I can assert that I finish my Ph.D. journey feeling as a much more non-essentialist, critical and open-minded researcher who is aware of the nuances and the complexities that are intrinsic to the nature of learning an additional language.

I hope that this dissertation has contributed –even if modestly– to filling a gap in the study of additional language learner's beliefs and emotions and to smoothing the way for further inquiry. Future research could continue exploring the dynamic and complex interconnection between language learner's emotions and beliefs, which would contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between emotion and cognition in language learning. In order to provide an exhaustive explanation of their dynamic relationships and potential changes, this should be ideally done through longitudinal research in which data are gathered from several case studies at different points in time (for an example see Mercer, 2011a). Moreover, further studies could also delve into how students construct (self-)beliefs and emotional experiences in relation to specific aspects of language learning (such as oral tasks) and how they are re- and co-constructed based on social interactions (with peers and teachers) and on the learning conditions of the environment.

In this sense, more research is needed from a positive psychology viewpoint on which aspects or conditions contribute to the experience of positivity in the classroom and specific classroom practices, behaviors or activities that promote this positivity. In this thesis, positivity has been analyzed in teacher-student contact, as well as in relation to the classroom environment and specific classroom activities and teaching methodologies. Nonetheless, an aspect which has remained under-researched in this dissertation is the role that peers play in the formation of self-constructs such as self-concept and self-efficacy and in the emotional experiences of the students. Ultimately, it would also be interesting to collect updated data of other students enrolled in the Catalan education system in order to observe whether their discourses and experiences

continue to be unsatisfactory, or, on the contrary, they are more positive, particularly in terms of teaching methodologies.

The aforementioned aspects could be further explored using data triangulation with observational and non-observational data, as the present research has shown that a combination of two types of data and different data collection methods and analytical tools and procedures is a valuable procedure for inquiring into students' emotions and beliefs. In relation to this point, I would also like to encourage researchers to explore the emergence and construction of language learning experiences (and related processes) in situ. We should bear in mind that the classroom is an invaluable source of information from which us researchers can identify specific aspects, practices or resources that can help both students and teachers flourish and prosper in their language learning and teaching experiences.

In the end, this dissertation was never designed as a gigantic project with a huge data-set or with cutting-edge data collection methods and analytical tools. Rather, it might be more adequate to interpret this thesis as an attempt to go back to the roots of educating. And what I mean by this is that, if teaching is an act of love (see Barcelos and Coelho, 2016), then we researchers and teachers would do well to pay close attention to all these affective aspects of teaching and learning that sometimes tend to disregarded in benefit of other variables, factors, or avant-garde teaching methodologies. My humble –but perhaps most important– contribution and recommendation for members of the language teaching community would be to bear in mind that in order for learning to be successful, we need to build it on solid foundations. And these foundations might not be composed of innovative teaching techniques or approaches, or complex teaching curriculums, but perhaps of other more basic ingredients, such as love and care. If these basic elements are not present, the whole structure on which learning is constructed might crumble, regardless of how inventive and original that structure is.

A personal final note

I want to thank the reader for having reached this point of the dissertation. If you are one of those curious readers who enjoy skipping to the last page in search of a condensed summary of the research, I must warn you that you will not find any academic spoilers here. Rather, I would like to take advantage of this space to make a brief personal reflection on the process of elaborating a doctoral thesis.

I have been looking forward to getting to this part not only because this means that this project is coming to an end (finally!), but also because I wanted to escape, even if just for a while, from the rigid conventions of academia, as at this point I feel that I am writing these words more for myself than for the reader. The elaboration of the Ph.D. project has been a long and arduous quest. At times, it felt like a rollercoaster, with many ups and downs. I struggled to reach the top little by little, where I could see the light, but then, soon after, I found myself falling again, unfastened, in a wagon of insecurities and doubts. Other times I felt like running a long-distance race, in which I had to grow stronger and to develop resilience to cross the finish line –and I must admit that positive psychology has been infinitely helpful for me in this sense! Finally, and at the risk of sounding too dramatic, many times I had the feeling that this doctoral journey was an Odyssey, and I was Penelope, weaving and unweaving a never-ending thesis, waiting eternally for it to be over.

However, now that the end is around the corner, I feel that it has all been worth it. Not only have I learnt how to conduct scientific research, or how to publish an academic paper, but I have acquired knowledge that is immensely valuable for me at a professional and at a personal level. Being a teacher, I became aware of the central importance that building rapport and promoting positivity in the classroom have in making self-assured students who are willing to take risks and play around with the language. The importance of these aspects is something which every teacher seems to know, but I guess that not all of us are aware of the actual influence that these factors

might have on the learners and on their learning experiences. Looking back, I realize that my own teaching has been far from flawless, but thanks to the elaboration of this thesis now I feel that I am in possession of many more resources and knowledge that can help me become a better teacher in the future. Lastly, at a personal level, the process of carrying out a Ph.D. has been all about self-regulating and managing emotions and beliefs about my own capabilities as a researcher. During the process, I constructed experiences of fear, anger, resignation, hopelessness; but also of happiness, enjoyment, ambition, passion and, eventually, pride. Thanks to the extensive reading on emotions and, particularly, on positive psychology, I was lucky enough not only to be educating myself in an area which would contribute to language learning research and pedagogy, but also to be developing emotional resources, such as resilience or hope, that will definitely be useful in my academic career but also in many other areas of my life.

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Appendix

Figure 10. *Mysterious blobs revealed*

(based on Barrett, 2017a, p. 308)